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Title: THE RELATION OF SENSITIVITY TRAINING TO MARITAL
INTEGRATION OF GRADUATE STUDENT HUSBANDS AND
THEIR WIVES

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The purpose of this study was to ascertain the usefulness of sensitivity training with wives of graduate students in decreasing role tension resulting from the husband's participation in an advanced degree-seeking program and to assess the effect of professional endeavor of wives upon marital integration.

Three groups for comparison were chosen: (1) a sensitivity group wherein the wives of graduate students who had no regularly scheduled activities outside the home met in two and one-half hour sensitivity sessions for at least 14 weeks; (2) an active group made up of wives of graduate students who were involved one-half time or more in seeking a college degree or pursuing a professional occupation such as teaching, nursing, social work, etc.; and (3) a non-active group including wives of graduate students who had no involvement outside the home nor sensitivity training.

Upon completion of the sensitivity training period, all couples in the three groups were administered the Index of Marital Integration. The resulting scores for the three groups were combined and ranked. The ranked scores were converted to standard scores for the purpose of normalizing the sample. The groups were then separated and compared by analysis of variance using the z scores. Computation of variance for groups of unequal size yielded an F value of 2.37 which is not significant at either the five or one percent level of probability.

Separate analyses of the index of consensus and index of role tension revealed the following respective results: (1) the active group showed a significant difference on agreement between husband and wife on domestic values over the sensitivity and nonactive groups; and (2) there was no significant difference between the three groups on role assignment.

Findings relative to the effectiveness of sensitivity training are inconclusive. Further study related to this problem should be concerned with identifying significant factors in the active professional endeavor of wives which lead to greater marital integration. Application of these factors to a process, sensitivity training or some other interpersonal transaction, that could substitute for meaningful, purposive activity for wives unable to be involved in professional endeavor outside the home should be the goal of future studies.

The Relation of Sensitivity Training to Marital
Integration of Graduate Student Husbands
and Their Wives

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THE RELATION OF SENSITIVITY TRAINING
TO MARITAL INTEGRATION OF
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AND THEIR WIVES

I INTRODUCTION

The percent of married students in total college attendance in the United States on a full-time basis has steadily increased since World War II to a current figure of 18 percent for men and six percent for women (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1959). The ratio of three men to one woman in married student attendance contains serious implications for the academic and social organization of colleges and universities. From the results of a national survey of land grant colleges and universities designed to identify problems of the married college student, Haun (1967) offers the following recommendations pertinent to this study:

Marriage counseling services should be provided for married student families on college and university campuses.

Programs developed (activities) should be geared to incorporate both members of the couple; thereby giving the couple a mutual interest.

Provisions should be made to allow the wife of the student to go outside the confines of her home to release day-to-day tensions of the home and family.

Statement of the Problem

The recommendations contained in the study done by Haun point to several significant areas that need further research. Foremost among these appears to be the effect that the husband's involvement in a degree-seeking program has upon the marriage relationship. S. I. Hayakawa (1967) has noted that participants in professional development programs ". . . develop a vocabulary for group communication, but that same vocabulary isolates others from the group. "

The example of graduate education closely corresponds to the foregoing observation. Men seeking advanced degrees in any discipline are faced with the demands for conformity inherent in the degree program structure. This conformity is characterized by a progression of courses that the degree candidate must follow, a sequence of qualifying tests, and a final examination in the form of a thesis or other evaluation designed to demonstrate the candidate's proficiency as a member of the particular profession for which the program is responsible.

From a sociological point of view, the program is responsible for sanctioning the candidate. The preparation for final endorsement requires that the candidate adopt the role behavior determined by group definition of the position which he will occupy. Sanctions of

a positive, or reinforcing, nature as well as negative, or punishing, sanctions are employed. It is the degree program, therefore, that controls the sources of feedback which the candidate must have access to in order to maintain awareness of his progress.

As an outgrowth of the program's evaluative control, candidates within a specific program must adopt new role behavior which increases their access to the feedback system. Peer groups are formed among the candidates for a certain degree. Through group interaction, they are able to achieve a more comprehensive coverage of feedback channels from the program. These group formations extend along a nexus continuum from new entrants into the program through candidates nearing completion and extending to more informal peer associations between other programs in the total graduate school of the university.

The married male graduate student is faced with adapting to the demands of the professional training program while at the same time maintaining his role of father and husband. It is at this point that the traditional pattern of family interaction may involve the development of role tension.

Role tension results when the expectancies of a role partner, in this case the wife, are not fulfilled by the incumbent, the husband. Hayakawa's statement regarding vocabulary can be extended to the total communication processes resultant from the structure of the

graduate program. As the graduate student husband seeks the structure of the program for the feedback necessary for assuming his professional role, the wife may no longer expect him to invest the same amount of time and consideration previously present in the marriage. She may deal with the resultant tension in a coping or adjustive manner or by defensive and rigid behavior. The former adjustment would lead to development of an individual concept of self-worth for the wife through meaningful, purposeful activity leading to cooperative growth and mutual understanding in the husband-wife relationship. The latter would result in the wife turning in upon herself, a symptom of neurotic adjustment in the face of stress, leading to an even greater disparity in husband-wife role behavior, and resulting in the destruction of meaningful relationships. This may end in divorce, or even worse, in the extreme, self-destruction.

It behooves the process of education, therefore, to make allowances for special consideration of human relationships in the life adjustment of its participants. In summary, education does have a responsibility to the total person, his traditional interpersonal patterns of family and societal adjustment as well as to his professional growth and competency.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the usefulness of sensitivity training with wives of graduate students in decreasing role tension resulting from the husband's participation in an advanced degree-seeking program and to assess the effect of professional endeavor of wives upon marital integration.

Scope of the Study

The study was conducted on the Oregon State University campus except for the sensitivity group which was conducted at two locations, one group at OSU and the other at the Portland Continuation Center of the Oregon State System of Higher Education. The makeup of the groups encompassed a continuum of graduate academic programs with the participants representing widespread geographical backgrounds. Generalization from the findings to other graduate populations should be made with extreme caution.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity and consistency, the following definitions will apply whenever the terms appear:

Sensitivity Training

A variety of labels have been applied to this approach. Whether called T-group, laboratory group, process group, or basic encounter group, the actual experience is much the same.

For this study the sensitivity training focused upon shared communication of feelings in a group setting whereby the participants were able to gain awareness of the effect their behavior, both verbal and nonverbal, had on others and the reciprocating effect the behavior of others had upon themselves.

The sensitivity training situation was presented to the participating wives through a brief explanation of the common goals of families where the husband is seeking an advanced degree. The goals of professional advancement, increased earning power and specialized knowledge were stated and discussed in relation to the difficulties experienced by the family while the husband was in the degree program. No specific situational topics were imposed initially as the focus was placed on participant interaction in sharing their feelings relative to their present situation.

In the early stages of the training, members of the group were encouraged to pinpoint sources of felt difficulties in family operation that were shared by others in the group. As the process of reaching consensus on such issues as coping with the husband and father being absent from the family more, less opportunity for the wife to relax away from the family, inadequate or cramped living conditions etc. was achieved by the group, individuals became free to discuss more personal concerns. The process involved at this stage was centered on seeking self-awareness in individual members.

As an example, a member might introduce a problem of decreased sexual satisfaction since the husband's involvement in his degree program. Implementation of the process in this instance was directed at the individual member being able to utilize the resources of the group in pinpointing the factors operating in the family relationship that contributed to the felt difficulty. Through investment of self-examination in this context, the individual member had opportunity to learn about her own mechanisms for adjustment to pressure and to define behaviorally the outcomes of her adjustment.

It may be noted that the latter focus upon personal concerns by individual members of the group during the training period presents a possible source for expanding, or creating, a gap in husband-wife relationships. For instance, in the discussion of sexual satisfaction one or more members of the group may find their adjustments

in this area to be different than those of the majority in the group. Due to such factors as religious background or early childhood training, such knowledge may lead to increased difficulty in that particular family when the wife's increased awareness is not accompanied by a corresponding awareness on the part of the husband.

Therefore, positive outcomes in marital adjustment stemming from self-awareness gained in sensitivity training for a particular family member are dependent upon problem-solving mechanisms existent in the husband-wife relationship. Development of new mechanisms resulting from the wife's participation in sensitivity training would also be dependent upon utilizing present mechanisms for involving the husband in the process of gaining awareness of the needs of the wife.

The following description by Rogers further defines sensitivity training:

The group begins with little imposed structure; so that the situation and the purposes are ambiguous, and up to the members to decide. The leader's function is to facilitate expression; and to clarify or point up the dynamic pattern of the group's struggle to work toward a meaningful experience. In such a group, after an initial 'milling around,' personal expressiveness tends to increase. This also involves increasingly free, direct and spontaneous communication between members of the group. Facades become less necessary, defenses are lowered, basic encounters occur as individuals reveal hitherto hidden feelings and aspects of themselves, and receive spontaneous feedback--both negative and positive--from group members. Some or many individuals become more facilitative in relationships to others, making possible greater freedom of expression. (Rogers, 1965, p. 21)

Role Tension

A satisfactory husband-wife relationship depends upon a complementary coordination of behavior between each position. When the expected behavior of the husband or the wife is predictable and congruent with the expectations of the other, the outcomes of the relationship are productive and mutually agreeable.

When a husband and wife fail to coordinate their roles effectively, the system of roles can then be said to be a state of tension. Farber describes the resultant behavior as follows:

In the communication which accompanies role tension, the self and spouse are redefined in terms of the character of the interaction. Tempers may flare, arguments may occur, affectionate demonstrations may cease, decisions may be imposed, the actors may become sullen or avoid conversation. As these behaviors become the expected instead of the exceptional action in the association, they tend to be attributed to the other person or actor as part of the self. Conformity to role expectations is then considered superficial and difficult (Farber, 1957, p. 118).

Marital Integration

A high degree of marital integration exists when (a) the individual members are able to develop domestic and community roles while maintaining a sense of personal integrity, and (b) the family members are competent to meet crises without loss of commitment to one another and with a minimum of disruption of their domestic careers (Farber, 1957).

Method of the Study

In order to maintain adequate marital integration in the face of the graduate-student-husband adopting new role behavior, it appeared evident in practice and theory that the wife must be involved in some type of meaningful, purposive activity which would lead her to developing a strategy for coping behavior. To support this hypothesis, three groups, sensitivity, active and nonactive, were decided upon whereby comparison could determine the effectiveness of the three strategies defining each grouping in terms of marital integration.

Sensitivity Group

One sensitivity group was made up of 12 wives whose husbands were graduate students undergoing a second-year training program for counselor-consultants at the Portland Continuation Center of the State System of Higher Education. The sensitivity sessions were conducted by a trained and experienced counselor employed by the Women's Programs Division, Division of Continuing Education. Eight other wives of graduate student husbands enrolled in an academic year counselor preparation program participated in sensitivity sessions on the Oregon State University campus conducted by this writer, whose qualifications include three years of advanced

counselor training, one of which dealt specifically with counseling single and multiple family groups and two years as a paid, full-time, high school counselor. The 20 couples were randomly selected from a pool of 42 who volunteered to participate.

Each wife was in attendance for a minimum of 14 of 20 two and one-half hour weekly sessions scheduled. None of the wives were employed or engaged in any regularly scheduled activity outside the home.

Active Group

This group was formed by identification of adjustive behaviors of a coping nature that would provide the necessary strategies for marital integration. Specifically, the group was selected from couples where the wife of a graduate student was actively involved in pursuit of a meaningful, purposive, structured activity. This activity was defined to include involvement one-half time or more in: (1) seeking a college degree; (2) pursuing a professional occupation (i. e., teaching, librarian, social work, etc.). Stop-gap employment such as secretarial work or other jobs held merely to help pay their husband's way through school was not included in defining the active group.

Nonactive Group

This group was selected from wives of graduate students who had had no involvement outside the home on a regularly scheduled basis for the term of one academic year during which their husbands were in an advanced degree-seeking program.

Instrument Used

The Index of Marital Integration consists of an index of consensus and an index of role tension. The consensus index contains ten domestic values to be ranked in order of decreasing importance to family success and is ranked by both husband and wife. To measure the extent of agreement between the husband's and wife's rankings, the Spearman rank correlation coefficient, rho, is used. The size of the rank correlation is used as an index of the degree of consensus.

The index of role tension is composed of ratings by the respondents for both self and spouse on ten negative personality items. The ratings and weights assigned to these ratings are: very much (-2), considerably (-1), somewhat (0), a little (+1), and hasn't the trait at all (+2). The total of the husband's rating for himself and his spouse and the wife's ratings for herself and her spouse are used as the index of marital role tension. A high score is regarded as indicating high integration (i. e., low marital role tension) and a low score as

denoting low integration (i. e., high role tension) (Farber, 1957, p. 120).

The index of marital integration is formed by adding ordinal scores derived from ranking the consensus and marital-role tension indices.

Collection of the Data

The Index of Marital Integration was completed at the end of spring quarter, 1967, by all participants in the study. The sensitivity group was administered the index at the last sensitivity session for the wives with the husbands completing their portion as a group immediately after the session. The active and nonactive groups were contacted as individual couples with both the husband and wife completing the index simultaneously to avoid any comparison. The couples were allowed to compare and discuss the index with the proctor after it was completed.

Analysis of the Data

Since no standard norms for the Index of Marital Integration are available, the rank correlations on the index of consensus and the combined husband and wife ratings on the index of role tension for the entire sample were ranked. The ordinal scores resulting from adding each husband-wife dyad's combined consensus and role tension scores

were then ranked for conversion to standard scores as described by Li (1957) for normalizing ranked data. (See appendix.)

The three groups, sensitivity, active, and nonactive, were then separated for comparison by analysis of variance.

In order to examine the relationship of the three groups to the index of consensus and the index of role tension, the same procedure was followed for each of these indices.

II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Marriage and marital problems have been the focus of a large amount of research and opinion defining marital adjustment in various cultures. Analytic studies have been undertaken to isolate variables that operate within the institution of marriage in a given society on the basis of common elements. These studies provide a basic framework describing the operational pattern of the family and allow the classification of data into a functional relationship. Parad and Caplin (1960) list the following basic classifications: (1) family life-style; (2) intermediate problem-solving mechanisms; and (3) need-response pattern.

The family life-style refers to the fairly stable patterning of family organization divided into three interdependent elements of value system, communication network, and role system. Values are the ideas, attitudes, and beliefs which either consciously or unconsciously hold the members of a family together. Communication refers to the channels for carrying messages, transmitting information, feelings, ideas among the various family members of the nuclear family as well as between the family and the outside community. Roles are the product of values and communication that define what is to be done by various members of the family. Definition of roles provides the authority structure for the family in terms

of sanctions, rewarding acceptable performance and punishing poor performance.

Intermediate problem-solving mechanisms are the coping strategies that are triggered when the stable life-style is threatened. Intermediate refers to the temporary nature of this process similar to a system of balance where the process is only active until equilibrium is restored. The mechanisms are transactional, interactional, and interpersonal methods for adapting to and dealing with emotional difficulties associated with stress situations.

The need-response pattern provides a link between the interaction process of the family and the functioning of an individual member. Certain basic needs relevant to individual mental health, such as love for one's own sake, balance between support and independence, balance between freedom and control, and the availability of suitable role models are all a necessary part of the family interaction scheme. Responses to these needs depend upon perception of the needs by other family members, respect for the importance of the needs, and satisfaction of the needs to the possible extent of family resources.

Responsibility of the College or University

American higher education has been distinguished from its European counterpart by its acceptance of at least a part of the

responsibility for student success or failure. This responsibility has been the result of the realization that intellectual accomplishment is related to physical and psychological well-being. In reference to this situation, Leonard (1956) stated:

It was the acceptance of the responsibility for the whole life of the students--housing, boarding, recreation, general welfare, manners, morals, and religious observances, as well as intellectual development--that set the pattern for our present-day programs of personnel services.

Since the scope of married student participation in higher education increased as the World War II progeny reached college age, the implications for student personnel services were of even greater proportions. Mueller (1961) questioned:

If the college accepts, indeed encourages, the marriage with its new housing units, must it not also accept all other prerequisites of married life, the wife and children, the added expenses, responsibilities and stresses? Can it afford to neglect these needs and allow the inevitable attrition and waste to take their toll of our talented youth? Or must higher education assume the responsibility for success in marriage as well as for the intellectual and cultural maturity of its students?

The answer seems evident in light of the interrelated nature of cognitive and affective development of the individual. Since the lifestyle of the student family includes these domains and is situated in the educational community, assistance for development of adequately educated people should include sources readily available to the wife as well as the husband. Frank (1957) agrees by saying:

The goal, then, may be conceived, not as that of providing the minimum, but rather the economically optimum, of equipment, facilities, and services which will make married living and homemaking as feasible and rewarding as possible. Specifically for students at the beginning of their marriage and family living, when of necessity their professional work makes heavy demands upon their time and energy and, be it noted, also placed difficult demands upon their wives.

It seems imperative, therefore, to inquire into possibilities of providing what will enable these young couples, often with babies and young children, to cope with the many tasks of homemaking, during the two, three, or four years of their residence--years which may be crucial for the marriage and for the future development of their children.

There is a considerable amount of agreement on the need for services provided by the college or university. The choice of services is not an "either-or" situation but a matter of "what" and "how much." Mueller (1961) comments relative to an optimum program:

We may provide obstetrical care for their wives, nurseries and babysitters and schools for their children. We may give them the money and the leisure for both husband and wife to devote their time and energy not only to study but to the full development of their personalities and the learning of the fine manners and sophistication we demand of our diplomats, the human insights and values we need in our physicians and lawyers, the keen appreciation of the arts essential for the future industrialists who must be their patrons.

Such a program is admittedly utopian in both content and scope. However, many individual programs for the aid of married students as indicated by Mueller have become reality to some degree. Housing for the married student has become more plentiful. Financial aid programs have offered low interest, deferred payment loans to

the married student. Grants for research and teaching assistantships, fellowships, and stipends have all become more plentiful for allaying monetary obligations. Cooperative child care and nursery schools have been initiated for aiding in problems of child rearing. All of these are remedial in nature because of the increased number of married students reaching the campus. It is obvious that colleges and universities must add additional services of a personal nature for the total well-being of married students.

The Place of the Student Wife

On most campuses, the position of the student wife is recognized neither in terms of emotional and social needs nor in terms of the human potential which she represents. Mueller (1961) states: "Perhaps no other group is being as frankly exploited and wasted as these able young women in our society today." Most significant of the problems which this lack of recognition may precipitate is the failure to grow with her husband as a person and the effect this deficiency may have on the marriage relationship. This observation was advanced by Kirkendall (1957):

One sees women dropping their plans for education to go into routine, dead-end jobs in order to help their husbands through school. May not a woman in this situation find, unless there is careful planning, that educationally her husband has moved on and apart from her while she has been working? As the husband moves further and further with his educational program, his wife may lag

until in the end she is hopelessly left behind. What started as a cooperative venture can turn out to be a dividing experience, unless the husband and wife can develop a real skill in sharing experiences and growing together.

Thus the importance of meaningful, purposive activity for the wife of the graduate student is summed up by Impellizzeri (1961):

. . . psychologists agree in general that psychological health means that: (1) human powers have been harmoniously and fully developed according to their true position within the hierarchy of all man's powers; and (2) they are integrated in the freely willed service of a worthy end--worthy from the point of view of both the person performing the service and of society.

The inference is that the service of providing the male with the necessary means of securing a degree is not enough. The service must be valued as worthy by the person performing that service. It does not infer that the wife should no longer be interested in marriage and motherhood for their own sake but that societal changes have made self-realization and a sense of fulfillment for the wife almost impossible when the program serves only the needs of the husband.

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of a process undertaken with wives of college students which may enhance the achievement of this meaningful service.

The Role of Sensitivity Training

The sociological concept proposed by Mead (1934) that communication is the means by which a person involves himself in participation with the "other" makes it necessary to understand the process by which the individual validates his concept of self. When there is shared communication of attitude toward the environment and there is shared communication by which one assumes the attitude of the other; then through this shared role of the other, the person is able to observe the impact of his own communication. Sensitivity training deals with this aspect of shared communication.

Whitman (1966) discusses this process as follows:

Its purpose can be described best in terms of freedom of choice. Though there is a theoretical problem in the concept of free choice, it is axiomatic that the more significant data one has on which to base a decision, the better the decision one reaches. Training in groups and in human relations of this type sensitizes the individual to the group process affecting him, the influence of other individuals upon him, and his own role in causing the group and individuals to respond to him in a certain way. Since this is essentially a circular chain of events, the individual gains an insight into himself and others as they participate in the transactional process that is human living.

Through involvement in sensitivity sessions, the individual becomes able to observe the effect his actions and words have upon those around him. Ackerman (1958) points out the need for organization of behavior and mind as the result of growth, socialization, and

social communication both with the self and others as prerequisite in maintaining an adequate family life. Discrepancies in role behavior between husband and wife would seem to lead to poor communication and inadequate marital integration. It is important that communication be understood in its total realm. As Hamilton (1960) points out, both verbal and nonverbal communication are factors in the dynamics of marital communication. She also indicated the need for understanding the basic differences between words and actions and their intent.

Studies of communication between spouses have been undertaken in several instances and offer conclusive evidence of marital dissatisfaction resulting from the lack of communication.

Case histories of marriage counselors were examined by Davidoff and Rosten (1959) revealing a high incidence of unrealistic role expectations upon the part of both mates. This aspect of role-taking was studied by Buerkle and Badgley (1959) who found that couples who reported their marriage as "not in trouble" rated higher in role-taking score than did couples who reported their marriage "in trouble" in 222 couples.

In studies of marital adjustment Karlson (1951) and Klausner (1959) found interspousal communication to be significantly correlated with marital adjustment. Empathy on the part of the female was found to be more important than empathy on the part of the

male in marital adjustment. A highly communicative relationship is significantly related to marital adjustment for both the husband and wife. Barriers to communication were highly related to communication and marital adjustment. Significant to this study was the finding that role disagreement is independent of ease of communication between couples.

Folsam (1958) feels that there is a need for training to enable the individual to describe emotional feelings and emotionally significant situations. He states: "The study of interpersonal communication as a distinctive process in its own right, not as a mere index of something else, should greatly improve the techniques we use, and the fine art of living can be communicated."

From the emphasis on interpersonal communication relative to marital adjustment as expressed by the literature, it seems evident that involvement with other people on an interpersonal level could have considerable meaning in helping to reach an adequate level of marital integration. The nature of sensitivity training is such that the dynamics of interpersonal communication is explored in a group setting (Wechsler and Reisel, 1959). When the sensitivity group experience is a fruitful one, it is a deeply personal experience resulting in more direct person-to-person communication, sharply increased self-understanding, more realness and independence in the individual, and an increased understanding and acceptance of

others (Rogers, 1965).

The Index of Marital Integration

Several investigators (Jones, 1958; Medalia, 1962; and Mueller, 1960) have found that married college students show a high degree of adjustment difficulties while attending college. Terman (1947) sought factors relating to marital adjustment in his study of gifted students. He found that personality characteristics, background factors, and sex adjustment were related to happiness in marriage. His study demonstrates the point made by Haley (1959) that the emphasis in psychological study has been on the individual. In general, the studies of personality factors are summed up by Foreman (1966) when he says

. . . any optimally functioning individual is a person who is free to express affect, who is able to function with an apparent awareness of self as well as an awareness of others, who is able to feel close to others, who is able to demonstrate this closeness in his relationships, and who is optimistic in anticipation of outcomes.

In his development of the Index of Marital Integration, Farber (1956) utilized a rating of ten personality traits in the index of role tension. Further basis for the use of personality traits as a means of analyzing interpersonal attraction is set forth by Newcomb (1966) as he states: ". . . one can predict interpersonal attraction under specified conditions, . . . from certain combinations of personality

characteristics and from attitudinal agreement. "

The primary consideration of personality traits resides in the more lasting or developmental qualities which tend to classify an individual. Zaleznik and Moment (1964) point out that personality traits are caused by the sequence of experiences over an individual's lifetime. For instance, aggressiveness, dominance, and friendliness are results of prior events in the individual's life.

Coupled with Newcomb's interpersonal attraction, the latter statement applies to the need-response criteria for individual family members. For example, a volatile, aggressive personality may elicit aggressive, strong pressures as compared to a more withdrawn and sensitive person. It is likely that some persons will experience strong role pressures differently than others. For example, a highly sensitive person may experience more emotional tension under mild pressure than a more rigid person will under intense pressure. The role tension index is indicative of the extent to which personality predispositions lead to the use of certain kinds of coping responses. The intrapunitive person, for example, may blame and hold himself responsible when faced with conflict and frustration, while an aggressive, extrapunitive person would perhaps respond with overt aggression against others whom he tends to blame for difficulties. Preference for certain life-styles of coping with tension and anxiety tend to be rooted in personality structure (Bennis

et al., 1965).

The role tension index of the Index of Marital Integration utilizes ratings by the respondents for both self and spouse on ten personality traits. The total of the husband's ratings for himself and for his spouse and the wife's ratings for herself and for her spouse are used as the index of marital role tension.

Present Conditions for Marital Adjustment

Even though the family has become the primary focus for some research workers in the past ten years, much of what has been done in studying the family has been the study of family members for the purpose of increasing knowledge of the individual (Spiegel and Bell, 1959). By far the largest amount of study dealing with the family has been in the form of therapeutic approaches.

Jackson and Satir (1961) enumerated four approaches which are used in working with families. (1) The family members are seen conjointly which means that all family members are seen by the same therapist at the same time. (2) The whole family is seen conjointly for diagnosis and its members are then assigned to individual therapists who work collaboratively. (3) A single therapist works with family members individually and pieces together what he knows of the interaction as described by the family members. (4) Another approach is to see the identified patient regularly and

the family members occasionally.

MacGregor et al. (1964) tried another approach in which one family is seen in a group initially, and then the family members are seen individually by each of the various members of the "multiple impact therapy" team. At the end of two full days the team and family members gather in a group again for a summary.

Multiple family therapy is described by Curry (1965). In this treatment, several family units are brought together into a large group where the members of the several families examine together their ways of functioning. A variation of multiple family therapy reported by Zwetschke and Grenfell (1965) is called family group consultation. In this process, multiple counselors are present with multiple families and focus on verbal and nonverbal behavior leading to free communication of feelings and attitudes.

This writer's survey of the literature supports the idea that most processes focusing on the family are clinical in orientation, with little emphasis on preventive programs for marital adjustment. In order for clinical or therapeutic processes to function, the family members must agree that their relationships are in trouble and that outside help is needed. Considering the causal factors in marital maladjustment: improper role behavior, poor communication, and unfulfilled need response patterns, such an agreement would seem to be difficult to achieve. A focus on remediation would seem to be

a highly unrealistic expectation for most families in trouble. It probably would be unverifiable, but it can be assumed that only a small proportion of families in trouble ever reach the point of seeking therapy.

The role of a preventive approach, based on the definable settings as proposed in this study, would seem to abridge much of the long-term remediation inherent in therapy. Programs of a preventive nature are presently located in the area of high school and college course offerings and in some church or social agency premarital instructions. After the marriage rites are performed, there is little recourse for the husband, wife, or children, short of admitting failure. The stigma attached to such an admission precludes little possibility of receiving any planned, effective aid in directing the course of the marriage.

Summary

In summary, there have been proposed certain theoretical conditions for adequate marital adjustment in the family. These include a life-style or integrated pattern of value systems, communication networks, and role relations; a system of intermediate problem-solving mechanisms which are interdependent strategies for coping with stress situations; and, need-response patterns consisting of recognition of basic needs of individual members of the

family by other family members.

A description of the situational difficulty facing the married couple in the college or university setting has been outlined. The demands of the situation call for adjustments in the life-style of the family that bear upon the process of problem-solving mechanisms and need-response patterns.

Sensitivity training has been examined as a possible process for meeting the unique problems of an individual faced with adapting to the disintegrating pressures of the situation. Present processes for marital adjustment were reviewed, leading to the conclusion that a need appears to exist for a preventive program, such as sensitivity training for families involved in programs requiring that one or more members adopt new role behavior in one or more sectors of their role systems.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 60 couples who agreed to participate, results were obtained from all but three couples in the active group and one in the nonactive. The characteristics of the three groups relative to age, educational level, years married, and number of children are contained in Table 1. The small differences in these characteristics were the result of selecting couples as closely matched as possible on those particular criteria.

Table 1. Means of age, educational level, years married, and number of children.

	Age		Educational level of wife (yr)	Years married	No. of children
	Husband	Wife			
Sensitivity Group	30.05	28.3	14.8	7.6	2.6
Active Group	31.7	28.6	15.4	7.1	2.4
Nonactive Group	30.5	28.5	14.3	6.9	2.6

Comparison of the sensitivity, active and nonactive groups was accomplished following Li (1957). Transformation of r 's to z scores was done to compensate for the departure of the sampling distribution from normal form (Guilford, 1956). Inspection of the

configuration of the three group means shown in Table 2 seemed to support the hypothesis that the group including the wife who was active showed the highest incidence of marital integration. However, direct computation of variance for groups of unequal size yielded an F value of 2.37 which is not significant at either the five or one percent level of probability.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of scores on the index of marital integration for the sensitivity, active and non-active groups.

Group	Mean	Standard deviation
Sensitivity (N=20)	49.50	24.57
Active (N=17)	65.69	27.75
Nonactive (N=19)	55.61	23.18

Table 3. Analysis of variance of scores for sensitivity, active and nonactive groups on the index of marital integration.

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between	2	4.05	2.02	2.37
Among	53	45.15	.85	
Total	55	49.20		

On the basis of the Index of Marital Integration it would appear that sensitivity training for wives of graduate students is not instrumental in leading to increased marital adjustment higher than that of the other groups. Nor are the indications clear that meaningful, purposeful, structured activity on the part of the wife leads to greater role congruence between husband and wife.

Examination of the three groups by analysis of the results on the index of consensus (see Appendix I) does offer support for the wife's involvement in meaningful activity. Parad and Caplin (1960) indicate that the family life-style is divided into three interdependent elements, one of which is a value system. Values are the ideas, attitudes, and beliefs which either consciously or unconsciously hold the members of a family together. In the agreement process, husband and wife must be able to reach consensus on the domestic values they wish to attain, order them, and proceed toward them in such a manner that both husband and wife see their part in attainment as personally meaningful. Professional endeavor, as characterized by the active group in this study, appears to be a significant factor in achieving consensus on family values.

The second element of the family life-style is a communication network referring to channels for carrying messages, transmitting information, feelings, ideas among the various members of the family itself and the outside community. Sensitivity training, as

described earlier, focuses upon the communication network. The results of this study seem to indicate that such training with only one member of the husband-wife dyad may tend to create or broaden a gap in the family communication channels. It could also be supposed that through lowering of defenses and more direct expression of feelings the sensitivity group is demonstrating a greater awareness of the sources of conflict that exist in the operational pattern of the family. Therefore, as Parad and Caplin (1960) also suggest, these families may in time be better able to adopt coping behavior and develop strategies for handling conflict that would enhance their operation as a family unit.

Table 4. Analysis of variance of scores for sensitivity, active and nonactive groups on the index of consensus.

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between	2	4.73	2.36	3.19*
Among	53	39.24	.74	
Total	55	43.97		

* $P < .05$

The third element of family life-style is a role system. Family roles are the product of values and communication that define what is to be done by various members of the family. Results on the index of role tension analysis (see Appendix I) as shown in Table 5

yield no significant difference between the three groups. This would seem to indicate that final definition of roles is not as important as how it is accomplished. Acceptance of roles, as indicated by the small variation between groups on the index or role tension, may be the result of situational or short range goals related to the period of time the husband is in graduate training. Longer range goals, focusing on domestic values, appear to be a better discriminator of individual feelings leading to family agreement. Of particular significance is the active participation of the wife in a field of endeavor that gives her a functional part in the process of achieving those goals.

Table 5. Analysis of variance of scores for sensitivity, active and nonactive groups on the index of role tension.

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between	2	.42	.21	.31
Among	53	35.60	.67	
Total	55	36.02		

The effect of sensitivity training with wives of graduate students is not clear. It would seem possible that a more sophisticated design based on these results could further the understanding of the process of interaction inherent in the more successfully integrated

couples. Consideration of the length of time for new adjustive strategies to manifest themselves in observable behavior was a shortcoming of the design in this study.

A second consideration should be made for identification of the specific factors in the wife's employment which contribute to the process of consensus in particular and overall marital adjustment in general.

Allowance for these factors would seem to be worthy of attention in future research related to this problem.

IV SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the usefulness of sensitivity training with wives of graduate students in decreasing role tension resulting from the husband's participation in an advanced degree-seeking program and to assess the effect of professional endeavor of wives upon marital integration. It was hypothesized that sensitivity training for wives of graduate students who were not involved outside the home in meaningful, purposive, structured activity would lead to a positive correlation with wives who were actively involved and had a personal identity other than with the husband and his professional development. Three groups were chosen for comparison: a sensitivity group; an active group wherein the wife of a graduate student was involved one-half time or more in seeking a college degree or pursuing a professional occupation such as teaching, nursing, social work, etc.; and a nonactive group including wives who had no involvement outside the home nor sensitivity training.

Sensitivity training sessions focusing upon shared communication of feelings to achieve awareness of the effect which individual behavior has upon others and the reciprocal effect the behavior of others has upon themselves were conducted in two settings, one at the Portland Continuation Center, the other at Oregon State University. Two counselors, one being this writer, trained in

sensitivity group process conducted 20 two and one-half hour sessions on a weekly basis. Each wife of a graduate student participating in the study was in attendance for at least 14 of the sessions.

The active and nonactive groups were selected from volunteers living in the Oregon State University community. Those selected were matched as closely as possible for age, educational level, years married, and number of children.

Upon the completion of the sensitivity training period, all couples in the three groups were administered the Index of Marital Integration. Care was taken to avoid comparison by husbands and wives while completing the instrument. The Index of Marital Integration consists of an index of consensus and an index of role tension. The first contains ten domestic values to be ranked in order of importance and is scored by comparison of the rankings by husband and wife through use of the Spearman rho. The index of role tension is comprised of ratings for self and spouse on ten personality items. Scoring is accomplished by weighting the ratings on each item from a minus two to plus two. The total of the ratings by husband and wife for self and spouse are added to achieve a measure of role tension. A high total indicates low marital role tension while a low score indicates high marital role tension. The index of marital integration is formed by adding the ordinal scores on the consensus and role

tension indices.

The resulting scores for the three groups were combined and ranked. The ranked scores were converted to standard scores for the purpose of normalizing the sample. Each group was then separated and compared by analysis of variance using the z scores. The computation of variance yielded an F value of 2.37 for the Index of Marital Integration which is not significant at either the five or one percent level of probability.

Using the same method of analysis for the three groups on the index of consensus results only, an F value of 3.19 which is significant at the five percent level of probability was found. The active participation group showed significantly greater agreement on domestic values by husband and wife than either the sensitivity or nonactive groups. This would indicate that the wife's involvement in the process of attaining long range domestic goals is a significant factor in marital integration.

Analysis of the results of the index of role tension only revealed no significant difference between the three groups. Coupled with the findings from the total Index of Marital Integration and the index of consensus analyses, these results seem to further substantiate the active involvement of the wife in attainment of long range family goals as an important factor in marital integration. All three groups appear to assign roles on a short range basis as necessary

such as during the husband's period of graduate training.

The effect of sensitivity training with wives of graduate students is inconclusive. It may be that if anything, sensitivity training with only one member of the husband-wife dyad may create or broaden a gap in the process of marital integration. A shortcoming of this study was the lack of consideration given to the time factor in allowing development of adjustive strategies resulting from sensitivity training that could lead to behavior demonstrating greater marital integration.

Two directions for further research seem to be indicated in the findings of this study. The first and most important would be the identification of specific factors in the active professional endeavor of wives that lead to greater marital integration. The second would be application of these factors to a process, sensitivity training or some other interpersonal transaction, that could substitute for meaningful, purposive activity for wives unable to be involved in professional endeavor outside the home.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

INSTRUMENT #1

Below are standards by which family success has been measured. Look through the list and mark 1 after the item you consider most important in judging the success of families (in the column headed RANK). Look through the list again and mark 2 after the item you consider next important. Keep doing this until you have a number after each item.

There is no order of items which is correct; the order you choose is correct for you. Remember, there can be only one marked 1, one item marked 2, one item marked 3, ...one item marked 10.

	<u>RANK</u>
A PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY. The ability of a family to give its members a respected place in the community and to make them good citizens (not criminals or undesirable people)	_____
HEALTHY AND HAPPY CHILDREN	_____
COMPANIONSHIP. The family members feeling comfortable with each other and being able to get along together.	_____
PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT. Continued increase in family members ability to understand and get along with people and to accept responsibility	_____
SATISFACTION IN AFFECTION SHOWN. Satisfaction of family members with amount of affection shown and of the husband and wife in their sex life.	_____
ECONOMIC SECURITY. Being sure that the family will be able to keep up or improve its standard of living	_____
EMOTIONAL SECURITY. Feeling that the members of the family really need each other emotionally and trust each other fully	_____
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS UNITY. Trying to live a family life according to religious and moral principles and teachings	_____
EVERYDAY INTEREST. Interesting day-to-day activities having to do with house and family which keep family life from being boring	_____
A HOME. Having a place where the family members feel they belong, where they feel at ease, and where other people do not interfere in their lives.	_____

INSTRUMENT #2a
SELF RATING

Below is a list of personality traits that are part of each individual's personality organization. As you go down the list, place an X in the column that corresponds to your rating of how applicable that trait is to your own personality.

	very much	consid- erably	some- what	a little	hasn't the trait at all
1. Sense of humor					
2. Sense of duty					
3. Stubborn					
4. Gets angry easily					
5. Feelings easily hurt					
6. Nervous or irritable					
7. Easygoing					
8. Moody					
9. Jealous					
10. Likes to take responsibility					
11. Dominating or bossy					
12. Critical of others					
13. Easily excited					
14. Shy					
15. Likes belonging to organizations					
16. Easily depressed					
17. Self-centered					

INSTRUMENT #2b
SPOUSE RATING

Below is a list of personality traits that are part of each individual's personality organization. As you go down the list, place an X in the column that corresponds to your rating of how applicable that trait is to your spouse's personality.

	very much	consid- erably	some- what	a little	hasn't the trait at all
1. Sense of humor					
2. Sense of duty					
3. Stubborn					
4. Gets angry easily					
5. Feelings easily hurt					
6. Nervous or irritable					
7. Easygoing					
8. Moody					
9. Jealous					
10. Likes to take responsibility					
11. Dominating or bossy					
12. Critical of others					
13. Easily excited					
14. Shy					
15. Likes belonging to organizations					
16. Easily depressed					
17. Self-centered					

APPENDIX II

Derivation of Scores on the Index of Marital Integration

The following steps were followed in deriving scores for the three groups:

I. Index of Consensus

- A. Agreement of husband and wife rankings of domestic values was measured by using the Spearman rank correlation, rho, for each couple.

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6\sum D^2}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

- B. The size of the rank correlation was used as an index of degree of consensus. This was accomplished by ranking the correlations with the smallest assigned a rank of one and the largest a rank of 56. Ties were averaged and assigned the average rank. Ranking was done on the basis of a composite of the three groups.

II. Index of Role Tension

- A. The ratings by both husband and wife for self and spouse on the ten personality items were totalled to form the Index of Role Tension.
- B. A high score was regarded as indicating high integration. The scores were then ranked following the procedure for

ranking in I., B, above.

III. Index of Marital Integration

- A. Since no evidence is available indicating relative importance of the Index of Consensus or Index of Role Tension, the combined rank for each couple on the two scales form the Index of Marital Integration (i. e., Consensus rank = 54 plus Role Tension rank = 26 = Marital Integration score 80).
- B. The Index of Marital Integration scores were then ordered and ranked for the entire population.
- C. In order to normalize the ranked data, the results of III., B, above were converted to standard scores using a conversion table,

IV. Comparison of the Groups

- A. The sensitivity, active and nonactive groups were separated into respective groups.
 - B. Analysis of variance for groups of unequal size was performed to test for difference among the means.
- V. The same procedure for conversion of ranks to standard scores was followed for separate analysis of the index of consensus and index of role tension.