Theory and Practice of Human Relations Training
Theory and Practice of
HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING

BY

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THE HOGG FOUNDATION FOR MENTAL HYGIENE

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Introductory Note

This brochure describes a development of mental health significance. For several years the Hogg Foundation provided travel fellowships to enable staff members of the University of Texas and of other agencies to take part in the National Training Laboratory in Group Development at Bethel, Maine.

The Lemuel Scarbrough Foundation and the Hogg Foundation have made initial grants to the group which has organized the Southwestern Human Relations Laboratory, whose sessions will be held each summer in one of the three cooperating states, Colorado, Kansas, and Texas. The Human Relations Training Laboratory is jointly sponsored by The University of Texas, the University of Colorado, Southern Methodist University, and Kansas State College.

Two participants in the development of the Southwest Laboratory have prepared the material for this publication. They are Dr. Robert R. Blake, Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Texas, and Mrs. Jane S. Mouton of the Department of Psychology, University of Texas.

The Foundation is glad to call this publication to the attention of persons who are interested in learning more about the nature of a human relations laboratory. The statements contained in this publication are of course the ideas and responsibility of the authors.

Robert L. Sutherland, Director
The Hogg Foundation for Mental Hygiene
Preface

Human relations training leads to better mental health through improved understanding of self and of others, of groups and of communities. Conflict, indecision, hostility and strife based on faulty human relations are no longer “inevitable.” Agreement may replace conflict and certainty, indecision. Friendship may develop where hostility formerly existed. Cooperation may displace strife.

Human relations training is based on personal, direct experience. By seeing and feeling one's own behavior against new social backgrounds and by exploring and trying alternative techniques for handling difficult situations, new opportunities for solving problems become evident. By studying the operation of social phenomena of which one was previously unaware, it becomes possible to appreciate why social events occur as they do. Learning to communicate with others more effectively is intrinsically rewarding. Accepting and respecting others, even when the reasons for their conduct are not understood, can be another product of this approach to mental health. The development of leadership skills and the more effective mobilization of human resources also are possible through the training approach to mental health.

Human relations training is not particularly well suited to the standard classroom situation. Conventional methods of teaching are unsatisfactory as techniques of communication. Successful training requires special conditions for learning. The following presentation describes some of the training experiences that are included, and the conditions for successful human relations learning are outlined. A perspective is provided rather than a finished document enumerating fixed rules.

Several learning opportunities have been helpful in evaluating approaches to human relations training described here. Membership on the staff of the National Training Laboratory in Group Development, Bethel, Maine, and The Texas Institute of Children and Youth, Camp Waldemar, Hunt, Texas, has contributed to the appreciation of how laboratory training can facilitate the development of human relations sensitivity and skills. Experience based on consultation with such organizations as the National Association of Girl Scout Executives, American Hospital Association, American Occupational Therapy Association and The Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs also has proved
valuable through providing the opportunity to test certain of the tech-
niques that are described for their adequacy as human relations train-
ing methods. The comparison between human relations training and
the approach using therapy groups is based on two years of experi-
ence in psychoanalytic group therapy, one at the Tavistock Clinic,
London, and the other in connection with research conducted at Har-
vard University. Participation in an Advanced Seminar for General
Semantics, Lime Rock, Connecticut, made possible the comparison of
the Laboratory approach with the approach to human relations train-
ing that is based on General Semantics.

Training in human relations is hardly a decade old. The future
will see many significant changes in the design described here. Such
changes are likely to constitute modifications rather than fundamental
alterations as the training design of the future is likely to evolve from
the approach to human relations training outlined in the following
pages.

R. R. B.
J. S. M.

March 1, 1955
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CHAPTER I

Basis for Human Relations Training

Human relations training program is based on several components. One provides the opportunity for the analysis of human relations problems which arise in connection with the requirements of work. Human relations problems may develop from the content of an occupation as well as from other sources. Learning how to deal with such specialized content problems is possible by reexamining certain of the implicit assumptions that guide the interactions among people while working.

Another part of the training program offers the opportunity for learning to be sensitive to the social factors in a human relations situation that are negative. Sensitivity is increased to the behavior of others, to one's own behavior toward others, to phenomena which appear in groups, and to how communities are organized. This is training in seeing and feeling. A third component involves learning to replace negative behavior at each of these levels with new and more skillful social behavior. This is training in acting and in responding.

The description of a Human Relations Training Laboratory given here can serve as an introduction for individuals considering participating in such an institute. It should be helpful to those who are interested in increasing their understanding of the kind of training that will be involved. Individuals or groups developing a training program may find suggestions which will help them plan more wisely. The description may suggest ways of improving programs that are already in operation.

THE TRAINING LABORATORY AS A "CULTURAL ISLAND"

A particular kind of learning situation is desirable for achieving the human relations training goals mentioned above. One of the more successful plans is based on developing a "cultural island" where participants can engage in intensive study of human relations problems without excessive outside interference (14). By using a camp, dude ranch, boarding school, resort setting, or an isolated large residence, participants are freed from the many pressures likely to be present
in a hotel, college, or a headquarters building. Newspapers are not available at every corner. There may be no more than one telephone. Mail is delivered only once a day. Pressures from the work situation are somewhat decreased. Participants live together without the continual harassment of making decisions and meeting deadlines likely to characterize their daily lives.

Under the less strained conditions of a “cultural island,” human relations problem situations, often ignored or glossed over under the press of work activities, can be analyzed and understood. Opportunities for recreation provided by isolated camp sites help break the standard routine for thinking and acting. The cultural island permits participants to experience their human relations problems from a new and challenging perspective.

Participants have common occupational interests but are not persons with whom one usually works. Because other participants are likely to live in another city, to be engaged in one of several related occupations, or to hold positions at different levels in the hierarchy of a profession, industrial or community organization, agency, public service or governmental institution, the learning situation is less threatening. The result is that a person can more easily examine his behavior and how it influences others. Other factors also contribute to the effectiveness of the cultural island as a human relations learning situation.

COMPOSITION OF THE TRAINING LABORATORY

Participants from different occupational specialties who share a single underlying purpose form a natural group for human relations training. For example, in the youth development area one occupational cluster is represented by case workers, judges, probation officers, public health nurses, psychiatrists, clinical and child psychologists, policemen, institutional workers, and others. Their work is to create conditions under which youngsters who are facing special problems can develop mature and more adequate social behavior. All deal with human relations difficulties. They share the problem of how best to deal with concrete human relations problems of youth.

A comparable group might be drawn from business and industry. Participants from several related activities including personnel directors, public relations officers, executive assistants, directors of training, and the personnel responsible for achieving coordination among interdependent subdivisions also form a natural unit for human re-
lations training. Their goals are those of increasing the efficiency of work, of arranging for the use of skills and resources otherwise unused and of improving the general satisfaction derived from work. Opportunities for understanding social relations difficulties created by the nature of these occupations are provided through arranging for specialists to teach and to learn from one another.

Another consideration in selecting participants is that of insuring a sufficient variety of specialists within the occupational cluster in the student body. Heterogeneity within an occupational cluster permits the assignment of participants to training groups on a non-occupational and non-specialized interest basis.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

The design can be modified in a number of ways to meet the specific objectives of any particular occupational cluster. The Institute may meet for different periods of time and under different physical conditions. It may use some parts of the training design being described and omit others. It may emphasize somewhat different needs of participants, depending on what the training program is designed to accomplish and the availability of appropriately skilled staff. While there is no fixed or ideal length for the training period, the plan described here is for a laboratory of two weeks.

To provide an overall view of the various parts of an Institute program a tentative schedule of training activities for a two week period is shown in Figure 1. In the following chapters, the internal organization of the laboratory, the purpose of the groups and sessions, and the procedures useful for conducting the various programs are described.
**Figure 1**

*Typical Schedule of Daily Activities in a Human Relations Training Laboratory*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>First Week</th>
<th>Second Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monday through Sunday</td>
<td>Monday through Saturday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00-8:00</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Same as the first week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:00</td>
<td>Staff arrival, steering committee meeting</td>
<td>Final Summary Session</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Morning Session—broad issues of Institute, or social science theory (Entire Institute body)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:10-10:10</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Groups (Common interest groups)</td>
<td>Evaluation by Discussion Groups of total Institute (11:15-11:45)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:20-11:45</td>
<td>Intradisciplinary Groups (Specialty occupational groups)</td>
<td>Departure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30- 3:30</td>
<td>Process Group (Group problem-solving)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30- 5:30</td>
<td>Pre-Institute planning, design details, quality standards. Arrival of participants.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6:30- 7:30</td>
<td>Goals, Introduction of Staff, announcements during dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00- 9:45</td>
<td>GES-Problem-Census</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Committee to set-up Inter-disciplinary Groups, other staff planning</td>
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**Notes:**
- Same as the first week
- Staff meetings from morning evaluations 1:45-3:00
- Final Staff meeting for evaluation
CHAPTER II

General Sessions

Some of the goals of laboratory training can be achieved in sessions where all participants meet in a single group. Three different aspects of training which can be met in large meetings of all laboratory participants are described. Included are the analysis of an institute theme, presentation of social science theory and experiments, and study of community organization.

General Morning Sessions

The general morning session may serve either of two broad content purposes. One is developing the implications of the institute theme.

Human Relations Theme

A broad theme can serve to organize the total laboratory program. For a laboratory concerned with leadership, an example of an appropriate theme would be "Changing Concepts of Leadership." When the total laboratory community is focused on a single, broad content problem, staff and students meet together to analyze the deeper implications contained in the theme.

The examination of the laboratory theme in general morning sessions permits participants to analyze the underlying significance of a common issue. Through general discussion a specialist from one area comes to appreciate the way specialists from other fields and specialists from his own area view a common human relations problem. The content of the general morning session often becomes the point of departure for discussions in other groups.

Since development of a laboratory theme calls for unusual skill and understanding, a specialist is placed in charge of general morning sessions. He gives direction and continuity to the program series although institute members actively participate in the analysis and discussion of the theme. Lectures can be used at critical points, particularly if techniques which supplement them are employed to ensure that all participants critically examine the problem from their
own individual perspectives. A number of approaches useful in improving the analysis, discussion, and understanding of a theme by a large group are presented in the section *Techniques for Increasing Participation*.

In the first general morning session some of the issues underlying the theme can be defined. The leader can introduce aspects of the topic that he considers important. The entire group then assumes the task of discovering implications of the theme for each individual. By dividing the large group into six or seven member sub-groups to discuss for ten or fifteen minutes the implications of the problem, each person has the opportunity of exchanging his views with others. An advantage of this method is that reluctance to state personal views in public is less when a person is in a small informal group.

If small discussion groups are used to analyze problem areas, at the end of the discussion period a recorder from each of the sub-groups summarizes to the whole assembly the discussion as it developed within his group. The general session leader then summarizes and comments from his own specialized point of view on the content reported by each recorder. His summary may emphasize similarities and differences as reported from the sub-groups, pointing toward identifying new issues with which the group is likely to be concerned in later meetings. The problem then can be restated to take advantage of the points developed through discussion.

After the problem has been defined in the initial session, the plan of the general morning sessions is designed to permit the sequential development of the laboratory theme. One point of departure for the second general morning session is to use recorders from the previous day. They serve as a committee and help the general session leader develop alternative procedures for use in the next meeting. If it seemed important to emphasize differences expressed with respect to the theme, the two recorders whose groups had presented the most divergent points of view might organize their sub-groups into panels to discuss their differences. Alternatively, a role playing situation might be staged to give dramatic reality to a central issue in order to redefine the issue prior to its discussion in sub-groups. Programs later in the week can use additional role playing situations, dramatic skits, films with panels, discussion groups or other techniques suitable for the purpose of improving analysis, understanding and discussion of the institute theme.

The general design as first developed can undergo continuous replanning from one general morning session to the next. Effort can be
made to insure that plans for each day's activities coincide with needs of participants. A very brief Post-Meeting Reaction (PMR) sheet completed at the end of each session is helpful in planning, particularly if questions concerning the way the program can be developed are included. The use of a joint student-staff general session planning committee helps insure that this part of the training program provides learning material of significance for institute members.

**Social Science Theory**

For groups with advanced basic training in social science, the general morning session may be more appropriately used for studying the theory and practice of human relations training. If theory is substituted as a topic of study, the level of presentation can be kept concrete by reference to experiments, field studies and other illustrative material. In addition, the demonstration of important phenomena can be arranged so that everyone can actively participate in studying direct examples of the principles being developed. Three aspects of human relations theory and practice, including community organization, small group and individual dynamics, may be presented in general morning sessions concerned with social science. Suggestions for the development of social science theory are presented in *Group Dynamics* (4).

Recommendations for the procedure of presenting social science theory in the general morning sessions are based on the following outline.

**Orientation.** Beginning with an orientation to the problem to be examined can provide a framework for listening to and analyzing the content presented. Word pictures describing the problem and how it appears in specific everyday behavior, both within the home situation and within the laboratory itself, help keep the presentation concrete. Vignettes serve to link personal experience of audience members to the more abstract discussion of phenomena.

**Principles, experiments, and action models.** Following the orientation, principles or generalized statements found useful in making phenomena more understandable are presented. An effort can be made to increase and to reinforce verbal understanding through audio-visual aids including charts, blackboards, projection equipment or other means. Along with the formulation of principles, experiments conducted to test their validity may be described. With careful selection and effective presentation these are insured a positive reception, if for
no other reason than the common observation that an adequately
designed social experiment has an intrinsic appeal.

Role playing is useful as a means for communicating the basic prob­
lem. When used with sub-group discussion and followed by summary,
evaluation and interpretation, role playing also may be presented to
increase sensitivity to and understanding of the kinds of behavior or
situations to which the principle has application.

Training applications and action implications. The final part of a
theory presentation is concerned with exploring training applications
and action implications.

Through reference to the vignettes, the principles which have been
developed can be analyzed. A number of specific instances or illus­
trations of common experiences can be added which are made more
understandable through application of the principle. In each case, the
implications for increased understanding of phenomena occurring in
the process groups or within the framework of the community organi­
zation objective also can be drawn. During the same period it may be
appropriate to identify and to discuss the problem of acquiring diag­
nostic and action skills requisite for effective application of the
principle presented.

GENERAL EVENING SESSIONS

Laboratory participants meet again as an assembly in the final for­
mal session of the day. The significant point of difference between the
general morning and general evening session is that the former has as
its purpose the analysis of problems defined by the institute theme
or by social science theory, while the latter can be used to study the
organization of communities or to further other training objectives.

Community Organization Problems

During the general evening session problems of community organi­
zation can be studied. Problems such as channels of communication,
conditions under which decisions are made, and power relations which
exist between people located at different positions in the community
can be analyzed.

Several aspects of communication at the community organization
level may be evaluated. Communication through both formal and in­
formal channels is traced and the content communicated through types
of networks also is assessed. The problems of developing techniques
and mechanisms for more effective community expression and of de­
veloping procedures that result in more representative community
action also are treated.
The kinds of decision-making mechanisms existing in different community structures and at different positions in the community hierarchy are studied. Some of these will include individuals as the decision-making authority, the use of small committees for decision-making, or decision-making based on the judgment of the community as-a-whole. In the two latter cases the criterion employed for determining when a decision has been reached would be examined. A variety of criteria, including unanimous consensus, a criterion of three-fourths, two-thirds, or more than half are used. The criterion employed enters into the speed and quality of decision-making and effects the commitment to decisions on the part of the individuals concerned.

The optimal level for decision-making may be analyzed as a function of those who are affected and those who must carry the decision into action. The manner in which decisions are communicated through the hierarchy also may be considered.

Community power structures are analyzed with demonstrations of the way in which sociometric procedures are employed to identify power figures, decision-makers, and community influence patterns. Conditions which produce in-group and out-group phenomena are examined. Recent work demonstrating the manner in which reference group affiliations are used for exerting influence and power also can be evaluated.

During the general evening session, the institute may be organized into a community for solving a community-wide problem. It might represent a small city, for example, that has recently been selected by a major industrial organization as the location for its home office and major plant. The company and the city must agree on where to locate the industry within the city. The problem is complicated by zoning laws, the city tax structure, the problem of arranging for transportation facilities including a railroad and access to major highways, the effect on value of nearby property, including residential areas and so on. Participants in the general session are organized into community sub-groups for the purpose of portraying the problem and finding a solution for it. One group represents the Real Estate Board, another the City Zoning Authority. Other groups include the City Council, the School Board, the Tax League, the garden clubs, and the local labor unions. Each has its own preferred solution and the enactment shows how groups communicate as well as permitting an analysis of the content of the communications that occur. It also permits assessment of communication channels whether by telephone, through direct contact, newspapers, or by correspondence.
The process of making decisions also can be analyzed by studying how each of the groups goes about deciding what its position will be with respect to the location of the industry. Assessment may be made of the extent to which decisions are binding on the members of each group, whether procedures exist for future modification of decisions and so on. Power relations between members both within and between groups also may be assessed by investigating the way in which power and influence are exerted, whether by personal favors, threats, the promise of reward, or appeals to group loyalty.

Other examples of the way in which the institute can be used for the purpose of analyzing community structure include the staging of problems such as relocating the railroad which passes through the center of a city, building a youth center, and raising or lowering school taxes. In all cases, the participants first identify the important subgroups in the community that are likely to find agreement difficult on a solution. Each group is then assigned a particular position with respect to the issue to portray. At various stages, the activity is stopped for purposes of study and evaluation.

Portrayal of community problems also provides an excellent training opportunity for applying social science findings about interconnections between personality, group process and operation, and community organization. For example, in any of the committees mentioned above some insecure person may make a fear-provoking remark to the effect that the plan under consideration would fail. The group becomes fearful to act. Even though an objective view would show that the fear is groundless, such a statement can influence the committee to change its entire approach. An anxious person by his remarks has prevented group action from modifying the organization of the community.

Due to the complex nature of problems mentioned here, investigation of how phenomena at each of the three levels are interconnected can be achieved only in a limited way. Participants may learn to see how phenomena arise due to the interrelations among personality considerations, group operation and community organization within the institute. They then may be able to translate and use the insights obtained for understanding some of the forces which determine the structure of their work organizations. Such learning is particularly helpful to those engaged in conducting programs involving a whole community.
Other Uses

A more specific learning opportunity or one only indirectly related to the institute theme may be created by using the general evening session to emphasize a particular problem of general significance to the entire institute. In addition to the content objectives, the general evening session also provides an excellent opportunity for studying how to conduct large meetings through analysis of techniques used in staging the general sessions.

A general evening session may be used to acquaint the entire training community with a problem that is the primary concern of one occupational group. If a group of policemen have been dealing with human relations problems which arise in taking a juvenile who has committed an offense home to his parents, they can enact the various ways in which this might be done. Then the problem can be discussed by the entire assembly. Certain types of skills such as practice in role playing and learning to supply group roles would be provided. Skill training of this kind can be given during the general evening session.

Afternoon faculty meetings where members suggest ways of using the general evening session are of particular advantage. A special planning group assigned responsibility for interpreting how outstanding developments in other parts of the institute may be presented can help in making maximum use of the general evening session.

CRITIQUE SESSIONS

An additional way of studying community organization is through the use of critique sessions. In the critique sessions participants ask questions about the design of the training program and about community organization. The institute itself can be viewed as an "experimental community" where a sizable group of people live together and engage in discussion, analysis, and solution of human relations problems. By studying the organization of the institute community in an orderly way, delegates analyze its structure, identify the forces which prevent it from undergoing change, and suggest modifications in its structure. By using the critique session to study the institute, insights are gained concerning community organization. These may be transferable to the actual work situation in the back-home community.

The critique session meets for thirty minutes at the close of each day. Participation is voluntary. Discussion concerns the training activities included in the institute program. No limitations are imposed regarding the kinds of questions which may be asked or the kinds of
remarks that may be made. Staff members have the responsibility of answering questions in such a way as to facilitate the study of community organization. Only in this way can participants understand the assumptions underlying the organization of the community, or the structural arrangements in terms of which it functions.
CHAPTER III

Content Groups

Specific human relations problems that arise in work activities are studied through the use of content groups composed on both an interdisciplinary and an intradisciplinary basis.

INTERDISCIPLINARY GROUPS

Objectives

One set of human relations training objectives provides participants the opportunity to understand better the approach to common problems of members from related fields. By understanding the services rendered in related areas, participants from each speciality can make use of a wider range of resources for dealing with problems arising within their own field. Each can determine more accurately whether the solution of a given problem will be facilitated by using the skills of others. For example, through understanding how a clinician handles problems, a family case worker may see more clearly that a client also requires clinical services provided by a psychologist or a psychiatrist.

Ways also may be learned that modify a given specialist's approach to his own job. The probation officer may see how he can be more effective in dealing with problems arising between himself, the mothers, and the children for whom he is responsible through analysis of how a skillful public health nurse handles a mother-child problem. Through examining how a child psychiatrist thinks about a behavior problem the specialist from another discipline, such as the worker in an institution responsible for foster home placement, may see that he can employ additional frames of reference in dealing with human relations problems in his own work.

A by-product of training that meets the interdisciplinary objectives also should be mentioned. Under cultural island conditions representatives from related disciplines may find it possible to work together in the analysis of human relations problems even though they might find cooperation difficult in the work situation. By studying together
under cultural island conditions, ways of cooperation may be learned for application in the home situation.

A training program meeting these objectives can provide each action specialist with knowledge for doing his own job better, either directly or through arranging to bring the resources of others to bear on the solution of complex problems. The training program being described includes Interdisciplinary Groups. They are content groups specifically designed to provide learning opportunities meeting these objectives.

Procedure

Interdisciplinary Groups can be formed by conducting a problem-census and then composing groups along lines of common interest (12). A problem-census designed to identify functional or common interest groups is conducted in the following way. The leader introduces the problem by indicating that interdisciplinary groups are to be formed, but that the planning group had no way of making an accurate assessment of needs and interests in advance of the arrival of participants. Then the group is separated into a number of sub-groups so that each person can formulate and express his own problem interests to others. During the sub-group discussions, participants help one another in clarifying and making explicit the problems on which they wish to work.

After fifteen to twenty minutes of discussion, the larger group is reassembled. Each sub-group reports its needs and interests to a blackboard recorder. Since the institute membership is composed of specialists from different disciplines within an occupational area, a pattern of interests is likely to appear. An effort is then made to determine the extent to which each cluster of problems constitutes an appropriate unit for organizing an interdisciplinary group. Cards are distributed, and each person ranks the problem areas in order of importance for him. A special committee then can organize the interdisciplinary groups, with members being placed according to their interests.

An example of a problem which could be analyzed in an interdisciplinary group would be establishing a Child Guidance Clinic supported by the community. Participants may be members who have had experience in establishing some community-wide service, those who are faced with the task of introducing one, or those who feel their organization should move in the direction of supporting the development of some such service. The possibility of the problem being dis-
cussed from many points of view is increased by the fact that both the areas of specialization and level of experience are different for individual members of the group. Emphasis can be placed on how to deal with human relations problems stemming from unreasoning resistance or overenthusiastic endorsements, from disinterest arising from inadequate understanding of the value of the services or from vested interests that threaten certain specialized groups and, therefore, block cooperation. From a more general point of view, groups might discuss any matter involving human relations issues which seem sufficiently important to attract participants from a number of different disciplines.

Staff members are assigned to lead the interdisciplinary groups in terms of their own interests and abilities. At the time staff selections are made, consideration should be given to discussing appropriate ways of leading content groups. Suggestions can be given on how to proceed in developing an adequate agenda, on the use of recorders to summarize group discussions, on providing a summary at the end of each day that will permit the continuous development of the group as it discusses the topic, and so on.

Institute interdisciplinary groups often are ended three or four days before the close of the institute. The meeting time made available is used for considering how best to apply institute learnings in the home situation.

Consideration of home applications can be facilitated by conducting a census of staff and students which will identify both the needs for tailor-made consultation regarding the solution of particular home problems and the staff and student resources which may be helpful in supplying the necessary consultation. Consultation on home situations constitutes an important part of the training program since it provides each participant the opportunity to study his own particular problems with freedom from immediate work pressures.

INTRADISCIPLINARY GROUPS

Objectives

Bringing several people from one discipline together to discuss human relations problems in their own field allows each to see a variety of ways in which such problems may be handled.1 Police officers can

1 In some respects, the intradisciplinary objective is comparable to the objectives sought by the American Management Association through its seminar program (1).
discuss the issue of finger printing youngsters, or case workers may share views concerning the implications of conducting an intake interview when both mother and daughter are present. Industrial training directors compare and contrast supervisory training programs.

Meeting the intradisciplinary objectives in a training institute provides opportunity to compare various approaches to a given human relations problem that have been tried by specialists from the same content area. Participants discover that different members can suggest alternative ways of dealing with the same human relations problem. They test the implications of an anticipated change in their home situation against the experiences of others who have dealt with similar problems. Under cultural island conditions it becomes possible for specialists to reexamine or modify stereotyped assumptions without appearing inconsistent, as would be the case if the same discussion occurred with colleagues in the home situation.

**Procedure**

The training design provides for meeting these objectives through intradisciplinary groups. Intradisciplinary groups are discussion groups conducted in a manner similar to interdisciplinary groups. However intradisciplinary groups deal more intensively with technical human relations problems since both the participants and group leaders have had experience in the same content area (12). Members check the validity of solutions offered by others against their own first-hand experience. A group of nurses may discuss the problem of understanding human relations motives that lead women into the nursing profession. Case workers may analyze a specific case report in order to gain a better understanding of its human relations components and various approaches to its solution. Judges discuss human relations problems that arise in the trial of delinquents.

If role playing and other techniques for practicing new solutions to human relations problems are employed, the intradisciplinary group provides skill training for its members in initiating proposed modifications in their standard procedure for handling problems. Another advantage of the intradisciplinary group is that the leader functions as a resource person in suggesting improved ways of handling a human relations problem which might not have occurred to the participants. While there are numerous advantages from such human relations training opportunities, one of the less visible gains may be that of raising standards for what constitutes adequate or effective handling of a human relations problem.
CHAPTER IV

Process Groups

OBJECTIVES

The process objective is concerned with analyzing and learning to manage difficulties which occur among people who are engaged in joint problem-solving activities. Effective participation in group action constitutes an important objective in human relations training. Staff meetings, committee sessions, planning boards, and so on are examples of groups engaged in solving problems.

The process objective seeks to provide understanding of the extent to which a group is working efficiently. It is also concerned with providing requisite skills for constructive handling of human relations problems in the area of small group behavior. For these reasons an understanding of how groups work and of the blocks to effective group action can lead to the more efficient use of small groups for solving problems in any work area. Skills for more effective management or participation in work groups can be acquired through the Process Group.²

Relating the Individual to the Group

Participants look at many different aspects of group and individual behavior in studying group action. They develop understanding of their own reactions to others and the reactions of others to them without the resistance and defensiveness that might arise in a work setting. They examine how members either contribute to or hinder the group in solving its problems. Members have the opportunity to see the discrepancies between the roles individuals insist on playing for personal reasons and the roles the group has need for them to take if it is to be effective. The group is able to examine the roles necessary for successful completion of the task and to practice the skills required in order to supply them (3) (8) (10) (13). The way the leader’s behavior

² The process group is also referred to as training or T-group in the human relations literature.
either obstructs or facilitates group functioning and the way members seek to relate to the leader also are investigated.

Achieving Group Consensus

Participants analyze their difficulties in achieving a valid, group-based consensus. First-hand experience is provided in the importance of formulating discussion issues with clarity, in collecting information through direct fact-finding, of spreading participation, and of dealing with intense emotional feelings as they arise rather than allowing them to remain unexpressed. Members are able to appreciate the significance of an adequate summary for giving the group direction and continuity. Obstacles to communication are explored. The group has the opportunity to see how the same words will be variously interpreted by different members, and how black-white thinking can lead to hassles, conflicts, indecision, hostility and strife. The group has the opportunity to see and to experience the differences between real compromise, based on shared agreement and unhealthy, artificial compromise based on avoidance of conflict, fear of rejection and so on. Through developing skill in analyzing such barriers, members come to realize that a consensus based on the conviction of the whole group requires the greatest understanding, skill, insight, patience, and good will. In other words, agreement through mature human relations among group members is a social achievement of the highest order.

PROCEDURE

Agreeing on an Agenda

The functions of a process leader are different from those of the leader for an interdisciplinary or intradisciplinary group who helps the group to formulate a content agenda and who accepts administrative responsibility for the group operation. The process leader’s obligation is to remain sensitive to developments in the group. By allowing the group to establish procedure for formulating its own agenda rather than providing it with the means for preparing one, the leader creates a situation where ordinary protocol for solving problems within a group no longer applies. The group is ready to work but has no explicit agenda to serve as the basis for interaction. Such a situation provides the group an opportunity to observe the way it goes about defining the problem on which it will work. With no prescribed agenda and no previously established set of rules for creating one, the group
can study the way it solves the problem of deciding what it will do. This simple procedure represents one of the few means which enables a group to study the way it functions.

*Using the Agenda for Work*

After deciding on an agenda the group may then try to carry it out. Difficulties soon arise. Perhaps the agenda was not carefully drawn, or it requires the group to engage in discussion which is no longer relevant, or the agenda is variously interpreted by different members. The problem of modifying the agenda then arises. Some want to carry out the one agreed upon. Others want to change. Difficulties that appear as the group tries to work through this issue provide members a rich learning experience.

In the work group where emphasis is on concrete content problems which must be solved, often times with speed and efficiency and frequently with important consequences for the whole work organization, the significance of getting a “good” solution is likely to be so great that it is difficult and even dangerous to try to study the group’s psychological operations. For this reason, the creation of optimal training conditions by developing a process group of the kind described above represents a more effective way of providing training in social process.

*Studying the Group’s Operation*

Members are continually concerned with examining the way the group develops. As contrasted with interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary groups, the content discussed in process groups is of secondary significance. Through the leader’s skillful intervention in the general discussion, it becomes possible for members to turn their attention away from the content of discussion toward consideration of group development problems. During the early part of training, responsibility for diagnosing and identifying the factors causing group difficulty is accepted by the leader.

After members have learned to take a diagnostic attitude toward their group problems, it is no longer necessary for the leader to direct the group’s attention to its difficulties or to interpret the reasons for its troubles. Group members learn to shift from problems of content to study of their operations, with the group as a whole cooperating in constructing a picture of their difficulties and planning strategies for constructively dealing with them. In order to maximize the learning
that can come from studying problems of operation, the group may make use of the group observer, a person assigned the task of identifying the factors in the group's behavior which lead to blocks in achieving group goals.

The several methods of facilitating the study by the group of its problem-solving operations include the leader's demonstration of how the group can assume a diagnostic attitude through which to view its operations, and the assumption of this diagnostic attitude by a group observer, or by the group as a whole, when it turns from content to discussing its process problems.

The training results in several types of learning which can be applied in the home work setting. One is skill in adopting an analytical focus through which to view the group's interactions. Others are more directly concerned with learning to identify the specific kinds of psychological group phenomena that produce difficulties, and learning to introduce corrective measures in order to minimize their effects. Learning to apply new methods for more efficient group problem-solving also can result in application in the home setting. Finally, attention is directed to identifying and analyzing the various roles being played by group members and to assessing the additional roles needed for successful group operation. Arrangements for practicing roles also may be provided.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PROCESS GROUP AND OTHER METHODS OF STUDYING GROUP BEHAVIOR

Because of the unusual characteristics of the process group as a method for providing human relations sensitivity and skill development, better understanding of this method may be obtained by contrasting it with other comparable approaches to human relations training. A brief comparison of the process group with therapeutic groups, the case study method, and with general semantics training will show some of the similarities and differences among them.

Group Therapy

The process group can be contrasted in several ways with the therapy group as described by Ezriel (6). The therapist often seeks to deal with social pathology through controlling or correcting it. The process leader concentrates on already present constructive trends by facilitating the acquisition of the additional skills that lead to even more effective group action.
Distorted aspects of the relations between group members and the therapist which result from efforts of the group to maneuver him into roles that will not be disturbing are analyzed and interpreted in the therapeutic situation. The process leader is concerned with analyzing the presence or absence of leadership and membership roles and whether they are in line with group requirements.

The therapist centers group consideration on the interpretation of unconscious components in competition and status striving. The process leader focuses attention on the same kinds of behavior but emphasizes those conscious aspects that can be brought more easily under social control.

While the problem of creating an explicit content to serve as an agenda is not emphasized by the therapist, the problem of establishing an agenda to meet the common needs of members is a central issue in the process group.

Although achieving a working consensus is given little or no attention within a therapy group, a valid consensus and how it can be attained is critical for study and skill development within the process group.

While phenomena appearing in the therapeutic setting and in the process training situation are similar, the subject-matter selected by the process leader for analysis and training may be quite different from that selected by the therapist. The two approaches are comparable in that the content dealt with is created within the group. Neither kind of group focuses on problems which have meaning only "outside" the group.

The Case Study Method

Concrete examples of human relations problems that have arisen in home situations serve to prompt discussion in the case study method (9). Group members consider what the difficulties are and suggest possible solutions for them. They may present parallel examples drawn from their own experience outside the study group, as has been described in connection with the use of the case study method in interdisciplinary groups, or the case may lead to an analysis of comparable difficulties happening in the group itself. In the latter instance, the case study approach to human relations training and the process group approach are similar. Both study their internal operational problems and test different ways for dealing with them.

The case study method is more likely to keep the group anchored to hypothetical or "outside" problems, with the discussion centering
less frequently on the internal problems of the group. The process
group is more likely to deal with problems directly in the experience
of all members. While the case study approach may not result in the
individual's understanding more adequately how group problem-solv-
ing takes place, it may help him think through concrete human relations problems in his own work situation.

General Semantics

General semantics seminars represent a third approach to human relations training (5). The group is organized along classroom lines
with a technical specialist in general semantics leading it. The leader's purpose is to provide instruction in the interpretation of Kor-
zybski's *Science and Sanity* (13) and other relevant literature. Since
general semantics is a theory of thinking and communication, increased skill in basic understanding of the blocks to accurate thinking
and communication may be brought to bear directly on analyzing a
wide range of human relations phenomena. As concrete manifesta-
tions of clear or disturbed communication or distorted or precise
thinking occur during the interactions of the group, they may be
used as concrete examples for analysis, retraining, and skill develop-
ment in more accurate social thinking and communication. When em-
ployed in this manner, general semantics training contributes to the
understanding of social phenomena. Other developments in general semantics suggest that human relations training through this ap-
proach has much of practical significance to offer in mobilizing hu-
man resources for more productive work, and for greater satisfaction
from work.
CHAPTER V

Techniques for Increasing Participation

A VARIETY OF techniques can be used to increase audience understanding of human relations problems and ways of solving them. Several structural models which have been designed for showing some of the uses of dramatic and group involvement techniques are shown in Figure 2. Both types of techniques are described in detail in the following sections.

DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

Acquiring both sensitivity to negative factors in human relations situations and skills in creating positive situations can be facilitated by using dramatic techniques such as role playing, skits, and films. Aided by dramatic presentations an audience is able to see more vividly the factors which create human relations problems and to investigate how they might be dealt with in reaching solutions. Attitudes and opinions of persons in the situation can be seen more realistically than by the use of other methods. Forces and conflicts which need resolution can be presented. A variety of solutions for the same human relations problem can be explored. Each is evaluated in terms of the consequences that it would have.

High Prop Role Playing

Advantages and disadvantages. The value of role playing for communicating human relations problems, difficult to make meaningful through lectures and other methods, has been demonstrated over and over (15). Role playing is particularly well suited for use in large meetings, but it can be employed with great effectiveness when there are so few present that each has a role to play. An advantage is that an audience can see and can identify with various roles as the plot develops. In addition to spoken words, attitudes and information which increase understanding are communicated through actions and gestures. Plots can be created when they are needed for the diagnosis of a human relations issue, or they may be selected to illustrate a particularly important human relations problem.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Skit or Role Playing</th>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Problem-Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Check mechanical details.</td>
<td>2. Plot construction.</td>
<td>2. Check trial for mechanical details.</td>
<td>2. Set up physical facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Casting.</td>
<td>3. Set up physical facilities.</td>
<td>3. 3x5 cards, blackboard.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Prop acquisition.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Prepare stage and audience arrangements.</td>
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<td>6. Pretest scene.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Revise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Questions or general discussion period.</td>
<td>2. Role playing of problem.</td>
<td>2. Show entire film or only to the problem solution.</td>
<td>2. Audience sub-group discussion to formulate individual problem interest areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Summary.</td>
<td>3. Audience discussion, in sub-groups or as a whole, of possible solutions.</td>
<td>3. Audience sub-group discussion, leader-led discussion, panel-led discussion, or panel discussion.</td>
<td>3. Sub-group recorders report summaries to audience as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Role playing of solution.</td>
<td>4. Show remainder of film.</td>
<td>4. Problems recorded on blackboard as reported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Audience discussion.</td>
<td>5. (Discussion.)</td>
<td>5. Problems condensed into interest areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The flexibility of role playing is an additional advantage of this method of skill training. If one solution of a problem is depicted and found unsatisfactory, role players can immediately test another solution until the human relations problem is handled in an adequate way. An incidental advantage is that in practicing the various roles required by the plot, participants gain experience and become more sensitive to the attitudes and feelings required in the specific situation. With this kind of training, participants have more confidence that a solution, once determined, can have practical advantage in a concrete situation.

The major disadvantages from using role playing to depict human relations problems and their solutions come from inadequate plot construction, poor casting or insufficient pretesting. Also when used excessively or inappropriately, role playing can lose its interest as an effective means for communicating human relations problems.

**Plot construction.** Construction of a plot for a role playing scene need not be highly detailed. The plot can be developed from a thumbnail sketch of the human relations problem to be presented. The first part of the plot characterizes difficulties in the situation, while the second part presents a solution for them. The problem and its solution should be planned so that all role players understand the issues and are able to identify with their roles. One way of developing a plot is for the people involved in planning to discuss the issues sufficiently so that an adequate one can be defined. Ten to fifteen minutes may be enough.

**Casting.** Since an adequate casting of persons to roles may be difficult, one procedure which can be helpful in insuring quality performance is that of testing the plot with role assignments made first on a tentative basis. Players then are allowed to shift roles as the situation demands or other players, who feel more comfortable in portraying their assigned roles, are substituted. By keeping arrangements flexible and tentative with respect to both plot and casting, shifts can be made without embarrassment to the people involved.

**High prop technique.** By contrast with conventional role playing techniques, the procedures recommended here make extensive use of props. High prop techniques can be a critical factor in accounting for the success of the method. This is particularly true when role playing is employed by groups who are unpracticed in analyzing human relations problems. Both stage and personal props can be used to advantage.

Stage props such as a telephone, a Bible, or a table setting are easy
to procure and seem to increase the realism of the scene. Facsimiles can help increase the quality of presentation even though the precise props required by the plot may be unavailable. In addition to stage props, personal props enhance the realism of the roles which are portrayed. If a man is assigned the part of an aged person, chalk dust may be used for graying his hair. A young girl is represented by using pigtails and bobby socks.

Detailed prop planning may seem unnecessary. By providing ample props, players more easily identify with the roles they are portraying. From the standpoint of the audience, high prop role playing technique increases the vividness of the scene. Planning, locating and testing props is also enjoyed by role players.

Pretesting. Practice sessions the day before the final enactment aid in insuring a high level of presentation when role playing is used as part of a training design. When pretesting is used, modifications in the plot are introduced where necessary, recasting is possible if required, and role players re-examine their parts during the interim period. Pretesting need not be so detailed, extensive or controlled that players stereotype their roles or play them in a mechanical manner.

The need for a role-playing situation may occur spontaneously in connection with other training activities. Under such conditions the role playing can be developed with a minimum of planning and preparation. The amount of preparation is determined by a variety of factors, and no mechanical rules can be applied.

Presentation. The actual presentation often is improved if a person is assigned responsibility for introducing the problem to the audience. Through a prologue he can warm-up the audience by briefly describing the plot and attitudes which will be taken by the role players.

At least two procedures may be used in presenting a role playing scene for training purposes. The problem and solution can be followed by audience analysis. An alternative procedure is to interrupt the role playing scene after the problem has been developed. The audience is invited to discuss the problem and to propose solutions before the remainder of the role playing scene is presented. The latter method increases the learning that is possible from this method of analyzing human relations difficulties.

Skits

Advantages and disadvantages. A number of well-written skits depicting human relations problems are available with the plots designed
to illustrate technically adequate solutions for them. There are several advantages in using skits. The details of the plot are selected to illustrate a significant point in a constructive way. Deeper emotional feelings than those which are often produced through role playing can be induced through a well written skit. Humor can be introduced at appropriate points to decrease audience tension. Inexperienced leaders sometimes find it easier to introduce a significant human relations problem through a plot that has been pretested by the publishers. Finally, inexperienced group members may feel less restraint in playing a role when the lines and actions are specified.

The major disadvantage in using skits is that the plot may prove artificial for audience needs. Knowing that the plot has been prepared by human relations “experts,” the audience may feel resistant to accepting the solution, in contrast to its readiness to become involved in the solution from a role-playing scene created by members of the training community.

Casting and high prop technique. As in role playing, high prop technique can also be used in the presentation of skits, and the problem of casting roles is similar.

Pretesting and presentation. Since lines are prepared in the skit, the question arises as to whether the cast should be required to memorize them and to practice the prescribed actions. Except for formal presentations, direct reading of the script does not detract significantly from the presentation. As with role playing, the advantages of the cast’s pretesting the plot by reading the lines and practicing the required actions outweigh the disadvantages.

Availability. Skits dealing with human relations problems are available from a number of sources. Skits can be procured from such agencies as the American Theater Wing Incorporated and The Hogg Foundation of The University of Texas.

Films

Advantages and disadvantages. A dramatic and interest provoking way of communicating human relations problems is through films. Since skillful actors are usually chosen to portray required roles, a high level of plot presentation is possible. Films can be shown during the latter part of an institute when students may feel the need to sit and watch rather than participate actively in a presentation. A disadvantage of both films and skits is that their fixed structure cannot be varied easily to meet needs of specialized groups.

Pretesting. Pretesting films is fairly uncommon. However, pretest-
ing can be as valuable for films as for any program. An unsatisfactory film presentation frequently may be avoided by previewing the film for defects. Through pretesting, a more satisfactory film may be substituted for a defective one, or inadequate physical facilities remedied. Simple mechanical difficulties as a needed extension cord, absence of an electrical outlet, rewinding from a previous showing, or some equally minor though significant detail may be corrected in advance.

**Presentation.** The training value of the film is increased by planning for adequate discussion of the problem and its solution. As in the case of role playing or skits, the entire film may be shown before the discussion is begun or the film can be interrupted at significant points to permit audience discussion of various solutions before the fixed one is presented.

The audience analysis of the film may be facilitated by using a panel which previews it during pretesting. Since the viewing panel has seen the film before it is presented to the audience, it can better lead the audience as the significance and meaning of the human relations problems depicted in the film are discussed.

A satisfactory way of increasing understanding of the issues contained in the film is for the film presentation to be followed by a well prepared lecture. If a previewing panel, selected on an interdisciplinary basis, discusses the film with the lecturer in advance of his preparation, he can include in his remarks the questions and considerations likely to arise from the frames of reference of specific occupations. If the lecture method of film analysis is used early in the institute program, it can be followed by sub-group discussion and general summary. Since in a later phase of the institute, the audience may learn more from listening than from discussing, the presentation of a well prepared lecture without audience discussion may prove more satisfactory.

**Availability.** Films can be procured from many sources including the Psychological Cinema Register, book companies such as McGraw-Hill, state departments of public health, and extension divisions of state universities.

**GROUP INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES**

In the approach to human relations training presented here, delegates actively participate in solving problems through their own deliberations. A variety of techniques which can facilitate problem-methods is that each person can contribute or develop his own solu-
methods is that each person can contribute or develop his own solutions for a range of human relations problems. The procedures employed are designed to provide members practice in considering problems with others (2).

When participants representing a variety of specialties concentrate on some broad problem, general sessions of the entire institute body seem particularly desirable. In such large group meetings techniques for increasing participation have three advantages. These techniques insure an active rather than passive approach to the problem being studied, with learning more rapid and thorough under conditions of active participation. Situations are provided in which participants can test the adequacy of their thinking against the proposed solutions suggested by others. Members from one specialty are able to see the solutions from the viewpoints of other specialities.

Sub-Group Discussion Technique

Procedure. One way to facilitate the analysis of human relations problems in a large session is to provide individuals an opportunity to communicate their thinking to others. A procedure particularly well suited to creating conditions of active participation in the large meeting is to divide the audience at certain critical times into a number of manageable discussion groups of six to ten members. Sub-group discussion technique permits the members of each group to exchange their views with others. Examples of the use of these techniques have been given in the sections concerned with the general morning session, high prop role playing and films.

Advantages and disadvantages. Members communicate their views to others through active participation in sub-group discussion. The adequacy of their views can be tested in terms of acceptability to other group members.

In the later phase of the institute when problems already have been described and available solutions explored, members may prefer not to engage in further sub-group discussion. Later in an institute such discussion may be frustrating, particularly if it does not lead to better solutions than those previously suggested. Members may not want to talk but prefer to listen. The leader should be sensitive to either possibility so that sub-group discussion techniques can be employed only when their use is indicated.

Physical limitations sometimes prevent the adequate use of sub-group discussion techniques. One limitation is chairs permanently
placed in rows which prevent their rearrangement for discussion purposes. Another is when the total area is too small to provide sufficient distance between groups for discussions to be conducted in a quiet and orderly way. If physical arrangements are unsuitable, small group discussion is likely to prove unsatisfactory. Other methods of achieving the same objectives may be employed. As an alternative, a skillful leader can direct a fruitful discussion by the group as a whole, or panel techniques, as discussed later, can be used to insure audience involvement.

Problem-Census

Procedure. A problem-census is conducted by the group leader. He introduces the discussion through providing easily understood examples of kinds of problems he thinks relevant within the design of the training program. His next step is to suggest that the group identify the problems on which it would like to work.

One way for the audience to proceed is to begin formulating problems through sub-group discussion. In a twenty to thirty-minute discussion period, each sub-group can identify and formulate the significant problems of individual members. The problems thus defined may be communicated verbally to the entire group or a record may be made for transmittal to the appropriate planning committee. A detailed example of how a problem-census can be conducted has been given in connection with the description of the initial general morning session.

Advantages and disadvantages. The purpose of a problem-census is to identify concrete problems which are realistic in the sense that members are involved in finding the solutions for them. A training program which deals with concrete problems is likely to stimulate the involvement of its participants. The major disadvantages from conducting a problem-census are mechanical. If a leader with the knowledge of requisite techniques is unavailable, the participation of the audience may be unsatisfactory. Similar results may occur if the time period allotted for conducting the problem-census is too limited or if room arrangements are unsatisfactory for sub-group discussion.

Panel Techniques

Procedure. A method intermediate between lecturing and sub-group discussion is the use of a panel to lead the discussion of a problem. Since one of the goals for using a panel is that of increasing audience involvement, a panel may be composed of volunteers from the audi-
ence, of representatives selected on the basis of their specialties, of several members who represent the same specialty, or along some other lines. The appropriate procedure is determined by the purpose for which the panel technique of increasing audience involvement has been chosen.

Advantages and disadvantages. The panel may be used for any of several reasons. The audience may follow an open panel discussion of a specific question. Another advantage of the procedure is that panel members may be divided into two sides to consider the specific question from opposite points of view. Still another advantage to using panel techniques may be mentioned. The audience can be divided into sub-groups with each being invited to follow the thinking of a representative of one of the several specialties which are taking part in the panel discussion. After the panel members have completed their remarks, each sub-group can engage in active discussion of the specific point of view it had been following. Such a combination of sub-grouping and panel technique can be of particular value when the purpose of the meeting is that of stimulating an audience to look at a problem from unfamiliar or unusual points of view.

The disadvantages of panel techniques for increasing understanding of a problem arise from either one of two sources. A coordinator who is incompetent or panel members who are inadequate to discuss the problem or are unfamiliar with it can increase audience confusion. Another disadvantage in the use of panel techniques occurs from poor timing. The audience may desire either active participation or passive listening. The panel technique does not make adequate provision for audience participation and it does not provide direction and continuity for satisfactory listening. The result is that close attention to the problem of when panels should be used is necessary for their success.
CHAPTER VI

Methods of Quality Control

Responsibility for the operation of a Human Relations Training Laboratory is distributed over the entire group of participants. The requirements of active participation and intense involvement in the institute program tax the endurance of individual members. Given the combination of responsibility which is based within the total group and heavy task requirements of the training design, the quality of the different parts of the institute is likely to decrease even though the involvement of the group in the institute purpose is high. The maintenance of high quality standards under such adverse conditions constitutes a basic problem for Human Relations Training Laboratories.

Two alternatives for insuring quality control are available. One is that of placing responsibility on one or two members who are given requisite authority to insure that high standards will be maintained. Quality control achieved in this way is foreign to the spirit of cooperation, involvement, and the training concepts on which human relations study is based. The second alternative involves introducing quality control techniques of the kind described below.

Standard-setting

Standards for adequate performance can be introduced in the preplanning meetings of the faculty groups. Once the faculty group has come to recognize that standards for maintaining performance are both necessary and important to a successful human relations training program, the idea of quality control can be introduced. Procedures for devising and maintaining standards can be suggested, including pretesting, preplanning, previewing and similar strategies for eliminating undesirable programs and for improving the quality of programs by substituting more satisfactory content.

Possibly the best basis for insuring that high standards will be maintained is through group discussion of and agreement on procedures for pretesting, previewing, and preplanning. If all members accept the commitment that standards be maintained at some agreed upon level through a decision to employ quality control procedures in program
planning, it is likely that standards for quality will remain acceptably high. A committee of participants may compose the planning group for evaluating and presenting some programs. The responsible staff member then can repeat this same procedure of group discussion and decision for obtaining standards of quality for committee-planned programs.

TECHNIQUES OF QUALITY CONTROL

Evaluating a program in advance of presentation through assessing the components and their relations to one another is the most important method for insuring that high quality standards will be maintained. Program evaluation can take a number of different forms.

Pre-Institute Planning

Human Relations Training Laboratories frequently bring the staff together for a planning period prior to the arrival of students. There are numerous advantages in following the procedure of pre-institute planning, including that of the staff’s becoming acquainted, the entire staff’s becoming familiar with the overall training design which will be employed in conducting the institute, the discussion and development of training philosophy, and making detailed arrangements for those parts of the institute program that can be designed in advance. During this period the concept of quality control can be introduced, with the staff discussing and reaching agreement with respect to the standards which will be maintained.

Pretesting, Preplanning, Previewing

Once the training design for a specific program has been determined, the program content and staging can be pretested from a quality control standpoint. If a role-playing situation is to be used, the plot can be developed, cast members selected, props secured, and the scenes practiced in advance of presentation. To improve both plot and role enactment during pretesting, the program committee can discuss and modify the plot and analyze and suggest alternative ways for the players to develop their roles. In a similar way a film can be previewed by the committee members responsible for leading a film discussion. If group agreement as to the necessity for making the essential preparations suggested by these examples can be achieved, the programs presented should be satisfactory from a quality control standpoint.

Learning the techniques used for controlling quality of training
also serves as a basis for skill training and, therefore, contributes to achieving the training objectives. Pretesting a role playing situation provides an opportunity for sensitivity training and skill development. A film previewing panel selected on an interdisciplinary basis to lead the film discussion or to suggest ways of dealing with the film in a lecture is actually contributing to skill training in the use of these techniques.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Two ways of evaluating quality for improving future programs are the use of post-meeting reaction questionnaires and of critique sessions.

Post-Meeting Reaction (PMR)

The PMR is a method of assessing reactions to a program on an individual-by-individual basis. A questionnaire, specifically designed for the purpose, is distributed at the end of the program. The audience is requested to answer questions regarding both their positive and negative reactions to the staging and content. The audience may also be invited to suggest ways of improving future programs ("Too much role playing. Let's not have any more for a while."). The program committee then summarizes audience reactions and makes recommendations for changes to committees responsible for later programs.

Critique Sessions

Through the questions, answers and discussion which occur during a critique session, valuable information for maintaining standards of performance is provided. Through the procedure for conducting critique sessions described in Chapter II, opportunity is provided for participants to suggest modifications and additions in the training design that result in their needs being met more adequately.

EVALUATING THE TOTAL LABORATORY TRAINING PROGRAM

Two training considerations arise in connection with evaluating an institute. The final session can be designed to aid participants to summarize and evaluate the various aspects of the total institute, to interrelate the various parts of the training experience and to resharpen perspectives. An evaluation session near the end in which participants may give their reactions to the program provides information for directing and strengthening the training design for later institutes.
Evaluation Sessions

Three procedures for conducting evaluations are described below.

Representative evaluation. Evaluations can be made during the last day in either interdisciplinary or intradisciplinary groups, or in process groups. Staff leaders leave thirty minutes before the end of the final session after instructing the group to evaluate the total institute. The evaluation can include features liked least, those liked most, and changes to be recommended to the planners of the next institute. The leader may suggest that the group make use of one of its members as a recorder, with the staff steering committee or some other group responsible for completing the evaluation of the institute.

During the afternoon report conference, recorders summarize the evaluations of their groups. The meeting can be conducted so that the leader has the opportunity to identify those features about which there seems to be disagreement among the recorders. The areas of disagreement or points in dispute may be based on real differences in reactions to the institute or they may represent a distorted emphasis, accountable in terms of the needs of personality structure of the recorder or some group members. Narrowing the area of disagreement decreases misunderstanding or misinterpretation of evaluation data in planning later laboratories. New ideas suggested for future planning but that may have arisen in only one group can be introduced for discussion by the recorders. Because participants have no further meetings where they may assess the soundness of a recommendation, recorders are invited to aid in this way by giving their reactions.

Two different kinds of records of the evaluation session can be made. First a stenographer takes an account of the reports and the discussion that follows. A tape recording can be made so that the evaluations can be replayed in order to clarify important details which may remain obscure.

Questionnaire evaluation. A second way in which an institute program may be evaluated is through the use of a questionnaire. It can have a preliminary section in which the respondent is asked to indicate his staff or participant status, occupation, and the number of institutes previously attended. By securing such background information, the reactions to the institute can be evaluated from the standpoint of the various subgroupings composing the institute.

The questionnaire can include items that allow the respondent to react to both the positive and negative features of the institute. If techniques for increasing participation have included skits, sub-group dis-
discussion, role playing, films, panels, a problem-census, and so on, the questionnaire includes items designed to permit the respondent to evaluate each of the several aspects of the program design.

Post-institute evaluation. A third way in which the effectiveness of the training design can be evaluated is through questionnaire or interview procedures used several months after completion of the institute. The extent to which participants and staff have changed their human relations problem-solving procedures in the same situation can be taken as a criterion of the effectiveness of training. Survey type analyses and controlled investigations are both valuable for evaluating training and for suggesting modifications in the design of the training program that may result in the institute's more effectively meeting participant needs.

Summary Session

The final session of the laboratory can summarize the various aspects of the total program. The summary can provide an abseract of the evaluation, characterize the institute theme as its meaning has emerged from the general morning sessions, synthesize the ideas developed in the general evening sessions, and interrelate the discussions from the interdisciplinary, intradisciplinary and process groups for their bearing on the solution of human relations problems. Findings from the study of community organization can also be placed within a broader framework and related to the institute theme.

Emotional needs of participants can be met in the summary session, including the desire to look beyond the institute to the wider implications of their training for improving human relations aspects of their work in the back-home situation.
CHAPTER VII

Research in the Design of a Human Relations Laboratory

Certain social science objectives of a Human Relations Training Laboratory are achieved through the research program. Research is an integral part of human relations training since only through science-based knowledge is it likely that understanding and prediction of human phenomena can be elevated above that possible on the basis of intuition and casual observation. Two aspects are involved. The first, that of interpreting social science knowledge, has already been discussed in the section describing the general morning session. The second is training in how social science research is conducted.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Two kinds of research can be conducted in a Human Relations Training Laboratory.

Social-Psychological Phenomena

The first includes research on basic social-psychological phenomena. Numerous problems arising from interaction as individuals seek to relate to one another in small problem-solving groups can be investigated. Included are such problems as agenda formation, studying the relationships between decision-making and effective relations among members, between the quality of a decision and the criterion used as the basis for determining when agreement has been reached (unanimity, three-fourths, two-thirds, more than half), and the relationship between the amount of information available to the group and the quality of the decision made. The power to exert influence studied as a function of the position of the initiator in the status hierarchy of the group, effects on communication of role conflict and the analysis of roles required for mature group decision-making also can be investigated within the setting of a training laboratory. As laboratory groups interact with one another, additional problems including communication through an organization, the level at which decision-making occurs, influence pathways, and other inter-group relations problems
within a community can be studied. The effects from increasing or decreasing reference group identification and from defining, developing, or modifying group standards as they affect human relations problem-solving, and similar basic problems also can be investigated under laboratory conditions of human relations training.

**Research in Training**

Stimulating research on problems arising in laboratory training programs is a second type of research which may be conducted. Included are such research issues as increasing diagnostic sensitivity in analyzing situations, improving skills needed for meeting social requirements, and identifying and learning how to deal with forces that produce resistance to change. Also included are problems of devising and evaluating the effectiveness of various techniques for facilitating the development of diagnostic sensitivity and the acquisition of social skills (role-playing, case study, skits, training groups, etc.). Recent applications of role-playing and of other dramatic techniques for facilitating the analysis and communication of human relations problems serve to exemplify the possibilities of research in the development of training techniques.

**SCHEDULING THE RESEARCH**

Research activity can be separated into a number of segments. One is concerned with solving theory and design problems, and a second with applying the design for purposes of data collection. The third involves the analysis and reporting of findings and the fourth the modification of the training design based on research findings. Social science research methodology is described in two recent publications which provide excellent orientation to many of the issues that must be considered in research with human subjects (7) (11).

**Theory and Design**

Since one of the assumptions underlying human relations training is that it should be organized to meet participant needs, the selection of research problems should be consistent with this basis for training. Research problems are selected because they facilitate understanding of a human relations phenomenon. With an increasing understanding of the dynamics of human relations through research, the training design may be subjected to replanning in terms consistent with science-based knowledge.
Theory development and design planning are unlikely to be effective under the hurried conditions of institute life. The alternative is a small interim committee composed of skilled social scientists who assume responsibility for long-term pre-institute planning which results in recommendations of experimental designs to be considered by the staff during the pre-institute planning sessions. Staff action is advisory rather than determinative.

Data Collection

Specific problems arise from procedures for data collection required by the research design. The satisfactory handling of these problems is possible only if those affected by them can contribute to their solution. If participants see an important relation between the training design and the research design, their participation in the action phases of the experiment will be greater than if an important relationship is not clearly visible.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Analyzing and Reporting

The analysis of research data is usually not finished until the period after completion of the institute though there are numerous kinds of projects for which the analysis of data during the institute is possible. Under such conditions an effort is made to arrange for participants to assist in data analysis. Participation may be on a voluntary basis since it is unlikely that skill development in data analysis will be important for more than a small minority. Opportunity for training that is provided through organizing, analyzing and interpreting research data contributes to meeting the social science objective.

Some findings assessed through analysis of data during the training period can be reported to the institute body. Participants are usually more enthusiastic about engaging in the activities made necessary by the requirements of the experimental design if they have the opportunity to appreciate how their participation has provided research data and thus has contributed to the development of social science knowledge. After data have been analyzed, it is also desirable to report results by mimeographed summaries to participants and by articles in professional journals. Results from experimental investigations make an important contribution to the institute’s achievement of the social science objective.
Training Design Modifications from Research Findings

One of the goals in human relations training is that of employing training designs based on research evidence which demonstrate their effectiveness. As results based on experimental work from within the institute itself or from other laboratories become available, the training design currently in use can be re-examined so that it does not become obsolete when evaluated in terms of additional experimental evidence.
CHAPTER VIII

Overview

HUMAN RELATIONS training leads to better mental health through improved understanding of self and of others, of groups and of communities. It is concerned with creating conditions which permit the development of mature, socially adequate, emotionally sensitive relations with other people. Training for human relations has been made possible by years of research and technical effort in the behavioral sciences.

A human relations training program has been described which may serve as an introduction for individuals considering participation in a training laboratory, as a guide to individuals or groups who are developing plans for starting a training program, and to suggest ways of improving programs already in operation.

Under cultural island conditions, participants representing an occupational cluster can engage in intensive study without excessive outside interference in the training program. The training program provides the opportunity to analyze problems that arise in connection with the requirements of work. Learning to become more sensitive to negative factors which arise from one's own behavior, from the behavior of others, and which appear in groups and communities also is provided. Skill practice provides the opportunity for replacing negative aspects of behavior with positive social conduct.

The training approach for increasing mental health is hardly a decade old. As science provides new understanding of social conduct, it may be expected that procedures for translating the insights into improved ways of solving problems will be found. Human relations training provides one of the means for accomplishing this goal.
References


