THE EFFECTS OF A WORKSHOP IN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ON DYADIC COMMUNICATION

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THE EFFECTS OF A WORKSHOP IN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ON DYADIC COMMUNICATION

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Committee in Charge
The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether or not supervisors changed their modes of communication after participating in Bank of California's workshop, The Elements of Personnel Management (Heslet et. al., 1971).

Ten supervisors took part in simulated employee interviews both before and after the workshop. The responses they made during the interviews were subsequently evaluated by five raters according to a specially designed scale.

Statistical analysis of the data revealed that the overall proportions of positively rated responses did not change. However, the number of individual supervisors who improved, as indicated by the frequencies of their positive responses, did differ significantly from the number who did not improve. It was therefore concluded that the workshop did effect a slight change in the supervisors' communication behavior.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writing of this thesis involved many helpers, including Roy Masterson and the staff at Bank of California, Bea Pressley and Fred Heslet, Dave Frey, Ferne Anderson, and my raters, Julie Hildreth, Linda Latasa, Brent Poulton, Steve Rhudy and Tom Sinclair. Thank you all.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Conventional management existed, and for that matter, still exists, in order to get things done through other people (McGregor, 1966). Within the last two decades, however, managerial attitudes toward the other people, its employees, have begun to change in keeping with changes in our cultural values. The carrot-on-a-stick view of motivation is being replaced by knowledge of man's complex and shifting needs. On every level, it appears that organizational values are turning from depersonalization toward a humanistic democracy (Bennis, 1969).

With the breakdown of rigid managerial authority, the supervisors who functioned in its shadow have begun to emerge with new responsibilities. Never before have they worked under such pressure to promote the development, adjustment, and integration of individual employees (Haney, 1967). But though their role has become almost one of counselor to employees, the supervisors must continue to maintain organizational efficiency. They must, therefore, mediate between the business they represent and the employees they supervise (Heslet, 1971). In order to minimize the resultant conflict,
they must learn to communicate on a high level of excellence and with great sensitivity.

The growing concern for improved communication within the organization has been met by a variety of approaches including T-groups, sensitivity laboratories, confrontation techniques, third person arbitration, workshops, and seminars. Although these approaches differ slightly in orientation, the key element in each appears to be that the training is experiential. It is assumed that communication must be taught, practiced, and experienced by the individuals who will ultimately affect the functioning of the entire organization.

Significance of the Problem

The Bank of California's workshop in The Elements of Personnel Management (Heslet et. al., 1971) represents one organization's attempt to improve the communication skills of its supervisors through active training. It emphasizes the humanistic aspects of such interactions as performance appraisals, termination interviews, and inter-racial arbitration. Within this context the supervisors, who are asked to participate in the workshop on a non-voluntary basis, spend from five to ten days interacting as a group. They view tapes, role-play, share problems and confront one another in an effort to become better communicators and better counselors to their
employees. It is hoped that as each supervisor learns to view his employees more individualistically, he will also gain a better understanding of himself, his needs and attitudes toward work.

Feedback from the Bank of California workshop has been typically favorable but, as seems to be the case in the evaluation of many similar programs, objective evidence of behavior change has proved difficult to obtain. In the light of present research, workshops may or may not facilitate communication between supervisors and employees. If they do, then the continuation and expansion of such programs is justified; if they do not, then revisions may be necessary.

The intent of this study is to determine whether participation in the bank's workshop does cause observable behavioral change on the part of the supervisors. Its significance lies in the degree to which it tests the efficacy of the workshop using a relatively untried means of evaluation. Thus, the study may suggest that the instrument designed to evaluate Bank of California's workshop could also be used for other programs having the same general objectives. If so, it will add to the small body of research techniques now in use. Conversely, the study may suggest that the instrument cannot discriminate behavior change resulting from a one-week workshop, or that another method should be used.
Statement of the Problem

Bank of California's Workshop in The Elements of Personnel Management, (Heslet et. al., 1971) purports to improve the ability of supervisors to communicate openly and effectively with their employees. The training offered is largely experiential, its impact varying with the experience and needs of individual participants. Although loosely structured, the workshop is led by skilled consultants who ensure that it will at least provide a stimulus to the rethinking of ideas and hopefully act as a catalyst to change on-the-job behavior.

The problem proposed by this study was to evaluate whether or not supervisors did change their modes of communication after participating in the workshop. Since an analysis of over-all job behavior was not feasible, only the responses made by supervisors during a series of interviews were evaluated. It was assumed that the responses, as the smallest components of the supervisors' interactions, represented meaningful samples of their total behavior.
Although training programs similar to Bank of California's Workshop have become widespread only within the last ten or fifteen years, a good deal has been written about them. Unfortunately more of the literature is descriptive than evaluative. That which is relevant to this study has been divided into four parts, including a brief review of group training methods and evaluation, a look at the dynamics of dyadic communication and finally a description of the techniques used to analyze the communication process.

The Evolution of Group Training

Group training began spontaneously in 1946 during a series of meetings at a teachers' college in Connecticut. When the emphasis of discussion shifted from the usual administrative details to the feelings of group members, sensitivity, or T-group training was born (Back, 1971). With the upsurge of humanistic ideals in the 1950's, the new method began to catch on, especially as a means of improving interpersonal relations among business employees. The purpose of sensitivity training as defined by Thomas
Greening (1964, p. 27) is to "...provide an existential setting in which participants can intensely review and possibly revise their basic views about man's nature, group behavior and roles and procedures necessary for accomplishing tasks with others..." According to House (1969), the primary learning vehicle in sensitivity training is a face-to-face unstructured group. The group should, however, provide for planned activities between members, ongoing feedback and emphasis on the here-and-now.

A slightly different approach called human relations training also had its beginnings in the 1950's. It too relied on the group method, but it emphasized selected skills for dealing with subordinates. Communication and listening techniques were taught through the use of simulated case situations and lectures. Schuster (1969) notes that the major deficiency of these early programs was their dependence on traditional teaching methods. Since group participation was passive, the programs tended to have little impact.

As group training became more popular, T-groups and human relations seminars began to meld their characteristics. Passive learning was de-emphasized in favor of active participation and individual growth. At the same time, controversies arose over the frustration and animosity catalyzed by group situations which completely lacked structure. Previously unstructured groups began to
introduce standards for focus on specific values (Schuster, 1969). As recommended by Odiorne (1963) actual problems and concrete issues began to be treated through active group process with greater expectancies for change.

Evaluation of Group Methods

The evaluation of human relations training has proved to be a difficult task in part because the objectives of training are often loosely defined (Finston, 1969). When goals are stated in non-measurable terms, the training tends to be evaluated by means of anecdotal evidence. According to Robert House (1969), of the one hundred different research studies he investigated, most were based on anecdotal evidence and only thirty percent met the minimum requirements for social scientific research. The requirements as stated by House are approximately as follows:

1. The evaluation must be based on tests of hypothesis. Criteria must be stated before experimentation takes place.

2. Assessment of change must be quantitative.

3. Variables must be isolated.

Belasco and Harrison (1969) add that the measures of change must be relevant to training objectives, and must be reliable as well as independent of change external to the program. He recognizes two general approaches to evaluation. The first, the subjective approach, involves learning how the participant feels about training and usually describes
his emotional state. The second, or objective approach, attempts to identify the amount and kind of change that occurred and can be attributed to training. This approach usually necessitates a before-and-after kind of design and is considered the more exact of the two.

Evaluative research has so far yielded inconclusive results concerning the effectiveness of group training. In a study of organizational relations, Finston (1969) determined the opinions of participants as to the usefulness of the T-group. He found that one-third of his subjects were enthusiastic, one-third were positive and the remaining third were critical of the program. He added that participants considered it unrealistic and unfair to expect major change to occur after a five-day interaction. Hand and Slocum (1970) assessed a human relations program through the use of self-acceptance scales and concluded on the basis of statistical analysis that the training was ineffective. Although other studies indicate varying results, the general trend suggests that subjective evaluation may be slightly more positive than objective evaluation.

Dynamics of Dyadic Communication

Improved communication among organizational members is a primary goal of most training programs and of the Bank of California Workshop in particular. Before this goal can be evaluated, however, it must be defined in objective terms.
Berlo (1960) emphasized that communication represents an attempt to bridge the gap between two individuals and is therefore an essentially dyadic process involving both a sender and a receiver. Each requires the other in a feedback system where one response affects the next and so on. Thus the concept of interaction is central to a working definition of communication.

According to Rogers and Roethlisberger (1952) true interaction occurs when the receiver understands the sender to the extent of achieving his frame of reference. In order to do so, he must know how to listen (Haney, 1967). Burke (1971) suggests that the listener should actively paraphrase and clarify, that he should attend to nonverbal cues and that he should look for main ideas. The purpose of listening is to reflect, leaving the responsibility for action and decision-making to the sender (Haney, 1967). Ideally, at no time should the listener think for the sender. Advice and information not only appear to be efforts to change the other person, but they also involve value judgments which constitute barriers to communication (Haney, 1967, Rogers and Roethlisberger, 1952).

In order to communicate successfully the receiver, or in the context of this study, the supervisor, must realize that incoming messages have two components. All language, including the most coldly scientific, has
emotional as well as cognitive dimensions and every word carries an emotional load which adds to the full meaning of the message (Anguren, 1967). When the listener begins to recognize the emotional component, he responds with more sensitivity and his listening becomes a growth experience.

According to Haney, (1967) research evidence exists for listening, mainly in the form of reflection, as a way of bringing about change in attitudes and values. Burke and Wilcox (1969) report that the greater the openness between supervisor and employee, the greater the employee satisfaction with job, company, performance appraisals, supervisor help and the supervisor. In each case effective communication is the key element for promoting change.

**Analysis of the Communication Process**

Analyzing the communication process for the purpose of measurement and evaluation has yet to become a thoroughly scientific procedure. Within the last twenty years, however, several methods have evolved which approach the problem of analysis from a behavioral standpoint. One such technique was developed by Flanders out of social psychological theory and purports to test the effect of classroom social-emotional climate on student learning (Amidon and Hough, 1967). This approach, called Interaction Analysis, measures the verbal behavior of one person, the teacher, in terms of group effect.
A similar technique was developed by Robert Bales (1951) in an attempt to analyze small group processes. His Interaction Process Analysis provides a way of classifying direct, face-to-face interaction as it takes place such that the resulting data will yield usable information. Every item of verbal behavior that occurs during the group process is classified according to specific categories by an observer. Consequently, as people interact, their behavior is broken down into the smallest meaningful units that can be distinguished.

The IPR Counselor Response Scale developed by Kagan (1966) moves away from group process to focus on strictly dyadic communication. The unit for analysis is the verbal interaction between counselor and client as represented by a client statement and counselor response, with the responses being categorized in terms of four dichotomized dimensions. This approach is especially significant for the present study because it can be easily adapted to the supervisor-employee interaction. Regardless of its purpose, the interaction will involve communication and by virtue of the supervisor's position, it is he who must act as a sort of counselor or, at least, as the principal respondent (Heslet, 1971).

Carkhuff and Truax (1967) have also developed scales by which they rate the effectiveness of the respondent during a dyadic interaction. Theirs, however, is a training
model which requires that the respondent specifically practice the types of responses outlined by the scales. Thus the scales provide training guidelines as well as evaluative measures.

Summary

A review of the literature reveals that the evaluation of group training in terms of subsequent dyadic communication has been virtually non-existent. However, since group training and dyadic communication make up the independent and dependent variables (respectively) of this study, the process and analysis of each was investigated.

Although the structure of group training programs varies somewhat from one organization to the next, it has been possible to determine the general type of structure which, according to participants, carries the most impact. Briefly, the program should take place in an experiential setting with emphasis on the here-and-now and practice in actual problem solving. It should provide direction as well as encourage active participation. Given a training program so structured, it is necessary to pinpoint goals to be used as the criteria of change. The method used to measure change must be relevant to those goals, reliable and quantitative. The objective approach to evaluating change is more stringent than the subjective and it also renders a more exact measurement when the requirements for scientific
research are met.

One of the goals most frequently espoused in training programs is improvement of the communication process as signified by openness, recognition of emotional loading, and listening ability. For evaluation purposes, the process must be viewed as an on-going interaction which, at any one time, involves just two persons. Although several researchers have devised evaluative techniques, few have dealt with the dyadic communication that occurs outside the group context. The one-to-one interaction that has been analyzed has focused mainly on the receiver or respondent. His responses have been categorized according to scales which represent the criteria for effective communication.
Chapter 3

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Hypotheses to be Tested

The purpose of this study was to determine whether supervisors communicated more effectively, as indicated by responses made during an employee interview, after participation in The Elements of Personnel Management (Heslet et. al., 1971). The general hypothesis that communication changes did occur will be tested in terms of six hypotheses. Stated in the null form, the subhypotheses are as follows:

1. The proportion of emotional responses made before the workshop will not differ from the proportion of emotional responses made after the workshop.
2. The proportion of understanding responses made before the workshop will not differ from the proportion of understanding responses made after the workshop.
3. The proportion of responses indicating employee responsibility made before the workshop will not differ from the proportion of employee responsibility responses made after the workshop.
4. The proportion of personal responses made before the workshop will not differ from the proportion
of personal responses made after the workshop.

5. The number of supervisors rated effective before the workshop will not differ from the number of supervisors rated effective after the workshop.

6. The number of supervisors who improved as indicated by their response sets will equal the number who did not improve after participating in the workshop.

The hypotheses stated above will be subjected to both descriptive and statistical analysis.

Sample

The sample consisted of ten supervisors, seven men and three women, who attended Bank of California's Workshop, The Elements of Personnel Management in May of 1971. Representing various levels of responsibility in the Bank's Electronic Data Processing Department, the supervisors differed in age, experience, and education. Seven of them were from the San Francisco office, two were from Portland, and one was from Seattle. All had been requested to participate in the workshop which lasted approximately eight hours each day, Monday through Friday.

Instrument Used

Change in verbal behavior was measured by a response scale which describes supervisor responses to employee communication in terms of four dichotomized dimensions: (a) social-emotional; (b) understanding-nonunderstanding;
(c) employee responsibility-supervisor responsibility; 
(d) personal-nonpersonal. A fifth dimension, effective-
non-effective, describes the overall effectiveness of the
individual interviews. The first two dimensions, as well as
the scale format, were derived from Kagan's (1966) IPR
Verbal Response Scale and were selected to represent the
behavior theoretically attributed to effective listeners or
counselors. The third and fourth dimensions refer specifi-
cally to the training objectives and emphases of the bank
program. The last dimension is a general measure of the
supervisors's success in helping the employee.

In measuring change, the unit for analysis is the
communication dyad which consists of an employee statement
followed by a supervisor response. A response is rated
according to each of the four dimensions on the scale, with
every dyad being considered independently of those
preceding it. Each rating describes how the supervisor
responded to verbal and nonverbal elements of the employee's
communication. On a before-and-after type of test, positive
change would be indicated by a greater proportion of
responses occurring in the emotional, understanding,
employee responsibility and personal categories. These, in
addition to the overall rating of effective, make up what
will be termed the critical categories.

A list of questions was developed to help raters
discriminate between categories (see Appendix B). The
dimensions of the scale are described briefly below.

1. The social-emotional dimension indicates whether the supervisor responded to the cognitive, task-oriented or to the emotional, affective components of the employee communication.

2. The understanding-nonunderstanding dimension refers to whether or not the supervisor understood the employee's basic communication and the nature of his concern.

3. The employee responsibility-supervisor responsibility dimension indicates whether the supervisor retained the sole responsibility for problem solving or whether he conferred that responsibility on to the employee.

4. The personal-nonpersonal dimension indicates whether the supervisor responded as one unique individual to another or whether he stayed within the bounds of total impersonality such that he could have been any supervisor speaking to any employee.

5. The effective-noneffective rating represents the global adequacy of all the responses made during an interview.

Collection of Data

On the first morning of the workshop, supervisors were assigned randomly to interact with one of two experi-
menters. Each supervisor was informed that he would have five minutes in which to counsel the experimenter and that he should respond just as he would to one of his own employees. Similar interviews were conducted on the last afternoon of the workshop with the supervisors taken in reversed order to interact with a different experimenter.

The problem presented during the interviews was structured to reflect the experimenters' actual work experience and to contain aspects relevant to both work and personal life. Between the pre-and-post interviews the cognitive elements of the problem were changed in order to minimize the effects of practice. Both experimenters were female graduate students in educational psychology under thirty years of age.

For purposes of evaluation, each interview was tape-recorded. A non-experimental tape was also recorded to familiarize the five raters with the interview format and the response scale. The raters, who were male and female graduate students in the behavioral sciences, then assigned the dyadic responses made by supervisors to the experimental categories. They also determined whether or not each interview was effective in terms of the experimenter-employee.

The tabulations of the five raters were combined and conspect reliability (Guion, 1965) was fixed at three-fifths agreement in the assignment of any response to a specific category.
Statistical Design

The responses made in each dimensional category were totaled and set up in proportions. In order to determine whether differences existed between the proportions it was necessary to correct for the bias occurring when the same individuals are measured before and after a treatment. McNemar (1949) provides a method for testing the differences between correlated proportions which necessitates tabulating the data into a two-by-two array.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Category 1</th>
<th>Category 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses rated as belonging to Category 2 on the pre-test would be added to Category 2 responses made on the post-test and the sum entered in the upper right cell (b). Category 2 responses followed by Category 1 responses would go in the upper left quadrant (a). Category 1 followed by Category 1 would go in the lower left quadrant (c) and Category 1 followed by Category 2, in the lower right (d). The sums entered in cells b and c represent the responses which were made the same direction on the pre-and-post tests. The
sums in cells a and d represent a mix, or the difference in responses before and after treatment.

The test for significance as described by Downie and Heath (1959) is made in the following manner:

\[
z = \sqrt{\frac{(a-d)^2}{a+d}}
\]

A z score of 1.96 is necessary to establish significance at the .05 level.

A second test was applied to determine whether change was limited to a few individuals or whether it was indicative of the group as a whole. Individual responses in the critical categories were totaled and paired with the pre-test scores appearing first. Using a method called the sign test (Siegal, 1956), the differences between scores were given a positive or negative value depending upon the direction of change. The fewer number of signs were then compared to the total number and the probability that no change had occurred was determined. A .05 level of significance was chosen to reject the hypothesis.
Chapter 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Data from the response scale was statistically analyzed and probability levels were noted. Only those hypotheses which reached a probability level of .05 or less were rejected. The data was also examined from a clinical viewpoint to reveal possible nonsignificant trends or causal factors. The results of both evaluations are presented and discussed below in terms of each hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 1.** The hypothesis that the proportion of emotional responses made before the workshop would not differ from the proportion of emotional responses made after the workshop was accepted. Statistically, the group process did not affect the ability of supervisors to respond on an emotional level. The frequency of emotional responses did increase when tested twice within similar time limits and positive trends are noted in Tables 1 and 2. Despite this apparent increase it was observed that throughout both sets of interviews the supervisors focused almost exclusively on the task-oriented aspects of the problem. Employee statements such as "I feel so alone" were usually bypassed while the supervisor followed his own cognitive train of thought. Thus, a typical response to the statement
mentioned above might have been "Maybe we can transfer you to another department where you would be happier. Where would you like to go?" Very seldom did the supervisors respond to emotional statements as important messages in and of themselves.

Hypothesis 2. The hypothesis that the proportion of understanding responses made before the workshop would not differ from the proportion of understanding responses made after the workshop was accepted. However, as noted in Table 1, the greatest positive change occurred in this category when compared to the others tested. According to Table 2, there was a significant difference between the number of supervisors who increased the frequency of their emotional responses and those who did not. Therefore it appears that there may have been a trend in the direction of understanding, a finding congruent with the content of the tapes. During the first set of interviews the supervisors seemed to gather more extraneous background information and to expound more on Bank policy. They also tended to seize upon a single solution to the problem of work alienation; that is, transference to another department. Responses made during the second set of interviews seemed to have greater variance and reflected a somewhat sharper focus on the problem. This finding is noteworthy because understanding seemed to be the objective stressed most heavily during the workshop.
Table 1
Tests of Significance for the Correlated Proportions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Dimensional Proportions</th>
<th>z score</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>4/120</td>
<td>11/145</td>
<td>.6757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>6/120</td>
<td>26/145</td>
<td>.9214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>15/120</td>
<td>28/145</td>
<td>.0614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>4/120</td>
<td>5/145</td>
<td>-1.412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Tests of Significance for Group Directional Change (Sign Test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-all</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 3. The hypothesis that the proportion of responses indicating employee responsibility made before the workshop would not differ from the proportion of such responses made after the workshop was accepted. No
proportional change was observed in this dimension. The frequency of critical responses, highest of all four categories on both tests, did increase and a nonsignificant trend is evident in Table 2. It appears that the response was already in the supervisors' repertoires, and that it was developed further through participation in the workshop. Such a finding is noteworthy since the ability to confer the responsibility for decision making on the employee is considered essential to the success of continuum counseling.

Hypothesis 4. The hypothesis that the proportion of personal responses made before the workshop would not differ from the proportion of personal responses made after the workshop was accepted. Based on statistical probabilities, there was no difference between the pre-and-post test proportions. There was, however, a negative trend indicating that, if anything, the supervisors made fewer personal responses after participation in the workshop then before. Content analysis of the tapes revealed that this trend may have been caused in part by the difference between the problem "lead-ins." The first interview was initiated because the employee was supposedly considering termination; the second, because the employee had received a low rating (too many absences) on a performance appraisal. In both cases feelings of frustration, loneliness and alienation were given primary emphasis, but it appeared that the supervisors reacted to them differentially according to the
stated reason for the interview. The work-related absences were apparently associated with rule infractions and therefore dealt with more comfortably on an impersonal level. It is also possible that as training and practice improved listening skills, it lessened spontaneity. Without the benefit of long usage the new skills may have required enough technical concentration to make personal responses difficult.

Hypothesis 5. The hypothesis that the number of interviews rated effective before the workshop would not differ from the number of interviews rated effective after the workshop was accepted. Because of the small number of cases involved the ratings were tabulated (see Appendix A) but not tested for statistical significance. One supervisor conducted an effective interview during both the pre-and post situations. Two others were rated effective on the post-test, bringing the total number of effective interviews to four out of a possible twenty. In some cases the brevity of the interviews may have lessened their potential effectiveness in dealing with the problem. The number of responses made during the interview did not seem to bear any relationship to the ratings, however. In fact, one supervisor was rated effective after having made only eight responses. This rating was consistent with the fact that effectiveness was judged more as a function of demonstrating good listening abilities than of solving the problem.
Most of the supervisors made relatively few responses indicative of good listening skills during either of the interviews. The supervisors rated effective did have higher proportions of such responses (see Appendix A).

**Hypothesis 6.** The hypothesis that the number of supervisors who improved, as indicated by their response sets, would equal the number who did not improve was rejected. Eight of nine supervisors improved in that they made more responses in the critical categories after the workshop than before it. (One supervisor showed no change.)

The mean number of critical responses increased from 2.9 on the pre-test to 7.0 on the post-test. It was also noted that on the pre-test only six supervisors responded in any of the critical categories while on the post-test all ten made at least two such responses. These findings indicate that during approximately the same time limits the supervisors did make more critical responses and thereby heightened their potential effectiveness. Furthermore, they moved in a positive direction as a group, regardless of individual idiosyncrasies which could have caused proportional differences. Whether or not the responses learned will acquire more weight during future interviews will depend upon the long term effects of the workshop.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether or not supervisors changed their modes of communication after participating in a workshop called "The Elements of Personnel Management, (Heslet, et. al., 1971). Ten supervisors were tested by means of simulated employee interviews arranged in a before-and-after design. The responses they made during these interviews were recorded and later evaluated by five raters according to a scale which measured change in terms of the following dimensions:
(a) social-emotional; (b) understanding-nonunderstanding;
(c) employee responsibility-supervisor responsibility;
(d) personal-nonpersonal; (e) effective-noneffective.

Statistical analysis of the data revealed that the proportions of responses made in the emotional, understanding, employee responsibility and personal categories did not differ as expected when measured before and after the workshop. Neither were the second set of interviews rated more effective on an over-all basis. It was noted, however, that change occurred in a positive direction on all but the personal-nonpersonal dimensions. Response frequencies also increased such that the number of supervisors who improved
differed significantly from the number of supervisors who did not improve. It was therefore concluded that the workshop did effect slight but positive change in the supervisors' communication behavior.

Conclusions

The general hypothesis that the proportion of critical responses made by supervisors would differ as measured before and after the workshop was not proved by this study. Slight positive trends were noted but these were not strong enough to meet the requirements for statistical significance. The hypothesis that the number of supervisors who increased the frequencies of their critical responses would differ from the number who did not was supported by the study. More critical responses were made within approximately the same time limits during the second set of interviews than during the first set. The most significant movement, as well as the largest proportional change, was in the direction of understanding. Trends were also noted in the employee responsibility and emotional categories. Thus it appears that although the effects were not great, the workshop did have some impact on the communication behavior of the supervisors.

The response scale used to measure behavior change appeared to provide a feasible means of group evaluation. It was easy to apply, yet it met the requirements for
objective measurement. It could also be modeled to represent the training objectives of almost any workshop without changing the scale format. Because objective instruments are rare in the evaluation of group process, the response scale might be considered worthy of further development.

Limitations and Recommendations

This investigation would have undoubtedly benefitted from a pilot study to test the adequacy of the scale dimensions and to pinpoint technical problems or sources of bias prior to conducting the final research. A control group and a larger sample of supervisors would also have yielded more rigorous findings. As the study was run, individual capacities for change could have had a telling effect on the changes observed for the group. For example, one of the younger supervisors increased his number of critical responses from zero out of a possible forty to nine out of a possible forty-four. In comparison with the other supervisors his change was especially notable.

Testing through the use of role play also involves a controversy over the validity of behavior displayed. It cannot be proved that the supervisors responded in role play just as they would in a job situation. It can only be assumed that their reactions would be similar. In any case, role play behavior should reflect learning gained during the workshop. Whether or not that learning transfers to
on-the-job behavior will depend on its relevancy and the needs of the individual supervisors.

Probably the most important limitation of this study was the short duration of the treatment. As noted in the literature, a five-day workshop may be too short to expect behavior change extreme enough to be considered statistically significant. Consequently, it is possible that the workshop acted more as a stimulus for change than as an actual change agent. Another limiting factor of the study had to do with the treatment itself. In order for an objective evaluation to be made of group training, objective goals must be stated as criteria if improvement. For purposes of this study, the criteria were drawn from workshop and research literature. Had they been stated explicitly at the beginning of the workshop, a more valid evaluation of change could have been made.


Appendix A

Tabulation of Responses by Critical Categories

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Appendix B

Delineation of Scale Categories

Social

Is the response a reflection of fact or information seeking? Is it task oriented? Is it the kind of response that might be made in an ordinary social context? Does it encourage the employee to continue at the cognitive level?

Emotional

Is the response a reflection or comment on the emotion expressed by the employee? Rating should be based on the content and/or intent of the response regardless of whether it be reflection, clarification, etc. This response would be more typical of a group situation than a social one.

Understanding

Does the response indicate to the employee that his communication has been understood? Is it an appropriate reference to what the employee is expressing or trying to express?

Nonunderstanding

Does the response indicate misunderstanding? Is it irrelevant? Is it reflected by an uneasy silence during which
there is no attempt to gain information? Does it squelch employee understanding or interpretation?

Employee responsibility

Is the response made for the benefit of the employee? Does it aid in clarification or cause the employee to consider and evaluate his actions? Does it reflect the employee's responsibility for decision making?

Supervisor responsibility

Is the response made for the benefit of the supervisor? Does it help solely to clarify his position or add to his knowledge of the situation? Does it reflect supervisor responsibility for making decisions or promoting change? Is the response in the form of a lecture or what might be termed a "spiel?"

Personal

Does the response reflect a recognition of the employee as a unique individual? Does it make reference to his personal characteristics or to the characteristics and experience of the supervisor?

Nonpersonal

Does the response reflect general business or bank policy? Could it have been made to any employee? Does it lack spontaneity? Is it pertinent solely to job performance?
Appendix C

Sample of Interview Transcripts

First Interview for Supervisor 1 with Employee A.

S. Good morning, have a seat. What can I do for you?

E. I just came to talk to you because I do have a problem. I've been thinking of coming to talk to you for quite a while. I've been thinking about quitting.

S. Why?

E. I don't know... I don't know whether I'm suited for this job. I don't know whether it's me or the job or what but I'm just kind of unhappy.

S. How long have you been with us now, six or seven months?

E. Yeah.

S. Working in this business, it's hard to really get the feel of the job in that period of time. I myself have only been in it for a year and a half and I'm still learning every day. I know that at times it can be very boring and there are many ways that can cause you to feel this way. This happened to myself; I can speak
from experience. I'd been here approximately the same amount of time and had the same feelings. From my point of view it was because I thought I wasn't going anywhere.

E. I feel a little like that too, but I don't feel involved in what I'm doing at all. I'm not sure whether...

S. I think from my observations your job performance is fine. As you say involvement—that's somewhat of a personal thing. You have to have an interest in what you're doing. This can be stimulated by what the Bank does to help you. We're presently undergoing several changes in the department and hopefully one of these changes will be to initiate a greater training program which will stimulate interest.

E. Well, I do feel kind of bored, you know and...

S. Well, what we hope to do is get you working not only in your particular phase of the department but move you around in the department, give you a little more knowledge, possibly motivate you...

E. But how can you--I just don't feel motivated! I'm just not in it...
S. Well, I think that one thing that breeds motivation is somebody showing an interest. I think if you came to work and did your job every day and nobody paid any attention to you, it would be very easy to feel the way you do. I think that your supervisors, like myself, have to show some interest in you, to tell you if you're doing a good job, if you're having problems to spend some time with you, to try to help...

E. Well, I can't just run in to you, you know, every time I need a pat on the head, there's some...

S. It shouldn't be something you have to look for, it's something that we as supervisors should take upon ourselves. One of our responsibilities is to maintain morale in the department. Poor morale breeds poor attendance, poor work output. It should be one of our functions to keep on top of the people we have working for us, to try and motivate them. As I say, this training program that we're going to instigate hopefully will create a little interest, give you a greater knowledge of your job, give you a greater outlook on what you might possibly want to do in the future. I don't know if you have any definite plans about what you'd like to do with your future. Hopefully by moving you around in the department, it will give you insight about what the different areas do...
E. You're telling me then that I should just look towards the future, huh?

S. I think...

E. Things are just going to get better?

S. No, I can't guarantee they will. I can guarantee that we'll try and make them better. I think you have to look to the future to a certain extent. If you live for today completely you become stagnant. I think that you have to have somewhere in the back of your mind a goal that you're working for. You may not have a definite future planned, but an area you're looking into.

E. That's just it. I don't know what I am really looking into. I'm going along and every day I'm going to work and I'm not even that interested in the people I'm working with right now. I don't really feel a part of them either. The gossip in the lunchroom doesn't turn me on...Maybe I'm in completely the wrong place, I don't know.

S. As I said before, all we can really do is...I'll refer again to our policy toward training people by moving you around in the department, getting you working with people, possibly sending you out in other departments,
to maybe stimulate your interests. You'll find one day that you've hit a nerve, that you've found something you'd really be interested in...
Second Interview for Supervisor 1 with Employee B

E. I came to see you because my supervisor gave me a marginal rating on attendance and like I don't feel that's fair because I've been doing my work and I think that's going to kind of screw me up.

S. Did you discuss this with your supervisor prior to coming here to see me?

E. In her typical thing. She discussed it with me, I didn't discuss it with her.

S. Does she know that you're coming here to see me?

E. No.

S. I think that was one thing that should have been...I think that she should have known you were coming to see me. I'm not going to say that we're going to discontinue the discussion, I'll try to find out all I can, but I would like to tell you right away that I will be going back to your supervisor and discussing it with her.

E. Maybe you can get through to the supervisor more than I can.

S. Hopefully we can figure out exactly what the problem is. How did she rate you on your absenteeism?
Marginal?

E. Yes.

S. Was there any specifics given like did she say you were gone so many days this past six months?

E. Well, she didn't like the fact that I was gone mostly on Fridays and...I mean the number's not that great. It's like ten, I really do my work, but I think she marked me down, that it was going to go on the record and everything, and I don't think it was fair.

S. Is there any--you say that most of them were on Fridays--is there any particular reason that a Friday would cause you to be absent? I'm not saying--what I'm trying to find out, is there some particular occurrence on a Friday that might cause you to be ill? Or out, for some reason?

E. Yeah, sometimes by Friday I get so completely hung up, it's like I get up Friday morning and the alarm goes off and I think, and my stomach's turning over and I think to hell with it.

S. Friday is a good day to end the week on...

E. Yeah, it's a lovely day.
S. Do you think that there's something causing that anxiety, about Friday morning it becomes so overpowering?

E. Yeah, I think so...

S. Do you feel uneasy at work that by Friday it becomes occasionally too hard to cope with?

E. Yeah, I think so, I...

S. What do you think would be causing it?

E. There're so many, I find so many value conflicts, like I go in and I do my kind of work and I don't sit around while the girls gossip and...

S. Do you feel a resentment on the part of the other employees towards you, the fact that you don't participate in quote, gossip, unquote?

E. Yeah, I think they're quite threatened because I really do my work, you know, and like well, we don't communicate too well either.

S. Why do you think that is?

E. Because I really see no importance to sit there and talk about who is doing this, you know, which one was doing what with whom and--the kind of stuff they talk
about really doesn't mean anything to me and...

S. Just as a point of reference, is there a great deal of age difference, say, between yourself and...(yeah) this is something I'd anticipated. I think what we might be dealing with is a different set of values between the way you see life or the way you see things going on around you and the way they see it. I think, this is something you have to get right into and explore and see if there is some way we can get this, I guess, not only yourself but those working with you to see the differences in the values. I think you've become aware of it somewhat, which is, has got to help. You do notice what possibly is causing the tension. Is there something that might be done, that you feel might be done to help alleviate this tension that obviously builds up to the point of overpowering?

E. Well, I think that one of my conflicts is that even if I work hard, it's not getting me any farther because they fit into their little system, coming in at 8:20 instead of 8:00 and this stuff. I don't see any reward in what I'm doing either.

S. Do you feel like you've become stagnant?*

*This supervisor was rated as having made a notable improvement compared to his previous responses to the changes made by other supervisors.