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**Effects of the Couple Communication Program I on the marital
adjustment, self-disclosure, and communication style of therapy and
non-therapy participants**

Valenti, Francis Timothy, Ph.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1987

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EFFECTS OF THE COUPLE COMMUNICATION PROGRAM I
ON THE MARITAL ADJUSTMENT, SELF-DISCLOSURE,
AND COMMUNICATION STYLE OF THERAPY
AND NON-THERAPY PARTICIPANTS

by

Francis Timothy Valenti

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the Faculty of the Graduate School at
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Approved by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Couple Communication Program I (CC I) in improving the marriage adjustment, self-disclosure, and work-style communication of participating couples. The study employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest-extended posttest non-randomized control group design in which all subjects were tested at one-month intervals. The sample of 28 couples was comprised of 3 groups: a "regular" enrichment group of 10 couples, a group of 7 enrichment couples who were concurrently involved in marriage therapy, and a no-treatment control group of 11 waiting-list couples.

On each of the three testing occasions, participants were administered the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) and conducted a five-minute discussion of an important issue in their relationship. The DAS was used to assess marital adjustment, while independent ratings of the taped husband-wife discussions provided measures of subjects' use of self-disclosure and work-style communication. In addition, conjoint interviews were conducted with enrichment couples at each time of testing for the purpose of obtaining in-depth qualitative data concerning program effects. Quantitative data were analyzed by means of 3x2x3 and 3x3 repeated measures analysis of variance. Post hoc analyses

of significant effects were carried out by means of Tukey tests and simple effects analysis of variance procedures.

Results of the statistical analysis indicated that neither husbands nor wives in either of the enrichment groups experienced any improvement over time in marriage adjustment, as measured by the DAS, but that couples in both enrichment groups significantly improved at posttest in the practice of self-disclosure and in the use of work-style communication. Regular enrichment couples maintained their improvement in communication skills over testing times, but significant gains for the therapy-enrichment group did not persist at follow-up. Results of the qualitative analysis of the interview data were generally supportive of the positive findings of the quantitative analysis with respect to communication changes but diverged sharply from the latter in documenting substantial and durable improvement in marriage satisfaction among couples in both the enrichment and therapy-enrichment groups.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

There can be little argument that intimate couple relationships in contemporary American society are operating under conditions of severe stress. Recent statistics (National Center for Health Statistics, 1982) showed that the divorce rate, after having doubled between 1966 and 1976, hit an all-time high of 5.3 per 1,000 population in 1981. In that single year, 1,219,000 divorces were granted. In the 20 year span between 1962 and 1981, annual totals rose every year; and the total number of divorces nearly tripled. Although the rate has leveled off in the last 5 years, fluctuating between 5.1 and 4.9 from 1982 through 1986 (NCHS, 1987), both the rates and the numbers of divorces continue to be among the highest recorded in U.S. history. Divorce statistics, however, are but one prominent index of the current malaise afflicting contemporary marriages. Statistics on conjugal violence, while not nearly as reliable as those on dissolution, are nonetheless disturbing. Gelles (1974), Steinmetz (1977), and Straus (1980) have all reported marital violence rates among couples in their samples ranging widely between 28% and 60%. Perhaps the most informed estimate was attempted by Straus (1980) who,

taking into account the well-known tendency of people to underreport socially unacceptable behavior, put the true incidence of interspousal violence in the general population at between 50% and 60%. Less spectacular, perhaps, but also worthy of attention are the findings of other studies documenting the depth and extent of dissatisfaction and disenchantment in many intact marriages. One such study (Rubenstein, 1983) reported that 40% of the married women and 28% of the married men questioned reported a lack of love and an absence of sexual desire in their relationship. Fully one third of wives confessed to believing that their marriage might end in divorce.

It has become obvious that contemporary intimate relationships are being buffeted by pervasive socio-cultural changes whose legacies are a high incidence of divorce, an alarming rate of domestic violence, and widespread relationship dissatisfaction. Aware of the seriousness of this situation, one observer (Otto, 1976) remarked that there was widespread recognition by specialists from diverse disciplines that the institution of marriage was beset by grave difficulties. Indeed, marriage and family specialists do seem to agree that making a marriage work today is a more difficult task than it once was and that marital partners are frustrated by their apparent inability to get what they want from their relationship.

Even a cursory reading of the formidable body of professional and popular literature revealed a considerable diversity of opinion as to the nature and causes of the problematic stresses confronting couples today. Perhaps the single most useful interpretation of what is occurring in contemporary marriage was originally proffered by Burgess and Locke (1945), reiterated by Burgess, Locke, and Thomas (1971), and since echoed by numerous other observers. They maintained that the institution of marriage has been undergoing substantial modification and that the direction of change is from an institutional to a companionship type of arrangement. Essentially, this transition entails a shift from a fixed hierarchical structure to a more democratic structure; from traditional, clearly defined sex role specifications to more modern and flexible sex roles; and from an institution characterized by legal rigidity and controlled by laws, mores, and public opinion to one characterized by greater intimacy, mutual affection, equity, and consensus (Burgess et al., 1971). The transformation toward the companionship style of marriage has been seen by many as representing a widespread striving by contemporary couples for more dynamic, growth-oriented relationships characterized by: intimacy, interpersonal growth, mutual fulfillment, open expression of feelings, affirmation of individual differences and creative use of conflict to deal with those differences,

balance between individual autonomy and interdependence, and acceptance of equal responsibility for the ultimate success of the relationship (Cushman & Cahn, 1985; Gee, 1981; Hof & Miller, 1980; Mace, 1982; Mace & Mace, 1974, 1975, 1977; Rogers, 1972).

One manifestation of these socio-cultural changes is a radical shift in popular expectations of marriage. Whereas marriage was formerly understood as an institution for the fulfillment of social and familial needs, modern companionate marriage is conceptualized as a vehicle for the attainment of a number of individual and interpersonal goals (Saxton, 1977). Increasingly, marital partners are operating under what has been termed a "criterion of happiness" (Mace, 1982) and, as a consequence, are demanding more of each other and more of their relationship than did their predecessors (Regula, 1975). Increasingly, today's husbands and wives are evaluating their marriage according to how well it gratifies their emotional needs; and, if the expected benefits are not perceived to be forthcoming, many are increasingly willing to leave their relationship and to explore alternatives. The old culturally induced sense of duty and obligation, backed by law, religion, and community pressure, no longer serves to persuade individuals to continue in what are defined as unrewarding marriages; and fewer and fewer individuals are willing to remain indefinitely in an unfulfilling relation-

ship (Bane, 1976; Cherlin, 1981). In short, the viability of a marriage relationship seems best assured when it is viewed by its members as constituting a mutually rewarding experience in which a substantial portion of the perceived rewards are psychosocial in nature.

A substantial part of the difficulty being experienced by contemporary couples has arisen from the fact that this emergent conception of marriage demands far more from its practitioners in the way of expressive skills than did its traditional counterpart. Consequently, the equipment needed for effective role performance is quite different. Whereas the chief requirement for success in the traditional marriage of an earlier era was simply the adequate performance of expected sex roles, marriage in its modern manifestation, with its relatively greater emphasis upon the affective aspects of the dyadic relationship, demands that both partners possess a higher level of interpersonal competence or, put differently, expertise in what are commonly known as human relations skills (Mace, 1982; Mace & Mace, 1975, 1977). In fact, in the years before the precipitous rise in marital dissolution rates began, some observers (Foote, 1963; Foote & Cottrell, 1955) foresaw the need of individuals for the nurturance of interpersonal competence (i.e., social skills) by means of functional education for marriage. Other scholars, speaking more broadly, cited the urgent need in modern societies for the

additional socialization of members to address the strain resulting from rapid socio-cultural change and to assist individuals in acquiring new symbols and new interaction skills required for competent functioning in a dynamic social system (Goode, 1960). These early proponents of functional education conceived of training in interpersonal competence as a sort of functional prerequisite or learning vehicle through which couples could be empowered to interact flexibly and effectively in highly fluid relational situations. Couples were exhorted to acquire these capabilities in order that they might become active agents in a changing world and, in the process, keep their marriages viable.

Today many experts (Gee, 1981; Mace, 1982; Mace & Mace, 1975; Travis & Travis, 1975) agree that traditional behavior patterns and role expectations no longer suffice as individuals experience difficulties in their interpersonal relationships and attempt to fulfill modern role obligations. Most also share the conviction that partners who acquire interpersonal capabilities are better able to cope with the exigencies of marital living and to maintain adequate levels of closeness, satisfaction, and relationship growth. Yet, many observers (L'Abate, 1985; Mace, 1982; Mace & Mace, 1975; Regula, 1975) have concluded that modern couples by and large are poorly equipped to meet the rising expectations for marital success which characterize

contemporary marriage. Furthermore, this shortcoming does not appear to be confined to couples seeking clinical services. Hill (1970) speculated that a deficiency in functional communication skills is evident in most marriages, not simply in those eventuating in divorce. That opinion was corroborated by Gilbert (1976) who cited mounting research evidence suggesting that consistently effective communication is somewhat rare in intimate relationships.

The development of this problem can be traced to the fact that, until fairly recently, cultural resources for assisting couples in promoting the development of communication and other relationship skills have been inadequate; and relatively few opportunities have been made available for couples to learn ways of interacting more effectively as they attempt to make a transition to modern marriage (Hinkle & Moore, 1971; Regula, 1975). One inevitable consequence of this cultural deficiency is that couples often encounter situations in marriage which call for the use of the same interpersonal skills which they have failed to acquire during the course of their socialization (Guerney, 1975; Mace, 1982; Mace & Mace, 1974). In other words, it appears that many couples don't relate well with one another because they don't know how to do so.

There has been no shortage of speculation as to the etiology of this widespread deficiency. As Guerney (1975) explained, the ability to experience a degree of individual and interpersonal satisfaction is dependent upon one's possession of certain learned skills. In the past, people have acquired these skills unconsciously, unsystematically, and inadequately. Some scholars have suggested that most young people in our culture are cut off from learning problem-solving skills, especially those most applicable to building and maintaining satisfying relationships, because their parents shield them from conflict and distressful episodes requiring the use of problem-solving, decision-making, negotiation, and other processes of marital exchange. Children observe and become familiar with only the outcomes of spousal interaction but don't grasp the processes. In other words, protective parents may unwittingly deprive their offspring of exposure to various ways of interacting with one's spouse. The children thus are shorn of learning opportunities and fail to acquire skills basic to success in modern marriage. The later development of workable patterns of adult interaction is thereby left to chance (Hill & Aldous, 1969). According to this point of view, then, the failure of many marriages can be traced to deficits in childhood socialization provided by the family of origin which render the child ill-prepared for future adult (i.e., married) roles.

Despite the widespread recognition among professionals of the need to develop effective means of equipping ordinary individuals and couples with the specific types of competencies deemed vital to the preservation and improvement of intimate relationships in an era of elevated cultural expectations, helping strategies have, until recently, been confined to pre-marital counseling or family life education courses and traditional marriage counseling or therapy. Unfortunately, serious questions have been raised about the efficacy of these traditional methods of service delivery (Joanning, Brock, Avery, & Coufal, 1980).

Premarital education efforts have been assailed for their didacticism, their lack of emphasis on skill acquisition, and their ill-advised timing. The latter criticism refers to the fact that such programs are based on the questionable premises that unmarried individuals are sufficiently motivated and receptive to advance preparation and that such preparation will prove efficacious at some later date. In fact, one review of the literature (L'Abate, 1981) on the subject concluded that "premarital" intervention efforts would actually be more effective if they were offered after marriage. On the other hand, traditional clinical approaches for married couples have been criticized because of their excessive cost, their time requirements, their adherence to the medical model with its overriding emphasis on pathology, their inattention to

skill development, their inaccessibility for large segments of the population, and the ever-present risk of patient stigmatization (Guerney, Stollak, & Guerney, 1971; Rappaport, 1976; Schauble & Hill, 1976). The matter of timing is a particularly salient issue in the case of marital counseling and therapy because professional remediation usually becomes available, or is sought out, only after dysfunctional interaction patterns have become so entrenched that extensive emotional damage has occurred and problems have reached crisis proportions, thereby rendering the success of remediation efforts highly problematical (Guerney, 1977; Mace & Mace, 1976; Miller, Corrales, & Wackman, 1975).

An additional drawback to each of these conventional modes of couple assistance can be found in their exclusio- nary nature. While premarital counseling and family life instruction undoubtedly provided a degree of support to some couples before marriage and while therapeutic moda- lities were available to others in times of crises, a yawning gap developed over the years in support services to that broad range of needy couples who didn't fit into the premarital or clinical categories. Otto (1976) termed these marriages "subclinical" in that they were often beset with problems which, while not incapacitating, nevertheless required professional assistance before optimal levels of functioning could be attained. Their needs were generally

not met by conventional professional support systems. As one observer (Mace, 1975b) later lamented:

As long as our interventions in marital and family dysfunction were remedial only, we would make only a limited impact on the state of family life in our culture as a whole. To wait until couples are in serious trouble is to choose the worst possible strategic ground for the application of our hard-won knowledge and skill. This seems eloquently demonstrated by the fact that we now have tens of thousands of highly skilled and dedicated professionals involved in marriage and family counseling--and the family is sinking deeper and deeper in a sea of trouble. (p. 31)

The last two decades have seen the long-awaited emergence of a clear alternative to the traditional didactic and medical models of marriage support services. Assistance has come in the form of a plethora of structured educational skill-training programs, including marriage enrichment programs, designed to promote couples' communication competence in the service of problem prevention and relationship enhancement (Joanning et al., 1980). The explosive growth of communication skills training programs for couples has come as professionals in the marriage and family field have increasingly focused on the importance of communication skills in the establishment and maintenance of relationships (Birchler, 1979) and as a natural outgrowth of research and clinical evidence which has consistently implicated communication as one of the major problems of couples in distressed marriages (Gottman, Notarius, Gonso, & Markman, 1976).

The education model upon which these programs are premised has been defined as a "systematic attempt to teach personal and interpersonal attitudes and skills which individuals can apply to solve present and future psychological problems and to enhance their satisfaction with life" (Guerney et al., 1971, p. 277). Adherence to this model does not require the assumption of pathology on the part of the program user nor of expert healing powers on the part of the professional helper. Rather, participants are seen as seekers of personal and relationship development and as active participants who assume primary responsibility for their own learning. Programs based on this model of social skills training are designed to assist participants in overcoming the skill deficiencies so prevalent in marriage relationships (Joanning et al., 1980). The group programs which have evolved out of this educational-preventive approach to helping couples are also based on the assumptions that solutions emanating from self-applied knowledge and skills are more likely than imposed "cures" to be satisfying and viable and, furthermore, that the acquisition and application of concepts and behaviors will minimize future reliance on professional intervention (Epstein & Jackson, 1978).

The recent development of educational skill-training approaches for couples has resulted in the simultaneous ascendancy of marriage enrichment programs, which can be

viewed as a subset of the former (L'Abate, 1981). Marriage enrichment is itself a generic concept encompassing a dizzying variety of intervention programs which, as Otto (1976) pointed out, share a common concern with "enriching the couple's communication, emotional life, or sexual relationship; with fostering marriage strengths, personal growth, and the development of marriage and individual potential while maintaining a consistent and primary focus on the relationship of the couple" (p. 14). Despite differences of emphasis, all marriage enrichment programs are considered educational and preventive in nature, focus on existing marital strengths and on the development of relationship potential, attach overriding importance to the development of communication skills, and possess either an experiential or a skill-training focus, or a combination of both (Davis, Hovestadt, Piercy, & Cochran, 1982; Guerney, 1977; Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Hof & Miller, 1981, L'Abate, 1977; Mace & Mace, 1974, 1977).

Although developed and presented as a support service to meet the needs of contemporary marriages, marriage enrichment was not initially intended as a palliative for all couples. Otto (1976) observed that:

... marriage enrichment programs are for couples who have what they perceive to be fairly well-functioning marriages and who wish to make their marriage even more mutually satisfying. The programs are not designed for people whose marriages are at a point of crisis or who are seeking counseling help for marital problems. (p. 137)

Others have pointed out that marriage enrichment can be distinguished from the more established marriage counseling/therapy and family life education approaches by virtue of the fact that it was designed to deal with "normal," as opposed to clinically-referred, couples; is offered in an informal group setting; and emphasizes experiential learning exercises rather than focusing exclusively on didactic methods (Smith, Shoffner, & Scott, 1979).

In summary, the development of marriage enrichment programs represents a concerted effort by the helping professions to meet the needs of married couples in a time of rapid and unsettling socio-cultural change (Mace & Mace, 1977). Consisting of a wide variety of program offerings designed to stabilize and improve couple relationships, enrichment provides growth-inducing learning experiences which strive to impart communication and other relationship-building skills that enable the recipients to enhance their own marriages. It is based on the optimistic belief that, even though most individuals and their relationships function at less than their full potential, personal and relationship growth is possible. As an intervention approach, marriage enrichment represents a decisive shift away from the long-established remedial emphasis of the therapeutic approach and toward a

preventive orientation with primary emphasis on facilitating relationship growth. It also involves a parallel shift away from the conventional didactic approach toward a more dynamic, experiential approach to assisting couples deal with problematic marital situations (Davis et al., 1982; Gee, 1981; Mace & Mace, 1975).

Along with the rapid growth of marriage enrichment into a large-scale service industry has come the inevitable concern over accountability. The necessity for empirical verification of program effectiveness in producing desired outcomes has been pointed out by a number of writers. As recently as a decade ago, Beck (1976) noted that evaluation efforts had been minimal, whereas Mace (1975a) observed that judgments of the effectiveness of programs were still largely subjective and called for the implementation of objective measurement in no fewer than nine different areas. Otto (1975), after surveying the results of 30 enrichment programs, remarked that "the pressing need for more research on the effectiveness of marriage and family enrichment must be underscored" (p. 141). More recently, Davis et al. (1982) noted the significant growth of marriage enrichment programs in the intervening decade and pointed out the continuing need to determine their effectiveness. Most importantly, the authors of comprehensive reviews of the literature on couple enrichment programs (Birchler, 1979; Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Hof &

Miller, 1981) have pointed out that, while evaluation studies have often reported positive results, most have suffered from methodological shortcomings which have rendered interpretations of the results problematical and their value somewhat questionable.

Reviews of marriage enrichment research and various writings by interested scholars have served to alert audiences to several outstanding issues that should be addressed. One issue which has been repeatedly raised by virtually all enrichment reviewers and commentators has been the extreme overreliance of most outcome assessments upon self-report data and the concomitant failure to develop or employ more objective non-participant ratings. Such exclusive dependence upon highly subjective self-report data leaves study data highly vulnerable to such sources of invalidity as social desirability response bias (Edmonds, 1967; Schumm, Milliken, Poresky, Bollman, & Jurich, 1983) and demand characteristics of the experimental situation (Orne, 1962; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 1966). To illustrate, Gurman and Kniskern (1977) reported that 84% of all criterion measures employed in the 29 outcome studies they reviewed consisted of self-report data from the program participants and that 59% (17 of 29) of the studies utilized self-reports as the sole criterion of outcome, while another 28% (8 of 29) relied primarily on self-report data. Thus, only 16% of all measures used in

outcome evaluations involved objective, non-participant ratings; and only 41% (12 of 29) of the studies surveyed utilized any objective indices of actual behavior. Hof and Miller (1981) reported that, while self-report measures were used in 91% (31 of 34) of the studies they reviewed, independent ratings were used in only 38% (13 of 34). Furthermore, they judged many of the self-report instruments used to be of unknown reliability and validity. These and other scholars (Birchler, 1979) have strongly recommended that the designs of future outcome studies include multimethod, multitrait assessment involving the use of both self-report methods and more objective behavioral measures such as non-participant ratings and observational methods. The gist of their position is that, unless future research can document transfer of skill training to real-life situations outside the program context, consumers cannot safely assume that putative enrichment effects represent actual program benefits.

Another issue that emerges from these reviews of the outcome research on marriage enrichment concerns the durability of enrichment-induced change. Previous outcome research efforts have often failed to include follow-up components. Only 14% (4 of 29) of the studies reviewed by Gurman and Kniskern (1977) contained a follow-up, and one of these occurred a mere 10 days after the conclusion of the enrichment experience. Only 18% (6 of 34) of the

studies examined by Hof and Miller (1981) included a follow-up assessment. The common practice of neglecting to do follow-up testing not only raises questions about the persistence of reported treatment effects but also eliminates the possibility of detecting any delayed treatment effects. Birchler (1979) and Wampler (1982) joined Gurman and Kniskern (1977) and Hof and Miller (1981) in calling for the inclusion of follow-up assessments in all future investigations as a way of determining whether reported treatment gains are maintained over time or whether they represent no more than mere transitory "halo" or "placebo" effects resulting from a "peak" enrichment experience.

An additional issue in need of further study concerns the external validity of the results of enrichment outcome studies. Heretofore, enrichment research has dealt primarily with a narrowly restricted range of white, middle-class, university-affiliated or church-affiliated volunteer participants (Powell & Wampler, 1982). In addition, because marriage enrichment programs were originally developed for so-called "normal" couples who were already in well-functioning marriages, couples currently receiving therapy have generally been excluded from both enrichment programming and research. Birchler (1979) is one of an increasing number of voices calling for the inclusion of clinical couples in future assessments of enrichment program effectiveness. Until that step is taken, and

outcome assessments are performed on broader populations, serious questions will remain about the generalizability of past findings.

Another neglected aspect of enrichment research has been in the area of sex differences. It is unclear at this point whether husbands and wives react differently to the enrichment experience and whether or not they show differential effects. Although a review of the literature by Giblin, Sprenkle, and Sheehan (1985) did not detect any consistent gender differences in several variables examined, certain male-female differences in responsiveness to enrichment were reported. This suggests that further study on the possibility of sex differences in program effects is called for at this time.

Purpose

The overall purpose of this study was to provide evaluative data on the Couple Communication Program I (CC I), a popular type of marriage enrichment and communication training program described in detail in Chapter Two. Since the stated objectives of the program are to provide participating couples with both insights and specific communication skills in the expectation that such training will eventuate in relationship enhancement, this outcome assessment sought to determine the effectiveness of CC I in producing positive changes in the frequency of usage of

self-disclosure skills and functional communication style by participants and in the perceived marriage adjustment of participants. The study sought also to determine whether or not reported benefits persist over time. In this manner, the goals of the program served as the criteria by which its effectiveness was assessed. In addition, this study attempted to determine whether or not there were differential program effects for husbands as opposed to wives and for distressed couples receiving therapy as opposed to regular (i.e. non-therapy) enrichment couples. A secondary objective of the study was to obtain qualitative information, by means of in-depth interviews, regarding the impact of the program upon participants. It was hoped that the use of supplementary qualitative techniques would bring to light any additional program benefits and/or unanticipated negative side effects not detected by conventional quantitative instruments.

Significance of the Study

It was felt that an outcome study of the CC I program was warranted at this time for several reasons. First of all, as was indicated previously, marriage enrichment programs, including CC I, have grown tremendously in the last 20 years. By 1980, an estimated 2,000 professionals and paraprofessionals had been trained as leaders; and approximately 50,000 couples had participated in CC I alone

(Joanning et al., 1980). Those numbers have surely increased substantially since that time. As a matter of principle, practitioners of any intervention have a responsibility to their audiences to certify the effectiveness of their product; and, in view of the popularity which the program has attained in recent years, CC I instructors and proponents have a special obligation to review the results of their efforts. In addition, as was stated earlier, relatively little is known about the actual effects of such programs due to the fact that rigorous evaluative research has lagged behind the development and delivery of programs (Beck, 1976; Birchler, 1979; Garland, 1983; Giblin et al., 1985; Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Hof & Miller, 1981; L'Abate, 1977; Mace, 1975a; Mace & Mace, 1976; Otto, 1975). Part of the rationale for this study is derived from the fact that most enrichment programs, including the CC I, are based on the assumption that improving a couple's communication skills will enhance their marital functioning and increase the satisfaction that they each feel with their relationship (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1976). However, the possibility also exists that imparting communication skills to couples will result in more conflict as formerly avoided issues are brought to the surface. Such improperly handled conflict could eventuate in lessened relationship satisfaction. Given the possibility of untoward results and given the growing nationwide push for accountability in

education, social services, and related fields, proponents of marriage enrichment would be well-advised to expand and refine their research efforts and empirically document the effectiveness of marriage enrichment programs such as CC I. Only in this manner will enrichment maintain its credibility as a viable mode of marital intervention.

In addition, a number of specific issues regarding the efficacy of the CC I program--and of marriage enrichment in general--have remained unresolved, due in part to defective evaluation research. This study attempted to address several of those issues and to overcome some of the weaknesses of past outcome assessment efforts by incorporating into its design several recommendations made by past critics of enrichment research. For example, the tendency of past enrichment programming and research to include only homogeneous groups of participants was countered in this study by using a broader type of sample not affiliated with any college or university. Similarly, while enrichment programs and evaluations have customarily excluded distressed or therapy couples on the grounds that skill training was inappropriate and/or insufficient to meet their needs, this study attempted a small-scale clinical application of the CC I program by including in the design a second experimental group of therapy couples. The practice of many earlier enrichment studies of relying exclusively upon subjective self-report data was eschewed

in favor of the utilization of objective behavioral measures along with a standard self-report instrument. The failure of many earlier outcome studies to test the durability of program effects was overcome in this study through use of a follow-up assessment on all instruments.

Another prospective contribution of this enrichment outcome study lies in the fact that it supplements the self-report and behavioral measures with a distinctly qualitative approach to data-gathering, the intensive interview. The rationale for including the qualitative component in this outcome study was provided largely by the mushrooming professional literature on the subject. A number of social scientists (Hill, 1981; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Wiseman, 1981) have recently detected the beginnings of a shift toward a more qualitative paradigm among some researchers--including those in marriage and family studies--in fields long imbued with the traditional quantitative emphasis. One scholar has contended that "the burgeoning interest in microfamily studies, with the emphasis on the interaction of family members, will move family researchers toward qualitative, naturalistic approaches" (Wiseman, 1981, p.264). Others (LaRossa & Wolf, 1985), although failing to discern any such movement among practitioners, nevertheless decried the long-standing marginal position of qualitative family research and called

for a restoration of qualitative research methodologies to their rightful place in the family field.

Advocacy of qualitative research approaches is by no means limited to family scholars. A growing number of researchers (Cook & Reichardt, 1979; Montagne, 1982; Patton, 1980) have argued for the increased implementation of qualitative evaluation methods, including in-depth interviewing, throughout the fields of education and social science program evaluation as a means of gathering detailed information about such varied topics as: program strengths and weaknesses, individual cases and outcomes, the quality of program activities and outcomes, and unexpected program side effects. In addition, proponents have often presented qualitative evaluation methodologies as a means of effectively overcoming the commonplace failure of social science and education outcome research to detect significant differences between experimental and control subjects (Gebhardt, 1980). Patton (1980) offered qualitative methods in evaluation research as a viable option for evaluation studies when empirical science has failed to provide a "valid, reliable, and believable standardized instrument... to measure the particular program outcomes for which data are needed" (p. 89). In summary, perhaps the burgeoning interest in the use of qualitative methodology in evaluation research and in a number of related fields stems, as one observer put it,

"from a dissatisfaction with the style of quantitative evaluations and a reconceptualization of the appropriateness of the scientific-quantitative model to the evaluation of intervention programs" (Filstead, 1979, p.45).

Few, if any, researchers propose a total disbanding of conventional quantitative methods of examining program outcomes. Rather, most (Connidis, 1983; Ianni & Orr, 1979; Patton, 1982; Reichardt & Cook, 1979) attest to the wisdom and efficacy of an integration of the two paradigms and recommend "triangulation," the use of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods in tandem. This combined-methods approach offers practitioners partial protection against the inevitable biases present in any single method. In theory, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study, as this outcome assessment has done, can help compensate for the flaws of a single approach used in isolation because such disparate methods are unlikely to share the same weaknesses.

The specific qualitative data-gathering technique employed in the present study was the conjoint interview of husband and wife. There is some support (Allan, 1980; Bennett & McAvity, 1985; LaRossa, 1978) in the social science literature for the increased acceptance of conjoint marital interviewing as a legitimate research strategy. One outspoken proponent (LaRossa, 1978) of this research tool laments some of the methodological inadequacies of

conventional marriage research (e.g. overdependence on female subjects, overreliance on self-report measures, and the failure to treat marriage in a holistic fashion) and calls for greater utilization of the conjoint intensive interview as a means of including husbands in the study, of yielding rich phenomenological and behavioral data, and of preserving or restoring the proper (i.e., relationship) level of analysis to marriage research. Allan (1980) also outlined some of the potential advantages of joint husband-wife interviews. These include: the possibility that joint accounts may be fuller and more valid than individual statements; the fact that each spouse may corroborate, supplement, modify, or contradict the other's statements; and the fact that they provide researchers with the opportunity to observe actual spousal interaction and to thereby gain insights into various aspects of the marital relationship.

Finally, it was hoped that the findings of this outcome evaluation would have practical implications for prospective program users, group leaders, and developers. For couples considering enrollment in CC I or desiring further training as program leaders, the results of this study, if properly disseminated, could prove to be enlightening. This study was also intended to provide a response to the expressed needs of active professionals in the marriage and family field for additional information

for use in their decision-making. Fortified with feedback from this study as to CC I effectiveness, group leaders might conceivably be encouraged to: (a) make the program available to a local constituency in those cases where it is not presently available; (b) initiate minor programmatic revisions as suggested by the findings; or (c) choose not to offer, or to cease delivery of, the program. Similarly equipped with the findings of this study, the developers of CC I would be in a position to make needed changes in the content or the process of the program.

In summary, although a number of outcome assessments have already been performed on CC I, design and measurement problems as well as oversights have flawed the efforts and have resulted in a number of unresolved issues. Therefore, it is argued that a definite need exists to further document the actual effects of the program on the relationship of participants.

In addition to addressing these research needs, CC I was selected as the focus of this outcome assessment for the following reasons: (a) It is one of the most popular and promising of the marriage enrichment programs (Beck, 1975; Olson & Sprenkle, 1976; Otto, 1975;) and is thus of sufficient importance to merit additional study; (b) it has a strong theoretical base drawn from communication and from systems theory (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1979; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980), which adds to the academic relevance of

the study; (c) it is a standardized, nation-wide program (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1976), which permits some comparability of findings among various outcome studies; (d) it was available locally at regular intervals and thus was accessible to the researcher.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will examine the literature relevant to a study of the outcomes of the CC I program, including research pertaining to the criterion variables used in the study of and research on marriage enrichment outcomes. The first section of the review reports on some of the definitional and measurement problems surrounding the concept of marriage adjustment and reviews the research literature on the relationship between effective communication and marriage adjustment and between self-disclosure and marriage adjustment. The next section presents a brief overview of research on the effectiveness of marriage enrichment programs followed by a review of relevant research on clinical applications and on sex differences in enrichment outcomes. The final section of the chapter presents a detailed description of CC I and a review of the outcome studies conducted on that program.

Marriage Adjustment

Definition Problems

Despite having been the focus of several decades of scientific interest and the subject of hundreds of empirical studies, marriage adjustment and related concepts

pose a formidable challenge to researchers attempting to employ them as dependent variables. This is due primarily to the collective inability of scholars to adequately define and assess the various concepts (Hicks & Platt, 1970; Spanier, 1976; Spanier & Cole, 1976). Of special relevance to this study, the ability of investigators to clearly conceptualize and objectively measure the various dimensions of variables such as interpersonal communication has surpassed their ability to do the same with concepts like marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. Because of this problem of conceptual vagueness, writers (Lively, 1969; Luckey, 1964; Miller, 1976) for years have criticized research for using the marriage adjustment variable and have pointed out some of the problems its usage has invariably caused with interpretation of results. Despite their admonitions, research employing marriage adjustment as a variable has continued while the term itself remains an ambiguous, poorly defined concept on which no definitional consensus has been reached.

Many past studies, following the early work of Burgess and Cottrell (1939), have proceeded as though the existence of a single global factor of adjustment with numerous components had been documented by research. Continued adherence to this notion of a single global theoretical construct, however, ignores the results of studies (Locke & Wallace, 1959; Locke & Williamson, 1958) which, despite

uncovering several independent factors, have failed to locate a general factor of adjustment. As Udry (1966) once observed, no one has yet shown marriage adjustment to be a single global factor. In all likelihood, the global approach to the study of marriage adjustment has resulted in semantic confusion which has hindered the search for more adequate ways to subjectively assess marital quality.

The problems posed by the variable of marriage adjustment can be viewed as part of a larger criterion problem in marriage research. Scholars (Burr, 1973; Lewis & Spanier, 1979) have commented on the lack of clarity surrounding the use of several of the traditional dependent variables widely used in research to represent the qualitative dimensions and subjective evaluations of the marriage relationship. Empirically intercorrelated terms such as adjustment, satisfaction, happiness, and relationship quality have subtle nuances of meaning; and formulating precise definitions has proven extremely difficult. Faced with this obstacle, many researchers have simply permitted the subjects of studies to provide their own definitions of these concepts, thus rendering valid cross-study comparisons impossible. Other researchers, however, have attempted to arrive at workable definitions of these inter-related and highly troublesome concepts. For example, the highly subjective condition of marital satisfaction has been defined as: the "subjective feeling of happiness,

satisfaction, and pleasure experienced by a spouse when considering all current aspects of his marriage" (Hawkins, 1968, p. 648), and as a subjective condition in which the individual experiences fulfillment of a goal or desire (Burr, 1970). Marriage adjustment, on the other hand, has tended to be the most specifically delineated of all the terms and has probably been viewed by researchers as a less subjective term than either marital satisfaction or marital happiness. It is perhaps the most widely used of the interrelated terms describing the perceived quality of marriage relationships and has been defined in a variety of ways. Early along, Burgess and Cottrell (1939) remarked that "a well-adjusted marriage may be defined as one in which the patterns of behavior of the two persons are mutually satisfying" (p. 47). Burgess et al. (1971) described a well-adjusted marriage as a "union in which the husband and wife are in agreement on the chief issues of marriage, such as handling finances and dealing with in-laws; in which they have come to an adjustment on interests, objectives, and values; in which they are in harmony on demonstrations of affection and sharing confidences; and in which they have few or no complaints about their marriage" (p. 321). More recently, Spanier (1976) defined marital adjustment as: "a process or outcome which is determined by the degree of 1) troublesome dyadic differences, 2) interpersonal tension and personal anxiety, 3)

dyadic satisfaction, 4) dyadic cohesion, and 5) consensus of matters of importance to dyadic functioning" (p. 17).

Despite this and other repeated attempts at differential definition, however, terms like marriage adjustment, satisfaction, integration, success, and happiness have frequently been used more or less interchangeably (Burr, 1970; Lively, 1969). The unresolved controversy surrounding these criterion variables is clearly reflected in Lewis and Spanier's (1979) decision to employ the general term of "marital quality" to encompass the entire range of interrelated concepts (i.e., marital adjustment, satisfaction, etc.) rather than to deal directly with any one of the more specific terms.

Measurement Problems

An inevitable outgrowth of the conceptual confusion surrounding this criterion variable has been the persistent problem of measurement. Corresponding to the multitude of definitions of marriage adjustment are a plethora of assessment tools. Not unexpectedly, there has been no shortage of criticism (e.g. Hicks & Platt, 1970; Luckey, 1964; Schumm, 1983; Spanier & Cole, 1976) of measurement scales purporting to measure adjustment and related concepts. Most critics have noted the aforementioned lack of clarity and precision underlying virtually all existing scales and have concluded that the measures are, at best, only rough indicators of respondents' subjective evalua-

tions of their relationships. For example, Hicks and Platt (1970) noted that "happiness" was an extremely individualized and subjective phenomenon which was sometimes referred to as "satisfaction" or "adjustment." Noting that consensus was clearly lacking on the definition of terms (e.g., adjustment, satisfaction, happiness, success), they pointed out that both the comparability and generalizability of research findings were restricted. The credibility of study results is further limited by the fact alluded to earlier that the various constructs possess overlapping dimensions. That is, the concepts are not separate and distinct entities but are highly intercorrelated.

One of the most persistent criticisms of marital adjustment scales concerns their alleged contamination by respondents' tendencies to distort appraisals of their marriages in the direction of social desirability and conventionality (Edmonds, 1967; Edmonds, Withers, & Dibatista, 1972; Schumm et al., 1983; Spanier & Cole, 1976). If, in fact, measures of marriage adjustment and satisfaction have significant components of these extraneous factors, then some of the score increase found in some studies might reflect the operation of these response sets rather than any actual change in the criterion variable.

Kirkpatrick (1963) and Spanier and Cole (1976) have outlined the major criticisms of marital adjustment

measures. They are as follows:

1. There is an ever-present danger of social desirability bias when such self-report instruments are used. As indicated above, responses may be tainted by the respondents' desire to appear respectable to the researcher(s).

2. There is some fairly convincing evidence that marital adjustment instruments are contaminated by a conventionality factor. Some scale items seem to reflect middle-class values and to require conventional middle-class answers. Therefore, total scores may actually be measures of deviation from middle-class norms instead of relationship adjustment.

3. Instruments designed to measure marital adjustment entail an unacceptably high risk of halo effects. When one response pattern predominates, the desired response differentiation is absent.

4. Evaluation of a relationship by one party is a highly questionable activity. Research has consistently shown low correlations between husband and wife marital adjustment scores. This low agreement raises serious questions about the reliability of any inferences about data which is based on the adjustment scores of only one spouse.

5. The unit of measurement is ambiguous. A marriage relationship consists of more than two separate partners, but most subjective self-report instruments leave

doubt as to whether the focus is on the adjustment of individual spouses to the marriage or on the adjustment of the married pair as a functioning group or social system.

6. The reliability of many test instruments used in marriage adjustment research is questionable. Reported reliability figures may be artificially inflated due to the possible operation of halo effects and social desirability tendencies.

7. The validity of marital adjustment instruments is questionable. Given the vagueness and variability in conceptual definitions of marital adjustment, existing measures should be regarded as no more than crude indicators of the variable.

The fourth item presented above deserves further comment. In the past, the responses of one partner, usually the wife, were often assumed to validly represent the real situation about relationship quality. Yet, studies have indicated that husband-wife agreement on marital adjustment ranges widely from $r=.04$ to $r=.88$ (Spanier, 1973). Reliance on individual assessments of marital quality, therefore, ignore reported discrepancies in spousal evaluations of marriage relationships.

Faced with clear evidence of the extent of the problem confronting researchers in this area, Lively (1969) boldly urged abandonment of marital adjustment and related concepts as objects of future research. His reasoning was

that continuation of their use would prove detrimental to the development of both theoretical formulations of, and precise analysis of, marriage as interaction behavior. In his words: "so many connotations have become attached to each of these terms that there seems to be justification for advocating their elimination from the field" (p. 113). Other researchers, however, have regarded this position as extremist. Recognizing the necessity of conducting research, even highly imperfect research, Spanier (1976) urged continued integration of research and practice along these lines and a redoubling of efforts at conceptual clarification. He argued that "methodologists cannot ignore the clear continuing need that family researchers have for adequate measures..." (p. 15). Burgess et al. (1971), also opting for further study using the variable, stated: "If one single criterion is to be used, adjustment is probably the most satisfactory measure of success available at the present time" (p. 332).

In conclusion, the concept of marital adjustment is extremely complex and highly subjective in nature, and any research employing marital adjustment as a criterion variable is necessarily fraught with difficulty. There is perhaps no other area in marriage research which has received so much attention and concerted effort yet has been characterized by such slow development in terms of conceptualization, measurement, and testing (Spanier &

Cole, 1976). Researchers and consumers alike of marriage research would be well-advised to take heed of the definitional and measurement problems surrounding all these related concepts before placing faith on the findings of any study. Nevertheless, subjective assessments of the quality of a marriage or statements of personal feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a given relationship are core material for marriage and family scholars. To default on further research in such a sociologically pivotal area would serve no useful purpose and, worse, would weaken future contributions to social science's storehouse of knowledge.

For that reason, the present study has pursued the investigation of marriage adjustment as an enrichment outcome variable. However, because of the lack of available definitions successfully differentiating marital adjustment from marital satisfaction, no attempt was made by the researcher to distinguish between those two terms, either in the forthcoming review of the literature or in the study itself.

Marital Communication

Despite a spate of articles by Schumm and associates (Schumm, 1983; Schumm, Bollman, & Jurich, 1980; Schumm, Figley, & Jurich, 1979; Schumm & Jackson, 1980; Schumm, Race, Morris, Anderson, Griffin, McCutchen, & Benigas,

1981) detailing the measurement issues facing communication researchers, especially those using self-report measures of marital communication, the term "communication" has not caused as much consternation nor created as much controversy as has the concept of "adjustment." Communication is generally considered to be a multi-dimensional concept encompassing a variety of components and, as a result, has been viewed in a variety of ways. It has been defined as "the process of transmitting feelings, attitudes, facts, beliefs, and ideas between living things" (Bienvenu, 1969, pp. 117-118) or simply as "the process by which information is changed from one state to another or moved from one point to another in space" (Steinglass, 1978, p. 316). Accordingly, the more specific term of marital communication can be defined as the process by which a husband and wife express and understand thoughts, feelings, and intentions toward one another. The function of communication in a marriage relationship has received an increasing amount of attention in the last quarter of a century from clinicians and academic researchers alike. Since the improvement of communication has been at the heart of most marriage enrichment efforts (Birchler, 1979) and since communication skill training is predicated on the belief that acquisition and use of such skills will eventuate in increased relationship satisfaction or adjustment (Wampler, 1982), it is essential to establish whether or not existing empirical

research has, in fact, found the variables of communication and marital adjustment to be related in any predictable fashion.

Communication and Marriage Adjustment

A number of authorities have postulated that good communication is the basic requirement for the development and maintenance of viable and rewarding interpersonal relationships (Gilbert, 1976). For example, it has been said that: "Of all the components believed to contribute to satisfying and stable marital relationships in our society, marital communication stands out as the process underlying and supporting most other, if not all, marital processes and outcomes" (Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980, p. 281). Marriage and family therapists (Ackerman, 1966; Henry, 1973; Lederer & Jackson, 1968; Satir, 1972; Satir & Baldwin, 1983), long cognizant of the critical role which communication plays in the development and maintenance of successful intimate relationships, have identified communication distortions as the main cause of marital and intra-family misunderstandings and conflict, and have heralded communication skills as the major avenue by which relationships can be improved. Satir (1972) opined that communication was the largest single factor determining the nature and quality of relationships an individual will have with those around him/her and identified it as one of four components vital

to a well-functioning family. Along the same lines, Lederer and Jackson (1968) wrote that the central task confronting any couple is learning how to communicate effectively in order that they become able to work on their relationship in an ongoing fashion. Finally, Hickman and Baldwin (1971) virtually equated marital problems with communication difficulties.

Academicians and other marriage specialists have also attested to the vital role that constructive communication plays in meaningful couple relationships. Some (Morton, Alexander, & Altman, 1976; Shauble & Hill, 1976) have maintained that communication is the primary means by which individuals and couples define their interpersonal relationships and keep them viable, while others (Rappaport and Harrell, 1975) described communication skills as constituting the very heart of a successful marriage. Otto (1976) singled out lack of communication as the greatest single cause of marital failure, while Bach (1968) characterized communication as the lifeline of successful intimacy. Similarly, Hicks and Platt (1970), pointed out that modern companionship marriage requires effective, open, and rewarding communication in order to succeed.

According to expert testimony, then, the acquisition of effective communication skills results in enhanced relationship satisfaction and/or adjustment by virtue of the fact that their usage opens up pathways for resolving

differences and increasing the satisfaction of partners across a broad spectrum of marital interaction (Snyder, 1979). Only relatively recently, however, have investigators made a concerted effort to seek empirical support for the purported relationship between communication and marital adjustment. Their efforts have resulted in the accumulation of a substantial body of data which clearly demonstrates the existence of such a correlation (Boyd & Roach, 1977).

A number of early correlational studies (Bienvenu, 1970; Birchler, Weiss, & Vincent, 1975; Murphy & Mendelson, 1973; Navran, 1967) and more recent research efforts (Boyd & Roach, 1977; Fitzpatrick, 1977; Fitzpatrick & Best, 1979; Honeycutt, Wilson, & Parker, 1982; Margolin, 1978; Ting-Toomey, 1983; Winkler & Doherty, 1983; Yelsma, 1984) have collectively demonstrated the existence of a substantial positive relationship between open, rewarding verbal communication behavior and marital satisfaction or adjustment. At the same time, these studies have documented the substantive and stylistic differences between the communication of distressed and non-distressed couples and highlighted the communication failures and breakdowns in troubled marriages.

Couples in disturbed marriages often fail to communicate properly; and, not surprisingly, couples labeled as dissatisfied generally report a higher incidence of unre-

solved problems than do more satisfied couples. Without clear, effective communication with which to discuss problems and arrive at solutions, the frustrations experienced by partners accumulate and dissatisfaction mounts. Distorted or infrequent communication interacts with marital dissatisfaction to create a vicious cycle which leads to additional dissatisfaction and to even less effective communication (Raush, Barry, Hertel, & Swain, 1974). Indeed, a considerable body of marital interaction research exists which strongly supports the notion that it is the communication patterns and specific strategies utilized in dealing with problems, rather than the specific problems themselves, which differentiate distressed and "normal" relationships (Birchler, 1979).

That point is easily illustrated in the literature. One need only note that Cutler and Dyer (1965) examined the methods which recently married couples employed in dealing with violations of expectations and reported that communication served as a proper medium for bringing about change and for promoting marital adjustment, whereas Navran's (1967) study highlighted the poor communication styles and techniques which make for inferior problem-solving and heightened marital friction. Furthermore, Hicks and Platt (1970) reported in their review of the research on marital happiness and stability that the prevailing evidence indicated that, the more open and effective the communication

between spouses, the higher their reported level of marital adjustment.

Even more persuasive supporting evidence of a linkage between communication and adjustment in marriage has more recently come from a group of studies of somewhat greater sophistication than the early correlational studies cited above. Snyder's (1979) correlational analysis confirmed that individual communication scales measuring affective and problem-solving dyadic communication predicted global marital satisfaction better than any of the other eleven predictor variables examined. Markman (1979), in a longitudinal study of couples, discovered a time-lagged association between premarital verbal interaction and future relationship satisfaction. Those couples in his study who later became labeled as dissatisfied were more likely to have initially rated their partner's communication as negative compared with couples who later reported satisfying relationships. His findings demonstrated even more convincingly than the correlational studies cited previously that unrewarding communication patterns preceded the development of relationship distress. Based on the findings of past research, Lewis and Spanier (1979) developed a number of first-order propositions relating marital quality, adjustment, and satisfaction to the communication skills of spouses.

Spanier (1976), however, conceptualized the relationship somewhat differently from the writers cited previously. Rather than speaking of a correlation between the variables of communication and adjustment, he maintained that dyadic adjustment can actually be defined by four communication components. He depicted dyadic adjustment as a process whose outcome is defined by the degree of consensus, cohesion, expression of affection, and satisfaction in the relationship and presented empirical evidence corroborating that claim.

A relevant point documented in several of the aforementioned studies was that, while satisfied couples generally exhibited more positive communication than distressed couples, dissatisfied couples used significantly more negative communication than did satisfied couples. This finding would seem to suggest that the determining factor in marital adjustment is not communication per se but the positive or negative nature of the communication. A similar observation was made by Udry (1966), who emphasized that what differentiated satisfying and unsatisfying marriages was not the sheer volume of verbal material or the time spent engaged in the process but the control and direction of communication process. Along the same lines, O'Neill and O'Neill (1972) cautioned that frankness and total honesty can be detrimental and observed that "there are always parts of ourselves that cannot be shared with or

verbalized to another" (p. 73). Finally, according to Stuart (1980), "the preponderance of available evidence suggests that discretion rather than overexuberance is a better norm for a relationship-enhancing communication pattern" (p. 209).

These last few findings and comments can be interpreted as affirming the crucial importance of selectivity and diplomacy in the exercise of communication. While communication does appear to be crucial to marital adjustment, the exhortations noted above serve as a reminder that knowing how and when to say something is the essence of functional communication in intimate relationships.

In summary, a sizable corpus of research which has investigated the effects of communication upon marital satisfaction has provided solid evidence for the relationship-enhancement and distress-prevention functions of effective communication practices and has corroborated both the long-standing claims of clinical experts and the underlying premise of marriage interventions like CC I that good communication is an essential element of satisfying marital relationships.

In order that the results of the foregoing studies be placed into the proper perspective, two important qualifications should be introduced at this point. First, not all studies have found the expected results. One early study (Hobart & Klausner, 1959) reported only a weak relationship

between the amount of communication and the level of marital adjustment. Some other early studies (Karlsson, 1963; Locke, Sabough, & Thomas, 1956) failed altogether to uncover a significant relationship. Despite these anomalies, the overwhelming majority of studies on the subject have found the expected relationship.

The second qualification has to do with the limitations inherent in correlational research. The risks of carelessly making unwarranted attributions about causality from the results of correlational studies have been well documented and require no additional explication at this time. However, the point that needs to be made here is that in many, though not all, of the studies noted above, the direction of influence between or among variables was not established. Simple correlational techniques, used almost exclusively in the older studies, do not allow this determination to be made with any degree of certitude. If x and y are correlated, one does not know if the direction of influence runs from x to y or from y to x , or if a third variable is responsible for the observed relationship. This principle was exemplified in one study (Honeycutt et al., 1982) whose authors refrained from contending that their results indicated that improved communication practices led to enhanced satisfaction. Rather, they emphasized that the degree of expressed marital happiness among sample couples affected the use of specific communi-

cation strategies, with more happily married spouses using decidedly different verbal styles than their less happy counterparts. Happily married spouses in their study were more inclined to utilize more relaxed, open, friendly, dramatic, and attentive communication styles with their partners. One implication of this easily understood point is obvious. If it is true that the level of perceived spousal satisfaction with a marriage influences the style and quality of communication practiced by each spouse instead of the other way around, then the efforts of enrichment personnel to enhance relationship satisfaction by providing communication skill training would be misguided.

Nevertheless, the evidence of a positive relationship is convincing; and leaders of CC I and other marriage enrichment approaches have collectively chosen to attempt to impart communication skills to couples in the expectation that their efforts will eventuate in higher quality relationships and improved marital satisfaction among participants rather than to attack the problem of dissatisfaction more directly. The practical reasons for this decision are obvious. The faith that educators and group leaders have in the efficacy of communication skill training is not necessarily misplaced, however. While the model implicitly held by many scholars and enrichment professionals defines quality relationships as a conse-

quence of functional communication, Hendrick (1981) and Montgomery (1981) have each proposed an interaction model in which communication quality and relationship quality are viewed as affecting each other. To the extent that this interaction model is viable, and to the extent that Troost (1976) was correct when he speculated that effective communication and marital adjustment are each a consequence of the other, attempts to enhance relationship quality through communication training are defensible. However, it remains for future research to address the matter of bidirectional causality more directly.

Self-Disclosure and Marriage Adjustment

Despite the impressive body of expert opinion and empirical research on the relationship between marital adjustment and effective communication, the fact remains that communication is a very broad, general concept which is best broken down into its constituent parts in order to facilitate its study as a separate variable. For this reason, many researchers have sought to study various components of couple communication. One particular facet of interpersonal communication which has recently come to occupy a prominent position in both social psychology and marriage research is self-disclosure, a skill behavior which some (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Jourard, 1971a, 1971b, 1974) view as the primary vehicle by which intimate rela-

tionships grow and develop and as a primary facilitator of satisfaction in meaningful relationships. Self-disclosure has been variously defined as verbal behavior which informs another person about oneself, whereby one openly and honestly shares one's thoughts and feelings with another in the hope that open communication will follow (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1983); the process by which one partner in a relationship expresses his/her feelings, perceptions, fears, and self-doubts to the other partner, in essence permitting private and personal information to surface (Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980); the act of "taking the risk of revealing one's innermost feelings and thoughts to a significant other person" (Regula, 1975, p. 156); and simply as a type of communication behavior in which a speaker honestly makes himself or herself known to another person (Pearce & Sharp 1973).

Jourard, probably the most prominent researcher and advocate of self-disclosure, believed that self-disclosure is what differentiates close personal relationships of love and friendship from formal role relationships and that self-disclosure is the only way that people can come to know one another. Central to Jourard's philosophy of interpersonal relationships are his beliefs that full and open communication promotes personal and interpersonal growth and that individuals in healthy relationships communicate all of themselves to each other. Although

Jourard (1959) at one point indicated that excessive self-disclosure betokens a disturbance in self and in one's interpersonal relationships, his theoretical position has been widely interpreted as representing a "more is better" philosophy of openness in which the optimum marriage relationship is characterized by disclosure without reserve. He stated: "The optimum in a marriage relationship, as in any relationship between persons, is a relationship between I and Thou, where each partner discloses himself without reserve" (Jourard, 1971b, p. 46). As a result of his research and writings, Jourard has come to be seen as a proponent of the belief that the practice of open communication, regardless of topic or emotional tone, in all aspects of married life results in better mutual understanding, adjustment, and satisfaction. In this perspective, self-disclosure is viewed as an index of the closeness of a relationship. The more a relationship is characterized by self-disclosure, the greater the closeness between partners.

Researchers have examined the nature of the relationship between this particular aspect of interpersonal communication and marital satisfaction, and many have provided evidence supportive of Jourard's (1971a, 1971b, 1974) theoretical position that self-disclosure is a prerequisite of marital satisfaction. Recent studies (Burke, Weir, & Harrison, 1976; Derlega & Charkin, 1975; Hendrick,

1981; Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980; Miller, Corrales, & Wackman, 1975) have essentially corroborated the finding by earlier investigators (Bienvenu, 1970; Blood & Wolf, 1960; Komarovsky, 1967; Levinger & Senn, 1967; Navran, 1967; Taylor, 1967) of a positive linear relationship between spousal self-disclosure, the communication of thoughts and feelings, and general marital satisfaction. Reciprocity has been generally thought to be the explanatory factor behind these findings. A hypothesized "dyadic effect" is said to operate in which, the more information one person in a relationship reveals, the more information the other tends to reveal in turn. Burke et al. (1976) reported that even the disclosure of problems and tensions resulted in greater marital satisfaction and speculated that one partner's revelation of such unpleasant facets of existence was interpreted by the other as a legitimate request for help. According to Jorgensen and Gaudy (1980), full mutual disclosure promotes intimacy, trust, and caring within the dyad and thereby ultimately enhances relationship satisfaction. Even communication about problems, doubts, fears, and negative feelings is said to increase a couple's chances for achieving marital fulfillment.

These empirical findings and their interpretations would appear to offer support for Jourard's theoretical position that a marriage characterized by full and open disclosure about all aspects of the relationship will

likely result in superior understanding, adjustment, and satisfaction. If that is indeed the case, then the heavy emphasis of communication training classes and marriage enrichment programs like CC I on that portion of skill development relating to self-disclosure is well-advised.

Although in substantive agreement that the general practice of self-disclosure is a crucial factor in the development of fulfilling and stable intimate relationships, a number of investigators who do not share Jourard's perspective have suggested that there may be limits to the amount and type of self-disclosure which is appropriate and salutary for relationships. In other words, the relationship between the two variables is now thought by many to be more complex than originally proposed. Karlsson (1963), while noting that the conveyance of dissatisfaction to one's spouse is a prerequisite for adjustment, spoke of the need for balance in disclosure. Simmel (1964) speculated that some problems of intimate dyads are the result of excessive self-disclosure, and he emphasized the importance of discretion in that activity. Similarly, Rutledge (1966) noted that the intensity level of marriage is such that a couple has to place limits on self-expression in order to stabilize their interaction.

A number of empirical studies have also cast doubt on the notion of a simple, clearcut linkage between self-disclosure and marital adjustment or satisfaction. Shapiro

and Swensen (1969) failed to find any meaningful relationship between the two variables, while Katz et al. (1963) reported that, in their sample, marital satisfaction was positively related to disclosure only for wives and only with respect to the disclosure of worries and anxieties. Levinger (1965) found that highly satisfied married couples exceeded less satisfied couples in frequency of discussion of most, but not all, topics. Noting that full disclosure does not always foster improved adjustment or increase the relationship satisfaction of the partners, some scholars (Cozby, 1972, 1973; Gilbert, 1976) have postulated that the relationship between the factors is curvilinear. Their position holds that intermediate levels of self-disclosure can be expected to be associated with high levels of marital satisfaction, while extremely high and extremely low levels of self-disclosure may be associated with low marital satisfaction. In other words, some self-disclosure between partners enhances relationship satisfaction, but increases in self-disclosure beyond a certain threshold result in a decline in satisfaction. There is ample empirical support for such a conclusion. Cutler and Dyer (1965) found that open communication of feelings did not lead to better adjustment among young married couples and that nearly half of the non-adjustive responses made by couples in their study to violations of role expectations were the result of open sharing of feelings about the

perceived infraction. Although she consistently found meager self-disclosers to be "unsuccessful" in marriage, Komarovsky (1967) did not find that "successful" spouses were always high, or even moderate, disclosers. She noted that some fully disclosing spouses expressed lack of satisfaction with marriage because they expressed their hostilities too freely.

More recently, Davidson, Balswick, and Halverson (1983) concluded from their study that the absolute amount of self-disclosure exchanged between spouses was not crucial to marital satisfaction. Rather, it was the perceived similarity of self-disclosure which most influenced one's feelings about one's relationship. Other investigators of self-disclosure (Chaikin & Derlega, 1974), implicitly recognizing the complexity of the relationship between the two variables, have concentrated their efforts on delineating those norms and rules governing self-disclosure which determine how much disclosure is socially acceptable and when it is appropriate to divulge personal information. In a similar vein, a study by Hansen and Schuldt (1984) found that, on self-report measures, both husbands' disclosure to their wives and wives' disclosure to their husbands were positively predictive of husbands' satisfaction; while wives' disclosure to their husbands was positively predictive of wives' satisfaction, there was no evidence that husbands' reported disclosure to wives was

predictive of wives' marital satisfaction. Furthermore, none of the three behavioral measures of self-disclosure used in the study were found to positively predict marital satisfaction for each spouse. One behavioral measure, the amount of time spent by husbands disclosing to wives in the laboratory setting, was a significant negative predictor of marital satisfaction for husbands and wives.

Although it is possible that the discrepancy between these results and others more supportive of Jourard's (1971a, 1971b, 1974) full disclosure position may be partially due to the use of different operational criteria and other methodological divergencies, several of the studies referred to above seem to suggest that relationship satisfaction or adjustment is associated with intermediate levels of self-disclosure by partners and that satisfaction declines with extremely high or extremely low levels of self-disclosure. Researchers have explained these findings in a number of ways. Some have suggested that too little self-disclosure may convey to one's partner a sense of lack of caring, intimacy, and trust, while excessive amounts of self-disclosure may be perceived as needless self-absorption, nagging, or complaining and eventuate in anxiety-arousal or hostility (Cozby, 1972, 1973; Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980). Gilbert (1976) speculated that human needs for security and intimacy exist in a state of dynamic tension in marriage, with self-disclosure fostering inti-

macy but threatening security. While disclosure by the partners may serve to promote intimacy in the early stages of a relationship, the security needs of individual partners may eventually become threatened by overly revelatory or negativistic disclosures. Cozby (1972) offered another interpretation, derived from exchange theory, of the proposed curvilinear relationship between the two variables. In his view, the reward aspects of reciprocal self-disclosure within an intimate relationship increase up to the point at which self-disclosure becomes too threatening and costly. At that point, reciprocity collapses.

Gilbert and Horenstein (1975) and Gilbert (1976) maintained that any discussion or analysis of the role and effect of self-disclosure on marriage and families must take into account several closely related variables: (a) content, or what is said about which topic; (b) valence, or the positive or negative emotional quality of the message; (c) degree of intensity and intimacy of the statement; and (d) self-esteem of the parties involved. These factors are regarded as critical to the effects of disclosure on a relationship. Disclosure, in and of itself, is not the issue. This interpretation dovetails with earlier findings by Komarovsky (1967) and by Levinger and Senn (1967) which showed that marital satisfaction was more highly associated with the proportion of pleasant disclosure than with the proportion of unpleasant disclosure. In these studies,

greater self-disclosure did occur between satisfied partners; but such couples were less inclined than their dissatisfied counterparts to share negative feelings. When they did share unpleasantries, satisfied couples were more likely to discuss negative feelings about external matters rather than those which pertained to their mates. The authors concluded that selective disclosure of feelings was more beneficial to marriage than indiscriminate catharsis.

The results of the studies cited above and their corresponding interpretations reflect the fact that the relationship between self-disclosure and marital satisfaction is more complex than Jourard's (1971a, 1971b, 1974) original conceptualization and that self-disclosure can have equivocal consequences for an intimate relationship. The type, rather than the amount, of disclosure may be the crucial variable. Indeed, the literature reports that high levels of indiscriminate self-disclosure are risky and not particularly conducive to the maintenance of satisfying interpersonal relationships. A more tenable position might be one which conceptualizes self-disclosure as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a satisfying marriage and recognizes that any determination of the optimal level of disclosure in a given marriage must take into account a number of factors. Perhaps in many marriages, as self-disclosure exceeds a certain threshold, it begins to entail

the sharing of more and more negative content, which has the effect of lowering marital satisfaction.

The preceding review of the research on the relationship between communication and marriage adjustment and between self-disclosure and marriage adjustment has presented evidence of strong, but qualified, relationships. As indicated earlier (see Chapter One), marriage enrichment and other communication training programs are predicated on the belief that an intervention which imparts communication skills to couples will eventually result in increased relationship satisfaction or adjustment. The next section of this chapter will examine marriage enrichment outcome studies to determine whether or not those programs have produced the intended results.

Marriage Enrichment Outcome Research

The first review of marriage enrichment outcome research was conducted by Beck (1975) and consisted of only three unpublished doctoral dissertations. All three reported at least some significant findings as a result of an enrichment experience; however, the data were obtained primarily from self-reports, and sample sizes were small. Beck concluded with a call for stronger methodological procedures in future studies. The first extensive review of empirical research on marriage enrichment, undertaken by Gurman and Kniskern (1977), revealed that 67% of the 29

studies reviewed showed significant differences in the enrichment groups, while the other 33% showed no differences between experimental and control groups. The reviewers classified dependent variables into three categories as follows: (a) marital adjustment and satisfaction; (b) relationship skills (i.e., communication, problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills, self-disclosure, and empathy; (c) individual personality variables (i.e., self-esteem, self-actualization, perception of partner, introversion-extroversion. Positive changes were reported in approximately 60% of the criterion measures in each of the three general categories constructed by the reviewers. However, the authors noted that 84% of the outcome criteria used in the studies were participants' self-reports and that 58% of the studies relied upon individual self-reports as the sole criteria for evaluation of change. They criticized past research efforts for their failure to utilize more objective indices of change and overreliance on questionable criteria. Interestingly, significant change was demonstrated on 57% of self-report measures and 81% of objective behavioral measures. Fewer than 18% (8 out of 29) of the studies included any follow-up testing. Those that did so indicated only moderate retention of gains over time. Furthermore, the fact that so few follow-up studies had been done rendered interpretation of those significant changes which were reported at posttest problematical.

Consequently, Gurman and Kniskern (1977) concluded that maintenance of treatment effects was only moderate. In addition, the authors noted that 76% of the studies involved volunteers who had been narrowly recruited from university communities.

While the overall results of the outcome studies appeared quite positive, the authors commented that seemingly impressive findings were marred by serious methodological shortcomings. Indeed, few of the studies reported on met Gurman and Kniskern's (1978) criteria for good outcome research. These criteria were designed for use in evaluating the adequacy of designs employed in outcome studies and as a means of maximizing the internal and external validity of those studies. As a result, Gurman and Kniskern (1977, 1978) have made the following recommendations for future enrichment research: use of ample sample size; use of control groups; use of more than one instructor or instructor pair; random assignment of subjects to groups; use of both pre- and posttests; multi-method assessment, including the use of behavioral measures such as non-participant ratings; use of proper statistical tests; and inclusion of precautions to insure against the risk of experimenter bias. The lack of objective (i.e., non-participant) ratings, the failure to do follow-up testing, and the absence of credible control groups in the studies reviewed were especially responsible for the

authors' cautionary view of what were otherwise encouraging results. They urged that future researchers address these shortcomings as well as extend the range of enrichment studies to different economic and socio-cultural groups; examine the effects, if any, of enrichment on other family members (generalization of effects); and elucidate the change-inducing components of enrichment programs.

In what was the most comprehensive review of marriage enrichment at that time, Hof and Miller (1981) reported that 82.5% (33 out of 40) of the studies they reviewed showed significantly greater change for the treatment groups than for the non-treatment control groups and that 90% (36 out of 40) showed positive change on at least some of the criterion measures used. The authors concluded that, on balance, the studies provided evidence of specific attitudinal, affective, cognitive, and behavioral changes attributable to the enrichment programs. Changes were broad and were not confined to any particular type of dependent variable. However, only 40% (16 out of 40) of the studies included independent rating sources, while 92.5% (37 out of 40) utilized more subjective self-report measures. Six of the studies reviewed employed no control group of any sort, thereby rendering interpretation of their findings impossible. Another 27 studies utilized either a no-treatment or a waiting-list control group, and only one of the studies used an attention-placebo control

group. Since the effects of non-specific factors (i.e., demand characteristics, placebo effects, and expectancy effects) cannot be partialled out from the change-inducing factors in an intervention program whenever no-treatment control groups are used, observed changes in program participants in all but one of these studies could have been attributable solely to the act of participation and to the attention focused on the subject. Evidence from follow-up results was encouraging since the majority of those studies which did follow-ups reported substantial maintenance of gains. However, only 20% (8 of 40) of the studies reviewed contained a follow-up component.

Hof and Miller (1981) concluded from their review that enrichment seemed effective and that optimism was warranted regarding the outcomes of enrichment programs. However, in view of the aforementioned methodological deficiencies, the great diversity of programs, and the great variety of outcome criteria employed, they, like Gurman and Kniskern (1977) before them, adopted a cautious stance in drawing any general conclusions regarding the effectiveness of enrichment. In a separate article, Hof, Epstein, and Miller (1980) called for future research to identify those components of enrichment programs responsible for positive effects and to identify the specific changes attributable to those components.

More recently, Pety (1983) located and reviewed a total of 99 enrichment studies, including a number which had been overlooked by previous reviewers. Positive change was demonstrated on at least half of the criterion measures used in 83% (84 of 99) of the studies, and significant results were obtained for the experimental group on all criterion measures in 34% (34 of 99) of the studies. Surprisingly, independent ratings were employed in 42% of the studies, while 43% included follow-up testing. The author concluded that there was considerable evidence of change occurring as a result of the enrichment experience and that the quality of enrichment research was improving with the passing of time.

In an attempt to statistically aggregate and evaluate the empirical findings from past studies of the effectiveness of marriage enrichment programs, Giblin et al. (1985) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of 85 outcome studies of premarital, marital, and family enrichment involving 3,886 couples or families (8,365 individuals) and 1,691 identified effect sizes. The method of meta-analysis they employed transforms various study findings into common expressions or summary statistics of treatment effectiveness. The authors reported that enrichment studies yielded an average effect size at posttest across the three types of enrichment programs of .44. This effect size was interpreted as indicating that enrichment generally results

in a 17% improvement and that the average participant is better off at posttest than 67% of untreated controls. While the average effect size decreased somewhat (to .34) at follow-up, positive effects were largely maintained. A separate meta-analysis by Smith, Glass, and Miller (1980) found the average effect size for psychotherapy outcome studies to be .85. If those statistics are accurate, enrichment does not appear to be nearly as effective as therapy; but it is effective nevertheless.

The results of the meta-analysis revealed that those studies which: were better designed; used behavioral, as opposed to self-report, measures; focused on assessment of relationship skills rather than on relationship satisfaction or on personality or perceptual variables; examined lengthier programs; and included less educated and more highly distressed participants in the study sample, generally demonstrated higher effect sizes and a concomitantly greater proportion of significant findings. Ironically, use of instruments of lower reliability and validity was also found to be associated with larger effect sizes. According to the authors, the most powerful factors related to study outcome were the type of instrument(s) used to measure change and the type of criterion variable examined. Behavioral measures had an average effect size of .76, while self-report measures had an average effect size of only .35. Measures of communication skill, relationship satis-

faction, and individual perception or personality factors had effect sizes of .63, .34, and .23, respectively. Therefore, it can be said that studies using behavioral measures of communication skill were most likely to report significant positive findings; and studies employing self-report measures of either marital satisfaction or individual characteristics were least apt to uncover significant treatment effects.

In related findings, the authors reported that only small or moderate positive relationships were uncovered between effect size and program length, age of participants, and research design. With respect to the latter variable, only two design variables were found to be significantly related to outcome. There was a slight relationship between outcome and higher design ratings and a significant relationship between outcome and the type of statistical analysis employed, with simpler statistical tools associated with larger effect sizes. No relationship was found between effect size and program variables like amount of program structure, program cost, program format (i.e. week-end or weekly), and specificity of program objectives, or between outcome and participant variables such as income level, previous enrichment experience, educational level, years of marriage, religious affiliation, or life stage. Nor was the level of instructor-leader experience found to correlate with program outcome.

The findings that behavioral measures were linked to larger effect sizes than were self-report measures was attributed by Giblin et al. (1985) to the effects of an interaction between treatment and measurement. Conventional testing theory generally assumes that respondents have a stable reference point from which they respond. However, when self-report measures are employed in a study, this assumption is, in all probability, violated. Often at pretest an individual or a couple may think they were doing pretty well in terms of their behavior and/or adjustment; but, by the time the intervention is completed, their viewpoint has changed and they respond differently. This phenomenon has been termed "response shift bias" (Howard & Dailey, 1979; Terborg & Davis, 1982).

One explanation offered by Giblin et al. (1985) for the discovery that greater effect sizes tend to occur when the dependent variable under study is a type of relationship skill was that such skills are more likely than either adjustment/satisfaction constructs or personality/perceptual variables to be assessed with behavioral measures such as non-participant ratings of audiotaped data. In other words, differences among criterion variables in effect sizes may be more a function of the type of instrumentation used. However, the authors also observed that certain types of dependent variables did appear to be relatively more resistant than other types to change by brief inter-

vention. They hypothesized the existence of a hierarchy of outcome categories in which lower-order skills such as communication, problem-solving, and conflict-resolution skills are more easily influenced by programmatic efforts than are higher-order skills such as perception and attitudes towards self, other, and one's marriage.

The explanation given for the finding that larger effect sizes were more likely to be reported when the instrumentation was of lower validity and reliability was that the more established and validated instruments often lack the requisite sensitivity to small, subtle changes which typically occur as a result of an enrichment experience. The usual population represented in enrichment study samples is thought to be "homogeneous at the upper end of the pathology-health distribution curve" (Giblin et al., 1985); therefore, any program-induced change for this kind of sample or population is not apt to be very dramatic. As a result, a ceiling effect occurs and measured change is severely limited. In other words, unknown and researcher-designed instruments of questionable or low validity and reliability are more likely to report significant findings simply because they are invalid and unreliable.

Taken as a whole, the studies reviewed seem to have provided considerable documentation for several positive effects of marriage enrichment programs. Claims of imme-

diate benefits in the way of improved communication skills, better mutual understanding, superior awareness of interaction, greater empathy and acceptance, elevated self-esteem or self-concept, and enhanced relationship satisfaction have all been reported and, to some extent, empirically corroborated. However, because investigators have often ignored the recommendations of critics for remedying the methodological shortcomings of enrichment research, it is rather difficult to draw definitive conclusions regarding the efficacy of these programs. The absence of follow-up testing in many outcome studies precludes any informed conjecture about the durability of enrichment-induced change. The validity and objectivity of most of the subjective (i.e. self-report) instrumentation used in outcome studies has been called into question, and relatively few studies have utilized independent measures of change. The benefits of enrichment for a broader audience than the young, white, middle-class, educated samples typically studied have yet to be established. In addition, elucidation of the program components most responsible for eliciting change in participants has not yet been accomplished; nor has identification of the leader and participant variables responsible for successful outcome occurred. Furthermore, some programs have such poorly defined goals that the operationalization of dependent variables and the identification of program effects has been made highly

problematical. These questions about the durability of changes, the validity of instrumentation, the generalizability of effects, the identification of crucial variables, and the operationalization of criterion variables remain to be addressed by future researchers. In the meantime, a cautiously optimistic view of the effectiveness of marriage enrichment programs seems appropriate.

Clinical Applications of Enrichment

One shortcoming of enrichment outcome research has been the rather restricted population on which most studies have been done. Most studies have investigated program effects only on samples of educated, white, middle-class volunteers, usually drawn from university settings or church communities (Powell & Wampler, 1982). This limitation is largely an outgrowth of the fact that, since their inception, enrichment programs have been presented as designed for, and appropriate only for, those couples already in well-functioning relationships who are desirous of further personal and interpersonal growth. Marriage enrichment has not been advertised as appropriate for couples experiencing serious difficulties (Hopkins & Hopkins, 1976; Mace, 1976; Otto, 1976), and programs have generally excluded highly-distressed couples by means of preprogram screenings.

In recent years, this traditional conceptualization of marriage enrichment has been challenged. L'Abate (1981, 1985) exhorted marriage professionals to meet the needs of less functional couples and families at a preventive-educational level, through enrichment, rather than at a therapeutic-crisis level, through counseling. He argued that most couples and families, even those considered functional, are in need of educationally-based skill training in many facets of life and that education can reach far more recipients than can therapy. L'Abate further suggested that skill training enrichment programs could be effective both at the level of primary prevention, with normal or functional couples, and at the level of secondary prevention, with troubled couples who are at risk. Guerney (1977) went so far as to suggest that the distinction between therapy and enrichment is an arbitrary one and should be questioned. Hof and Miller (1981) also challenged the conventional assumption that distressed couples cannot benefit from marriage enrichment and suggested that such programs could serve as valuable adjuncts to therapy. Similar proposals were put forth by other authorities (L'Abate & O'Callaghan, 1977; Wright & L'Abate, 1977) who viewed enrichment benefits as both preventive and therapeutic in nature.

The developers of CC I, the focus of this outcome study, have recently stated that, although the Couple

Communication program is clearly educational and developmental rather than therapeutic in objectives and structure, the program can be an extremely valuable complement to counseling and therapy (Nunnally, Miller, & Wackman, 1980). They elaborated on this by adding that dysfunctional couples may take part if they contract to learn communication skills rather than attempting to use class time to resolve their issues. Even though the focus is on equipping couples with understanding communication skills rather than on therapeutic remediation and solving problems for the participants, couples with serious relationship problems often benefit from participation in CC I after they have demonstrated some progress in therapy.

Despite the initial reluctance of enrichment professionals to offer their programs to more distressed couples and despite the conventional wisdom that such an application to clinical populations is not feasible, there is evidence in some professional circles of movement away from this intransigence. Some observers (Guerney, 1977; Hof & Miller, 1981; Schauble & Hill, 1976) have noted that a growing number of practitioners are, in fact, offering enrichment to dysfunctional or clinical couples. The results of their efforts will now be briefly reviewed.

Both L'Abate (1977) and Ganahl (1981) reported successful attempts to apply a structured enrichment program to couples and families receiving therapy. After

detecting significant gains for clinical couples on measures of marital communication, satisfaction, and adjustment, Ganahl (1981) discussed the implications of those findings for extending enrichment programs to additional clinical populations. These findings were corroborated by the results of a study by Brock and Joanning (1983), which found that couples scoring low on a pretest measure of marital adjustment demonstrated significant gains in several respects by posttest. In what was essentially a review of marital therapy, Jacobson (1978) also examined several studies that had applied structured enrichment approaches to clinical populations. Results of those studies were inconclusive and methodological inadequacies hindered efforts at interpretations. Beck (1975) reviewed the results of outcome studies in marital therapy and also concluded that benefits had been demonstrated. Unfortunately, most of the therapy outcome studies she examined suffered from the same severe methodological shortcomings which have plagued much of enrichment research (Beck, 1975; Gurman & Kniskern, 1978; Hof, Epstein, & Miller, 1980; Olson, 1970). The meta-analysis of prior enrichment outcome research by Giblin et al. (1985) unexpectedly revealed that, for enrichment as a whole, studies with a greater proportion of distressed couples tended to show larger, not smaller, effect sizes.

These surprising results of various applications of enrichment to clinical populations clearly challenge the conventional belief of program founders and other professionals that marriage enrichment works only with normal, nondistressed populations. There are, of course, competing interpretations of these untoward, but positive, findings. Such results could conceivably represent regression toward the mean for low-scoring distressed couples and/or reflect the operation of ceiling effects inhibiting the achievement of significant gains in adjustment by higher-scoring non-clinical couples. Nevertheless, these findings are sufficiently provocative so as to warrant the inclusion of clinical populations in future enrichment programs and outcome research.

Sex Differences in Enrichment Studies

Another relevant issue in enrichment research concerns sex differences in the responsiveness of participants to the program experience. Some scholars have sought to uncover possible pre-existing differences between males and females on crucial variables thought to be related to enrichment goals and outcomes. For predictive purposes, it would appear to be worthwhile to clarify the pre-existing levels of males and females on key factors related to typical enrichment objectives. For example, if it is true that, as some studies (Argyle & Furnham, 1983; Riesman,

1981) have shown, women in our society are more concerned than men with, and derive more satisfaction from, getting and giving emotional support and from discussing personal problems and issues of mutual concern--all of which are affective expression activities entailing the use of skills and interaction behaviors emphasized by enrichment programs--then it would not be unreasonable to expect wives to demonstrate more sizable benefits in some respects after undergoing an enrichment experience. In other words, the socio-emotional proclivities of many women might enable them to be more responsive than their husbands to an enrichment experience and make them more likely to report more sizable gains on a particular criterion measure. On the other hand, if men pretest on a key dependent variable at a lower level than their wives, their lower initial level of functioning would leave more room for improvement to be demonstrated on that variable. In other words, a ceiling effect may be found to be operating against wives' ability to show improvement on certain sex-linked criterion variables in which they excel; and significant sex effects showing greater change among husbands would be a distinct possibility.

With respect to the matter of possible pre-existing sex differences in marital satisfaction or adjustment, Bernard (1972) claimed that the evidence from numerous empirical studies had revealed the existence of two sepa-

rate ("his" and "hers") marriages in every conjugal relationship, each indicating substantial gender differences in perception and experience. A few studies (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Rhyne, 1981) have uncovered such sex differences, with men reporting higher levels of marital satisfaction. Most evidence has been less direct, however. Some studies (Birchler, 1979; Stuart & Lederer, 1979) have reported that husbands and wives, although not necessarily differing in level of relationship satisfaction, express different concerns about their marriages. Along similar lines, several investigators (Argyle & Furnham, 1983; Riesman, 1981; Wills, Weiss, & Patterson, 1974) have reported that husbands and wives emphasize different sources of relationship satisfaction. To the extent that these studies are valid, it would appear that the marital satisfaction of men and women is contingent upon very different factors (Kimmel & Van Der Veen, 1974). On the other hand, the results of a study by Rhyne (1981) indicating that the same factors contributed to the marital satisfaction of both husbands and wives has served only to further cloud the picture.

Uncovering pre-existing gender differences on key dependent variables is but one way of engendering speculation about possible sex differentials in enrichment outcomes. A more direct approach is to examine the results of outcome studies themselves for possible sex effects with

respect to key outcome variables like marriage satisfaction and related criterion measures. Some enrichment researchers have done this.

A few other studies have shown greater program effects among wives. For example, Corrales (1974) reported slightly higher marital satisfaction scores among wives; and Davis et al. (1982), in a comparative study of two different enrichment formats, found that wives in both groups displayed more change in their responses on an attitude questionnaire concerning their marriages. Entirely different findings were reported by Collins (1977) and Strickland (1982), neither of whom reported any gender differences in either communication skills or marital adjustment among marriage enrichment participants. More enlightening, perhaps, were the results of the meta-analysis of all previous enrichment outcome studies by Giblin et al. (1985), which uncovered gender differences among enrichment participants. While men and women were found to be essentially similar on personality/perceptual variables and on relationship (including communication) skills, men scored considerably higher than women at posttest on measures of marital satisfaction. The authors speculated that the latter finding might have been attributable to: (a) ceiling effects arising from higher pretest scores for women, which limit the amount of improvement that they can demonstrate at posttest; and/or (b) the greater sensitivity of women to

relationship issues, which implies that they have less, and not more, to gain from an intervention.

In summary, the results of research on pre-existing gender differences on the key enrichment outcome variable of marriage satisfaction have been somewhat more equivocal than one might have expected. Claims have been made by some that males generally experience higher levels of marital satisfaction, but the matter is far from settled. Questions also remain about whether or not there are differential sources of marital satisfaction for husbands and wives. A somewhat clearer picture has emerged from outcome studies which have compared the impact of enrichment programs on husbands and wives. Although the available evidence is conflicting, research seems to indicate that men tend to display more sizable gains in marital satisfaction. Additional research is clearly warranted at this time.

Couple Communication Program I

The CC I program (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1975, 1976, 1979; Nunnally, Miller, & Wackman, 1975, 1980) is a structured, 12-hour educational marriage enrichment program usually presented by a leader couple in four weekly three-hour sessions to groups of from four to seven couples. The program emphasizes both didactic and experiential learning and consists of a standard package of brief didactic presentations, skill-training exercises with group discus-

sion and feedback, supplementary reading assignments, and behavioral homework exercises, all of which are designed to teach communication skills as well as knowledge and attitudes about relationships to participating couples. Perhaps owing to the program's wide proliferation, CC I instructors operate independently of the national organization (Interpersonal Communication Programs, Inc.) once they have completed their certification. The program is offered nation-wide in a large number of both institutional and private settings.

Program Objectives

In a series of statements (Miller et al., 1976, 1979; Nunnally et al., 1975, 1980), the developers of the program outlined the long- and short-term goals of the CC I. The immediate objectives of the program are:

1. To improve a couple's ability to accurately perceive their dyadic interaction by (a) increasing each member's self-awareness; (b) heightening each partner's awareness of his/her contribution to the interaction; and (c) helping couples to explore the rules governing their relationship, particularly those regarding the handling of conflict situations and those regarding their ways of maintaining the esteem of both parties.

2. To equip each couple with communication skills which can be used to create more effective and more satisfying patterns of interaction.

The long-run objectives of the program are to increase the flexibility of the dyadic system in dealing with change and to enhance the autonomous functioning of the partners so that couples become active agents in building their relationship. The program's developers have since issued an abbreviated statement of program goals. They stated that the general education goal of the CC I was to foster personal and relationship growth and autonomy by improving couples' competence in interpersonal communication. This overall goal was said to encompass two specific educational objectives, both of which were to be achieved simultaneously: (a) acquisition of cognitive frameworks for the better understanding of effective communication; and (b) acquisition of specific communication skills for disclosing self-awareness and facilitating the other partner's disclosure.

Underlying Assumptions

CC I has strong theoretical foundations in communication and systems theory (Miller et al., 1976; Nunnally et al., 1975, 1980; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980). These theoretical roots are reflected in some of the implicit assumptions of the program. Nunnally et al. (1980) outlined a set of specific assumptions about interpersonal communication, the individual self, intimate relationships, and the process of communication training which underlie CC I. These may be viewed as general principles around which the program was developed.

Among the assumptions about interpersonal communication are the following:

1. Communication is the major vehicle for creating, maintaining, changing, and terminating relationships. One cannot not communicate (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). In the process of communication, one constantly defines and redefines one's relationship with other people.

2. Communication serves as an index of a relationship, reflecting closeness or distance, tension or confidence, etc.

3. Although there is no single best way to communicate in all social situations, some ways of sending and receiving messages are more effective than others, depending upon one's intentions.

4. Every message has both an attitudinal or intentional component as well as a skill or behavioral component, and individuals must heed both.

5. A full, flexible repertoire of communication skills is more useful in dealing with situations than a limited, rigid repertoire. Rigidity (i.e. approaching different situations in the same way) limits relationships and impedes one's ability to discover, process, and act responsibly on information.

6. Complete, congruent communication is more functional for dealing with relationship and personal issues

than incomplete, incongruent communication. When one honestly and accurately discloses his/her full experience, he/she is being congruent. When individuals are fully aware of what they are experiencing and they share their awareness with their partner, the chances of successful resolution of issues are improved.

CC I is also based on assumptions about the individual. Essentially, it is assumed that people have a choice as to how they respond in social situations, that other people's behavior does not cause one's behavior, and that people can change both themselves and their relationships through their personal choices (Nunnally et al., 1980).

In a similar manner, the program is based upon certain assumptions about meaningful human relationships. Among other things, it is assumed that, in an intimate relationship, the well-being of the individual members is interdependent, that conflict is inevitable, and that healthy relationships require flexible, effective communication in order to develop and flourish (Nunnally et al., 1980).

A number of theoretical assumptions regarding communication training were also crucial in the formation of CC I and were incorporated into the program. These assumptions relate to the value or efficacy of: (a) an educational model, (b) a system orientation, (c) a group learning environment, (d) voluntarism and participant choice, (e) teaching cognitive frameworks, (f) skill training (Nunnally

et al., 1980). Since knowledge of these assumptions is integral to a proper understanding of CC I, each will be discussed below.

Educational Model. The first theoretical assumption of CC I regarding communication training asserts the primacy of the educational-developmental model of service delivery. The program is not built upon a therapeutic or treatment model designed to directly assist couples to solve their problems. Rather, it attempts to prevent problems by equipping couples with useful knowledge and skills which will allow them to deal more effectively with issues on their own and to direct their own relationship while adapting to changing circumstances (Miller et al., 1976; Nunnally et al., 1975, 1980).

System Orientation. CC I assumes that a system focus is a prerequisite for understanding and influencing the marriage relationship. Miller et al. (1976) and Nunnally et al. (1980) enumerated four components of a system orientation: (a) dyadic versus individual or group focus, (b) focus on the "how" of communication rather than on the "what" or "why," (c) system flexibility, (d) system autonomy.

The first component simply asserts that both partners are responsible for the relationship patterns which they develop and that both partners are to be involved in the learning experience. If only one partner were involved in

enrichment, the untrained partner would be likely to resist change. The focus is kept on the couple system, although there is an implicit recognition that individual autonomy is essential to a truly interdependent partnership.

The second component reflects the emphasis during training on the process as opposed to the content or outcome of communication. Every effort is made to avoid prolonged searches for causes. It is assumed that asking "why" questions of another person forces him/her into a defensive posture characterized by excuses, rationalizations, lies, or set answers.

The third component of a system orientation is flexibility characterized by a balanced repertoire of interactional behaviors. Many couples lack a complete repertoire of interpersonal skills, including the ability to communicate openly. Open communication is an intimate style of communication which entails qualities such as honesty, responsiveness, understanding and supportiveness. The practice of open style communication enables couples to communicate congruently and freely and increases the options available to the couple.

The fourth component of a system orientation is autonomy, which becomes possible when couples have acquired a conceptual framework relating to dyadic interaction and behavioral (i.e., communication) skills. Once so equipped, couples can rely on their own abilities and expertise to

solve problems rather than having to depend upon outside assistance.

Group Format. Another assumption of CC I asserts the importance of a group format for learning. The small group situation is viewed as providing a safe and supportive climate which is conducive to experiential learning. In such a climate, couples are encouraged to take risks and receive permission to make mistakes in the process. The small group also provides participants with multiple role models and opportunities to both provide and receive feedback, all of which constitute learning opportunities (Miller et al., 1976; Nunnally et al., 1975, 1980).

Voluntary Learning. Another assumption underlying CC I is that learning is most effective when it is voluntary and initiated by the learner. Before beginning the program, each couple agrees to a contract with the group leader(s) during which a commitment to change is made by both partners. Once program sessions begin, participation remains voluntary. Couples decide for themselves whether or not to participate in specific learning activities. The developers of CC I believe that group pressure to participate only serves to hinder participants' willingness to focus on their own behavior and thereby inhibits learning. This realization, along with ethical considerations, has resulted in the program's emphasis on voluntarism (Miller et al., 1976; Nunnally et al., 1975, 1980).

Cognitive Framework. In order to achieve its stated goals, CC I teaches couples both cognitive frameworks and behavioral skills. Both are assumed to be of great importance. Cognitive frameworks are taught for several reasons. They are thought to be of direct instructional value in informing participants about the operation of human relationships, and they provide a meaningful organization within which specific skills can be learned. Furthermore, they provide couples with a common ground of understanding from which they can negotiate changes in their relationship and increase their autonomy. Four such frameworks or learning perspectives are taught in CC I: the awareness wheel, the shared meaning process, the communication style framework, and the self-other esteem framework (Miller et al., 1976; Nunnally et al., 1975, 1980).

Behavioral Skills. Skill training is also a vital activity in CC I. Teaching specific behavioral skills is thought to facilitate the expression in concrete behavior of the cognitive understandings acquired by the couple in the program. Speaking for self, documenting interpretations with behavioral data, making appropriate kinds of self-disclosure statements, acknowledging or giving feedback, and checking out are specific behavioral skills taught in CC I. The developers of the program asserted that both skill mastery and the aforementioned conceptual frameworks are prerequisites to a couple's achievement of real auto-

onomy over their lives (Miller et al., 1976; Nunnally et al., 1975; 1980).

Description of Program Activities

CC I consists of a series of four class sessions. Each session focuses on one major conceptual framework and its associated skills. The training format for each class generally occurs in the following sequence: brief didactic presentation by instructors, modeling by instructors, dyadic practice, feedback from instructors and group members, and group discussion. Homework assignments consisting of reading and practice exercises follow all but the final session. The following session-by-session outline of the standardized agenda is offered with the understanding that minor modifications in emphasis may be introduced by the leader couple in accordance with situational exigencies.

Session One. The basic conceptual framework of CC I, the awareness wheel, is introduced in the first session in a short presentation by the leader couple. This conceptual device divides individual self-awareness into five components: sensory data (raw data obtained through the sense organs); interpretations (the meaning given to sense data or the sense one makes out of one's experience); feelings (emotions); intentions (immediate or long-range wants and desires); actions (actual behaviors and expressions of the other four aspects of self-awareness). The awareness wheel

concept is intended to help participants to identify the kinds of self-information they have, to organize this self-understanding, and to select which information will be shared with others. Participants must learn specific behavioral skills for expressing their self-awareness congruently. Essentially, these skills involve learning how to make self-responsible statements (speaking for self) and using "I" messages to verbalize the various aspects of self-awareness (e.g. "I hear...", "I think...", "I feel...", "I want...", "I am doing..."). These skills are demonstrated by the leader couple and then practiced by partners in a dialogue format. After engaging in the practice exercise, each couple receives feedback from the instructor and from other group members concerning their use of the skills. Couples are then asked to select at least one skill to practice during the week.

Session Two. In the second session, the shared meaning process is presented. Shared meaning is designed to maximize understanding between partners by ensuring that the message sent is the message received. Three sequential acts take place within this process. First, the speaker sends a clear, direct message and asks for acknowledgement (i.e. feedback) from the listener. Second, the other partner listens and observes attentively, then reflects or paraphrases the message that he/she has heard. Third, the original speaker listens and then either confirms the accu-

racy of the reflection or clarifies the listener's understanding. The first speaker assumes responsibility for seeing that the process continues until the listener can accurately reflect the message, while the latter attempts to help the original speaker express his/her self-awareness and to accurately understand the message. This process is first practiced in the group with participants other than one's spouse and then later with one's marriage partner. The importance of setting procedures before discussing issues is emphasized. A common homework assignment for the week is for the couple to negotiate two procedural rules, with each partner initiating one of the rules.

Session Three. The communication style framework is presented in the third session. The intent of this framework is to assist participants in identifying alternative types of communication to choose from and to help them in understanding the impact which different styles have on other people. The import of matching one's communication to one's intents or purposes is emphasized. Four styles of communication are described which vary along the dimensions of risk and amount of self-disclosure. Style I is a low risk and closed style of conventional communication and usually consists of chit-chat or small talk. The intention of a speaker using this conventional style is to be playful or sociable and communicate in a comfortable way without trying to change anything in the interpersonal relation-

ship. Style II is a high-risk, closed communication style, in which the speaker's intent is to manipulate and to force change. Some examples of style II communication are directing, persuading, criticizing, advising, and pressing. Style III is a low-risk, open type of communication, characterized by an intention to speculate tentatively and intellectually about some personal or relationship issue. Style IV is a high-risk, high self-disclosure, open type of communication. The intent here is to be open with one's partner in discussing an important personal or relationship issue. Although the program emphasizes that all four styles are appropriate in certain situations, style IV is assumed to be most conducive to intimacy and mutual problem-solving in an intimate relationship. After presentation and discussion of the styles of communication, participants practice using different styles in simulation exercises with non-partners. After the simulation, they dialogue with their partners and attempt to maintain work-style (i.e. III and IV) communication. Once again, the group provides feedback to the couple on the use of the styles.

Session Four. The "I count me/I count you" framework presented in session four is concerned with self and other esteem as they are fostered within the relationship. The leader presentation entails a description of the evaluative component of all communication, and the relationship between one's communication style and one's intention to

build or diminish the esteem of self or other is explored. Attitudes of counting or failing to count oneself and one's partner are discussed. Four self-other esteem positions are identified: (a) I count, I don't count you; (b) I don't count, I count you; (c) I don't count, I don't count you; (d) I count, I count you (Miller et al., 1975). The key point is made that discounting either self or other is destructive both to the person and to the relationship. Viewing both partners' feelings, desires, thoughts etc. as valuable (i.e., I count, I count you) is considered to be, by far, the most desirable perspective. Once again, a short exercise between partners is monitored by the group, and the instructors and other group members give feedback on how well the couple counted themselves and each other during the exercise.

Couple Communication Program I Outcome Research

Because of its immense popularity, its standardization, and its well-defined objectives, the CC I program has been the subject of a wealth of outcome assessments. While these studies are far too numerous to review here in any detail, they have been examined in several reviews of CC I outcome research; and a number of general conclusions have been drawn from their results.

Birchler (1979) reviewed the findings of the outcome studies on several marriage enrichment models and noted

that the general effectiveness of CC I had received some empirical support. While observing the improvement in communication skills generally reported among CC I participants, he also noted the lack of convincing evidence of similar positive changes in self-disclosure and interaction awareness skills.

Nunnally et al. (1977), the original developers of CC I, reviewed eight outcome studies relating to that program that had not been included in the general review by Gurman and Kniskern (1977) of marriage enrichment research. The authors pointed out that each of the additional studies had reported at least some positive findings, especially in the areas of interaction awareness and communication skills. They concluded that the program was effective in promoting short-term change in those areas, although long-term maintenance of the effects remained to be demonstrated. Results were mixed regarding marital satisfaction; and no evidence was found of significant change in self-esteem, self-disclosure, or in various other criterion variables.

Overall, the evidence for program effectiveness has been particularly persuasive when behavioral measures are used to assess verbal communication style and various communication skills. Several studies (Campbell, 1974; Davis, 1979; Fleming, 1976; Miller, 1971; Schwartz, 1980; Thompson, 1978; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980) have reported significant positive effects in communication style (i.e.,

use of work-style verbal statements); however, only two studies (Schwartz, 1980; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980) included follow-up assessments; and both of those reported a significant diminishing of effects. A few studies employing behavioral measures have reported positive effects on other aspects of communication. Joanning (1982) documented a posttest increase in communication skill among program participants. Witkin, Edelson, Rose, and Hall (1983) reported less negative verbal communication and more positive non-verbal communication among their experimental subjects. Stafford (1978) presented evidence in his study for a lowered frequency of interruptions, less use of defensive communication, increased use of supportive communication, and greater amount of time spent in constructive silence among CC I participants.

On the negative side, Stafford's (1978) findings of a decrease in the use of interruptions and of an increase in the time spent in silence were not maintained at follow-up. Similarly, Russell, Bagarozzi, Atilano, and Morris (1984) found communication style differences between experimental and control couples at posttest; but these differences were no longer significant at follow-up. Warner (1981), Wilfong (1982), and Brock and Joanning (1983) failed to detect any significant improvement in communication skills using behavioral measures.

Wampler (1982) observed that, even when relatively objective (i.e., behavioral) measures of the communication variable were used, some program effects washed out rather quickly. Apparently, couples tend to use acquired skills less and less as time passes. On the other hand, posttest results with behavioral measures of communication skills have been very encouraging; and follow-up results have demonstrated that at least some acquired skills persist for as long as several months after the completion of training.

Evidence from self-report measures of improved communication among CC I participants has been much less impressive than that produced by behavioral measures. Only three such studies (Campbell, 1974; Dode, 1979; Joanning, 1982) have reported positive effects in perceived communication quality at posttest, although each reported that gains were maintained at follow-up. Numerous studies (Brock & Joanning, 1983; Coleman, 1978; Dillard, 1981; Dillon, 1976; Glisson, 1976; Larsen, 1974; Schaffer, 1980; Thompson, 1978; Wilfong, 1982; Witkin et al., 1983) have failed to detect any significant change in marital communication when self-report measures have been employed. One study (Beaver, 1978) found positive changes in communication quality only among husbands participating conjointly with their wives in the program. No similar changes were noted among husbands participating alone or among wives participating either alone or with their spouses. Busick (1982)

uncovered significant differences between groups in communication, but her results were rendered largely uninterpretable by the presence of sizable inter-group pretest differences which were not statistically compensated for by the use of analysis of covariance procedures.

Self-report measures have also provided conflicting results with less frequently studied specific communication skills. For example, Davis (1979) and Nunnally (1971) reported positive effects of CC I on interaction awareness and Nunnally (1971) found significant program effects on accuracy of recall. Davis (1979) also found significant positive change in respondents' ability to predict their partners' responses to a questionnaire. On the other hand, Nunnally (1971) and Thompson (1978) failed to detect any gains in such predictive accuracy.

Findings on the criterion variable of relationship adjustment or satisfaction have been mixed. A number of studies (Beaver, 1978; Busick, 1982; Dillon, 1976; Dode, 1979; Joanning, 1982; Larson, 1976; Russell et al., 1984; Schaffer, 1980; Stafford, 1978; Thompson, 1978; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980; Wilfong, 1982) have reported at least some evidence of immediate program effects on relationship satisfaction. However, it should be noted that Joanning's (1982) reported gains in marriage adjustment were not maintained at follow-up and that the studies by Beaver (1978), Dode (1979), Larson (1976), and Schaffer (1980)

failed to include follow-up assessments of that variable. In addition, the studies by Russell et al. (1984) and Wilfong (1982) suffered from serious methodological problems which made interpretation of their findings difficult. Beaver (1978) found only limited evidence of change among program participants, while the studies by Larson (1976), Stafford (1978), and Thompson (1978) utilized multiple measures of relationship satisfaction and recorded mixed results. Finally, no evidence of significant gains in relationship satisfaction or closely related variables were reported in a number of studies (Brock & Joanning, 1983; Coleman, 1978; Davis, 1979; Dillard, 1981; Steller, 1979; Warner, 1981; Witkin et al., 1983). Therefore, it can be safely said that only a few studies (Busick, 1982; Dillon, 1976; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980) have produced clear-cut evidence of the effects of CC I on marital satisfaction that have been maintained through follow-up testing.

Marriage enrichment outcome studies have also offered disappointing results with respect to the criterion variable of self-disclosure. Campbell (1974) found significant differences using questionnaire instruments; but, generally speaking, studies using self-report (i.e., questionnaire) measures of self-disclosure (Larson, 1976; Miller, 1971; Steller, 1979) have failed to provide evidence of program effects. Results have been mixed in those limited

instances when behavioral measures have been used in the study of self-disclosure. Fleming (1976) found positive effects with regard to two self-disclosure components, speaking for self and making feeling statements, but no change in the frequency of intention statements. Steller (1979) failed to find any evidence of change among program participants in the usage of the communication skill of speaking for self.

Research on other criterion variables such as self-esteem has provided mixed results. Busick (1982) and Schwartz (1980) found no evidence of change in self-esteem, while Dillon (1976) reported significant gains which held up at follow-up testing. Coleman's (1978) results showed positive effects on the self-esteem for males but not for females. According to Wampler (1982), the CC I program appears not to substantially impact on this, and various other criterion variables, in any consistent manner.

Wampler (1982) observed that a common occurrence in CC I outcome studies has been for a study to detect significant effects or positive trends with one measure but not with another measure. Several examples of this can be seen in the studies examined above. Cromwell, Olson, and Fournier (1976) explained that such discrepancies should not come as a surprise to consumers of outcome research. Since self-report and behavioral data tap different aspects

of reality, they should be expected to yield different results.

Summarizing the findings of CC I outcome assessments, Wampler (1982) and Wampler and Sprenkle (1980) concluded that, in general, behavioral measures had provided more convincing evidence of CC I effectiveness than had self-report measures. Particularly impressive were the positive results obtained with a variety of behavioral measures of communication style and various communication skills, at least in terms of documenting the program's short-term effectiveness. Evidence regarding the durability of effects has been mixed, however, particularly when self-report measures were involved. Even studies reporting significant effects at follow-up (generally those employing behavioral measures) invariably show some decline in benefits between posttest and follow-up. A number of studies have found few or no positive changes, regardless of the criterion variables studied or the instrumentation utilized. The program appears to make substantially less of an impact on variables like self-disclosure, self-esteem, and relationship satisfaction than it does on communication style and specific communication skills. These findings regarding CC I closely parallel those reported for marriage enrichment as a whole by Giblin et al. (1985) in their meta-analysis of outcome studies.

The question remains of how the CC I program compares in terms of effectiveness with other models of marriage enrichment. Several sources of information on this topic are available. Comparing the outcomes of various types of programs, Gurman and Kniskern (1977) concluded from their extensive review of the literature on marriage enrichment outcome studies that CC I and the Conjugal Relationship Modification (CRM) program (Guerney, 1977) had produced the most consistent positive results. In contrast, various behavioral exchange programs had failed to demonstrate any significant differences in two thirds of the studies reviewed. In a review of marital therapy outcomes, Jacobson (1978) included 14 studies of nonclinical enrichment, all but two of which were covered by the Gurman and Kniskern (1977) review. Noting the reliance on nonclinical populations, the lack of control groups or the failure to utilize nonspecific control groups, the absence of follow-up testing, and the use of unvalidated assessment procedures, he remarked that methodological problems precluded definitive interpretations of the data and that the results of comparative outcome studies were equivocal. He did, however, express a cautious optimism regarding the effectiveness of several programs and reported some evidence of the relative superiority of the CC I and the CRM programs, especially the latter, and of some behavioral exchange program formats. Interestingly enough, he speculated that

communication training may be the crucial element in producing positive change within the behavioral programs.

Hof and Miller (1981), in their extensive review of marriage enrichment research, also examined the data from seven comparative studies for evidence of differential effectiveness of program types and reported that, while three studies showed no differences between programs, the others showed communication and behavioral exchange programs to be more effective than insight-oriented group experience programs. The data were judged to be too limited to support any conclusions about either the differential effectiveness of various program components or about the effects of type of program upon different areas of functioning (i.e., marital satisfaction, individual personality variables, and relationship skills).

In their meta-analysis of 85 studies of various types of premarital, marital, and family enrichment, Giblin et al. (1985) found large differences in outcomes across 23 program types. They reported that the Relationship Enhancement (RE) program (Guerney, 1977), formerly entitled the Conjugal Relationship Modification (CRM) program, demonstrated the largest effect sizes, by far, among marriage enrichment programs. CC I and Marriage Encounter (Bosco, 1973) had intermediate effect sizes which were significantly smaller than those of the RE program. Not

surprisingly, the smallest effect sizes were recorded by attention placebo and discussion groups.

Brock and Joanning (1983) compared CC I and RE directly and obtained results similar to those reported by Giblin et al. (1985). They proposed two primary explanations for the disparity in outcomes between the programs: (a) CC I places greater demands on the instructor/group leaders than does RE, and (b) RE appears to be more applicable to low marital satisfaction couples than does CC I. Giblin et al. (1985) examined and ruled out another possible explanation for the differential effectiveness of the two programs: namely, that CC I had been assessed with outcome measures of relationship satisfaction and of personality/perceptual variables which are thought to be considerably more resistant to change. In fact, they found that outcome studies of the RE program had used a greater proportion of measures of relationship satisfaction. However, Giblin et al. (1985) cautioned that any comparison of program outcomes should consider the fact that many of the studies of RE have taken place at Pennsylvania State University, where the program was developed by Guerney (1977). Since research on any subject matter done in the same location tends to be cumulative and to employ superior designs, instrumentation, and recruitment procedures, this would appear to give the RE program an advantage in outcome research which the CC I program does not enjoy.

Finally, the caliber of outcome research has been assessed by some reviewers. Although Wampler (1982) commented that the quality of outcome research on CC I has been improving in recent years, both she and Wampler and Sprenkle (1980) cited several shortcomings of existing program outcome research: (a) small sample sizes; (b) lack of random assignment to groups; (c) lack of complete follow-ups with the entire sample; (d) failure to control for, or to even verify the existence of, concurrent treatment from external sources; (e) failure to monitor the intervention proceedings to ensure that the standard program is delivered; (f) failure to control for lack of group equivalence at pretest; (g) use of restricted populations of white, educated, middle-class, church- or university-affiliated volunteers.

Chapter Two has reviewed the research relating to the criterion variables examined in this dissertation as well as selected marriage enrichment outcome assessments. The chapter attempted to highlight some of the salient issues in marriage enrichment research which will be addressed in the present study. A number of specific hypotheses were formulated and tested for the purpose of seeking at least partial resolution of those ongoing issues. Given the conflicting results of past enrichment studies, particularly of those involving the dependent variable of marriage adjustment, it was determined that the use of directional

research hypotheses was not warranted at this time. Therefore, non-directional hypotheses were used instead. Stated in null form, the hypotheses statistically tested in this outcome assessment were the following:

Ho₁. There will be no significant differences in the marital adjustment (DAS) scores of couples in the regular enrichment, therapy, or control groups.

Ho₂. There will be no significant differences across time in marital adjustment (DAS) scores among couples in the enrichment, therapy, and control groups.

Ho₃. There will be no significant differences across time in the marital adjustment (DAS) scores of the husbands and wives.

Ho₄. There will be no significant differences in the proportion of self-disclosure statements made by couples in the regular enrichment, therapy, or control groups.

Ho₅. There will be no significant differences across time in the proportion of self-disclosure statements made by couples in the enrichment, therapy, and control groups.

Ho₆. There will be no significant differences in the proportion of work-style communication statements made by couples in the regular enrichment, therapy, or control groups.

Ho₇. There will be no significant differences across time in the proportion of work-style communication state-

ments made by couples in the enrichment, therapy, and control groups.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This chapter discusses the methods and procedures used in the study. It is organized under the following main headings: design of the study, intervention, sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and analysis of findings.

Design of the Study

A quasi-experimental pretest, posttest, extended posttest nonrandomized control group design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) was chosen to assess the effects of the CC I program upon the communication patterns and marital adjustment of participating couples. There were two experimental groups (regular enrichment and therapy) and one waiting-list, no-treatment control group in this study. Data gathering for all groups occurred at three points in time covering a period of approximately two months. For experimental couples, measurements were taken just prior to the initial class, immediately after the fourth and final weekly class session, and one month after completion of the program. Instruments were administered to control couples at equivalent one-month time intervals.

The dependent variables examined in this outcome study were: (a) marital adjustment, (b) self-disclosure, and (c) work-style communication. Marriage adjustment was measured by scores on a standard self-report questionnaire, whereas self-disclosure and communication style were both behaviorally assessed.

The independent variables were: (a) group membership, (b) sex, and (c) time of testing. The variable of group membership had three levels (regular enrichment, therapy-enrichment, and control). The time of testing variable also had three levels (pretest, posttest, and extended posttest or follow-up). The independent variable of sex had two levels (husband and wife).

While random assignment of couples to experimental and control groups was not possible due to the service function of the sponsoring agency and to situational constraints such as the lack of available couples and limited agency resources, this study met most of the criteria developed by Gurman and Kniskern (1978) to evaluate the adequacy of the designs employed in outcome assessments. Specifically, the study satisfied the following design criteria: (a) pre-post measurement of change; (b) protection against the contamination of leadership variables such as experience level, number, and competence; (c) appropriate statistical analysis; (d) follow-up assessment; (e) absence of leader bias toward subgroups; (f) verification that the treatment

was carried out as described; (g) use of multiple change indices; (h) use of both self-report and behavioral measures; (i) use of outcomes relating both to the marital dyad as well as to the individual subject; (j) assessment of both positive and negative change by criterion measures; and (k) non-equivalence of instructor and investigator. The only two of Gurman and Kniskern's (1978) criteria which were not fully met by this study were random assignment to treatment conditions and elimination of concurrent treatment for subjects. The inability of the researcher to provide for random assignment of subjects to groups was noted earlier. With respect to the violation of the latter criterion, it was determined by the program instructor and administrator of the sponsoring agency that individuals or couples who were in need of counseling during the two-month testing period should not be denied access to professional help for the sake of research rigor, and that enrichment was to be viewed as an adjunct to ongoing therapy for the clinical couples. Therefore, all the therapy couples continued in counseling during the time they took part in CC I. None of the enrichment or control couples received any therapeutic intervention during the time they were involved in the study.

Intervention

The experimental treatment in this study consisted of the CC I program, a structured and standardized marriage enrichment intervention designed to promote individual and relationship growth through increased competence in interpersonal communication. The program was described in detail in Chapter Two.

For the most part, the local version of the program investigated in this study deviated only slightly from the original model. Like the original, it consisted of a series of four weekly sessions, each of which entailed brief didactic presentations by the instructors, skill training exercises, group discussion and feedback, reading assignments, and homework exercises. The instructors introduced minor variations in the syllabus, basing their decisions on perceived group needs. These variations related primarily to learning activities (i.e., certain class exercises from among those presented in the text were selected to illustrate a particular lesson), points of emphasis (i.e. listening skills were generally given some added emphasis when appropriate), and session length (i.e., class length was shortened from three hours to two and a half hours for practical considerations). Additionally, as a precaution against unwanted departures from class agendas, the instructors chose at times to limit the amount of group feedback given to couples engaging in learning

activities (e.g., role playing) somewhat more severely than the original model called for. Aside from these rather minor modifications, the program actually delivered to members of the study sample closely resembled the standard Couple Communication Program I developed by Miller et al., (1976, 1979). The investigator was able to make this determination after consultations with the program instructors and after discreetly observing or "listening in" on some of the classes from an adjoining room.

Program Sponsor

CC I offerings examined in this outcome study were sponsored and provided by a private, church-affiliated counseling center, founded by an organization of eight member mainline Protestant churches in the Greensboro, N.C. area and established to provide family life educational programs and therapy for both the pastoral care of church members and as an open ministry to persons in the community. CC I is but one of a number of regular program offerings made available by the counseling center to audiences both at the center itself and at facilities provided by the member churches. Fees for educational offerings are variable and based on a sliding scale according to income. Fees for CC I at the time of this study ranged from \$60 to \$75 per couple.

Program Setting

The various renditions of CC I included in this study were conducted at various locations throughout the city of Greensboro. Program sessions for some groups of couples were conducted in the offices of the counseling center; other couple groups held their meetings at member churches. However, for any given group of participants, the meeting place remained the same for all four program sessions.

Instructors

All program sessions for each of the couples groups involved in this study were led by a trained husband-wife instructor team. The researcher was not involved in any way with the actual conduct of the sessions. One of the instructors held a Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Counseling and was a certified marriage and family therapist, a minister, and the executive director of the sponsoring agency. Both he and his wife had received their certification as program instructors and as trainers of prospective instructors. At the commencement of this outcome study, the instructors had been jointly conducting CC I groups for more than ten years. In this paper, any mention of "the instructor" will be understood as a reference to the husband, since it was he with whom the researcher worked most closely.

Sample

There were three groups of participants in this study: a regular enrichment group of ten couples, a therapy-enrichment group of seven couples, and a no-treatment control group of eleven couples. The nature, composition, and recruitment of each of the groups is described below.

Recruitment and Selection of Subjects

The regular enrichment group was comprised of those couples enrolled in CC I during the time of the study who had not received marital counseling during the year preceding their enrollment. These couples were recruited by several means. Brochures detailing the various programmatic offerings, including CC I, of the counseling center were distributed to various agencies and offices throughout the city. Announcements of upcoming programs were periodically prepared for inclusion in the Sunday bulletins of affiliated churches and in the newsletters sent to couples on the center's mailing list. On occasion, the sponsors utilized newspaper notices informing the general public of the availability of upcoming classes. Additional publicity and recruitment was generated by means of announcements of upcoming CC I classes made during other program functions of the counseling center. Although he played a small part in contacting couples who had expressed an interest in attending an enrichment activity, the researcher was not

involved with the actual selection of couples for this group.

The therapy-enrichment group was made up of those couples enrolled in the CC I program during the time of the study who were concurrently involved in individual or marriage counseling at the center. Couples in this group were initially selected by the primary instructor from among those couples receiving therapy at the Center who expressed an interest in participating in the program and who, in the professional judgment of both their own therapist and that of the program instructor, were functioning at a level which made them suitable candidates for an educational skill-developmental program. In those cases in which the program instructor was also the applicants' therapist, the same criteria of interest and readiness were applied in the selection process. The researcher played no role in the selection of this group of couples.

Interested couples who had not been available at the time at which prior classes were offered or who had been unable to gain admission due to lack of space were placed on a waiting list for future classes and contacted by the researcher during January and February of 1986 regarding their possible participation in the study. The control group consisted of all couples who had been placed on the program waiting list and who agreed to take part in the study prior to their enrollment in CC I. Once they had

agreed to take part, control couples were informed only that they would be part of a larger evaluation of center programming involving prospective participants. Their status as study controls was not discussed. Aside from their involvement in the research process itself, control couples received no additional attention during the time the study was in progress. As compensation for their cooperation with the researcher, control couples were offered a 50% fee reduction and a reservation for future CC I classes.

Initial Screening and Orientation
of Experimental Couples

Prospective program participants, both therapy and regular enrichment, met with the primary instructor for an initial screening interview and with the researcher for an orientation to the study. Whenever possible, this initial meeting was conjoint, with all four parties present. At this time, applicants were given a brief orientation to CC I; and their needs, interests, and willingness to attend were discussed with the instructor. During the course of this orientation meeting, couples were also informed of the ongoing research project and given a Request for Volunteers form (Appendix A) to read. After the researcher reviewed with them the contents of the form, which briefly outlined the general nature of the assessment and described what would be required of study participants, applicants were

asked if they would be willing to take part in the outcome assessment. Although both the instructor and the researcher encouraged couples to participate in the assessment, the voluntary nature of the research was emphasized and at no time was program participation made contingent upon involvement in the research. The researcher also emphasized his commitment to preservation of the integrity of the project and described what measures would be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the information obtained. Once a couple had agreed to take part in the research, a signed consent form (Appendix A) was obtained from each spouse. Finally, the researcher extended an offer to all participating couples of a brief summary of the findings when they became available.

In those instances in which the researcher was unable to attend the initial screening meeting between the couple and the primary instructor, special arrangements were made for a "home visit" or a pre-program office meeting at the center for purposes of orienting the couple to the research. The agenda and purpose of these private visits were the same as those of the conjoint orientation meetings that they replaced.

Orientation of Control Couples

No formal screening process with the instructor, similar to that used with experimental subjects, was used with the controls. Control couples met only with the researcher

to discuss their possible participation in the study. After couples had read the Request for Volunteers form (Appendix A), the investigator briefly discussed its contents with them and pointed out what would be required of them as research participants. Both the voluntary nature of the study and the measures taken to ensure the confidentiality of the process were emphasized. Once again, a signed consent form (Appendix A) was obtained from each spouse, and an offer was extended to share with interested couples a brief summary of the findings.

Sample Size

Of the 20 couples enrolled in the CC I program between the Fall of 1985 and the Summer of 1986, 19 initially agreed to take part in the study. Of those 19 couples, one enrichment couple dropped out of the program after the first class session and another enrichment couple declined to continue with the research project after they had completed the program. This resulted in an experimental sample size of 17 couples, of which 7 were in the therapy group and 10 were in the regular enrichment group. Of the 11 volunteer couples initially included in the control group, all 11 followed through until completion of the research. Total sample size, then, was 28 couples.

Sample Description

Table 1 offers a detailed description of the characteristics of the study participants. The demographic data

in the table were collected by means of a background information form completed at pretesting by each participant. A copy of this form is included in Appendix B.

Experimental Groups. While individuals ranged in age from 23 to 64, the average program participant was approximately 35-40 years old. Couples varied from relative newlyweds to those who had been married for several decades, but the "average" couple had been married 7 to 10 years and had one child living at home at the time of the study. Forty percent had been previously married. Two thirds of the participants had a college or advanced graduate degree. Nearly 90% of couples had total annual family incomes over \$30,000; 47% surpassed \$60,000 in annual income. Nearly 90% of the sample were Protestant. All participants were white, and all were attending a marriage enrichment program for the first time. Within the experimental group, enrichment and therapy couples were very similar on most demographic characteristics, with the former tending to be five or six years older and married about three years longer than the latter.

Control Group. Control couples closely resembled experimental couples in most respects, except that they tended to be a few years older and married a few years longer.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Enrichment (N = 20)	Therapy (N = 14)	Control (N = 22)
Age			
Mean	41.35	35.57	45.00
Range	23-64	28-44	32-60
Length of Marriage			
Mean	10.3	7.3	15.6
Range	1-37	1-14	3-32
Previously Married			
Yes	8	6	8
No	12	8	14
No. of Children at Home			
Mean	.70	1.43	1.18
Range	0-2	1-3	0-3
Educational Level			
High School or Less	2	1	3
Some College	4	4	7
College Degree	4	4	9
Some Grad. or Prof.	2	3	2
Grad. or Prof. Degree	8	2	1
Total Family Income			
Under \$30,000	4	0	2
\$30,000 - \$45,000	6	4	8
\$45,000 - \$60,000	2	2	6
Over \$60,000	8	8	6
Religious Preference			
Protestant	16	14	21
Catholic	3	0	1
Jewish	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
None	1	0	0
Race			
Caucasian	20	14	22
Other	0	0	0
Previous ME			
Yes	0	0	1
No	20	14	21

The only sizable inter-group variations occurred between the therapy and control groups. Due primarily to the presence of one or two older couples, controls were, on average, nine years older and had been married about eight years longer than members of the therapy group.

Instrumentation

Four different instruments were employed to provide measurement of the dependent variables under investigation in this evaluation of program effectiveness. A standard questionnaire, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), provided separate self-report measures of marital adjustment for each spouse. Behavioral assessments of self-disclosure and of communication style were obtained from coded tape recordings made during couple discussions of relationship issues and yielded combined couple scores. Qualitative data relating to marital satisfaction and perceived affective and behavioral program effects was obtained from intensive interviews conducted with the 17 experimental couples at each of the three times of testing.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976), a self-administered questionnaire designed to assess the quality of intimate dyadic relationships at a given point in time, provided a self-report measure of marital adjustment. The instrument is based on the assumption that

marital adjustment is not a fixed trait but the result of a process which develops and changes over time. The DAS (Appendix C) consists of 32 items, most of which employ a 6-point Likert-type format. The overall scale is composed of four empirically verified components: dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, and affectional expression. Consequently, the DAS yields, in addition to an overall adjustment score, separate scores on each of the four subscales. A subsequent factor analysis (Spanier & Thompson, 1982) confirmed the four-factor structure of the scale. Scale items were obtained from a variety of sources. While some were drawn directly from existing measures of marital adjustment or were essentially modifications of items from earlier scales, others were developed specifically for the DAS. The scale has a theoretical range of 0-151, with low scores representing low marital adjustment and high scores indicating high marital adjustment. The mean score for married couples in Spanier's (1976) original sample was 114.8, while the standard deviation for the group was 17.8.

Content Validity. Spanier (1976) reported that all items were evaluated by three outside judges for content validity and that items were included in the scale only if they were adjudged to be relevant measures of adjustment in contemporary relationships, consistent with nominal definitions of adjustment and its components, and carefully

worded with appropriate fixed-choice responses (Spanier, 1976).

Criterion-Related Validity. Concurrent validity was determined by administering the scale to a sample of 218 married individuals and to a sample of 94 divorced individuals. Spanier (1976) reported that each of the 32 items in the scale was found to be significantly correlated with the external criterion of marital status. The case for concurrent validity was based on the findings that the mean total scale scores for the married and divorced groups (114.8 and 70.7, respectively) were significantly different at the .001 level and that the divorced sample differed significantly ($p < .001$) from the married sample for each individual item when a t-test was used to assess differences between sample means (Spanier, 1976).

Construct Validity. Construct validity was assessed by determining how well scores on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale correlated with scores on the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (1959), the most frequently used and most established scale measuring the same general construct. The high correlations (.86 among married respondents and .88 among divorced respondents) were both significant at the .001 level and indicated evidence of construct validity. A factor analysis of the scale revealed the existence of the four interrelated components comprising the

final scale and thereby further established the construct validity of the scale (Spanier, 1976)

Reliability. Internal consistency reliability was determined by employing Cronbach Coefficient Alpha (Cronbach, 1951), a conservative variant of the Kuder-Richardson (1937) formula (Anastasi, 1968). Total scale reliability was found to be .96, while the alpha coefficients for the consensus, satisfaction, cohesion, and affectional expression subscales were reported to be .90, .94, .86, and .73, respectively. This has been interpreted as indicating that the overall scale and its four components have sufficiently high reliability to justify their use (Spanier, 1976). A subsequent re-evaluation (Spanier & Thompson, 1982) with a different sample reported a coefficient alpha of .91 for the total scale.

The DAS was selected for use in this study as the measure of marital adjustment for several reasons. First, the evidence for validity and reliability presented above can be considered convincing relative to that obtained for similar scales designed to assess the same variable. Secondly, unlike the better-known and somewhat more widely used Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (1959), the DAS partially controls for direction-of-wording and acquiescence effects (Spanier, 1976). Third, the DAS has produced higher correlations between husband and wife scores than has the Locke-Wallace scale (Snyder, 1979).

Behavioral Measures

In order to objectively assess the transfer of training in communication skills to situations outside the class sessions, this study utilized behavioral measures of both self-disclosure and communication style. These objective measures were obtained by tape recording five-minute couple discussions of a relationship issue of their own choosing. A content analysis of the resulting couple dialogues was performed to assess the frequency of usage of both self-disclosure skills and of work-style communication as taught in the program.

In order to arrive at a behavioral measure of communication style, each statement made by either party during the five-minute taped discussions was coded according to the conventions outlined in a coding manual developed by the researcher. The specific categorization system used to classify the taped data as to type of verbal communication style closely resembles the Verbal Communication Style Framework described in Miller et al. (1976, 1979), which is taught to CC I participants in the third program session. That framework was itself based on an earlier communication coding system, the Revised Hill Interaction Matrix (Hill, 1965). This coding system conceptualizes four distinct or "pure" styles and three mixed styles of dyadic communication. Of these seven styles, only two are defined as "work" styles and recommended for constructive discussions

of dyadic issues and relationship enrichment. For purposes of this research, all statements were initially coded as representing one of the seven styles and later categorized as either work-style communication (styles 3 and 4) or as non-work style communication (styles 1 and 2 and the three mixed styles). The coding manual contains a summary description of the Verbal Communication Style Framework and is included in Appendix D.

The behavioral measure of self-disclosure was obtained in a similar manner from the taped husband-wife dialogues. The coding system used to classify statements as to whether or not self-disclosure skills were employed was also based on a framework developed by Miller et al. (1976, 1979) and taught to CC I participants in the first program session. Once again, all statements were initially coded either as representing one of five specific self-disclosure skills or as failure to disclose. Then, for purposes of analysis, these codes were collapsed into two broader categories: self-disclosure or failure to disclose. The conventions for coding self-disclosure statements are also presented in the coding manual (see Appendix D).

In-Depth Interviews

A fourth data-gathering approach, a series of three conjoint interviews (Appendix E) conducted with all experimental couples, represented the qualitative component of the assessment. All three interview schedules were

researcher-designed, semi-structured instruments consisting of a series of open-ended questions relating to the main purposes of the outcome study and a number of more specific follow-up questions or probes designed to elicit more specific and in-depth information. Whereas each of the other instruments employed in the study represented the more conventional quantitative approaches to outcome research and were designed to measure one, and only one, criterion variable, the three interview schedules for pretest, post-test, and follow-up testing were designed to provide answers to a broad range of questions of interest to the researcher.

The rationale for including the specific questions posed in the schedules was drawn from several sources. The academic objectives of this outcome study (i.e., examining the influence of the intervention upon the verbal behavior and marital satisfaction of participating couples) provided a basis for some of the questions. The interest of the researcher and the program instructors in learning more about certain aspects of the overall process (e.g., recruitment and motivations of participants) provided the basis for other questions. A mutual desire to develop a series of useful recommendations for future programming formed a rationale for additional questions. Finally, the typical foci of qualitative research strategies (Lofland, 1971; Patton, 1980; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) on participants'

feelings about the experience under investigation, as well as on various types of perceived changes, formed a justification for the remaining questions.

The pretest interview form sought descriptive information concerning the reasons behind the respondents' decision to enroll in the CC I program, personal expectations for the program, their feelings about becoming members of a small group, and any underlying doubts or concerns they might have had about the upcoming program. Of direct relevance to the stated objectives of the present study were the items relating to the respondents' perceived marital satisfaction and to their personal goals for self, spouse, and relationship change. Information obtained from these items provided a baseline against which responses to identical questions posed during the posttest and follow-up interviews were directly compared, as well as a point of indirect comparison with the results of the questionnaire (i.e., level of relationship satisfaction) and the coded dialogues (i.e., use of self-disclosure and other communication skills).

Items on the posttest interview schedule followed logically from those on the pretest schedule and were designed to gather information concerning the respondents' reaction to the group experience as well as their estimation of the extent to which the program had been in line with their prior expectations for it. Respondents were

also asked to describe in detail any specific changes they had perceived in themselves, their spouse, and their relationship since the pretest interview so that it could be determined whether any changes in communication attributable to the intervention had occurred since the program commencement. In similar fashion, the questions relating to perceived relationship satisfaction were repeated in order to determine whether any changes in that variable had occurred during the course of the program. As before, information from the questions on perceived changes in verbal behavior and relationship satisfaction were used to draw direct comparisons with results obtained from the quantitative data-gathering instruments.

In the follow-up interview, respondents were asked to assess various aspects of the program such as the instructors, the group, the class material, the in-class learning activities, and the workbook and to indicate which concepts and skills they had found most helpful and least helpful in their daily lives. They were also asked to point out any obstacles to the full utilization of acquired knowledge and skills they had encountered and to offer recommendations for strengthening the program. Once again, the questions relating to marital satisfaction and communication change were presented for the purposes of assessing perceived changes over time and of providing a point of comparison

with the results of the quantitative measures employed in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

Because the sponsoring agency offered the program infrequently and because the CC I was designed to serve small groups of four to six couples, it was necessary to conduct the assessment over a time period extending from the Fall of 1985 to the Summer of 1986, a time span which encompassed several offerings of the program, in order to assure an adequate experimental sample size. In all, the experimental group used in this study consisted of the couples from four separate sets of classes or program offerings: two groups of enrichment couples, one group of therapy couples, and a mixed group.

Pretest

Pretesting of experimental couples was conducted at some point during the week prior to the commencement of the program and consisted of: completion of a background information form, administration of the questionnaire (i.e., DAS), the pretest interview, and an audio tape of a discussion by the couple of a current relationship issue. For those couples in the experimental group with whom the researcher and the instructor met jointly for screening and orientation, pretesting was normally conducted at the counseling center. For those couples who met separately

with the researcher and the instructor, pretesting usually took place in the homes of the participants. Pretesting generally required between 45 minutes to an hour to complete although, in a few instances, additional time was required.

For the control group, pretesting consisted only of completion of the background information form, administration of the questionnaire, and taping of a husband-wife discussion. No interview was conducted with control couples. The researcher, however, spent some additional time during the initial visit with the controls answering their questions about the program. All pretesting of control group couples occurred in the participants' homes, since no joint screening-orientation meeting at the center with the instructor and researcher was required. The pretest of control couples generally required about 30 minutes, depending upon the extent and nature of their questions regarding CC I.

Posttest

Appointments for the posttesting of experimental couples were typically set up the week of the final class session and scheduled for the following week. In this manner, the time span between pre- and posttesting was kept at approximately one month for nearly all the enrichment couples. As was the case at pretesting, each couple was interviewed, completed the questionnaire, and engaged in a

taped discussion of a current relationship issue. With one exception, posttesting of all couples was conducted in the homes of the participants. It was assumed that this procedure would both minimize the inconvenience which the process of testing poses to couples and maximize the naturalness of the testing situation. The expectation was that, as a result, both the cooperation of the participants and the validity of the findings would be maximized. Total time of the posttest visit for experimental couples generally ranged from one and one-quarter hours to one and three-quarter hours.

Appointments for posttesting of the control couples were scheduled for one month from the time of the pretest so that the time span between testing would correspond closely with that for the experimental couples. The process essentially duplicated the pretesting experience and involved only completion of the questionnaire and of a second taped discussion of a current relationship issue. Control group posttesting also took place in the home and generally required about 20 minutes.

Because of unavoidable scheduling difficulties with a few couples, the elapsed time between pre- and posttests varied slightly from group to group. The average time spans between tests for the enrichment group, therapy group, and control group were 33 days, 29 days, and 34.3 days, respectively. For the three groups combined, the

average elapsed time between pre- and posttests was 32.5 days.

Follow-up

Every effort was made to schedule follow-up visits so as to keep the time span between posttest and follow-up as close to one month as possible for all couples in the experimental and control groups. Follow-up testing involved administration of the same instruments as those utilized at the posttest, with the sole exception being a change in the interview schedule for experimental couples. Once again, testing for all but one of the couples took place in the homes of the participants. Length of testing approximated that of the posttest.

Despite normal scheduling exigencies, the length of time between posttesting and follow-up testing was very similar for each group. The time intervals between tests for the enrichment, therapy, and control groups were 34.9, 34.7, and 33.5 days, respectively. The average time interval across all three groups was 34.3 days, approximately two days longer than the pretest-posttest interval for the three groups combined.

Analysis of Findings

Questionnaires were scored by an outside party trained by the investigator in accordance with the scoring sheet provided by the developer of the scale (Spanier, 1979). The

general procedure employed in preparing the taped data for analysis was as follows: the researcher transcribed the tape-recorded couple dialogues and then unitized them according to a set of rules (see Appendix D) developed in the course of the study. Coders, or raters, were then trained to classify, according to the sets of coding conventions compiled by the researcher (see Appendix D), all recorded statements with respect to self-disclosure and communication style.

Preparation and Unitization of Transcriptions

After the recordings were transcribed, the next step in the preparation of the taped data (i.e., self-disclosure and communication style) was the division of the transcripts of the husband-wife discussions into basic units of verbal behavior. Such unitization insured that coders rated the same number of verbal events. The transcripts were reformatted so as to facilitate coding and units were numbered to minimize coder confusion.

Previous research (Thompson, 1978) on CC I occasionally employed a unitization system (Miller & Peterson, 1976) constructed around coding units comprised of speaker statements. In that system, a statement is defined as a phrase, sentence, or group of sentences in which there is but one style code. Every time there is a change in speaker or a definite change of statement style within a

person's speech, a new unit is demarcated and a new code assigned.

Problems can arise in the implementation of this set of conventions, however. First of all, the scheme requires that the researcher, in effect, precode all transcribed data prior to determination of the units. This is a direct outgrowth of the troublesome concept of a coding unit, which is somewhat circularly defined as that portion of a speaker's speech having only one style code. In other words, one cannot delineate the coding units of the transcriptions unless one first knows the style used in every statement made. In addition, Miller and Peterson's system was originally designed to examine communication style but not, as is the case of the present study, the use of self-disclosure skills as well. As a result, a single unit or statement in which a speaker employs only one style of communication could very easily contain a large number of instances of self-disclosing statements. Such a situation would present insurmountable coding problems. Obviously, a different unitization system more sensitive to smaller "chunks" of verbal behavior was required to permit analysis of the taped data in the present study.

The present author utilized a different unitization system used earlier by Fleming (1976) and by Stellar (1979) based on units of independent clauses, either standing alone or occurring in conjunction with one or more modify-

ing dependent clauses. Such a grammatically based scheme enabled the researcher to overcome the difficulties alluded to above and facilitated the overall coding process. The conventions used for unitizing the transcribed couple discussion material are presented in Appendix D.

Rater Training

In order to diminish the problem of bias arising from the idiosyncratic judgment of a single rater, it was the original intention of the researcher to select, train, and employ two raters to classify all the taped data from the couple discussions, first with respect to self-disclosure usage and then for communication style. Because one of the raters was unable to continue beyond the first assignment (rating for self-disclosure), a suitable replacement was selected and trained for the second assignment of coding for communication style. Of the two raters initially selected and trained, one had a Ph.D. in child development and family relations, while the other had received a baccalaureate degree in the same field and was preparing to pursue a graduate course of study. The replacement rater had a master's degree in the child and family field. All three individuals had extensive prior coding experience in social science research. Since the rating assignments for self-disclosure and communication style were separate and distinct activities involving separate training at different times, it was not believed that use of a replacement

in any way biased or compromised the results of the study. After the initial coding for self-disclosure had been completed, the replacement rater was trained with the remaining rater for communication style coding.

The researcher's own preparation for the process of rater training had entailed repeated readings of both the CC I instructor's manual (Nunnally, Miller, & Wackman, 1980) and the textbook Talking Together (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1979) used by participants, both of which conceptually and operationally defined the variables of self-disclosure and verbal communication style and provided detailed textual readings, coding examples, and quiz questions relating to each. Additional training materials in the form of a coding manual and sample coding results were provided by the co-developer of CC I (S. Miller, personal communication, August 2, 1985) who, along with various colleagues, has done extensive outcome research on the program. The investigator then examined other studies of the CC I program (Fleming, 1976; Steller, 1979; Thompson, 1978), which had utilized behavioral measures and coding conventions to study similar variables. These sources provided additional examples of self-disclosure and communication style coding and were of great assistance to the researcher both in revising the original coding system of Miller and Peterson (1976) and in organizing the training of raters for the present research. Finally,

before rater training commenced, the researcher consulted the main instructor of the program for further suggestions regarding the feasibility of a coding system based on the Verbal Communication Style (Miller et al., 1976, 1979) framework.

Initial rater training procedures involved specific reading assignments based on material taken from the textbook used in CC I, independent study, and intensive discussion of the coding manual in a series of lengthy meetings with the researcher. Early in the training process, coders were provided with joint practice in coding simple examples taken from the textbook used in the program. As the raters began to demonstrate rudimentary proficiency in coding verbal statements, more extensive practice with actual taped verbal interaction episodes was provided. Several of the latter training materials were developed from unused segments of the actual research tapes, while others consisted of entire taped discussions prepared by the researcher expressly for training purposes. Once they had demonstrated skill with the brief segments, raters were deemed ready to code the more involved specially prepared training tapes and to discuss any difficulties or differences in coding decisions in joint meetings with the researcher. As the causes of rating problems were discerned, modifications were made in the coding manual and/or additional practice provided.

Since utilization of more than one rater always carries an attendant risk of coding discrepancies, an estimate or determination of the consistency of measurement between raters was required before a decision could be made to terminate training and proceed with the actual coding of couple dialogues. This inter-rater reliability was determined by computing the percentage of simple agreement between raters on randomly-selected segments of the training tapes, once the initial codes for both self-disclosure and communication style had been collapsed into the categories of self-disclosure or non self-disclosure and work-style communication or non work-style communication. The investigator determined beforehand that when the coders had attained a minimally acceptable (i.e., 80%) level of agreement, the decision would be made to begin actual coding. Since the task of coding for self-disclosure skill was relatively straightforward, only a few training sessions were required. Once the initial codes had been collapsed into the two broader categories, inter-rater reliability for self-disclosure coding at the conclusion of training was well over 90%. Training for the more complex task of coding for communication style took several weeks of more intensive training and more extensive coding practice. Inter-rater reliability at the conclusion of training using the simplified communication style coding scheme was nearly 85%.

Coding Procedures

Once actual coding began, raters were provided with a reformatted, typed transcript as well as with the actual audio tape of each discussion to be coded. Providing coders with both forms of the data proved advantageous in prior research by virtue of the fact that typed transcripts compensate for occasional poor audio quality, clearly indicate the unitization, and provide the form on which the actual coding is to be done. Audio tapes, on the other hand, convey subtle verbal cues (e.g., tone of voice) which may sometimes qualify the literal meaning of the message reported in the transcripts.

In order to minimize the threat of rater bias, the tapes and accompanying transcripts were identifiable by couple identification numbers and time codes known only to the researcher and were presented to coders in random order so that raters would remain unaware of the treatment condition and time of testing involved in the coded tapes. In this manner, blind rating was achieved and objectivity maximized.

Once satisfactory inter-rater reliability had been established in the training sessions, it was no longer necessary for both raters to code every taped discussion. Therefore, for purposes of this study, 28 (one third) of the taped discussions were coded only by rater A, 28 (one

third) were coded only by rater B, and 28 (one third) were independently coded by both raters.

In addition to the inter-rater reliability estimates obtained during training, estimates of coder reliability were also calculated during the actual coding process so that a certain level of confidence could be placed in the results of the statistical analysis. During the actual coding, reliability estimates were calculated from the 28 taped discussions coded by both raters. From the total number of coding decisions made during the analysis of the 28 jointly coded transcriptions, the percentage of coding decisions in which the raters were in agreement as to whether a unit represented an instance of (a) self-disclosure or failure to disclose; and (b) work-style and non work-style communication, served as the measures of inter-rater reliability for the two coding assignments. Inter-rater reliability for self-disclosure ratings during the actual coding process was calculated at 97.41%. Inter-rater reliability for the communication style coding assignment was 90.39%.

Statistical Analysis

Results of this outcome evaluation were statistically analyzed, and the various null hypotheses tested, using separate analysis of variance procedures and post hoc analysis for each of the three criterion variables. Scored data from the marital adjustment questionnaires (DAS) were

analyzed by means of a 3x2x3 repeated measures analysis of variance in which group (3 levels) was the between-subjects factor and sex (2 levels) and time of testing (3 levels) were considered within-subjects or repeated measures factors. Statistical treatment of the behavioral data on self-disclosure and communication style was done by means of separate 3x3 repeated measures analyses of variance, in which the main factors were group (3 levels) and time of testing (3 levels). Once again, group served as the between-subjects factor; and time was the within-subjects factor. Since the behavioral measures of self-disclosure and communication style gave only combined "couple" scores, as opposed to individual husband and wife scores, there was no main factor of sex involved in the two-factor analysis of variance procedures used with that data. The unit of measure in these analyses was the married couple. Post hoc analyses of significant main effects were conducted using the Tukey method. Significant interaction effects were analyzed to determine specific areas of significance by means of simple effects analysis of variance procedures. The .05 level of significance was established as the criterion for rejecting or not rejecting the null hypotheses. All analyses were performed on a VAX 8700 computer using the general linear models procedure of the Statistical Analysis System.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data obtained from the interviews were subjected to conventional techniques of qualitative analysis, as outlined in Lofland (1971), Miles and Huberman (1984), and Taylor and Bogdan (1984). For the purposes of this study, analysis was confined primarily to simple frequency counts of various types of responses in order to uncover any recurring themes and patterns relating to program impacts on the verbal behavior and the marital satisfaction of program participants. Emphasis was placed on the discernment of those patterns which either illuminated, supplemented, or contradicted the findings from the quantitative instruments.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents and discusses, in four sections, the results of the quantitative data analysis as they relate to each of the seven null hypotheses outlined in Chapter Two. The first section presents the results of the statistical analysis and is organized by the hypotheses tested. The hypotheses, in turn, are grouped according to the dependent variable to which they relate. Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 relate to the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable of marriage adjustment as measured by scores on the DAS. Hypotheses 4 and 5 center on the effects of the independent variables on the behavioral measure of self-disclosure. Hypotheses 6 and 7 concern the effects of the independent variables upon the behaviorally measured work-style communication variables. The next section of the chapter presents the results of the qualitative analysis of the interview data obtained from enrichment couples. Findings obtained from the interviews regarding perceived changes in marital satisfaction will be compared to the results of the statistical analysis of the DAS data, and interview data pertaining to perceived communication changes will be compared to the results obtained from the statistical analysis of the behavioral measures of

self-disclosure and communication style. The third section contains a discussion of the major findings. The chapter concludes with a list of recommendations for future CC I programming.

Quantitative Analysis

Preliminary Data Analysis

The self-disclosure and communication style data obtained from the coded tapes of husband-wife discussions were in the form of percentages (i.e., percentage of all statements which were indicative of the use of self-disclosure skills or of work-style communication). Since it has often been the case in human subjects research that percentage data were not normally distributed, it has sometimes proven necessary to submit such data to arcsine or log transformations before performing the analysis of variance. The percentage data in the present study were examined across all groups and found to be normally distributed at each of the three times of testing. Therefore, no such transformation procedures proved necessary prior to the statistical analysis.

To assess the effects of treatment group, sex, time, and their interaction upon marital adjustment (DAS) scores (hypotheses 1-3), a $3 \times 2 \times 3$ repeated measures analysis of variance was performed. Separate 3×3 repeated measures analyses of variance were carried out on the self-

disclosure data (hypotheses 4 and 5) and the communication style data (hypotheses 6 and 7) to determine whether those variables were significant functions of group, time of testing, or their interaction. In each of these analyses, group was considered to be the between-subjects variable and time was the within-subjects variable. In the 3x2x3 repeated measures analysis of variance of the DAS scores, sex was treated as a within-subjects variable. In all analyses undertaken in this study, the unit of measure was the couple. Post hoc analyses of significant main effects were conducted using the Tukey procedure. Significant interaction effects were analyzed to determine specific areas of significance by means of simple effects analysis of variance procedures. The .05 level of significance was established as the criterion for rejecting or not rejecting the null hypothesis in all cases.

In addition, preliminary analyses were conducted to determine whether or not there were significant pretest differences among groups on any of the three dependent measures or between husbands and wives on the DAS. In addition, the DAS data were checked for significant initial differences between husbands and wives. A repeated measures analysis of variance indicated no significant pretest differences on the DAS between husbands and wives or between groups. Similarly, the results of simple effects analyses of variance indicated no significant group diffe-

rences at pretest in self-disclosure or in communication style. Results of this preliminary analysis are presented in Table F-1 in the Appendix.

Marriage Adjustment (DAS) Findings

Hypothesis 1. The first hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences in the marriage adjustment (DAS) scores of couples in the enrichment, therapy-enrichment, and control groups. The results of the 3x2x3 repeated measures ANOVA indicated that there were no significant differences among treatment groups across all time periods. Based on these results, the null hypothesis for the main effect of group was not rejected. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 2. Means of the regular enrichment, therapy-enrichment, and control groups, collapsed across time, were 108.82, 102.02, and 105.19 respectively, clearly indicating the absence of a group effect on the data.

Hypothesis 2. The second hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences over the times of testing in the marriage adjustment (DAS) scores among couples in this study. Results of the 3x2x3 repeated measures ANOVA indicated that time of testing was significant as a main effect ($p=.01$). Consequently, the null hypothesis for the main effect of time was rejected. The results of this analysis are also shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Group (3) X Sex (2) X Time (3) Repeated MeasuresAnalysis of Variance for DAS Scores

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Group	2	1167.62	538.81	.81	.4558
Couple w. Group	25	17999.05	719.96		
Sex	1	.07	.07	.00	.9829
Sex X Group	2	67.80	33.90	.23	.7980
Sex X Couple w. Group	25	37722.25	148.89		
Time	2	533.45	266.73	4.85	.0119
Time X Group	4	73.47	18.37	.33	.8539
Time X Couple w. Group	50	2751.85	55.04		
Sex X Time	2	12.87	6.43	.31	.7335
Group X Sex X Time	4	209.26	52.26	2.53	.0516
Sex X Time X Couple w. Group	50	1031.19	20.62		
Total (Corrected)	167	27607.97			

Post-hoc analysis (i.e., the Tukey procedure) revealed that there were no significant changes across groups in marital adjustment scores between pretest (M=103.27) and posttest (M=106.03) or between posttest and follow-up testing (M=107.78). However, the differences across all three

groups between posttest and follow-up, although small, were statistically significant. The minimum significant difference was computed to be 3.39. This indicates that, by follow-up testing, the time factor had become significant and that the DAS scores of the three groups combined were significantly greater at follow-up than at pretest.

Hypothesis 3. The third hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences over time of testing in the DAS scores of the husbands and wives in this study. The 3x2x3 repeated measures ANOVA procedure revealed that there was no significant effect of sex in the DAS scores across all testing occasions (Table 2). Therefore the null hypothesis for the main effect of sex was not rejected. DAS means for husbands in the three groups combined at pretest, posttest, and follow-up were 103.16, 106.29, and 107.70, respectively. Wives' DAS scores for each time period were 103.37, 105.73, and 107.87. The fact that the mean DAS scores of husbands and wives at each of the three times of testing were nearly identical clearly illustrates the absence of a significant sex effect.

Interaction effects. Results of the overall 3x2x3 repeated measures ANOVA also revealed that, while none of the interactions between sex and group, time and group, and sex and time were significant, the Group x Sex x Time interaction was significant ($p=.05$). Results of this analysis are also shown in Table 2. Additional analysis of

the interaction effect utilized a simple effects repeated measures ANOVA in which the effects of the group factor on the DAS data were analyzed separately for each time of testing. The results of this post-hoc analysis, shown in Table 3, indicated that no significant main effects of sex or time occurred in any of the three groups in the study; nor were there any significant interactions occurring in the data from the regular enrichment or control groups. However, the interaction between sex and time was significant within the therapy-enrichment group ($p=.02$).

The means and standard deviations of the DAS scores for each group, sex, and time period are shown in Table F-2 of the Appendix; and a graph of the mean DAS scores for both sexes in each group at each time period is presented in Figure 1. Both the figure and the table clearly show that the general pattern was one of very small but consistent improvement in DAS scores over time by all subgroups, with the obvious exception of wives in the therapy-enrichment group. For most of the subgroups, the modest increase in scores occurred at posttest. Those gains were essentially maintained at follow-up. Slightly different patterns were demonstrated by wives in the regular enrichment group, who remained stable from pre- to posttest and then showed a small increase at follow-up, and by control group husbands, who showed very slight improvement over the three occasions of testing.

Table 3

Sex (2) X Time (3) Simple Effects Repeated MeasuresAnalysis of Variance for DAS Scores

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Enrichment					
Couple	9	2170.82			
Sex	1	45.07	45.07	.25	.6268
Couple X Sex	9	1601.27	177.92		
Time	2	184.41	92.20	2.23	.1368
Couple X Time	18	745.51	41.42		
Sex X Time	2	35.51	17.75	.71	.5051
Sex X Time X Couple	18	450.41	25.02		
Total (Corrected)	59	5232.98			
Therapy					
Couple	6	8629.73			
Sex	1	13.71	13.71	.04	.8398
Couple X Sex	6	1845.54	307.59		
Time	2	121.33	60.67	1.01	.3940
Couple X Time	12	722.42	60.20		
Sex X Time	2	139.00	69.50	5.51	.0200
Sex X Time X Couple	12	151.25	12.60		
Total (Corrected)	41	11622.98			
Control					
Couple	10	7198.51			
Sex	1	9.09	9.09	.33	.5783
Couple X Sex	10	275.45	27.54		
Time	2	348.58	174.29	2.71	.0905
Couple X Time	20	1283.92	64.20		
Sex X Time	2	39.30	19.65	.92	.4166
Sex X Time X Couple	20	429.53	21.48		
Total (Corrected)	65	9584.38			

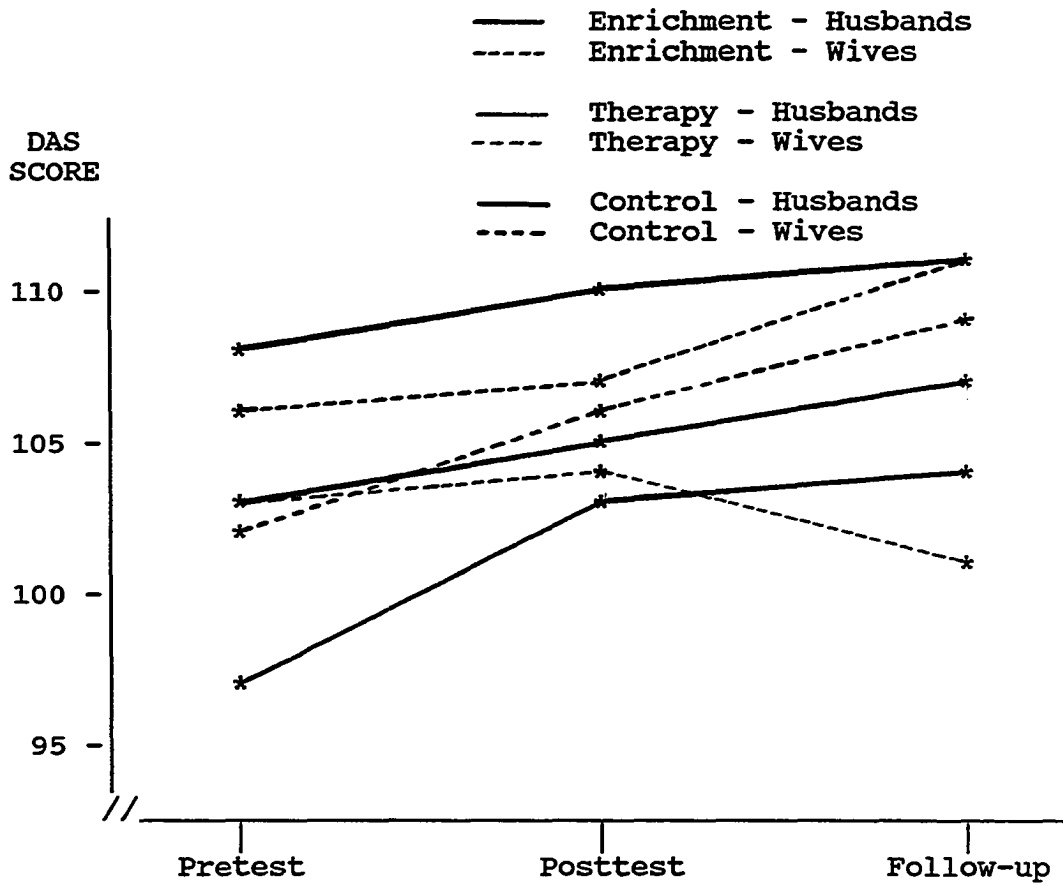


Figure 1. Mean Scores on Dyadic Adjustment Scale for Experimental and Control Groups.

As the Table F-2 indicates, husbands in the therapy group showed a modest improvement in their scores from pretest (M=96.7) to posttest (M=103.2), and then maintained their gains at follow-up (M=104.4). The only other subgroup showing an average gain of similar magnitude (i.e., 7 points), was the wives in the control group, but the F-ratio for the ANOVA done on that group was not significant. These results suggest that the significant interaction of group, sex, and time and, in all probability, the significant main effect of time, were produced by the significant posttest improvement in DAS scores made by husbands in the therapy-enrichment group. In conclusion, the CC I program seems to have had little effect upon the marriage adjustment (DAS) scores of participants.

Self-Disclosure

Hypothesis 4. The fourth hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences in the percentage of self-disclosure statements made by couples in the enrichment, therapy-enrichment, or control groups. The 3x3 repeated measures ANOVA revealed significant differences in self-disclosure among the treatment conditions ($p=.005$). Therefore the null hypothesis regarding group effect was rejected. Results of this analysis are shown in Table 4. Post-hoc analysis using a Tukey test of the significant main effect of group showed that both the regular enrichment (M=55.34%) and therapy-enrichment (M=57.32%) groups

had significantly higher self-disclosure scores across all three times of testing than did the control group (M=40.79%).

Table 4

Group (3) X Time (3) Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance on Percentage of Self-Disclosure Statements

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Group	2	0.48	0.24	6.57	.0051
Couple w. Group	25	0.91	0.04		
Time	2	0.11	0.05	4.72	.0133
Time X Group	4	0.19	0.05	4.13	.0058
Time X Couple w. Group	50	0.58	0.01		
Total (Corrected)	83	2.24			

Hypothesis 5. The fifth hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences over time in the percentage of self-disclosure statements made by couples in this study. The results of the 3x3 repeated measures ANOVA (Table 4) revealed that the self-disclosure scores of all three groups combined were significantly different at the three testing periods ($p=.01$). Consequently, the null hypothesis regarding time effect was also rejected. A

post-hoc analysis using the Tukey procedure indicated that posttest self-disclosure scores ($M=53.19\%$) were significantly higher than pretest scores ($M=45.72\%$) across all three groups, but that follow-up scores ($M=51.45\%$) were not significantly different from either the pretest or posttest scores. The minimum significant difference was found to be 6.95%. In other words, self-disclosure scores increased significantly from pretest to posttest for all treatment conditions combined, but by follow-up the difference was no longer significant.

Interaction effects. As Table 4 shows, the 3x3 repeated measures ANOVA also indicated a significant interaction between group and time ($p=.006$). Post-hoc analysis of this interaction was accomplished by means of a simple effects analysis of variance in which the effects of the group factor on the self-disclosure data were analyzed separately for each time of testing. The results of this additional analysis, shown in Table 5, indicated that there was no significant group effect at pretest. Pretest means for the regular enrichment, therapy-enrichment, and control groups were 45.12%, 49.76%, and 43.69%, respectively. By posttest, however, the treatment groups were significantly different in self-disclosure ($p=.0002$). The Tukey method used to locate the source of the group effect revealed that both the enrichment group ($M=62.12\%$) and the therapy-

enrichment group (M=65.72%) were significantly greater in self-disclosure than the control group (M=37.11%) at post-test.

Table 5

Group (3) Simple Effects Analysis of Variance on Percentage of Self-Disclosure Statements at Each Time Period

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Pretest					
Group	2	0.02	0.01	.43	.6528
Error	25	0.47	0.02		
Total (Corrected)	27	0.49			
Post 1					
Group	2	0.47	0.24	11.91	.0002
Error	25	0.50	0.02		
Total (Corrected)	27	0.97			
Post 2					
Group	2	0.18	0.09	4.30	.0249
Error	25	0.52	0.02		
Total (Corrected)	27	0.70			

Results of the simple effects ANOVA also revealed that the group effect was still significant at follow-up ($p=.02$). However, a Tukey test indicated that only the regular enrichment couples ($M=58.79\%$) were significantly greater in self-disclosure at follow-up than the control group couples ($M=41.57\%$). Therapy-enrichment couples, while still greater in self-disclosure ($M=56.48\%$) than controls, were no longer significantly so. In conclusion, then, one can see that both enrichment groups demonstrated immediate program benefits with respect to self-disclosure skill. However, the therapy-enrichment couples failed to maintain much of what they had gained by the time of follow-up testing; and they were no longer significantly greater in self-disclosure than were control couples.

In order to facilitate within-group comparisons, a post hoc analysis of the interaction between group and time was also done by means of a simple effects ANOVA in which the effects of the time factor were analyzed separately for each group. The results of this analysis (Table 6) revealed that the time variable was significant for the regular enrichment group, thereby indicating that the regular enrichment group changed significantly over time ($p=.007$). Additional analysis of the simple effects ANOVA data was provided by a Tukey test for the purpose of locating the source of the time effect within the regular enrichment group.

Table 6

Time (3) Simple Effects Repeated Measures Analysis of
Variance on Percentage of Self-Disclosure Statements

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Enrichment					
Couple	9	0.34			
Time	2	0.16	0.08	6.72	.0066
Time X Couple	18	0.22	0.01		
Total (Corrected)	29	0.72			
Therapy					
Couple	6	0.32			
Time	2	0.09	0.04	4.59	.0330
Time X Couple	12	0.12	0.01		
Total (Corrected)	20	0.53			
Control					
Couple	10	0.25			
Time	2	0.02	0.01	1.01	.3811
Time X Couple	20	0.24	0.01		
Total (Corrected)	32	0.52			

The results of this procedure revealed that both posttest and follow-up self-disclosure scores were significantly greater than the pretest scores for this group. In other words, couples in the regular enrichment group increased significantly in self-disclosure from pretest to posttest; and the gains they made were largely maintained at follow-up. The means and standard deviations of self-disclosure scores for each group and time period are shown in Table F-3, and a graph of the mean scores for each group at each of the three time periods is presented in Figure 2.

The simple effects repeated measures ANOVA (Table 6) also revealed that the time factor was significant for the therapy-enrichment group, indicating that couples in this group changed significantly over testing occasions in their use of self-disclosure ($p=.03$). Additional analysis of the significant effect of time revealed that therapy couples also increased significantly in self-disclosure from pretest to posttest. By follow-up, however, the difference from pretest scores was no longer significant for members of that group.

Results of the simple effects ANOVA also indicated that the control group did not change significantly over time with respect to self-disclosure. In fact, as Table F-3 shows, control couples declined slightly over time in their usage of self-disclosure statements.

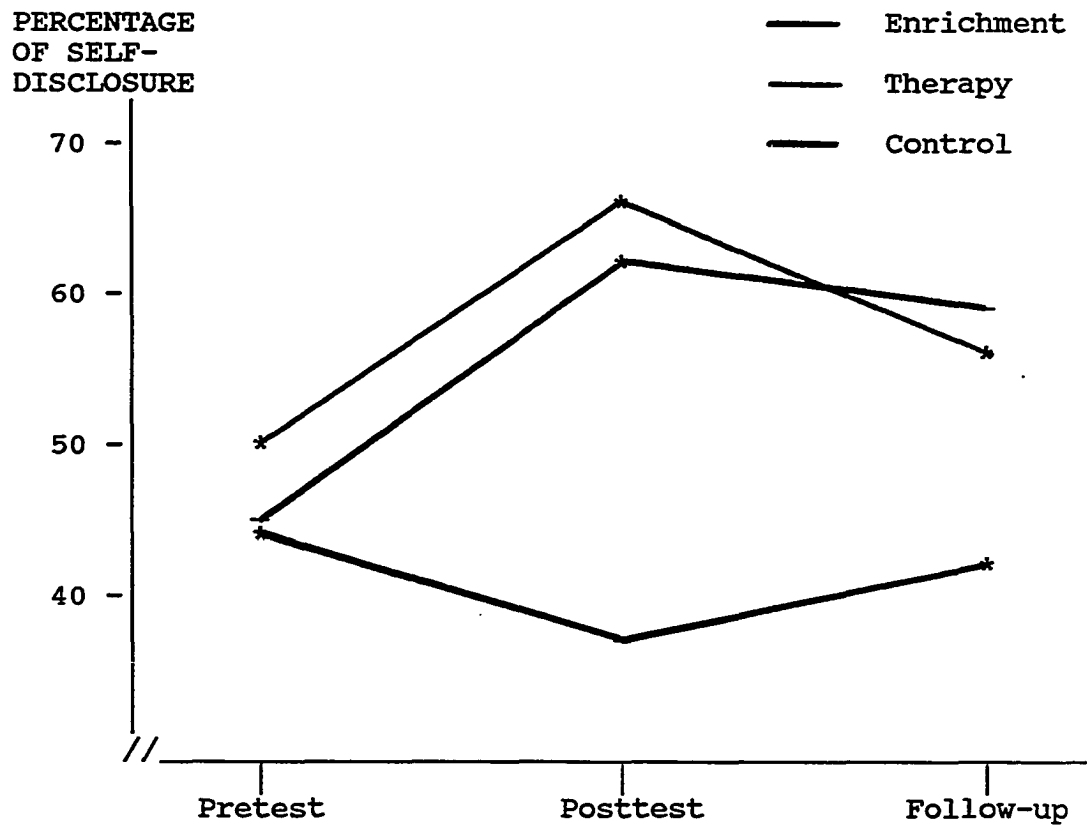


Figure 2. Mean Percentage of Self-Disclosure Statements for Experimental and Control Groups.

As both the table and Figure 2 demonstrate, the overall trend evidenced in the self-disclosure data was one of substantial improvement at posttest for couples in both enrichment groups. Both groups then experienced some erosion of those gains at follow-up testing, although the loss was noticeably greater for the therapy-enrichment group. Scores for the control group fluctuated, declining somewhat from pretest to posttest before increasing at follow-up to a point nearly commensurate with their pretest level.

Work-Style Communication

Hypothesis 6. The sixth hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences in the percentage of work-style communication statements made by couples in the enrichment, therapy-enrichment, and control groups. Results of the 3x3 repeated measures ANOVA uncovered a significant group effect, indicating that there were differences at some point in time among the three groups in communication style ($p=.01$). Therefore the null hypothesis regarding group effect was rejected. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 7. Additional analysis using a Tukey test revealed that the work-style communication scores of both the regular enrichment group ($M=74.86\%$) and the therapy-enrichment group ($M=74.63\%$) were significantly greater than those of the control group ($M=49.39$) across all three time periods.

Table 7

Group (3) X Time (3) Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance
on Percentage of Work-Style Communication

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Group	2	1.29	0.65	5.12	.0137
Couple w. Group	25	3.15	0.13		
Time	2	0.44	0.22	7.14	.0019
Time X Group	4	0.99	0.25	8.08	.0001
Time X Couple w. Group	50	1.55	0.03		
Total (Corrected)	83	7.32			

Hypothesis 7. The seventh hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences over the times of testing in the percentage of work-style communication statements made by couples in this study. The 3x3 repeated measures ANOVA also revealed the existence of a significant time effect (Table 7) in the work-style communication data ($p=.002$), indicating that the work-style communication scores of the three groups combined were significantly different at the different testing occasions. Therefore the null hypothesis regarding time effect was rejected. A post hoc analysis using the Tukey procedure revealed that post-test scores ($M=72.99\%$) were significantly greater than pre-test scores ($M=57.61\%$) across all three groups. By follow-

up ($M=63.79\%$), however, the difference was no longer significant, thereby reflecting the sizable loss at follow-up of gains recorded earlier at posttest. The minimum significant difference between group means was calculated at 11.35%.

Interaction effects. As Table 7 shows, the 3x3 repeated measures ANOVA also uncovered a significant interaction between group and time ($p=.0001$). Additional analysis of this interaction effect utilized a simple effects ANOVA in which the effects of group were analyzed separately for each time of testing. The results of this analysis, shown in Table 8, indicated that there were no significant differences in work-style communication among the three groups at pretest. Table F-4, which displays the means and standard deviations of the work-style communication scores for each group and time period, shows that the pretest means of the enrichment, therapy-enrichment, and control groups were 54.86%, 55.75%, and 61.29%, respectively. The overall analysis also indicated that by posttest the groups had become significantly different in the style of communication they employed ($p=.0001$). Further analysis using a Tukey test indicated that the posttest work-style communication scores of both the regular enrichment group ($M=91.01\%$) and the therapy-enrichment group ($M=88.33\%$) were significantly greater than those of the control group ($M=46.85\%$).

As Table 8 indicates, the group differences were still significant at follow-up testing ($p=.002$). Results of a Tukey test indicated that the differences between the work-style communication scores of the enrichment group ($M=78.71\%$) and the therapy-enrichment group ($M=79.81\%$), vis-a-vis those of the control group ($M=40.03\%$), remained significant at follow-up.

Table 8

Group (3) Simple Effects Analysis of Variance on
Percentage of Work-Style Communication at Each Time Period

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Pretest					
Group	2	0.02	0.01	.15	.8580
Error	25	2.02	0.08		
Total (Corrected)	27	2.04			
Post 1					
Group	2	1.24	0.62	13.89	.0001
Error	25	1.12	0.05		
Total (Corrected)	27	2.36			
Post 2					
Group	2	1.02	0.51	8.19	.0018
Error	25	1.56	0.06		
Total (Corrected)	27	2.59			

In order to permit within-group comparisons over time, the significant interaction uncovered by the overall 3x3 ANOVA was also examined by means of a simple effects ANOVA in which the effects of the time factor were analyzed separately for each group. Results of this analysis, shown in Table 9, revealed that time was a significant factor for the regular enrichment group ($p=.0006$), the therapy-enrichment group ($p=.01$), and the control group ($p=.03$), thereby indicating that all three groups changed significantly over time in the use of work-style communication. A graph of the mean scores for each group at each of the three time periods is presented in Figure 3 and illuminates the nature of the changes for each group.

Additional analysis provided by a Tukey's test indicated that the regular enrichment group improved significantly from pretest to posttest. While there was some loss of gain made at posttest, the elevated level of work-style communication was still significant at follow-up for this group. The post hoc analysis also revealed that couples in the therapy-enrichment group improved significantly from pretest to posttest in their use of work-style communication. However, a substantial erosion of posttest gains occurred with this group, which resulted in follow-up scores that were no longer significantly greater than pretest scores. Finally, results from the Tukey test also showed that the control group declined sharply, although

not significantly, from pretest to posttest in the use of work-style communication. By follow-up testing, however, the decline had become statistically significant.

Table 9

Time (3) Simple Effects Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance on Percentage of Work-Style Communication

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Enrichment					
Couple	9	0.56			
Time	2	0.68	0.34	11.45	.0006
Time X Couple	18	0.53	0.03		
Total (Corrected)	29	1.77			
Therapy					
Couple	6	0.72			
Time	2	0.40	0.20	6.46	.0125
Time X Couple	12	0.37	0.03		
Total (Corrected)	20	1.49			
Control					
Couple	10	1.87			
Time	2	0.26	0.13	4.03	.0339
Time X Couple	20	0.64	0.03		
Total (Corrected)	32	2.78			

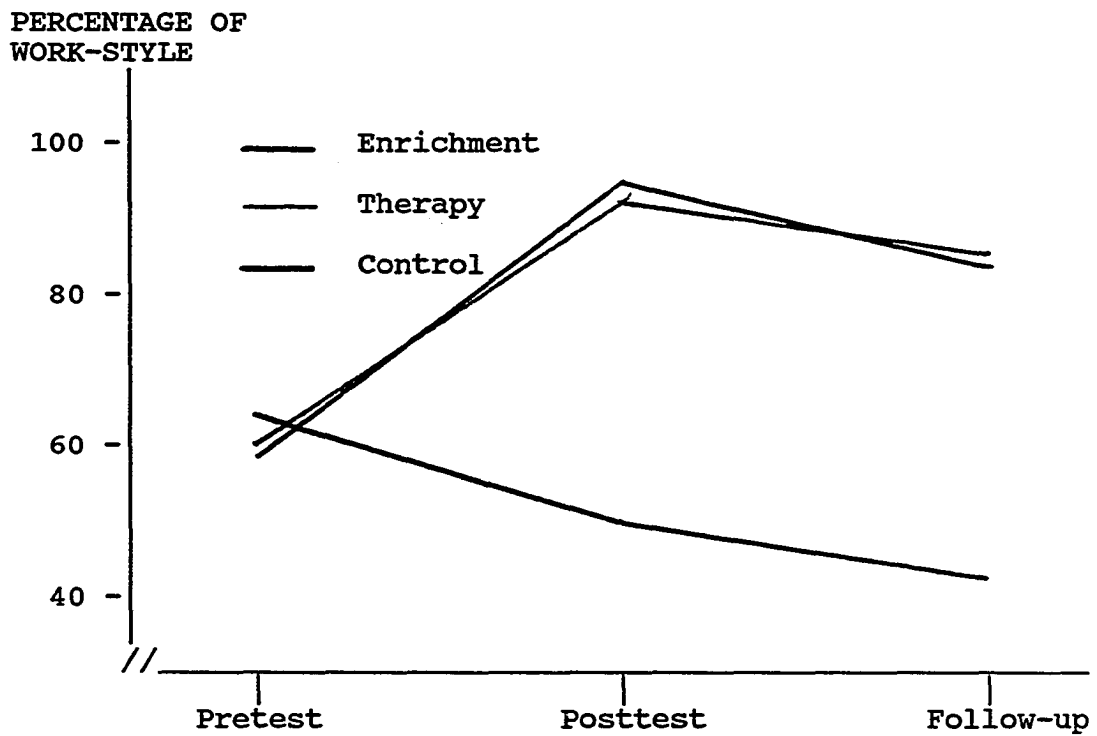


Figure 3. Mean Percentage of Work-Style Communication Statements for Experimental and Control Groups.

As Table F-4 and Figure 3 both illustrate, the predominant trend in the data for the work-style communication variable was, once again, one of substantial gains from pretest to posttest for both experimental groups. As was the case with the self-disclosure data, some deterioration of those gains had taken place by follow-up testing, although both groups remained well above their initial levels. What distinguished the data for this variable from that for the marriage adjustment and self-disclosure variables was the unexpectedly sharp decline over time in control group scores. This inexplicable decline, however, explains why the follow-up scores in work-style communication for the therapy-enrichment group, though they were not significantly greater than their pretest levels, were nevertheless significantly greater than the follow-up scores of the control group.

Qualitative Analysis

The results of the qualitative analysis of the interview data obtained from the enrichment participants directly contradicted the DAS results, but they generally corroborated the analysis of the behavioral data on self-disclosure and communication style. Since control couples could not have been interviewed about their assessment of the program's impact on their marriage, no qualitative data

regarding their status were available for purposes of comparison.

While the DAS data failed to show any significant treatment effect on marital adjustment for either husbands or wives--with the exception of the modest, but significant, improvement shown by the therapy-enrichment husbands--the interviews revealed gains in professed marital satisfaction among a substantial majority of both husbands and wives in each of the experimental groups. When asked how personally satisfying they found their marriage and whether or not their assessment changed since the previous testing periods, 8 of the 10 (80%) husbands in the regular enrichment group indicated in the follow-up interviews that their relationship satisfaction had improved since the initial testing (Table F-5). In addition, 5 of the 10 (50%) wives in the enrichment group stated that improvement had occurred since pretest. Overall, 13 of the 20 (86%) subjects in the regular enrichment group indicated at follow-up that their satisfaction with their relationship had increased since pretest. Among the therapy-enrichment subjects, 6 of the 7 (86%) husbands and 4 of the 7 (57%) wives indicated improved marital satisfaction. Overall, 10 of the 14 (72%) individual participants in the therapy-enrichment group reported some degree of improvement in marital satisfaction over the three testing periods. Table F-5 also shows that, in the combined (i.e.,

regular and therapy) experimental sample, 14 of the 17 (82%) husbands, 9 of the 17 (53%) wives, and 23 of the 34 (68%) individuals participating in the enrichment program said at follow-up that their marital satisfaction had improved over the course of the testing.

While two thirds of the participants in the CC I program indicated some level of improved relationship satisfaction at follow-up, all but one of the remaining participants experienced no change in satisfaction during the time of their involvement in the study. In the regular enrichment group, 2 of the 10 (20%) husbands and 4 of the 10 (40%) wives stated that no change had occurred since initial testing. Therefore, 6 of the 20 (30%) individuals in the regular enrichment group said in the interviews that they experienced no change, positive or negative, in their level of satisfaction with their marriage over the testing occasions. In the therapy-enrichment group, 1 of the 7 (14.3%) husbands, 3 of the 7 (43%) wives, and 4 of the 14 (29%) individuals overall stated that no change had occurred over time. In both enrichment groups combined, 3 of the 17 (18%) husbands and 7 of the 17 (41%) wives experienced no change. Overall, then, 10 of the 34 (29%) experimental subjects said that they had experienced no change in marital satisfaction from pretest to follow-up. Only one person in the study, a wife in the regular enrichment group, experienced a decline in marital satisfaction

over the testing period. Furthermore, as can be seen from Table F-6, the perceived improvement in marital satisfaction occurred throughout the entire testing period. Although clearly most of the change had occurred by posttest, a substantial amount of improvement in marital satisfaction occurred between posttest and follow-up.

Finally, it can be seen that a greater percentage of husbands than of wives in each of the enrichment groups said that they had experienced an increase over the testing period in marital satisfaction (Table F-6). Overall, 82% of the husbands and 53% of the wives claimed at follow-up that an improvement had taken place. Concomitantly, more wives (41%) than husbands (18%) stated that no change had occurred over time in the level of their relationship satisfaction. The findings from this analysis of the interview data would seem to offer at least a modicum of support for the view that CC I impacts differentially upon husbands and wives, at least with respect to the variable of marital satisfaction. It should be noted, however, that very small numbers of subjects are involved. In fact, only 5 more husbands than wives claimed that their level of relationship satisfaction had been enhanced; and only 4 more wives than husbands had experienced no change in level of satisfaction. Obviously, no firm conclusions as to sex differences in the amount of benefit derived from an enrichment experience can be safely drawn from this limited data.

While the interview approach to measurement of changes in marital satisfaction resulted in data which differed sharply from the DAS findings, the qualitative analysis of the interview data yielded results regarding changes in communication behavior which strongly supported the positive findings of the quantitative analysis of the self-disclosure and communication style data. The interview data showed that, when asked if they could state any specific benefits they had derived from the CC I experience, 19 of the 20 (95%) subjects in the regular enrichment group could name, in the follow-up interview, at least one behavioral (i.e., communication) change which they thought had occurred in their personal communication since initial testing (Table F-7). Six of the 20 (30%) could list two concrete communication changes. In the therapy-enrichment group, 11 of the 14 (78.6%) subjects named at least one concrete change that had occurred in their personal communication since pretest; and 5 of the 14 (35.7%) subjects named two or more such changes.

When asked in the interviews if they could identify specific, positive changes in their spouses' communication, 18 of the 20 (90%) individuals in the regular enrichment group and 9 of the 14 (64.3%) individuals in the therapy-enrichment group could do so at follow-up. When asked to identify any concrete changes which had occurred in their marital relationship, all 20 subjects in the regular

enrichment group could enumerate at least one change in their communication that had occurred since pretest; 18 of the 20 (90%) could list more than one change; and 15 of the 20 (75%) were able to identify three or more such changes in their relationship at follow-up. In the therapy-enrichment group, 9 of the 14 (64.3%) subjects could, at follow-up, point to at least one concrete change in their marital communication; 7 of the 14 (50%) could identify more than one specific communication change; and 4 of the 14 (28.6%) subjects could list three such communication changes at follow-up.

With respect to inter-group differences in the number of changes reported in their communication, members of both enrichment groups were similar in the number of specific changes they reported in their personal communication behavior and that of their spouse. Individuals in both groups were able to report, on average, slightly more than one specific change in their personal communication behavior and approximately one such change in their spouse. However, when asked whether they could identify any specific changes in the communication they had engaged in with their spouse, individuals in the regular enrichment group were able to list approximately twice as many specific changes as their counterparts in the therapy-enrichment group. Whereas individuals in the enrichment group generally listed about three changes in their

relationship communication over the three test occasions, members of the therapy-enrichment group were able to name only about 1.5 such changes. There were virtually no differences in the number or types of communication changes reported by husbands and wives in either of the groups (Table F-7).

Discussion

The results of the analysis of the DAS data on marriage adjustment were primarily negative. No main effect of treatment group or of sex was found. The only significant interaction effect was attributed to one subgroup, the therapy-enrichment husbands, whose mean score increase over times of testing was a modest 8 points on the DAS scale. The lack of substantial post-program change on this dependent variable was not wholly unexpected since improvement in marriage adjustment, although a broad program goal, was not a specific objective of any CC I training session; nor were any direct attempts made in the sessions to modify participants' attitudes toward their relationships. CC I is a skill development program which attempts to teach communication skills on the assumption that their use will enhance dyadic interaction. It does not attempt to directly "teach" improvement in marital adjustment.

The lack of significant results related to this variable was also not surprising since the results of prior research on the effects of marriage enrichment programs upon marriage adjustment or satisfaction have been very mixed. In their review of the literature on enrichment outcome studies Giblin et al. (1985) concluded that studies employing self-report measures of this variable were among the least likely to uncover significant treatment effects. Similarly, a number of studies of the CC I program have found no evidence of significant gains in relationship satisfaction or similar variables. Brock and Joanning (1983), Coleman (1978), Davis (1979), Dillard (1981), Steller (1979), Warner (1981), and Witkin et al. (1983) all reported negative results similar to those of the present study. Although a number of CC I outcome studies have produced some evidence of short-term improvement, only a few (Busick, 1982; Dillon, 1976; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980); have produced convincing evidence of an improvement in marital adjustment or satisfaction which has been maintained through follow-up testing.

There are several possible explanations of the failure of this study to report statistically significant changes in marriage adjustment, as measured by the questionnaire. One possible explanation has to do with the nature of the dependent variable. It may be that marriage adjustment is resistant to change efforts which last only a few weeks and

that intervention over a longer period of time is required for change to occur. After having attended only four brief program sessions, many couples may not have integrated the new skills into their routine interaction at a deep enough level to affect their adjustment to one another. It is one thing for couples to demonstrate the use of newly acquired communication skills; it is quite another for them to incorporate those skills into their daily behavioral repertoire in such a way that relationship satisfaction is heightened. The plausibility of this explanation, however, is vitiated somewhat by the positive findings from the interview data regarding the impact of the CC I program on marital satisfaction.

Another proposed explanation has to do with the limitations of the measurement scales employed. The DAS may not be sensitive enough to the subtle types of changes that can occur in marriage adjustment subsequent to a brief enrichment experience. The instrument may be better suited to measuring more substantial fluctuations in adjustment which can occur over longer periods of time with distressed couples in therapeutic settings. It is conceivable that some of the content areas "tapped" by the DAS were of low relevance to CC I participants. Given the positive results regarding marital satisfaction from the analysis of the interview data, this explanation seems credible. Perhaps the use of a qualitative, in-depth approach (i.e., a face-

to-face conjoint interview) allowed respondents to select more personal criteria relating to the relationship satisfaction variable. Therefore, the lack of treatment effects with respect to marital adjustment may have been partially a function of inappropriate instrumentation.

Another possibility is that a "response shift" bias (i.e., change in frame of reference) occurred which prevented significant changes from developing. Initially, couples might have thought that they were communicating reasonably well and were involved in a satisfactory relationship. Or perhaps they were initially unaware of the inevitability of conflict in intimate relationships and were not able to admit to the true state of their marriage. Such couples would have been likely to produce artificially inflated pretest scores, partially out of a genuine lack of awareness of their condition and partially out of an understandable desire to appear, both to themselves and to others, happily married. After participating in the enrichment program, however, their awareness of their problems in communication and their knowledge of other marriages and other ways of interacting might have grown to the point at which their standards regarding marriage were raised and their evaluation of their own relationship had become more realistic. These couples might then have been more disposed at posttest and at follow-up to be more honest and insightful in their responses to the questionnaire. This

would, in all likelihood, have precluded the possibility of any significant improvement occurring in marriage adjustment. Under these circumstances, lack of posttest improvement in scores would reflect not so much a major failure of the program as it would a more reliable assessment of the true state of affairs.

It would not have been beyond the realm of possibility, in an outcome assessment such as this, to have discovered that the enrichment couples were already functioning at a relatively high level of measured marital adjustment at the time of pretest. In such a situation, a ceiling effect might have been found to be operating which would have left little room for improvement in posttest scores and would have rendered significant program effects extremely difficult to achieve. However, pretest means for the treatment groups in this study (Table F-2) were lower than those of Spanier's (1976) original sample and considerably below the maximum score attainable. Therefore, such an explanation does not seem plausible in the present case.

Another possible explanation of the failure of the experimental sample to demonstrate significant improvement in marital adjustment as measured by the questionnaire could be that the communication training in the CC I program does not properly address the matter of dyadic satisfaction. There may only be a weak relationship between the adjustment/satisfaction variable and the dynamics

involved in the CC I program. It is also conceivable that communication skill acquisition and usage are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for improved adjustment to occur. If that is indeed the case, then marriage enrichment interventions, particularly communication training programs like CC I, may have inadvertently overemphasized the importance of marital communication per se in improving marriages.

As Garland (1981), Lewis and Spanier (1979), and Montgomery (1981) have all pointed out, communication skills are only one salient factor in a rewarding marriage, and other system variables may be key determinants of whether or not dyadic adjustment is enhanced as a result of program participation. In fact, acquired skills and attitudinal changes may be useless without concomitant changes in the overall environment. Factors such as situational constraints and the capacities of the spouses involved may be even more critical than functional communication skills to the outcome of enrichment interventions.

Virginia Satir, who has long emphasized the crucial role of communication in individual mental health and relationship development, has pointed out that communication is only one of the basic components of family effectiveness. Self-esteem, not communication, is said to be the foundation of individual and relationship mental health (Satir & Baldwin, 1983). Furthermore, Satir et al. (1975)

have repeatedly pointed out that communication and therapeutic techniques only work when they are practiced in a proper context of trust and, by themselves, are not sufficient to alter the quality of interpersonal relationships. A similar message has been delivered by a number of recent investigators (Barnes et al., 1984; Miller et al., 1975; Schumm et al., 1986) who have challenged the assumption of the efficacy of most versions of communication skill training. While acknowledging communication as a central process in marital relationships, even Miller et al. (1975) cautioned that effective verbal communication was not in itself a panacea and that teaching specific communication skills could conceivably equip some persons to be more sophisticated and destructive communicators. They observed that functional communication consists not only of concrete behaviors, but also of the spirit or intention behind a given message. Although the CC I program textbook alludes to the fact that a spirit of goodwill is essential for effective communication to occur, it is possible that this message gets lost in the process of intensive skill training.

Along these lines, Schumm (1983) speculated that the theoretical framework underlying most communication training programs is oversimplified. Programs which are built on the assumption that the combination of open communication and effective listening skills increases

perceptual accuracy which, in turn, results in greater marital satisfaction and adjustment may be omitting a crucial consideration: the amount of positive regard which partners have for each other's individuality and worth. Schumm maintained that programs that are intended to increase interspousal disclosure and perceptual accuracy may simply increase awareness of differences and thereby reduce relationship adjustment or satisfaction, if the underlying attitudes and perception of mutual confirmation, validation, or positive regard are not present.

Recent research has supported this position. Barnes et al. (1984) explained that the extremely large correlations uncovered by previous research between measures of communication and satisfaction were mistakenly interpreted as evidence that effective marital communication was both a necessary and sufficient condition for good marriage adjustment. In addition, the authors discovered that the level of perceived and professed positive regard among couples in their study explained substantial amounts of the variance in marital satisfaction. After controlling for the level of positive regard, they found that communication predicted much less of the variance in marital satisfaction than expected. A recent study by Schumm et al. (1986) offered additional support for the belief that improving perceived regard before encouraging higher levels of disclosure tends to increase marital satisfaction. The

authors interpreted their results as pointing out the futility of those enrichment programs designed to enhance communication between partners which do not first present communication as a means to the end of enhancing mutual trust and positive regard.

Unlike the analysis of the DAS data, results of the qualitative analysis of the interview data offered surprisingly strong support for the efficacy of the CC I program in enhancing marital satisfaction. Given the general lack of treatment effects for the marriage adjustment variable indicated by the quantitative analysis, the direction and strength of the interview findings were both unexpected and puzzling. There are several possible explanations for the divergent findings of the two instruments.

One possibility is that the positive results obtained from the intensive interviewing are valid and are attributable to the strengths of the qualitative approach to data gathering. Perhaps the DAS and similar self-report instruments designed to measure the perceived quality of a dyadic relationship lack sensitivity and/or validity and, for the reasons enumerated earlier, yield misleading quantitative data. If that is, in fact, what happened, then the DAS results should be disregarded and the focus should shift to the positive interview results.

On the other hand, the interview data may be untrustworthy due to the susceptibility of that approach to social

desirability response bias. In that case the positive findings would be a direct result of the demand characteristics of the research situation. Similarly, it is quite possible that the positive results of the interview approach are attributable to a placebo effect. Conceivably, the mere fact of spending time together with a compatible group of peers and attentive instructors and away from the problems and stresses of daily living produced a type of emotional high which led to inflated posttest "scores" on marital satisfaction, as measured by the interviews. If either of these proposed explanations is true, the interview results would be contaminated by extraneous factors and any confidence in the positive results regarding marital satisfaction would be seriously undermined.

These two interpretations of the findings would be more credible, were it not for the fact that the self-report DAS is probably susceptible to the same biases. The question then arises why the DAS results did not reflect a similar positive bias. No definitive answer can be offered at this time.

Another possibility is that the two instruments are measuring two different variables and that the findings obtained from each approach are correct. This is not uncommon in enrichment studies which utilize a multimethod approach, particularly when the focus is on such trouble-

some criterion variables. However, it does not seem likely that marriage adjustment and marital satisfaction are such different concepts that measurement of their outcomes would be so discrepant. In all probability, one of the instruments has yielded inaccurate data.

In conclusion, the treatment effects of CC I on participants' perception of the quality of their relationship (i.e., dyadic adjustment or satisfaction) are unclear because of the major discrepancies in the results obtained by the quantitative and qualitative instrumentation used in this study. While different outcomes can sometimes be expected to occur when multiple criteria are used, the extent of the discrepancy in the present case seems sufficiently untoward as to warrant additional research.

While the present findings for the criterion variables of marriage adjustment and satisfaction remain largely enigmatic, the results were far more clear for communication. On these variables, the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analyses were essentially in agreement. The overwhelmingly positive results for the regular enrichment group and the less striking, but nevertheless positive, outcome for the therapy-enrichment group on the self-disclosure and communication style variables is consistent with the results of much, but not all, of previous enrichment research. Giblin et al. (1985) had concluded from their review of the literature on enrichment outcomes that

greater effect sizes tended to occur when the dependent variable under study was a type of relationship (i.e., communication) skill. Indeed, several CC I outcome studies (Campbell, 1974; Davis, 1979; Fleming, 1976; Miller, 1971; Schwartz, 1980; Thompson, 1987; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980) have reported significant improvement among participants in work-style communication. However, only two of the studies (Schwartz, 1980; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980) included follow-up assessments; and both of those reported a significant diminishing of program effects over time. While the findings of the present investigation are in general agreement with these earlier studies with respect to the variable of communication style, they extend previous efforts somewhat. The quantitative component of the present study goes beyond earlier findings in that it confirms the persistence of program benefits through follow-up for the regular enrichment group, while the results of the qualitative analysis attest to the maintenance of treatment effects for both therapy and non-therapy enrichment couples. Relatively few enrichment studies have been able to do this.

Outcome research on the CC I program has seldom employed behavioral measures of self-disclosure such as that utilized in the present study. In those few instances when such measures have been used in outcome studies on the CC I program, the results have been mixed. Whereas Fleming

(1976) reported positive program effects on some components of self-disclosure skill, Steller (1979) failed to uncover evidence of any improvement among program participants in the skill of speaking for self. Therefore it is difficult to determine just how the predominantly positive results obtained on this variable compare with a body of past research.

The present results relating to the variables of self-disclosure and work-style communication appear to be too convincing to be attributed to non-specific factors such as the attention paid the subjects by the investigator, positive interaction with the program instructors, and the like. It is possible, of course, that the progress shown in these two criterion variables by members of the therapy-enrichment group was attributable, in part or in full, to the concurrent marital therapy they received during their participation in the program. However, since the focus of their therapy was not on the development of those particular communication skills, it is unlikely that the therapy had a direct bearing on the program outcomes. In addition, neither of these alternatives adequately explains the findings obtained with the regular enrichment couples on the behavioral measures; and neither convincingly refutes the evidence of positive change in specific communication behaviors obtained through the interviews. Therefore, in all likelihood the increase in self-disclosure and work-

style communication demonstrated in varying degrees by the enrichment and therapy couples in this study was due to the intervention itself.

There are a number of explanations for the partial erosion over time of gains made in communication which was documented by the quantitative analysis. Wampler and Sprenkle (1980) suggested that this phenomenon may occur because couples eventually become bored with the procedures. After repeated attempts to mechanically practice the skills in the format taught in the program, they may put less and less into them and take their tasks too lightly as time passes.

A more probable explanation may be that couples in fact learned the skills, as demonstrated in the posttest results, but found using them too difficult to maintain at a high level over a long period of time. Wampler and Sprenkle (1980) proposed that couples are often unable to incorporate new communication skills into their daily repertoire without receiving the constant reinforcement that they had grown accustomed to during the program. Perhaps it is true in the present case that the group experience fostered intimacy, trust, and support for change during the short life of the program but that, once the training ended and couples returned to their normal environments and routines, they soon drifted part of the

way back to their usual style of communication and patterns of interaction.

The possibility also exists that the couples come to view open and honest communication as presenting a risk to the stability and continuity of their relationships. Joanning (1982) has suggested that, rather than opening up a Pandora's box of discontent, one or both partners may tend to avoid using some of the communication skills they have acquired in order to prevent grievances from developing and feelings from becoming explicit and escalating out of control. Either of these proposals would appear to satisfactorily explain the decline in the use of communication skills from a peak at posttest immediately following treatment to somewhat lower levels at follow-up testing, at which time couples had been back in their normal settings for a full month.

The only major discrepancy between the results of the quantitative and the qualitative analysis of the communication data was in the fact that the latter did not provide any evidence of a tendency for posttest gains in communication behavior to erode over time. Follow-up results of the interview data indicated persistence of all treatment effects. Interestingly, there was no evidence in the qualitative analysis of any erosion effects at follow-up in marital satisfaction, either (Table F-7). The possible reasons for this discrepancy between the results of the two

separate data analyses are the same as those discussed earlier with respect to the marriage adjustment variable. Without benefit of additional research, no definitive resolution of this problem can be offered at this time.

Program Recommendations

To address some of the questions raised by the failure of the quantitative data analysis to uncover any clear-cut evidence of a treatment effect on marriage adjustment and to counter the general tendency of treatment effects to dissipate over time, a number of suggestions for future programs are made:

1. Preprogram screenings of dysfunctional couples should take into account initial levels of perceived and professed positive regard and existing communication skills rather than estimated relationship satisfaction or distress. Couples who profess high regard for each other, but who don't perceive it in return because of poor communication practices, stand to gain the most from a communication training program such as CC I. Such couples should be admitted without hesitation. Couples who appear to be high in both professed and perceived positive regard probably have the least to gain by communication training and should be so informed. Couples who appear to be low in both professed and perceived positive regard should be encouraged to remain in therapy and discouraged from

enrolling in CC I, regardless of their communication patterns. Individuals who perceive positive regard from their partner but who don't themselves profess it toward their spouse should also be considered at risk if allowed to engage in communication training because such a training program might only exacerbate existing conflicts and stir up negative feelings. Were this suggestion regarding program screening to be implemented, only couples whose relationship quality is capable of being improved would be admitted into the program.

2. Experimental CC I programs should be inaugurated which place a high priority on individualized and dyadic goal-setting by participants. During preprogram screening sessions increased attention could be devoted to encouraging and assisting participants to set their own personal and relationship goals. Some of the group discussion time could be used to focus on the efforts of couples in the group to achieve their objectives. Theoretically, added emphasis upon active goal-setting by participants could maximize program relevance and boost the motivation of participants to change, thereby enhancing treatment effects. At a future date, outcome studies could then compare the effectiveness of the experimental and standard program formats.

3. Rather than continuing to emphasize self-disclosure per se between partners as the primary pathway to enhancing

marriage satisfaction or adjustment, modifications should be made in the CC I curriculum to enlarge the present focus on teaching couples how to communicate their positive regard for one another and how to maximize levels of positive reinforcement in their interaction. While it is recognized that the final session of the present program does emphasize the relationship between communication and the self-esteem of partners, devoting a single class to teaching couples the all-important skill of conveying positive regard or validation of worth to one another may not be sufficient, particularly in view of the lack of any proven treatment effect on marriage adjustment.

4. The CC I program should be lengthened so as to allow time for additional instruction, skill practice, feedback, and group discussion. While the relative brevity of the present program undoubtedly serves to keep the CC I affordable and attractive to potential audiences who are reluctant to commit themselves to a long and costly program, it also reduces the potential power of the intervention. As it is presently constituted, the program does not adequately counteract the well-documented erosion over time of program benefits. Four weekly sessions do not appear to encompass a sufficient length of time for some couples to overcome entrenched marital interaction patterns; and, unless some type of structural change is made in the CC I program, at least some reported treatment

effects are not likely to persist over time. The assumption is made here that the learning curve extinction rate can be reduced by the additional opportunities for skill practice and feedback which would be made possible by an extended program. Expansion can be done either by (a) increasing the number of sessions; or (b) combining CC I with the newer, more advanced CC II program. Such a measure would be proven unnecessary, of course, if it could be shown that all CC I graduates participate in the newer program in a timely fashion.

5. A program follow-up component consisting of at least one "booster" session should be developed, and ongoing couple support groups should be established to counteract the trend toward deterioration of program effects over time and ultimate regression to pre-enrichment patterns of interaction. The follow-up session would provide an opportunity for review of material, clarification, additional skill practice, and discussion of obstacles encountered since completion of the regular program. Similarly, former participants could meet periodically in groups and offer one another opportunities for mutual support, feedback, and discussion.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This concluding chapter is comprised of three sections. A brief summary of the study's objectives and methodology are provided in the first section. This is followed by a presentation of the major conclusions drawn from the data analysis. Recommendations for further research are offered in the final sections.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the CC I program in improving the marriage adjustment, self-disclosure, and communication style of participating couples. The study employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest-extended posttest non-randomized control group design in which subjects were tested at one-month intervals. The sample consisted of 28 volunteer couples and involved two experimental groups and a control group. The regular enrichment group consisted of ten non-therapy couples who had responded to a variety of recruitment procedures and had taken part in CC I during the time at which the research was conducted. The therapy-enrichment group was composed of seven couples who were concurrently involved in marriage therapy and who had been

judged by their therapist to be suitable candidates for a communication skill-training program. The control group was made up of eleven couples drawn from the waiting list for the program. Controls received no treatment during the time they were involved in the research, although it was expected that they would later enroll in the program. In general, subjects were in their thirties and forties, fairly well-educated, middle-class, white, and Protestant. There were no substantial differences among the groups in any major demographic characteristics.

The study examined the effects of the independent variables of treatment group, time of testing, and sex of participant upon the dependent variables of marriage adjustment, self-disclosure, and work-style communication. On each of the three testing occasions, all subjects were administered the same three quantitative instruments. The criterion variable of marriage adjustment was assessed by means of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, a standard questionnaire. The criterion variables of self-disclosure and work-style communication were behaviorally measured by means of independently rated audio tapes made of five-minute husband-wife discussions of important issues in their relationships. An additional instrument, a conjoint interview, was conducted only with experimental couples for purpose of obtaining in-depth qualitative information regarding the effects of CC I upon the marital satisfaction and/or verbal

communication of participants. Quantitative data relating to each of the criterion variables were analyzed by means of repeated measure analysis of variance procedures which controlled for the main effects of treatment group, time of testing, and their interaction. In addition, the effect of the sex factor on marital adjustment was investigated. Post hoc analysis of significant main effects was accomplished by means of Tukey tests, while additional analyses of interaction effects were performed using simple effects analysis of variance.

Results of the statistical analysis uncovered no main effect of group or of sex in the marriage adjustment (DAS) scores. Further analysis of a significant Group x Sex x Time interaction revealed that a modest, but statistically significant, improvement occurred only among husbands in the therapy-enrichment group. However, even that interaction effect was rendered meaningless by the fact that, overall, controls improved as much over time as did experimental couples. Results of the data analysis also indicated that both the regular and therapy-enrichment groups significantly improved in their use of self-disclosure from pretest to posttest, although significant gains were maintained only by the regular-enrichment group at follow-up testing. Follow-up self-disclosure scores for the therapy-enrichment couples remained substantially higher than pretest levels, but the difference was not statistically

significant. Finally, the results indicated that both enrichment groups had also significantly improved at post-test in their use of work-style communication. By follow-up, however, only the regular enrichment couples remained significantly different from their pretest levels. Therapy-enrichment couples failed to maintain their statistically significant increase, despite remaining well above pretest levels. However, due to the unexplained sharp decline over time in control group scores, therapy couples did remain significantly greater than controls at follow-up.

A qualitative analysis of the interview data essentially corroborated the positive findings of the statistical analysis for the communication variables, with the exception that no deterioration of treatment effects over time was detected in the interviews. However, the results of the qualitative analysis of the interview material relating to marital satisfaction diverged sharply from the largely negative results of the statistical analysis of the marriage adjustment (DAS) data. Results of the qualitative approach revealed that most enrichment couples, whether therapy or non-therapy, reported improvement from pretest to follow-up in their levels of satisfaction with their relationship. Furthermore, there was no evidence of any tendency for gains to deteriorate over time.

Conclusions

The results of the data analysis presented in Chapter Four support several conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the CC I program. In some cases, however, results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis were discrepant and no firm conclusions can be drawn.

The assumption that CC I has a positive effect on marriage adjustment has been brought into question by the perplexing results of this study. While the analysis of the DAS questionnaire data revealed no clear evidence of a general treatment effect for either husbands or wives in either of the enrichment groups, a qualitative analysis of the interview data brought to light a substantial improvement among experimental couples in marital satisfaction which was maintained through follow-up testing. Because of the conflicting results produced, no conclusions can confidently be drawn from the data of this study regarding the efficacy of CC I in improving marriage adjustment or satisfaction.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale appears to lack sensitivity to the subtle types of attitudinal change which typically occur in marriage enrichment, and consideration should be given to discontinuing its use in future enrichment research. Generally speaking, marriage adjustment does not appear to be amenable to reliable measurement by any of the

current self-report instruments designed for use in clinical settings.

The effectiveness of the CC I program in producing immediate (i.e., posttest) improvement in self-disclosure and work-style communication has been verified by the present findings both for regular enrichment participants and for couples concurrently involved in marriage therapy. More generally, the findings demonstrated that communication can be improved by a brief marriage enrichment experience.

The short-term (i.e., one-month follow-up) durability of CC I program effects has been clearly demonstrated for regular enrichment couples only. CC I was found to be somewhat less effective in improving the communication of therapy-enrichment couples. For that group, significant posttest gains in self-disclosure were not maintained at follow-up, and gains in work-style communication also largely dissipated over the testing occasions. Follow-up scores for the therapy couples on the communication style variable were significantly greater than control group scores only because the latter exhibited an inexplicable decline over time.

The often-reported phenomenon of deterioration of benefits recorded at posttest has also been demonstrated in the present study. Both experimental groups scored substantially lower at follow-up than they did at posttest on the

behavioral measures of communication skill and communication style. However, despite the tendency of program effects to wash out, at least in part, over time, the follow-up scores of both treatment groups remained substantially higher than pretest scores.

The major findings of the statistical analysis of the data were generally consistent with the results of most other enrichment outcome studies in that significant positive change was reported in communication skills, while no evidence of treatment effects was found with respect to the variable of marital adjustment. On the other hand, results of the qualitative (i.e., conjoint interview) component regarding changes in communication behavior were in accordance with the main body of empirical research; but they were in sharp contrast to the findings of other studies with respect to the criterion variable of marital satisfaction.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based partly upon the limitations of the present study, and partly upon current issues in enrichment research, a number of recommendations for future outcome studies are offered. They are as follows:

1. Involve larger sample sizes. This may entail the use of different and expanded recruitment strategies to

insure the development of more extensive waiting lists of applicants.

2. Employ random assignment of subjects to groups. This may only be feasible when recruitment activities result in a waiting list of sufficient size.

3. Conduct replication studies on diverse populations in order to test the generalizability of these results. This study took a first step in that direction by including clinical couples in the assessment, but there is a need to extend assessments of marriage enrichment programs to different educational and social class groups. Specifically the ability of low-income, less educated populations to benefit from communication training should be investigated.

4. Discontinue, whenever possible, concurrent therapeutic treatment for well-functioning clinical couples during the time the subjects are involved in the research so that changes in attitudes or behaviors can be properly attributed to the effects of the CC I program. In those cases in which clinicians believe that such a decision would be unwise, research could still productively investigate the effects of marriage enrichment as an adjunct to therapy.

5. Employ long-term follow-up assessments. Six-month or one-year follow-up periods could more adequately assess the durability of program effects and permit the verification of any delayed program effects that may arise.

6. Investigate the generalizability of enrichment program effects and, especially, consider the possible ramifications of marital communication training programs for other familial relationships. Small-scale case studies of family interaction in the home would be best suited to address this issue.

7. Discontinue the use of standard self-report instruments designed to measure marriage adjustment and related variables. These criterion measures have not proven sensitive enough to detect the subtle types of changes which characteristically occur in enrichment populations. More attention should be devoted to the development of more appropriate and more sensitive assessment instruments which are specifically designed for use with less distressed populations.

8. Include measures designed to control social desirability bias whenever self-report measures of marital adjustment or satisfaction are used in a study. This can be accomplished either through the use of unobtrusive measures or by statistically adjusting raw scores through the use of special scales.

9. Investigate the nature of participants' motives for enrolling in marriage enrichment programs, the strength of their commitment to change, and the extent to which these motivational factors affect treatment outcomes.

10. Utilize more rigorous designs, such as the Solomon Four-Group or factorial designs, in order to control for the possible effects of pretesting.

11. Utilize attention-placebo control groups to control for the influence of nonspecific factors, whose influence on the outcome may be confounded with actual treatment effects.

12. Conduct studies which include participant satisfaction with the program as a dependent variable. Focusing solely on program effectiveness in altering conventional criterion measures may be an overly narrow approach to assessing the impact of a marriage enrichment experience.

13. Investigate subject characteristics (e.g., educational level, stage of family life cycle) to determine which are related to positive program outcomes and which types of couples are likely to benefit most from a particular type of marriage enrichment experience. The ultimate goal of developing ways of matching different programs to specific types of participants will entail the specification of user characteristics and the analysis of specific program components.

14. Examine the differential effects of instructor variables on enrichment outcomes. This would necessitate the delineation of instructor traits and behaviors, large sample sizes, and more than one set of instructors per program.

15. Conduct studies to determine which specific components of marriage enrichment programs are most responsible for positive program effects. Until the effective components of enrichment are delineated, specific proposals to improve programming cannot be developed.

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APPENDIX A

REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS FORMS

Request for Experimental Couples

Request for Control Couples

Consent Form

Experimental Group*

REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS
FOR A MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT EVALUATION PROJECT

This research project is being conducted by Tim Valenti as part of the requirement for a doctoral dissertation at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. It represents an effort to study and to improve the effectiveness of a program designed to enhance the quality of marriages in our community.

Specific objectives of the research

1. To assess the effectiveness of the Couples Communication Program I sponsored by the Presbyterian Counseling Center of Greensboro.
2. To develop a set of practical recommendations for improving future programming for couples.
3. To compare the findings from various approaches to program outcome assessment.

What is needed

Married couples who are, or will be, enrolled in the Couples Communication Program I at the Presbyterian Counseling Center and who are interested in helping out with this project.

Requirements

All participating couples will first be asked to fill out a standard background information sheet (with name, address, phone number, etc.), and to sign a statement indicating their willingness to take part in the research. Participating couples will meet three times, at one-month intervals, with the researcher: once before the program begins, a second time immediately following the last session, and a final time one month after completion of the program. On all three occasions, couples will complete a short questionnaire and allow the researcher to make a 5-minute tape recording of a discussion they have about some aspect of their marriage. In addition, on the initial visit, short interviews will be conducted with each spouse. On the second and third visits, in-depth interviews will be held with each spouse. The first visit will probably last approximately 45-50 minutes. The last two meetings will probably last 75-90 minutes.

*This label was not on the form given to the participants.

Confidentiality

An ID number will be used on all forms (except for the background information form) and tapes so that your name will not have to be used. A list of names of participants will be kept in a secure place with access limited solely to the researcher. At the completion of the data analysis, all identifying information will be destroyed.

Reasons for participating

All couples who participate in this study will have the satisfaction of knowing that they will be contributing to practical research designed to improve a program for strengthening marriages. In the past, most couples in studies of this sort have reported that they found the opportunity to reflect on their marriage relationship interesting, useful, and "different." Most have stated that they enjoyed the program itself. Finally, at the conclusion of the evaluation, a summary of findings will be sent to all interested participants.

If you have any questions about the project, I will be happy to answer them. Feel free to contact me.

Tim Valenti
1337 West Friendly Avenue
Greensboro, NC 27403
Telephone: 273-2556

Control Group***REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS
FOR A MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT EVALUATION PROJECT**

This research project is being conducted by Tim Valenti as part of the requirement for a doctoral dissertation at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. It represents an effort to study and to improve the effectiveness of a program designed to enhance the quality of marriages in our community.

Specific objectives of the research

1. To assess the effectiveness of the Couples Communication Program I sponsored by the Presbyterian Counseling Center of Greensboro.
2. To develop a set of practical recommendations for improving future programming for couples.
3. To compare the findings from various approaches to program outcome assessment.

What is needed

Married couples who expect to enroll at a future date in the Couples Communication Program I at the Presbyterian Counseling Center and who are interested in helping out with this project.

Requirements

All participating couples will first be asked to fill out a standard background information sheet (with name, address, phone number, etc.), and to sign a statement indicating their willingness to take part in the research. Participating couples will meet three times, at one-month intervals, with the researcher. On all three occasions, couples will complete a short questionnaire and allow the researcher to make a 5-minute tape recording of a discussion they have about some aspect of their marriage. It is anticipated that the first visit will last approximately 20 minutes and the second and third visits about 15 minutes each. All such meetings will normally take place in the home of the participants, unless special arrangements need to be made.

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Confidentiality

An ID number will be used on all forms (except for the background information form) and tapes so that your name will not have to be used. A list of names of participants will be kept in a secure place with access limited solely to the researcher. At the completion of the data analysis, all identifying information will be destroyed.

Reasons for participating

All couples who participate in this study will have the satisfaction of knowing that they will be contributing to practical research designed to improve a program for strengthening marriages. Such couples will be assisting efforts to evaluate and upgrade a program which they themselves plan to take part in. In the past, most couples in studies of this sort have reported that they found the opportunity to reflect on their marriage relationship useful, interesting, and "different."

Furthermore, upon completion of the third visit with the researcher, the couple will automatically receive a reservation for a future Couples Communication Program offering at a 50% reduction in the usual registration fee.

Finally, a summary of findings of the evaluation study will be sent to all interested participants.

If you have any questions about the project, I will be happy to answer them. Feel free to contact me.

Tim Valenti
1337 West Friendly Avenue
Greensboro, NC 27403
Telephone: 273-2556

C O N S E N T F O R M

I hereby agree to participate in the research project being conducted to evaluate the Couples Communication Program.

HUSBAND

WIFE

(Please sign in the appropriate spaces)

APPENDIX B

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ PHONE: _____
(street)

CITY: _____ ZIP: _____

1. SEX: _____ MALE _____ FEMALE
2. AGE: _____
3. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OR PREFERENCE: _____
4. NUMBER OF YEARS MARRIED TO PRESENT SPOUSE: _____
5. NUMBER OF PREVIOUS MARRIAGES: _____
6. AGES OF CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME: _____
7. HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL COMPLETED (check one):
 SOME HIGH SCHOOL
 GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL
 SOME COLLEGE
 GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
 SOME GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL
 COMPLETED GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL
8. CURRENT OCCUPATION: _____
9. APPROXIMATE TOTAL FAMILY INCOME (check one):
 UNDER \$15,000 \$45,000 - \$60,000
 \$15,000 - \$30,000 OVER \$60,000
 \$30,000 - \$45,000
10. HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN A MARRIAGE OR FAMILY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM IN THE PAST? IF SO, PLEASE DESCRIBE BRIEFLY AND GIVE APPROXIMATE DATE(S).

APPENDIX C

DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE

Dyadic Adjustment Scale*

ID #: _____
 Date: _____

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

	Always Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Occa- sionally Disagree	Fre- quently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Handling family finances	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Methods of recreation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Religious matters	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Demonstrations of affection	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Friends	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Sex relations	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Conventionalty (correct or proper behavior)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Philosophy of life	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Amount of time spent together	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Making major decisions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Household tasks	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Leisure time interests and activities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Career decisions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Do you confide in your mate?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Do you ever regret that you married? (or lived together?)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

- | | <u>Every Day</u> | <u>Almost Every Day</u> | <u>Occasionally</u> | <u>Rarely</u> | <u>Never</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 23. Do you kiss your mate? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| | <u>All of them</u> | <u>Most of them</u> | <u>Some of them</u> | <u>Very few of them</u> | <u>None of them</u> |
| 24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

- | | <u>Never</u> | <u>Less than once a month</u> | <u>Once or twice a month</u> | <u>Once or twice a week</u> | <u>Once a day</u> | <u>More often</u> |
|------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 26. Laugh together | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 27. Calmly discuss something | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 28. Work together on a project | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometime disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no)

- | | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 29. _____ Being too tired for sex. | _____ | _____ |
| 30. _____ Not showing love. | _____ | _____ |

31. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

 Extremely Unhappy Fairly Unhappy A little Unhappy Happy Very Happy Extremely Happy Perfect

32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?

- _____ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
 - _____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
 - _____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
 - _____ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
 - _____ It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
 - _____ My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.
-

APPENDIX D

CODING MANUAL

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THE UNITIZATION CONVENTIONS

GENERAL PUNCTUATION GUIDELINES FOR CODERS

UNITIZATION CONVENTIONS

CODING CONVENTIONS

 Coding for Self-disclosure Skills

 Coding for Communication Style

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THE UNITIZATION CONVENTIONS

1. A clause is part of a sentence containing a subject and a predicate (verb) with or without modifiers or complements (objects). There are two types of clauses: main (independent) and subordinate (dependent).
2. A main clause is self-contained; does not function as a subject, complement, or modifier; and can stand by itself as an independent simple sentence. Main clauses are connected to one another in compound sentences either by coordinating conjunctions (and, or, but, either... or, neither... nor, yet) or by conjunctive adverbs (accordingly, also, besides, consequently, furthermore, hence, however, indeed, instead, moreover, nevertheless, only, otherwise, so, still, then, therefore, thus, too, yet, etc.).
3. A subordinate clause depends upon a main clause for its meaning; is always used as a part of speech (i.e., as a noun, adjective, or adverb); and cannot stand alone as a sentence. Subordinate clauses are connected to the main clauses they modify by subordinating conjunctions or by relative pronouns (after, although, as, as soon as, because, before, if, in order that, since, than, that, though, unless, until, what, when, whenever, wherever, which, while, who, etc.).
4. A conditional clause is an adverbial clause which begins with such conjunctions as: if, unless, whether, or provided and expresses as a real, imagined, or nonfactual condition. Sentences with conditional clauses often follow this pattern:
If... [condition stated], then, ... [consequence/
conclusion stated].
5. Mood refers to the way a speaker or writer regards an assertion - i.e. as a declarative statement or a question (indicative mood), as a command or request (imperative), or as a supposition, hypothesis, recommendation, or condition contrary to fact (subjunctive). Verb forms indicate mood. Especially in formal English, the subjunctive mood is used to express a wish or a hypothetical, highly improbable, or contrary to fact condition (as in "if" clauses or "as if" clauses). Consequently, conditional clauses sometimes entail the use of subjunctive (mood) verb forms.

Examples:

"If I were you, I'd accept the offer."

"If he should resign the position, we would have difficulty finding a suitable replacement."

6. To be grammatically complete, a sentence must contain a main clause capable of standing alone. Elliptical sentences are fragmentary sentences which are grammatically incomplete, and yet clear, because the omitted words (subject and/or predicate) can be readily supplied by the reader. Such elliptical expressions often occur in commands, exclamations, interjections, questions, answers to questions, expressions, and in dialogue or ordinary conversation. Since completion of the thought conveyed by the fragment can be unmistakably inferred, these incomplete sentences are considered acceptable.

Examples:

- a) How much? b) Good job! c) What? d) Speak up.
e) Q: "How much change did you receive?" A: "Fifty cents."

GENERAL PUNCTUATION GUIDELINES FOR CODERS

1. The transcribed text of each husband-wife discussion consists of a variable number of identifiable coding units, each of which is numbered and is set off from other units by double-spaced type. When coding for communication style, coders should insure that all units are coded and that each unit receives one and only one style code. When coding for self-disclosure skills, however, coders should be aware that the unitization system developed for purposes of examining communications style does not necessarily correspond with the nature of self-disclosure statements. Therefore, coders should consult the special coding conventions for self-disclosure before proceeding.
2. Because of the grammatical complexities, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies of human speech, the punctuation employed in the transcribed text is not always harmonious with either the rules of grammar or with the aforementioned unit divisions. Coders should be aware that such punctuation marks are designed only to assist them in reading and understanding the transcriptions and are not intended to provide a basis for the actual coding process. Similarly, while coders will generally find listening to the audio tapes of the discussion helpful in the coding process, they should recognize that the vocal inflections of the speakers are not always calibrated perfectly with either proper grammar or with the results of the unitization. Therefore, coders should follow only the numbered unit divisions when engaging in the actual rating process.
3. Extraneous portions of the transcriptions of the discussions will not be coded. The symbol [o/] indicates that the preceding passage(s) should not be coded, while the symbol [/o] indicates that the following passage(s) should not be coded.
4. Parenthetical remarks and speaker interpolations will be set off from the rest of the text by dashes.
5. Speaker asides and other irrelevant speech material will be enclosed in parentheses.

6. Brief explanatory notes and other inserted commentary by the researcher designed to enhance rater comprehension of the transcripts will be set off from the text by brackets.
7. Three ellipsis points [...] following incomplete speeches or portions of speech will be used to signify both volitional change of message content and voluntary lapses into silence by a speaker as well as interruptions by the speaker's partner. Voluntary speaker lapses into silence will be differentiated from partner interruptions by the presence of bracketed explanatory notes indicating that the speaker has chose to terminate a message.
e.g., [Voice trails off].
8. Three ellipsis points [...] preceding a statement will be used to denote the resumption of a speech after an interruption.

UNITIZATION CONVENTIONS

1. Coding units for rating communication style and self-disclosure will consist of main, or independent, clauses, either standing alone or occurring with one or more subordinate, or dependent, clauses.
2. Subordinate clauses will be included in the same unit with the main clauses they modify.
3. Coordinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs connecting two main clauses will be included in the same unit with the main clause which follows them.
4. Uninterrupted false starts will not count as separate units, and any such repetitious utterances will be included together in the same coding unit.
[e.g., "I don't... I don't... I don't really recall what she said."]
5. Affirmations and negations will not be considered separate units if the speaker goes on to amplify or explain; they will be coded as separate units only if they stand by themselves (as simple "yes" or "no" responses) without any elaboration.
6. Multiple affirmations and negations occurring together will be included in the same unit.
[e.g., "No, no, no. That's not what happened"]
7. Short, commonplace phrases and colloquialisms such as "I guess," "you know," "OK," "see," and "isn't it" will not be coded as separate units when they are simply added on to sentences or main clauses. They will be separately unitized only when they constitute a speaker's entire statement.
8. In cases where a speaker employs improper or confusing grammatical construction or words that appear to incorrectly express the intended message, the researcher will interpret the speaker's intent and meaning and then unitize accordingly.
9. Brief, parenthetical remarks interjected into ongoing statements by the same speaker will not be treated as separate units.

10. Quoted material, which generally occurs when the speaker reports his/her version of what the other has said at some point in the past, will not be separately unitized.
11. Elliptical sentences will be treated as complete sentences and unitized accordingly.
12. Despite their lack of grammatical completion, major sentence fragments will be treated as separate units, regardless of whether they are formed by a sudden speaker lapse into silence or by an interruption by the partner.
13. Single-word comments [e.g. yeah, right, ok, uh-huh] which indicate simple tracking of the speaker by the listener will not be considered separate coding units. Only such comments which represent definite responses of agreement or confirmation will be unitized.
14. Each and every interruption or attempted interruption of the speaker by the "listener" will be unitized, irrespective of its length or degree of completion... except for those interpolations which represent simple tracking by the "listener" of the other's speech (see No.11).
15. Unless they constitute interruptions or attempted interruptions of the speaker by the other party, minor sentence fragments (a few words in length) whose meaning is not clear will not be treated as separate coding units, regardless of whether they have been formed by speaker lapses, partner interruptions, or speaker decisions to change messages already in progress. However, for purposes of coding the interrupting statements, notice will be taken of any fragments created by interruptions.
16. In order to avoid unnecessarily excessive unitization and coding, complete statements by a speaker which are broken up by introjections from the partner (including instances of compound mutual interruption or "leap frogging" in which both speakers successively interrupt one another), will be unitized only upon their completion. In other words, spoken segments artificially formed by successive interruptions will not be individually unitized unless they constitute complete clauses in their own right or represent interruptions or attempted interruptions by the "listening" party (see Rule #14). Attempts by the initial speaker to complete his/her statement after an

interruption by a partner will not be considered interruptions.

17. In the event that both speakers simultaneously complete a sentence begun by one of them, the statements of both parties will be separately unitized.
18. Brief inaudible statements which appear to consist of one- or two-word responses will not be unitized. All lengthier inaudible statements will be unitized.

CODING CONVENTIONS

I. CODING FOR SELF-DISCLOSURE SKILLS

Statements will be categorized primarily according to the criteria for self-disclosure presented in Chapter 3 of Alive and Aware (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1976) and in Chapter 1 of Talking Together (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1979) and summarized herein. Revisions and additional guidelines designed to govern coding in various types of situations are presented below.

Speaking for Self

The general act of speaking for self is considered a prerequisite to effective use of the specific self-disclosure skills discussed below. Speaking for self occurs when "... you report your own sensations, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and actions in a way that clearly says that you do, indeed, own them. You identify yourself... as the person who is aware of, and responsible for, your own experience. You clearly indicate that you are the owner of your experience and the authority on your own awareness." (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1979, p. 41). When speaking for self, a speaker clearly indicates to any listener(s) that he/she is the source of the message being sent and that he/she is both acknowledging and sharing his/her own personal experience. Use of such self-responsible communication leaves room for others who experience reality differently to also speak for themselves. In this manner, it fosters the disclosure and open discussion of interpersonal differences. Key words which indicate that an individual is speaking for self are: "I," "me," "my," and "mine."

Failure to Speak for Self

There are two major ways to avoid speaking for oneself:
a) an individual can speak for another person; or b) he/she can speak for no one at all. In either case, the speaker fails to disclose directly and clearly what he/she thinks, feels, wants, etc.

a) Speaking for Another (Making Over-Responsible Statements)

When an individual speaks for another person, he/she makes over-responsible statements which attempt to

coerce agreement by telling that other person what he/she is experiencing or what he/she should do in a given situation. In so doing, over-responsible communicators deprive other people of the opportunity to interpret and share their own awareness as they see fit. As a result, interpersonal differences are suppressed instead of being openly discussed. Key words which may indicate that an individual is speaking for another are: "you," "we," "everybody," and "all," often used in conjunction with "should" or "ought" and substituted for the word "I."

Examples:

"You don't really mean that."

"Every person who is in a position like you're in should go for it."

"Of course we enjoyed the party. Don't you remember?"

"You'll like this next one. It's your kind of song."

b) Speaking for No One
(Making Under-Responsible Statements)

When an individual speaks for no one at all, he/she makes under-responsible statements which fail to acknowledge his/her own experience and which leave ownership and meaning of the message unclear. Because the under-responsible communicator states messages in an overly cautious and uncommitted manner, listeners can only guess as to the speaker's real feelings, intentions, and thoughts. In this type of situation, interpersonal differences tend to be concealed instead of being openly dealt with through the use of clear communication techniques. Key words which may signal that an individual is speaking for no one are: "it," "some people," "most people," and "one." In many cases, the under-responsible speaker substitutes these words for the word "I." In other cases, he/she makes statements which employ no personal pronoun or reference point whatsoever.

Examples:

"Some people would think that's a good idea."

"One would think so."

"There's a good movie playing this week at the theater."

"Most women would get upset if this happened to them."

"It might be a good idea for us to discuss things more often."

"They say that the Virgin Islands is a lovely place to spend a vacation."

Specific Self-Disclosure Skills

Speaking for self can be achieved through the use of five specific skills for disclosing various facets of individual awareness. These skills of self-disclosure essentially represent the various ways an individual can speak for self and share his/her experiences with other people. They are the following: sense statements, interpretive statements, feeling statements, intention statements, and action statements. In the following paragraphs, each skill is first conceptually defined and then operationally defined in terms of the characteristic language employed by a speaker using the skill.

1. Sense Statements

"Making sense statements is the skill of describing what you see, hear, touch, taste, and smell." (Miller, et al., 1979, p. 44). Sense statements report on the data a person is receiving through the five physical senses and entail the sharing of those sense perceptions with another person. Sense statements describe situations from the past and report observations about the present. They provide data to answer questions relating to "who," "what," "when," "where," and "how." (Miller, et al., 1975, p. 58). They do not, however, provide the answer to "why" questions. Sense statements are essential to the process of documenting (see below) interpretations.

Examples:

"I saw you earlier today at the shopping mall."
 "I heard a noise..."
 "I notice that you're smiling."
 "I feel something on my skin."

Statements in which a speaker describes his/her sense perceptions will be coded as sense statements (S).

2. Interpretive Statements

Interpretations are "all the different kinds of meanings you can make in your head to understand yourself, other people, and situations." (Miller, et al., 1979, p.26).

"Interpretive statements can be made simply by saying what it is that you're thinking, believing, assuming, etc." (Miller et al., 1975, p. 63). They are the most common type of self-disclosing statement because people very often say what they think. They include impressions, beliefs, conclusions, assumptions, ideas, opinions, expectations, reasons, and evaluations. Interpretive statements sometimes require documentation

(i.e. detailed description of the information which has led the speaker to an interpretation) with sense statements so that a listener can see how a speaker has arrived at an interpretation (Miller, et al., 1979, p. 45).

Examples:

"I thought that was a pretty good movie we saw."
 "I'm wondering if..."
 "I expect to arrive next Tuesday."
 "It seems to me that..."
 "I'll bet he has no idea of what we are talking about."
 "It was my impression that..."
 "I simply can't believe that..."

Statements in which a speaker expresses his/her thoughts, beliefs, interpretations, etc. will be coded as interpretive statements (T).

3. Feeling Statements

"When you make a feeling statement, you use words to tell your partner what your feeling is. You make your inner emotional experience more conscious to yourself and more available to your partner. You can tell your feelings directly and clearly by simply saying, 'I feel...' or 'I'm...'" (Miller, et al., 1979, p. 46).

Examples:

"I'm really happy about..."
 "I'm feeling a little anxious about..."
 "I was relieved to discover that..."
 "I've never been more frustrated and disappointed in my life."
 "I was surprised to find out that..."

Statements in which a speaker expresses his/her feelings will be coded as feeling statements (F).

4. Intention Statements

"Intention statements let your partner know what you want. You provide your partner with information about what you would like for yourself or what you want to do. When you make intention statements, you use words such as 'I want...', 'I don't want...', 'I'd like...', 'I intend...'" (Miller, et al., 1979, p. 47).
 Intention statements are also used to convey what a speaker does not want, would not like, or does not intend to do.

Examples:

- "I want to spend more time with you, but I don't want to neglect the children."
 "I'd like to tell you what happened at work."
 "I don't want to discuss it now."
 "I don't like to impose on other people."

Statements in which a speaker expresses his/her wants or intentions will be coded as intention statements (I).

5. Action Statements

"Making action statements simply involves describing your actions, your behavior, to others - what you have done, are doing, or will do... Action statements refer to your own past, current, or future actions, and are often expressed using 'being' verbs - I was..., I am..., I will..." (Miller, et al., 1975, p. 70).

Examples:

- "I will be driving to the airport in the morning."
 "I'll be home by 5:30."
 "I'm listening."
 "I took the car in for repairs this morning."
 "I tried to phone you earlier tonight."

Statements in which a speaker describes his/her behavior or activity will be coded as action statements (A).

Additional Coding Conventions for Self-Disclosure

1. When the main clause in a complex sentence contains an instance of a codable self-disclosure skill, the unit will be coded on the basis of that main clause irrespective of the content of the subordinate clause(s).
2. When the main clause in a complex sentence does not contain an instance of a codable self-disclosure skill but the lone subordinate clause does, the unit will be coded on the basis of the subordinate clause, provided the latter serves as a noun (i.e. subject or object) clause or is otherwise central to the overall meaning of the sentence.
3. When the main clause in a complex sentence does not contain an instance of a codable self-disclosure skill and there are multiple subordinate clauses present which do, the unit will be coded on the basis of that

subordinate clause which appears to be most central to the overall meaning of the sentence.

4. Sentences comprised of two conditional (if... then) clauses will be coded on the basis of the latter (i.e. "then") clause.
5. Sentences comprised of a single conditional (if only...) clause expressing a wish or preference will be coded on the basis of that lone clause.
6. Sentences comprised of conditional (if... if only...) clauses stated in the subjunctive mood will be coded as if the indicative mood had been used.

Example:

"If that had happened to me, I would have done something about it." (Action Statement, coded same as "I do/did something about it.")

7. Negatively phrased statements will be coded as if they were positively phrased using the same verb.

Examples:

"I did not go." (Action Statement, coded same as "I went").

"I didn't know what to make of that." (Interpretive Statement, coded same as "I knew what to make of that.")

8. Brief passages which simply restate a unit's message or which constitute false starts or colloquial expressions will not be coded for self-disclosure.

Examples:

Restatement:

"What I really want to say is..."

"What I mean to say is..."

"I'm just saying that..."

"I guess what I'm trying to say is..."

False Start:

"I already went... I already went shopping but didn't see anything worth buying."

Colloquial Expression:

"I mean, I'd really feel irritated if I were you."

"I guess I think you should go for it."

"You know, I never really explained it to him before."

"Aw, I don't know, maybe I should give it another try."

9. When a self-disclosure skill which is used at the beginning of a person's speech is not repeated but is clearly implied in subsequent clauses or sentences, coding will proceed as if the skill were restated in each of the subsequent coding units within the speech.

Example:

"I think that they were mistaken in spending so much time out of the home. And [I think] it's too bad for the children that their parents' values were so community-oriented. It seems to me that they should have spent more time together as a family." (Rate all three as interpretive statements.)

10. When statements to be coded consist of elliptical sentences, the missing, but clearly implied, part(s) of speech will be included in order to complete the meaning.

- a) The subject, or subject and verb, from the previous sentence uttered by the same speaker is clearly implied in the incomplete sentence.

Example:

"I didn't do what you wanted. [I am] Sorry. [I] Apologize."

- b) The subject and verb from the previous sentence uttered by the other speaker are clearly implied in the incomplete sentence.

Example:

He: "You saw that TV show last week."
She: "[You mean] The show on child abuse?"

- c) "You" is the unexpressed but clearly implied subject of the sentence. (i.e., "You" is understood).

Example:

"[You] Go ahead."
"[You] Close the door."

11. Quotations cited by a speaker will not be coded for self-disclosure skills. However, in most cases, quoted matter forms the object in clauses or sentences which are codable for skill usage.

Example:

"I think I said at the time 'I want to get a new car, but the money's just not there right now.'"

12. Statements which begin with "I feel...", "I feel like...", or "I feel that..." but which reveal the speaker's thoughts, beliefs, or points of view will be coded as interpretive statements, not as feeling statements. Statements must describe an emotion before they can be coded as "feeling" statements.
13. Statements which begin with "I sense that..." or "I see what..." will be coded as interpretative statements, not as sense statements. Statements must describe something actually seen, heard, felt (touched), etc. in order to be coded as sense statements.
14. Statements phrased in the future tense which imply a clear commitment to do or not do something (e.g. "I will finish this assignment tonight if it's the last thing I ever do") will be coded as (future-tense) intention statements and not as (future-tense) action statements.

N. B. This convention is contrary to that employed by Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman (1976, 1979).

15. True interrogatory sentences (i.e. sentences which are clearly designed to ask a question) will not be considered examples of speaking for self and, accordingly, will be coded as though the speaker had failed to self-disclose. However, statements comprised of what appear to be essentially declarative sentences with a brief question (e.g. "right?" "huh?" "you know?" "aren't you?") attached to the end will be coded for self-disclosure skill usage.
16. When the clause or sentence comprising a coding unit contains a compound verb which reflects the use of multiple (i.e. more than one) types of self-disclosure skills, coding will be based on the following criteria:
 - a) in those instances in which the use of one type of skill predominates, the assignment of codes will be made on the basis of whichever skill appears most often in the unit;
 - b) in those instances in which no single skill is represented more often than any other, assignment of codes will be made on the basis of whichever skill appears first in the unit.

17. Indecipherable, meaningless, inaudible, and irrelevant statements and speaker asides will be assigned a special code of "N."
18. Interrupted and unfinished statements whose meanings cannot be readily discerned will be assigned a special code of "Z".

Assignment of Codes

For purposes of this research, all statements which do not represent instances of speaking for self (i.e. those representing instances of speaking for another or speaking for no one) will be coded as speaking for other (O). Therefore, each statement will either receive one of the five self-disclosure codes or a code of O for failure to disclose/speak for self. Statements will be coded as representing one of the five self-disclosure skills only when it has first been determined that an individual is indeed speaking for self.

II. CODING FOR COMMUNICATION STYLE

Statements will be categorized primarily according to the criteria for communication style presented in chapters 8 and 9 of Alive and Aware (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1976) and Chapter 3 of Talking Together (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1979). Revisions and additional guidelines designed to govern coding in various types of situations are presented below.

Special Style Conventions

1. Style I.

- a. Statements which represent a speaker's disclosure of simple everyday feelings, preferences, or intentions but which do not entail self-disclosure of important feelings, desires, needs, or intentions relating to personal or relationship issues will be coded as Style I.

Examples:

Simple preference: "I'd like to go out for ice cream this evening."

Simple feeling: "I feel so much better after taking a nice long shower."

Simple intention: "I'm going to stop at the store on the way home from work."

- b. Subjective recollections and descriptions of shared events from the couple's past (i.e. historical talk) will be coded Style I, provided the speaker is careful to add that "this is how I remember it." Often, however, a speaker presents an unqualified personal version of shared events from the past in a manner which is designed to tell the listener how it was or which presents his/her perceptions and recall as actual fact. This latter closed-ended form of "historical talk" will be coded as Style II. As a general rule, such statements in which the speaker employs the second person singular (you) will be coded as Style II, unless the speaker is careful to employ an appropriate qualification with his/her version of past events. Statements about shared events from the past in which the speaker uses the first person singular (I) or first person plural (we) will generally be coded as Style I, unless a Style II code is otherwise indicated.

Examples:

Style I (with proper qualification)

"If I remember correctly, you didn't want to get involved in a relationship at that time."

"As I recall it, it took us a long time to get to know one another."

"I could be mistaken about this, but I think what happened was..."

Style II (unqualified version of the past)

"Don't you remember? You chased after me for months before we went on our first date."

"No, that's not the way it happened. What really happened was..."

- c. A speaker's use of the phrase "I don't know" as a colloquial expression within a broader statement will be coded as Style I. When used as a direct response to an inquiry by the other speaker, "I don't know" will be coded as Style III.

Examples:

Style I "Sometimes I wonder... aw, I don't know... I guess I just can't figure why this happens to us."

Style III [Response to the question "Why do you think that happens?"]
"I don't know."

2. Style II.

- a. A speaker's Style II messages may contain references to positive as well as negative qualities in his/her partner. Because they constitute close-ended evaluations of another person, pronouncements which extend praise, pay compliments, or seem designed to encourage "approved" behavior in the listener will be coded as Style II.

Examples:

"You are a great cook."

"You are the best husband in the world."

"You did an outstanding job washing and waxing the car."

- b. For reasons similar to those cited above (see 2a), a speaker's negative judgmental statements made in reference either to him/herself or to the other person will be coded as Style II.

Examples:

"I know I'm a soreheaded loser."

"We're both very stubborn and strong-willed individuals who are hard to please."

- c. A speaker's directives (as opposed to requests) to the other person either to go first or to wait before beginning will be coded Style II.

Examples:

"You go first."

"You start."

"I'm going first this time."

- d. Statements indicating that the speaker believes the other person is making them feel the way they do will be coded Style II.

Examples:

"You really make me angry!"

"You really made me feel depressed the other day."

- e. Interruptions or attempted interruptions will be coded as Style II, unless they appear to constitute either brief statements of agreement (see 3m) or sincere attempts to better understand the other person's message. In the latter case, they will be coded as Style III.

Examples - Style III:

(Interrupting the speaker) "I'm sorry. I didn't hear you." or "Sorry, but you lost me there. What were you saying?"

- i) In the event of a "successful interruption" in which the interrupted party does not continue speaking, only the initial unit in the second speaker's interjection will be considered an interruption of the first speaker's message and coded as Style II solely on that basis. All subsequent coding units in the interrupting speaker's message will be judged on their own merits according to the criteria contained herein.
- ii) Each of the interrupting statements contained in passages of extended parallel speech (i.e. that situation which occurs when, following an initial interruption of one speaker by another, both parties continue speaking simultaneously and thereby create a series of

mutual interruptions) will be coded as Style II communication.

iii) Neither of the individual statements constituting an unintentional simultaneous or joint start by both speakers will be regarded as interruptions nor coded as Style II on that basis. However, any subsequent interruptions of one speaker by another will be coded as Style II.

- f. Noncommittal or "footdragging" statements indicating direct or indirect avoidance of self-disclosure or withholding of information on the part of the speaker will be coded as Style II.

Examples:

"Maybe." "Perhaps." "We'll see." "Well, maybe when I get the time I'll do it."

- g. Statements which indicate that a speaker has made a unilateral decision to change the topic under discussion will be coded as Style II, regardless of whether or not that decision is openly announced to the listener.

Example:

Announcement: "Ok, now we're going to talk about..."

- h. Since they clearly constitute a counter-productive, non-work style of communication, all instances of "mixed" style communication (e.g. II and I, II and III, and II and IV) will be coded as Style II.

N. B. See also 1b above and 3b, 3c, 3d, 3n, 3p, 4a, 4b, and 4c below.

3. Style III.

- a. Procedural comments (i.e. statements or questions which function as a preface to work-style communication and which clearly indicate such intentionality on the part of the speaker) will be coded as Style III.

Examples:

"There's something I want to say to you about what happened the other day."

"Something's been on my mind lately and I'd like to

talk to you about it."
 "Could we set aside some time to talk about...?"

- b. Invitations and non-directive encouragements for the other person to disclose information (see 4b.) pertinent to an issue or to further elaborate his/her thoughts on a matter of importance will be coded as Style III. Should such "requests" contain authoritarian or other negative elements, they will be coded as Style II.

Examples:

Style III "Would you like to tell me what I do that bothers you?" (Said in a non-challenging manner)

"What do you think about all this?"

"What are your impressions on this problem we have?"

Style II "Tell me what I do that bothers you." (Stated as an imperative)

- c. Statements in which the speaker attempts to identify, clarify, or explain a problem or issue or attempts to provide relevant background information about a problem or issue under discussion, will be coded as Style III. An exception to this rule occurs when the speaker attempts to assign blame or responsibility for the problem to the other person. Statements of this latter sort will be coded as Style II.

Examples:

Style II "I think this all goes back to when you started spending too much time away from home."

Style III "I think our problem may be related to a larger issue."

"Maybe that's why we..."

"I wonder if it's because we..."

"Could it have something to do with the fact that...?"

"It seems to me that..."

- d. Statements in which the speaker proposes solutions to dealing with problematical matters or suggests alternative approaches will be coded as Style III, provided they contain no authoritarian or other negative elements. Should they contain such elements, they will be coded as Style II.

Examples:

Style III "It might be a good idea for you to talk

with your boss about it right away."
 "What do you think about...?"
 "Maybe we could..."
 Style II "You should talk to your boss about it
 right away."

- e. Talk about feelings or intentions rather than direct disclosure of them will be coded as Style III instead of as Style IV.

Examples:

Style III "I wonder why I feel angry."
 Style IV "I'm angry and upset about this whole incident."

- f. The phrases "I feel...", "I feel that...", or "I feel like..." are often substituted for "I think" in everyday parlance. When they involve only the sharing of thoughts and not the true disclosure of feelings required for Style IV code, such commonplace expressions will be coded as Style III.

Examples:

Style III "I feel like we've been through this over and over again."
 Style IV "I feel frustrated and angry about our inability to find a better way of dealing with this problem."

- g. Summarizations or restatements of the other person's thoughts, impressions, interpretations, explanations, proposals, etc. will be coded as Style III (See 4a.)
- h. Statements in which the speaker indicates his/her understanding, or lack of understanding, of the other person's message or inquiry will be coded as Style III.

Examples:

"I get the point of what you're saying."
 "I understand."
 "I know what you mean."
 "I'm not sure what you mean."

- i. Attempts by a speaker to ascertain whether or not the listener has understood the previous message(s) will be coded as Style III.

Examples:

"Do you know what I mean?"

"Do you understand?"

"Are we clear on this?"

- j. Prefatory statements which signal an attempt by the speaker to gain a better understanding of the issue or of the other person's thoughts, feelings, etc. related to an issue will be coded as Style III.

Example:

"Let me ask you this."

- k. Attempts by a speaker to explain or elaborate on a previous message for the purpose of increasing the listener's understanding will be coded as Style III.

Example:

"Let me give you an example."

- l. Very brief, unelaborated affirmations or corroborations of a partner's message(s) will generally be assigned a Style Code of III, unless they are offered in response to a partner's Style I statement. In the latter case, they will be coded as Style I.

Examples:

"That's true." "That's right." "Yes, it is."

"Sure." "Okay." "Yeah, I know." "I agree."

- m. In the event that they constitute "listener interjections" while the other partner is speaking, brief corroborations or expressions of agreement (see 31 above) will not be interpreted as interruptions nor coded as Style II on that basis.
- n. Brief, unelaborated negative responses which are attempts to inform or enlighten the listener will be coded as Style III, provided they contain no negative overtones and do not constitute attempted listener interruption's of a speaker. Negative statements of the latter sort will be coded as Style II.

Examples: "No." "Not at all." "On the contrary."

- n. Statements which represent a speaker's personal evaluation of, or commentary on, the issue confronting the couple will be coded as Style III.

Example:

"It's not fair to either one of us to let things continue this way."

- o. Statements which represent a speaker's assessments of, or comments on, ideas or proposals previously presented by either partner will be coded as Style III, provided the speaker's reaction does not contain elements of Style II communication (i.e. sarcasm, criticism, etc.).

Examples:

Style III: "That might be good for both of us."

"That sounds good."

"I think that's probably right."

Style II: "That sounds like another one of your bright ideas."

N. B. See also 2e above.

4. Style IV.

- a. Summarizations, restatements, and tentative interpretations of the other person's feelings, desires, or intentions will generally be coded as Style IV (see 3g). However, for these messages to be differentiated from Style II "you" statements, the person attempting to engage in such "reflective listening" and empathetic role-taking must clearly indicate to the other that he/she is not trying to speak for that other person and that his/her understanding is only tentative and is not based on unwarranted assumptions. This can be accomplished either by framing the interpretation or reflection in the form of a question or by use of statements containing personal pronouns which differentiate the speaker's perspective and experience from that of the other person.

Examples:

Style IV: "I hear you saying that you feel..."

"It sounds like you are feeling pretty angry about the whole thing."

"You want to ask me about it, but you don't know how to go about it, right?"

"You're excited about your prospects, but are you a little anxious too?"

"After all you've been through, you must be feeling exhausted by now. I know I would be."

Style II: "You're always depressed about something."
 "You're upset with me because you're tired."
 "You're probably just having a bad day."

- b. Invitations and non-directive encouragements for the other person to disclose or further elaborate on his/her feelings, desires, or intentions (see 3b.) will be coded Style IV. Should such "requests" contain authoritarian, persuasive, or other negative overtones, they will be coded as Style II.

Examples:

Style IV: "Would you mind giving me your reaction to what I've been saying?"

"What is it that you want from our relationship?" (asked as an open-ended question without an edge to the voice)

"How do you feel about this whole thing?"

"Would you like to tell me how you feel about having to move again?"

"I would really appreciate it if you shared your feelings on this matter with me."

Style II: "Tell me how you feel about it."

"I have a right to know your feelings about it, and I think you should tell me what they are."

"Why do you feel that way?"

"What do you want?" (spoken in a sharp, demanding tone)

- c. Overt but non-directive requests by a speaker that the listener indicate his/her understanding of, or give a reaction to, the speaker's previous message will generally be coded as Style IV. Should such "requests" for acknowledgement of, or feedback regarding, one's message contain authoritarian or other negative elements, they will be coded as Style II.

Examples (after stating the message):

Style IV "I'm not sure I'm coming across clearly.

What did you hear me say?"

"I'd like to know what you heard me say."

Style II "Tell me what I just said to you."

"What did I just say?"

- d. Serious attempts by a listener to comply with overt requests from the speaker to acknowledge and provide desired feedback on the latter's previous

message will be coded as Style IV.

- e. Attempts by a speaker either to confirm the accuracy of feedback which he/she has just requested from the listener or to correct the "listener's" misunderstanding of the previous message will be coded as Style IV.

Examples:

"You're reading my feelings right, but I don't think you quite understand what I intend to do about this."

"No, I don't think you got my message. Let me try again."

N. B. See also 3e and 3f.

Miscellaneous Coding Conventions

1. Questions will be coded according to the type of information requested, the manner in which requests are made, and the function they appear to serve.

- a. Questions which seek from another person information on routine or general topical matters unrelated to personal or relationship issues will be coded Style I.

Examples:

"What time is our dinner reservation?"

"How did the softball game turn out?"

- b. Pseudo-questions (i.e. "closed" questions which don't allow the respondent genuine freedom of response and which are intended to force compliance) and any other questions which attempt to elicit self-disclosure from the other person in a critical, authoritarian, or otherwise negative way will be coded Style II.

Examples:

"Why on earth did you say that?"

"Don't you think it would be better if..."

"Aren't you going to..."

- c. Open-ended, non-directive questions which seek from the other person information (e.g., thoughts, suggestions, impressions, explanations, interpretations, etc.) relating to personal or

relationship issues for further exploration will be coded style III.

Examples:

"How do you suppose we get ourselves into situations like this?"

"What do you think about..."

"What gives you that impression?"

- d. Questions which indicate that the speaker is seeking to confirm or to clarify his/her understanding of the other person's previous statement(s) will be coded as Style III.

Example: "Is that what you are saying?"

- e. Questions that serve as a preface to the speaker's suggestion of an alternative course of action or a possible solution to a problem will be coded as Style III.

Example:

"Why couldn't we do this?" [followed by proposal]

- f. Open-ended, non-directive questions which clearly encourage the other person to disclose his/her feelings, desires, or intentions on personal or relationship issues will be coded Style IV.

Examples:

"How do you feel about what happened last night?"

"What is it that you want from our relationship?"

2. Very brief responses other than those expressing agreement (see 3 and 3m under Special Style Conventions) present special coding problems due to the fact that they contain relatively little information upon which decisions can be based. Such abbreviated responses will be coded according to the following conventions:

- a. Brief, non-negative responses to the other person's previous work-style (i.e. III or IV) statement(s) will be given a Style Code of I if, by their neutrality or disinterest, they appear to discourage further discussion or elaboration of an issue and a Style Code of III if they seem to encourage or promote further exploration. Such abbreviated replies to work-style statement(s) will be coded as Style II if they contain elements of sarcasm, defensiveness, or contentiousness, or

other negative attributes associated with Style II communication.

Examples: (Responses to the Style II statement "I think you're a lousy housekeeper.")

Style I (Said in a neutral or disinterested manner): "Oh." "Really?" "Hmmm."

Style II "I am not!"
"Is that so?" (said defensively)

Style III (Said non-defensively): "How come?"
"How's that?" "In what way?"

- b. Brief, non-negative responses to the other person's previous non work-style (i.e. I or II) statement(s) will be coded as Style I, regardless of whether or not they encourage further discussion. Abbreviated replies to non work-style statement(s) will be coded as Style II, if they contain any negative overtones (see 2a).
 - c. Brief responses to the other person's Style IV statements will not be coded as Style IV since they are unlikely to constitute active encouragement to elaborate on, or to clarify, an issue being discussed. Such brief responses will be coded as Style I, II, or III according to the criteria outlined immediately above.
3. Examples of documentation (i.e. use of sense statements describing what one has heard, seen, felt, etc. that has led one to a viewpoint, interpretation, or conclusion) will be coded according to the speaker's probable intention, as determined from the context provided by previous and subsequent statements. Style I documentation is used to provide information relevant to a general topical point being made. Style II documentation is used as evidence to prove a point, bolster an argument, and persuade the listener. Both Style III and Style IV documentation are used to clarify and/or elaborate on issues and to create better understanding of thoughts (III) and feelings, desires, or intentions (IV).

Examples:

Style III "I noticed that you were scratching your had a kind of quizzical look on your face, so I thought that perhaps you hadn't understood what I said."

Style IV "Last night I could hear you swearing and you looked really angry, so I was afraid to bring up the issue for discussion."

4. Laughter occurring without verbal accompaniment does not constitute a statement in this coding scheme and, therefore, will not be unitized or coded. Laughter may, however, provide a cue for making coding decisions.
5. Some statements may present special difficulty for coders attempting to assign speaker responses to discrete categories. A certain amount of overlap and ambiguity sometimes exists in the classification scheme, particularly between Styles I and III and between Styles III and IV. In case of uncertainty concerning the proper categorization of "borderline" statements, codes will be assigned to the "lower" of the most likely categories.
 - a. If there is substantial uncertainty as to whether a statement is Style I or Style III, it will be coded as Style I.
 - b. If there is substantial uncertainty as to whether a statement is Style III or Style IV, it will be coded as Style III.
6. Statements by a speaker which merely reiterate or re-emphasize his/her previous statement(s) will receive the same code as the previous statement(s).

Examples:

"... I really am."

"... I really do."

"... I really mean that."

7. Indecipherable, meaningless, inaudible, and irrelevant statements and speaker asides will be assigned a special code of "N."
8. Interrupted and unfinished statements whose meanings cannot be readily discerned will be assigned a special code of "Z."

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Pretest Interview

Posttest Interview

Follow-up Interview

PRETEST INTERVIEW

Explanation

This interview is part of an overall evaluation of the Couples Communication program to help us learn more about the effects of the program on peoples's lives so that we can develop more and better programs in the future. I will need to tape record my questions and your remarks because I want to be able to get down everything you say rather than relying on my memory. I will be taking down a few notes while you are talking just in case there is a malfunction or the recording isn't clear at some points.

I. First of all, how did you become interested in the Couples Communication program?

A. How did you find out about it?

B. When you first found out about it, what about the program appealed to you?

C. What previous experience have you had along these lines?

II. Some people have difficulty deciding whether or not to participate in marriage enrichment programs, while other people seem to decide rather easily. Could you tell me what kind of decision-making you went through in thinking about whether or not to sign up for this program? In other words, how did the two of you come to a decision to take part?

A. What is happening in your life right now that led you to your decision to sign up?

B. What things in particular did you take into consideration when you were trying to decide?

C. Which of you was more responsible for your signing up for the program?

III. People often have somewhat mixed feelings about entering new group situations, like an enrichment program. Now that you've made the decision to participate, how do you feel, at this point, about being in the program?

- A. What lingering doubts, concerns, or questions do you have about the program?
- B. What feelings do you have about being part of a group of couples who are making a conscious effort to enrich their marriage?
- C. Based on your past experience with groups, how do you see yourself fitting in with this group?
 - 1. What kinds of contributions do you see yourself making to the group?
 - 2. How do you think the other people in the group will respond to you?

IV. Everyone wants something out of a program like this, or else he/she wouldn't sign up for it in the first place. What are your expectations for the Couples Communication Program in terms of how it will affect your life?

- A. What do you hope to get out of it for yourself?
- B. What do you hope that your spouse gets out of the experience?
- C. In what way do you expect the program to benefit your relationship with your spouse?

V. Finally, I'd like to ask you a question that may seem unrelated to what we talked about up until this point. It is important for me to know how much personal satisfaction you derive from your marriage so that I can better assess the overall effectiveness of the Couples Communication Program. Could you tell me how personally satisfying you find your marriage these days?

- A. How do you think your marriage compares with the marriages of your closest friends and associates?
- B. Ideally, what would you want your relationship to be like? In other words, what would be the ideal marriage for you?
- C. At this point in time, how does your marriage compare with your ideal in terms of personal satisfaction?
- D. At this point in time, how would you describe your feelings about the future of your relationship?

I'd like to thank you for being so generous with your time and energy. Your answers have been most helpful. Are there any other thoughts or feelings about the program or about your marriage that you would like to share at this time?

POSTTEST INTERVIEW

Explanation

The purpose of this interview is to give us a better idea of what you have just experienced in the Couples Communication Program so that we can develop a better understanding of the program's effectiveness and thereby improve future program offerings. Some of the matters I am going to ask you about relate to what we discussed the first time, while others are entirely different.

I. When I talked with you before the program began, I asked you about your expectations for the program. To what extent was the Couples Communication Program what you expected it to be?

A. In terms of what went on in the class sessions, in what ways did the program turn out to be basically what you had expected?

B. In terms of what went on in the class sessions, in what ways did the program turn out to be different from what you had expected?

C. In terms of quality, in what ways did the program live up to your expectations?

D. In terms of quality, in what ways did the program fail to live up to your expectations?

E. Overall, then, how satisfied were you with the program? What makes you say that?

II. Let's focus for a moment just on the other couples involved in the program. For the last few weeks, you were a part of a small group of couples who were interested in improving their marriages. I'd like to get your reactions to your experiences with these other people. What thoughts or feelings do you have about having been a part of that group of couples?

- A. In what ways did the other couples make an impact on you?
- B. What kind of contribution did you make to the group?
- C. How was your experience with this group different from your experiences with other groups?

III. In a minute, I will ask you how the program has affected your spouse and your relationship with one another; but, for now, I want to focus briefly on you as an individual. Assuming that you got something out of this enrichment experience, could you tell me in what specific ways you think the program has affected you personally?

- A. Last time you said that you hoped that you would benefit from the program by _____

 How have you done in those respects since then?
- B. What have you learned about yourself since you began the program?
- C. In what ways has the program changed the way you relate to people other than your spouse?
- D. Has the program had any other effects on you?

IV. Let's focus for a moment on your spouse. In your opinion, in what ways has the program affected your spouse?

- A. Last time, you said you that you hoped your spouse would benefit from the program by _____

 How has he/she done in those respects since then?
- B. Has the program had any other effects on your spouse?

V. We have talked about how the program has affected you and your spouse as individuals. Now I'd like to get an idea of how you think the program has affected your relationship with your spouse. When you interact, what do you as a couple do differently as a result of this program? Be as specific as possible.

- A. Last time, you said that you hoped that you and your spouse would benefit as a couple from the program by

How have you and your spouse done in those respects since then?

- B. Do you and your spouse talk any more often than you used to about your relationship or about issues in your relationship? If so, which issues do you discuss?
- C. Do you share your feelings with one another any more often than before? If so, what kinds of feelings do you share?
- D. Do you and your spouse disagree any more often or less often than before? If so, what about?
- E. When you and your spouse do encounter disagreements or differences, in what ways do you handle them differently than before?
- F. Has the program pointed out to you and your spouse any areas in your marriage that need to be worked on that you were not aware of before you started the program?
- G. Has the program had any other effects on your relationship with your spouse?

VI. The first time we talked, I asked you a set of questions having to do with the satisfaction you felt with your marriage, your view of your relationship relative to other marriages, your conception of an ideal marriage, your assessment of your relationship compared with your ideal, and your feelings about the future of your relationship. Now that you've completed the program, could you tell me if your feelings or opinions on those five topics have changed in any way? If so, in what ways?

- A. Last time, when I asked you how personally satisfying you found your marriage relationship, you said that

 _____.
 How do you feel about that now?

- B. Last time, when I asked you how you thought your marriage compared with other marriages that you knew of, you said that _____

 _____.
 How do you feel about that now?

- C. Last time, when I asked you what your idea of an ideal marriage was, you said that _____

 _____.
 Has your opinion on that matter changed in any way since then?

- D. Last time, when I asked you how your marriage compared with your ideal in terms of the personal satisfaction you got from it, you said that _____

 _____.
 How do you feel about that now?

- E. Last time, when I asked you how you would describe your feelings about the future of your relationship, you said that _____

 _____.
 How do you feel about that now?

Are there any other thoughts or feelings about the program or about your marriage that you would like to share at this time?

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

Explanation

The first time we talked, I asked you what you hoped to get out of the program, what you hoped your spouse would get out of it, and how you hoped the program would benefit your relationship. Then, after you had completed the program, I asked you how you and your spouse were doing with respect to those objectives. Now I'd like for us to briefly follow up on these matters.

I. The first time we talked you indicated, in reference to yourself, that you hoped you would _____
_____.

The last time we talked, I asked you how you were doing and you indicated that you had _____
_____.

Do you think that still holds true for you, or has your opinion on this matter changed since we last spoke?

II. The last time we talked, I asked if the program had affected you personally in any additional ways. At that time you indicated that you had _____
_____.

Do you think that still holds true for you, or has your opinion on this matter changed since we last spoke?

III. The first time we talked you indicated, in reference to your spouse, that you hoped (s)he would _____
_____.

The last time we talked, I asked you how your spouse was doing and you indicated that (s)he had _____
_____.

Do you think that still holds true for your spouse, or has your opinion on this matter changed since we last spoke?

IV. The last time we talked, I asked you if you thought the program had affected your spouse in any additional ways. At that time, you indicated that (s)he had _____

Do you think this still holds true for your spouse, or has your opinion on this matter changed in any way since we last spoke?

V. The first time we talked you indicated, in reference to your relationship, you hoped that you and your spouse would _____

The last time we talked, I asked you how the two of you were doing and you indicated that you and your spouse had _____

Do you think that still holds true for your relationship, or has your opinion on this matter changed since we last spoke?

VI. The last time we talked, I asked if you thought the program had affected your relationship in any additional ways. At that time you indicated that you and your spouse had _____

Do you think this still holds true for your relationship, or has your opinion on this matter changed since we last spoke?

VII. Now let's focus on some particular aspects of the Couples Communication program. Try to reflect back on your experience and determine what happened in the program that has benefited you in some way. Specifically, what was it about the program that you have found to be helpful in your day-to-day living?

A. At the time you were taking the program, how helpful did you find the following aspects of the program to be and in what ways did you find each to be helpful or not helpful?

1. Instructors.
 2. Doing the in-class exercises (and getting feedback from others).
 3. Observing other couples do the exercises.
 4. Homework assignments.
 5. Readings from the workbook.
 6. Other aspects of the program.
- B. Now I'd like to get your brief evaluation of each of the four class sessions of the program. Since you completed the program, how helpful have you found the material from each session, and in what ways have you found it to be helpful or not helpful?
1. Tuning into yourself (your Awareness Wheel and sharing your experience with others).
 2. Tuning in to your partner (listening skills, increasing your awareness of others, shared meaning process, etc.).
 3. Four ways of talking (styles I, II, III and IV of communication).
 4. Counting yourself and your partner (self-esteem and increasing positive feelings in each other).
- C. Of all the skills and concepts you were taught in the four classes, which ones have you found to have been the most helpful in your day-to-day living?

1. In what types of situations have these skills or techniques been most helpful to you?
 - a. Have you and your spouse found these communication skills to be most helpful when you are having conflicts or disagreements?
 - b. Have you and your spouse found these communication skills to be most helpful when things are going smoothly between you?
- D. Which skills or concepts have been the least helpful to you in your day-to-day living?
- E. Have any additional problems arisen when you and your spouse have tried to use the skills and techniques you were taught in the program?

VIII. One of the primary purposes of any program evaluation is the development of a set of recommendations for improving future programming. Now that you have shared with me your appraisal of a variety of program components, I would appreciate any helpful suggestions you might have to offer regarding the improvement of future offerings. What specific recommendations do you have for improving the various aspects of the program? (Probe for the following aspects:)

- A. Number of class sessions.
- B. Frequency of class sessions.
- C. Length of each class session.
- D. Allocation of class time for various activities (i.e. leader instruction and modeling, practice and feedback, discussions, etc.).
- E. Course content (curriculum).

F. Coverage of topics (thoroughness).

G. Size of the group.

H. Other.

IX. Not everybody gets the same results from an experience like the Couples Communication Program. Some couples benefit from the experience more than others. I'd like you to concentrate for a moment on any key factors in your overall situation that you think may have either helped you get something from the program or may have prevented you from getting as much out of the program as you would have liked. Off-hand, can you think of any positive or negative factors?

A. To the extent that you and your spouse have benefited from the program, what are the key factors that are responsible for this? That is, what is it about your situation that has helped you to use what you have learned?

B. To the extent that you have not benefited from the program as much as you would have liked, what obstacles or barriers to change have gotten in the way? That is, what is it about your situation that has made it difficult for you to use what you have learned?

X. On both previous occasions we talked, I asked you a series of questions having to do with: the amount of satisfaction you felt with your marriage; your opinion of how your marriage compared with other marriages; your conception of an ideal marriage; your opinion of how your relationship compared with your ideal; and your feelings about the future of your marriage. Now that you've completed the program and have had several weeks to think about matters, could you tell me if your feelings or opinions on those five topics have changed in any way?

- A. The first time, when I asked you how personally satisfying you found your marriage relationship, you said that _____
_____.

Last time you said that _____
_____.

How do you feel about that now?

- B. The first time, when I asked you how your marriage compared with other marriages you knew of, you said that _____
_____.

Last time you said that _____
_____.

How do you feel about that now?

- C. On each previous occasion, when I asked you what would be the ideal marriage for you, you said that _____
_____.

Has your opinion on that matter changed since then?

- D. The first time, when I asked you how your marriage relationship compared with your ideal, you said that _____
_____.

The last time you said that _____
_____.

How do you feel about that now?

- E. The first time, when I asked you to describe your feelings about the future of your relationship, you said that _____
_____.

The last time you said that _____
_____.

How do you feel about that now?

XI. Finally, I'd like to get your reactions to the way we have gone about obtaining information for this research project. On all three occasions, we have employed a tape recorded discussion between you and your spouse, a standardized questionnaire, and an interview. What is your reaction to the ways we have tried to evaluate the Couples Communication Program?

A. What is your opinion of the 5-minute taped discussions between you and your spouse?

1. How natural and relaxed did you feel?
2. Do you think the discussion we taped was a typical example of the way in which you and your spouse discuss issues? In what ways was it not typical?
3. Do you think it was a good way to go about getting accurate information on the program and its impact on your relationship?

B. What is your opinion of the questionnaire?

1. How natural and relaxed did you feel?
2. Do you think the items asked about the most important aspects of your marriage?
3. Did it miss any important areas? If so, which ones?
4. Do you think it was a good way to go about getting accurate information on the program and its impact on your relationship?

C. What is your opinion of the interviews?

1. How natural and relaxed did you feel?

2. Do you think we discussed the most important aspects of the program and its impact on you?
 3. Did we miss any important areas? If so, which ones?
 4. Do you think it was a good way to go about getting accurate information on the program and its impact on your relationship?
- D. In your opinion, how could this evaluation of the Couples Communication Program have been improved?

APPENDIX F

SUPPLEMENTAL TABLES

Table F-1

Analysis of Variance for Pretest Group Differences in
DAS Scores, Percentage of Self-Disclosure Statements,
and Percentage of Work-Style Statements

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Repeated Measures ANOVA for DAS Scores					
Group	2	483.70	241.85	.77	.4728
Couple w. Group	25	7832.28	313.29		
Sex	1	9.35	9.35	.14	.7147
Group X Sex	2	149.36	74.68	1.09	.3511
Sex X Couple w. Group	25	1710.00	68.40		
Total (Corrected)	55	10175.98			
Simple Effects ANOVA for Percentage of Self-Disclosure					
Group	2	0.02	0.01	.43	.6528
Error	25	0.47	0.02		
Total (Corrected)	27	0.49			
Simple Effects ANOVA for Percentage of Work-Style					
Group	2	0.02	0.01	.15	.8580
Error	25	2.02	0.08		
Total (Corrected)	27	2.04			

Table F-2

Means and Standard Deviations of DAS Scoresfor Each Group, Sex, and Time Period

GROUP	TIME	N	MEAN	SD
Enrichment				
Husband	Pretest	10	107.95	7.00
Wife	Pretest	10	106.00	14.58
Total	Pretest	20	106.98	11.17
Husband	Post 1	10	110.05	9.39
Wife	Post 1	10	106.55	10.32
Total	Post 1	20	108.30	9.77
Husband	Post 2	10	111.05	5.99
Wife	Post 2	10	111.30	7.75
Total	Post 2	20	111.18	6.74
Therapy				
Husband	Pretest	7	96.71	15.90
Wife	Pretest	7	102.57	14.31
Total	Pretest	14	99.64	14.84
Husband	Post 1	7	103.21	20.92
Wife	Post 1	7	103.79	15.44
Total	Post 1	14	103.50	17.67
Husband	Post 2	7	104.42	24.36
Wife	Post 2	7	101.43	12.80
Total	Post 2	14	102.93	18.76
Control				
Husband	Pretest	11	102.91	14.02
Wife	Pretest	11	101.50	15.74
Total	Pretest	22	102.20	14.56
Husband	Post 1	11	104.82	10.40
Wife	Post 1	11	106.32	8.26
Total	Post 1	22	105.57	9.20
Husband	Post 2	11	106.73	11.18
Wife	Post 2	11	108.86	13.16
Total	Post 2	22	107.80	11.96

Table F-3

Means and Standard Deviation of Percentage of
Self-Disclosure Statements for Each Group and Time Period

GROUP	TIME	N	MEAN	SD
Enrichment	Pretest	10	45.12	13.04
Enrichment	Post 1	10	62.12	16.17
Enrichment	Post 2	10	58.79	13.72
Therapy	Pretest	7	49.76	18.12
Therapy	Post 1	7	65.72	15.42
Therapy	Post 2	7	56.48	12.83
Control	Pretest	11	43.69	10.98
Control	Post 1	11	37.11	10.93
Control	Post 2	11	41.57	15.89

Table F-4

Means and Standard Deviation of Percentage of Work-Style
Communication for Each Group and Time Period

GROUP	TIME	N	MEAN	SD
Enrichment	Pretest	10	54.86	27.99
Enrichment	Post 1	10	91.01	13.17
Enrichment	Post 2	10	78.71	15.91
Therapy	Pretest	7	55.75	31.59
Therapy	Post 1	7	88.33	18.22
Therapy	Post 2	7	79.81	22.10
Control	Pretest	11	61.29	26.73
Control	Post 1	11	46.85	27.60
Control	Post 2	11	40.03	32.27

Table F-5

Participants Indicating Change or No Change in
Marital Satisfaction, at Follow-up, by Group and Sex

Group	N	Increased	No Change	Decreased
Enrichment				
Husbands	10	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0
Wives	10	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
Total	20	13 (65%)	6 (30%)	1 (5%)
Therapy				
Husbands	7	6 (85.7%)	1 (14.3%)	0
Wives	7	4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	0
Total	14	10 (71.4%)	4 (28.6%)	0
Combined				
Husbands	17	14 (82.4%)	3 (17.6%)	0
Wives	17	9 (52.9%)	7 (41.2%)	1 (5.9%)
Total	34	23 (67.6%)	10 (29.4%)	1 (2.9%)

Table F-6

Participants Indicating Improved Marital Satisfaction
by Group, Sex, and Time

Group	N	Improved Pre to Post 1	Improved Post 1 to Post 2	Improved Pre to Post 2
Enrichment				
Husbands	10	7 (70%)	5 (50%)	8 (80%)
Wives	10	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
Total	20	12 (60%)	8 (40%)	13 (65%)
Therapy				
Husbands	7	4 (57.1%)	2 (28.6%)	6 (85.7%)
Wives	7	4 (57.1%)	0	4 (57.1%)
Total	14	8 (57.1%)	2 (14.3)	10 (71.4%)
Combined				
Husbands	17	11 (64.7%)	7 (41.2%)	14 (82.4%)
Wives	17	9 (52.9%)	3 (17.6%)	9 (52.9%)
Total	34	20 (58.8%)	10 (29.4%)	23 (67.6%)

Table F-7

Number and Type of Specific Changes in Communication
Reported by Program Participants at Follow-up

Group	N	<u>Number of changes reported</u>				
		0	1	2	3	4
Participants reporting changes in self						
Enrichment						
Husbands	10	0	6	4	0	0
Wives	10	1	7	2	0	0
Total	20	1	13	6	0	0
Therapy						
Husbands	7	3	1	2	1	0
Wives	7	0	5	2	0	0
Total	14	3	6	4	1	0
Participants reporting changes in spouse						
Enrichment						
Husbands	10	1	8	1	0	0
Wives	10	1	8	1	0	0
Total	20	2	16	2	0	0
Therapy						
Husbands	7	2	4	1	0	0
Wives	7	3	4	0	0	0
Total	14	5	8	1	0	0
Participants reporting changes in relationship						
Enrichment						
Husbands	10	0	0	2	6	2
Wives	10	0	2	1	4	3
Total	20	0	2	3	10	5
Therapy						
Husbands	7	2	2	1	2	0
Wives	7	3	0	2	2	0
Total	14	5	2	3	4	0