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HUMAN-RELATIONS TRAINING IN THREE RURAL MANITOBA HIGH SCHOOLS: A THREE MONTH FOLLOW-UP*

ABSTRACT: This study attempted to empirically test the hypothesis that the effects of human-relations training are fairly long-lasting. Human-relations training groups were provided on a voluntary basis for the staffs of three rural Manitoba high schools. The participants included 8 administrators, 33 teachers, 6 counsellors, and 2 aides. A pretest-posttest (four days after group) final test (three months after group) design was used. Significant positive changes in self-actualization (as measured by the Personal Orientation Inventory), found in the posttest, were maintained in the final test. Significant positive changes in educational values (as measured by the Educational Process Opinionnaire), found in the posttest, were not maintained in the final test. Subjective evaluations, completed at the time of the final test, indicated that for most participants the group experience had been positive and there had been some lasting effect.

Harrison (1971) commented that "One process which has been little investigated is the progressive change in outcome with time following training (p. 74)." Those engaged in human-relations training often assume that the effects are fairly lasting. This study is an attempt to shed further light on this issue, and is a three-month follow-up of a group previously reported by the authors (Banmen & Capelle, in press).

While limited work has been done in the area of long-term follow-up, several studies deserve mention. Miles (1965) reported on 34 elementary-school principals eight months after a two-week human-relations training group. He obtained reports from friends and colleagues of the participants, and found positive change, particularly in the areas of sensitivity to others and equalitarian attitudes.

Schutz and Allen (1966) obtained subjective evaluations of 71 participants six months after a two-week human-relations group. Five percent of the participants reported no change; 22 percent reported that change had faded; 35 percent reported change was constant; 30 percent reported it had increased. The main areas of change seemed to be in understanding interpersonal, individual, and group behaviour, and in being more effective in relationships with other people.

French, Sherwood, and Bradford (1966) reported on 20 middle-management personnel ten months after a two-week human-relations group. They found positive changes in most of the participants.

Bunker and Knowles (1967) reported on 155 participants 10-12 months after they had participated in either two-week or three-week

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human-relations training groups. While they found some differences in the type of change depending on the length of the group, the changes were generally lasting and positive.

Finally, Himber (1970) reported on subjective evaluations from 384 teen-agers six months after a one-week human-relations group. The highly positive change, reported shortly after the group, remained for most participants. The main areas of change seemed to be a "better understanding of others, increased self-identity, more acceptance of others, increased trust, openness and availability, increased ability to express self, and greater autonomy (p. 316)."

These preceding studies all indicate that human-relations training groups have positive lasting effects for most participants. These studies all measure personal growth of participants from human-relations groups lasting from one to three weeks.

Our study is different from any of the preceding in several ways. The participants were high-school administrators, teachers, counselors, or aides from the same school. Therefore, the groups were "family groups" rather than "stranger groups." The groups were held for a relatively short duration (3½ days), and were non-residential rather than residential. While the explicit goal of the groups was personal and interpersonal growth, changes in educational values were also measured.

However, the basic question is the same: are the changes resulting from human-relations training temporary or lasting? More explicitly, we can state three hypotheses to be tested.

The first hypothesis is that there will be a significant positive change between both the pretest and the posttest (4 days after group) and between the pretest and final test (3 months after group) on a measure of self-actualization (the Personal Orientation Inventory). Also, there will be no significant change between the posttest and final test. Positive change is regarded as an increase in self-actualization, and is indicated by a numerical decrease in the two ratio scales, and a numerical increase in the ten subscales.

The second hypothesis is that there will be a significant positive change between both the pretest and the posttest (4 days after group) and between the pretest and the final test (3 months after group) on a measure of educational values (the Educational Process Opinionnaire). Also, there will be no significant change between the posttest and the final test. Positive change is regarded as increased concern with student needs and more involvement with students, and a decreased concern with extreme order on the importance of subject matter *per se*. This would be indicated by a numerical decrease in any of the following scales: Personal Adjustment Ideology, Student Autonomy, Consideration of Student Viewpoint, Student Challenge, and Integrative Learning; and a numerical increase in any of the rest of the scales: Subject Matter Emphasis, Teacher Direction, Emotional Disengagement, and Classroom Order.

The third hypothesis is that there will be indications of lasting change on a subjective evaluation completed by the participants.

METHODOLOGY

A rural Manitoba school division requested that human-relations training groups be made available to the staffs of the four high schools in the division. These groups would serve the dual purpose of providing in-service training to the schools and providing an opportunity to establish a research base for human-relations training in Manitoba.

It was decided to hold a separate group for each school, to be held on a voluntary basis. At the smallest of the four schools there was not a sufficient number of volunteers, and no group was held. However, approximately 75 percent of the staffs of the other schools volunteered, and three groups were held. The sizes of the three groups were 13, 15, and 17 participants. As well, there were a facilitator and a co-facilitator in each group. The co-facilitator participated in all three groups; one facilitator led two groups and the other led one group.

It would be valuable at this point to consider some of the dynamics of human-relations training as used in this project. All groups began on a Thursday evening, lasted until a Sunday afternoon, and were non-residential. Sessions generally ran from 9:00 a.m. to noon, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The explicit purpose closely followed Rogers's definition of an encounter group, which "tends to emphasize personal growth and the development and improvement of interpersonal communication and relationships through an experiential process (1970, p. 4)."

The research function involved a pretest on the Thursday just before the group began; a posttest on the following Thursday; and a final test and subjective evaluation three months later. Two tests were used: the Personal Orientation Inventory and the Educational Process Opinionnaire.

The *Personal Orientation Inventory* (POI) was developed by Shostrom (1964, 1966), and is a comprehensive measure of values and behaviors that are important in the development of self-actualization. It consists of 150 two-choice comparative judgments which are scored twice, once for the two ratio scales and once for the ten subscales.

The *Educational Process Opinionnaire* was developed by Wehling and Charters (1969), and measures teacher beliefs about the teaching process. It consists of 86 questions which are evaluated on a continuum from one to five.

Two attempts to establish control groups failed. The one school which did not have a group refused to complete the tests. As well, staff members who did not participate in the groups but volunteered to write the tests were different from the group members (i.e. mainly auxiliaries — teacher aides, librarians, etc., rather than teachers), and, therefore, not acceptable as a control group.

The 45 group participants consisted of 33 teachers, 4 administrators, 6 counselors, and 2 aides. Of these, 36 completed the subjective evaluation and 32 completed the three sets of tests. Demographic data

were obtained from the 32 participants who completed the tests. The average age was 29. There were 21 males and 11 females. Twenty-one participants were married, while 11 were single. The average number of years of teaching experience was 5. The average number of years at their present school was 4, and the average number of years of post-secondary education was 4.

RESULTS OF TESTS

The empirical results are shown in Tables 1-4. All *t*-tests are one-tailed due to the predictive nature of the hypotheses.

Table 1 shows the pre-post (4 days after group) changes on self-actualization as measured by the POI. Increased self-actualization is indicated on 6 of the 12 scales. In the original study with a slightly larger group (*N* = 36) the same 6 scales as well as the Spontaneity scale showed increased self-actualization (Banmen & Capelle, in press).

Table 2 shows the pre-final (3 months after group) changes on self-actualization. The same six scales remain significant, and the Spontaneity scale also becomes significant.

Table 3 shows the post-final changes on self-actualization. It indicates that there is no significant difference on any scale between the time of the posttest (4 days after group) and the time of the final test (3 months after group).

Therefore, the first hypothesis is supported. While there are small differences between the posttest and final test results, none of these differences are significant. The significant positive gains immediately following the group are maintained.

Table 4 shows the pre-post (4 days after group) changes in educational values as measured by the EPO. Significant positive changes are indicated on 4 of the 9 scales. In the original study with a slightly larger group (*N* = 36) the same 4 scales as well as the Considera-

TABLE 1

Pretest and Posttest Personal Orientation Inventory Scale Means and *t*-Test Values (*N* = 32)

Scale	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	<i>t</i>
Time Ratio	0.40	0.36	0.70
Support Ratio	0.56	0.45	3.05**
Self-Actualizing Value	19.9	19.6	0.56
Existentiality	20.9	22.6	2.90**
Feeling Reactivity	15.0	16.3	3.61**
Spontaneity	12.3	12.9	1.50
Self-Regard	10.7	11.0	0.58
Self-Acceptance	15.5	17.6	3.73**
Nature of Man	9.3	9.0	0.98
Synergy	7.2	7.3	0.80
Acceptance of Aggression	14.1	15.5	3.04**
Capacity for Intimate Contact	16.7	18.5	3.30**

***p* < .01

TABLE 2

Pretest and Final Test Personal Orientation Inventory Scale Means and *t*-Test Values
(N = 32)

Scale	Pretest Mean	Final Test Mean	<i>t</i>
Time Ratio	0.40	0.35	1.15
Support Ratio	0.56	0.43	3.85**
Self-Actualizing Value	19.9	20.1	0.39
Existentiality	20.9	22.5	2.04*
Feeling Reactivity	15.0	17.0	3.75**
Spontaneity	12.3	13.3	1.97*
Self-Regard	10.7	10.9	0.49
Self-Acceptance	15.5	18.2	5.13**
Nature of Man	9.3	9.2	0.48
Synergy	7.2	7.3	0.76
Acceptance of Aggression	14.1	15.0	2.05*
Capacity for Intimate Contact	16.7	19.1	3.93**

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

tion of Student Viewpoint scale showed significant positive change (Banmen & Capelle, in press).

Table 5 shows the pre-final (3 months after group) changes in educational values. There is a significant positive change on only one scale (Consideration of Student Viewpoint).

Table 6 shows the post-final changes in educational values. There are significant changes in 3 scales (Personal Adjustment Ideology, Student Autonomy, and Teacher Direction). All are in the negative direction.

Therefore, the second hypothesis is not supported. There is only one significant positive pre-final change and 3 of the positive changes found in the posttest significantly decrease 3 months later on the final test. The positive changes immediately following the human-relations group are not maintained.

TABLE 3

Posttest and Final Test Personal Orientation Inventory Scale Means and *t*-Test Values (N = 32)

Scale	Posttest Mean	Final Test Mean	<i>t</i>
Time Ratio	0.36	0.35	0.28
Support Ratio	0.45	0.43	0.77
Self-Actualizing Value	19.9	20.1	0.94
Existentiality	22.6	22.5	0.28
Feeling Reactivity	16.3	17.0	1.53
Spontaneity	12.9	13.3	0.73
Self-Regard	11.0	10.9	0.25
Self-Acceptance	17.6	18.2	1.51
Nature of Man	9.0	9.2	0.51
Synergy	7.3	7.3	0.15
Acceptance of Aggression	15.5	15.0	1.11
Capacity for Intimate Contact	18.5	19.1	1.28

TABLE 4

Pretest and Posttest Educational Process Opinionnaire Scale Means and *t*-Test Values (N = 32)

Scale	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	<i>t</i>
Subject Matter Emphasis	44.3	45.3	1.69
Personal Adjustment Ideology	34.3	32.2	1.92*
Student Autonomy	29.9	27.9	2.83*
Teacher Direction	25.9	27.5	2.08*
Emotional Disengagement	10.9	11.6	2.03*
Consideration of Student Viewpoint	18.6	18.0	1.49
Classroom Order	28.7	29.0	0.49
Student Challenge	14.8	14.3	0.83
Integrative Learning	29.3	28.5	0.94

**p* < .05

TABLE 5

Pretest and Final Test Educational Process Opinionnaire Scale Means and *t*-Test Values (N = 32)

Scale	Pretest Mean	Final Test Mean	<i>t</i>
Subject Matter Emphasis	44.3	45.7	1.58
Personal Adjustment Ideology	34.3	33.8	0.46
Student Autonomy	29.9	29.3	1.00
Teacher Direction	25.9	26.3	0.54
Emotional Disengagement	10.9	11.3	0.97
Consideration of Student Viewpoint	18.6	17.6	2.03*
Classroom Order	28.7	28.4	0.35
Student Challenge	14.8	14.6	0.38
Integrative Learning	29.3	28.8	0.56

**p* < .05

TABLE 6

Posttest and Final Test Educational Process Opinionnaire Scale Means and *t*-Test Values (N = 32)

Scale	Posttest Mean	Final Test Mean	<i>t</i>
Subject Matter Emphasis	45.3	45.7	0.67
Personal Adjustment Ideology	32.2	33.8	2.05*
Student Autonomy	27.9	29.3	2.11*
Teacher Direction	27.5	26.3	2.35*
Emotional Disengagement	11.6	11.3	0.80
Consideration of Student Viewpoint	17.0	17.6	0.96
Classroom Order	29.0	28.4	1.22
Student Challenge	14.3	14.6	0.73
Integrative Learning	28.5	28.8	0.42

**p* < .05

SUBJECTIVE EVALUATIONS

Thirty-six of the participants completed subjective evaluations of the human-relations training group three months after it had been held. The evaluation consisted of completing a questionnaire, the results of which are summarized in tables 7 to 10.

Table 7 shows general evaluations of the experience. The majority (35) felt that the experience had been positive, while one person felt that the predominant effect was negative. One person felt that there was no lasting positive effect, while the majority felt that there was either some (22) or considerable lasting effect (12).

Table 8 shows the people with whom changed behaviour has taken place. Most participants reported changes with their co-workers. This was expected since they had participated in the human-relations training experience together. Most of the married participants reported positive changes with their spouses, while many of those with children reported positive changes with them. It is interesting that only one half of the participants reported positive changes with students.

TABLE 7

Subjective Evaluation of Behavior Change Three Months After Human-Relations Training Experience

Effect	Number of Responses
No Change	0
Temporary positive change which has completely vanished	1
Temporary negative change which has completely vanished	0
Considerable temporary positive change with some permanence	22
Considerable temporary negative change with some permanence	1
Considerable lasting positive change	12
Considerable lasting negative change	0

TABLE 8

Subjective Evaluation of Behavior Change with Certain People Three Months After Human-Relations Training Experience

People	Positive Change	No Change; Not Sure	Negative Change
Spouse	19	19	0
Children	7	29	0
Parents	2	34	0
Friends	19	17	0
Co-workers	29	6	1
Superiors	9	24	3
Students	18	18	0

Table 9 shows specific areas of behaviour change. The areas of most significant positive change seem to be increased sensitivity to the feelings of oneself and others, and increased understanding of oneself and others.

Table 10 shows other specific areas of behaviour change. The areas of most significant positive change seem to be less fear of emotions, less fear of what others think, and less inhibition.

Therefore, the third hypothesis is supported. Participants report a great diversity of positive change three months after the

TABLE 9

Subjective Evaluation of Specific Behavior Change Three Months After Human-Relations Training Experience

Category	Quite a Bit More	Somewhat More	Not Sure; No Change	Less
Living in the present	0	19	16	1
Flexible	2	27	7	0
Sensitive to my feelings	10	20	6	0
Sensitive to others' feelings	9	25	1	1
Spontaneous	2	16	15	3
Self-confident	6	20	8	2
Accepting of my weaknesses	4	23	9	0
Able to form meaningful relationships	4	16	16	0
Trusting of students	2	19	15	0
Personally involved with students	3	22	11	0
Able to express positive feelings	4	23	9	0
Able to express negative feelings	4	20	12	0
Understanding of others	7	23	6	0
Self-assured	9	16	9	2
Understanding of myself	6	26	4	0
Able to function in a group	2	22	11	1
Able to deal with personal problems	7	16	13	0
Able to communicate	4	21	10	1
Questioning of values and attitudes	7	17	12	0

TABLE 10

Subjective Evaluation of Specific Behavior Change Three Months After Human-Relations Training Experience

Category	Quite a Bit Less	Somewhat Less	Not Sure; No Change	More
Controlling of others	1	15	20	0
Afraid of emotions	3	25	4	4
Depressed	7	12	12	5
Shy and timid	2	20	13	1
Afraid of what others think	11	16	7	2
Inhibited	2	22	9	3
Angry	1	11	21	3
Afraid to be close to others	5	18	13	0
Lonely	3	16	14	3
Defensive	4	16	15	1
Anxious	5	12	17	2

human-relations training group. While the reactions are largely positive, it should be noted that there were some negative reactions. One of the 36 participants felt that it had been largely a negative experience. Several participants felt that the effect in specific areas had been negative, although the overall effect had been positive. More research is needed on these negative reactions, and follow-up resources must be available to participants to work through any difficulties which result from the experience.

DISCUSSION

Before discussing the results, it is necessary to mention that the project was quasi-experimental. The participants were not randomly selected and, therefore, generalizations beyond the school division involved are difficult. There was no control group, so the effects of writing the same tests three times and extraneous events taking place between these writings were not controlled. (See Campbell & Stanley, 1963). There were no reports from outside observers to confirm reported changes. The research and training functions were combined, which could have affected the results. Therefore, the weaknesses of the project prevent firm conclusions.

However, the results are still of value as long as we are cognizant of this fact. We can evaluate the outcomes of this particular project with caution, recognizing that contaminating factors may have affected the results.

Let us first consider the changes in self-actualization. The fact that these changes were generally greater (although not significantly so) three months following the group raises the question as to whether the process of change stops at the end of a group, or continues beyond it. It also indicates that the change is not at a superficial level, but is deeper and more lasting. Finally, it indicates that groups of shorter duration than usual can have lasting effects. This lasting effect may be partially due to the ongoing relationships of the "family group."

The general failure of change in educational values to be maintained indicates that either the changes were not deep enough to be lasting or that the school environment was not supportive of these changes. Probably there is some validity in each inference.

The human-relations group did not focus specifically on educational values, so that changes resulted indirectly rather than directly. In order to maximize change in this area, four variables must be taken into account.

The first variable is the organizational (i.e. school) structure and climate. It must be supportive of directions and values towards which a school staff seems to be moving.

The second variable is providing school staffs with the techniques or approaches through which these changes can be implemented, especially in classroom settings. It is one thing for a teacher to develop more equalitarian values; it is another to successfully translate this value into classroom practice.

The third variable is involving the students and community (who are also important aspects of a school organization) in the process of change. Resistance to change, especially on the part of the students, will doom it to failure.

The fourth and final variable is a follow-up which will allow feedback and evaluation, and will have a consolidating effect on the change process.

It would seem likely that a human-relations group, with these four variables as a part of it, would lead to a more significant impact on the educational system.

CONCLUSION

Bearing the limitations in mind, it is still possible to conclude that positive changes in self-actualization were maintained while positive changes in educational values virtually disappeared three months after the staffs of three small rural Manitoba high schools participated in three-and-a-half day non-residential human-relations training groups. Subjective evaluations indicated that changes were lasting in many different areas of positive growth.

This study is supportive of other studies which indicate that human-relations training results in lasting rather than temporary personal growth, but also indicates through the failure to maintain change in educational values that more specialized programs, with personal growth as the core component, are necessary to have a more significant impact on the educational system.

RESUME: Dans cette étude, on a tenté de vérifier de façon empirique l'hypothèse selon laquelle les effets d'un groupe de formation aux relations humaines durent assez longtemps. On a exposé à des sessions de sensibilisation aux relations humaines le personnel de trois écoles secondaires rurales du Manitoba. Les participants se sont joints aux groupes sur une base volontaire. Il comprenaient 8 administrateurs, 33 instituteurs, 6 conseillers et 2 aides. Le schéma d'étude utilisé était constitué de trois étapes: un prétest, un post-test (quatre jours après la dernière session) et un test final (trois mois plus tard). Les changements positifs et significatifs dans l'actualisation de soi (tels que mesurés par le Personal Orientation Inventory) observés au moment du post-test se sont maintenus au moment du test final. Les changements positifs et significatifs dans les valeurs éducatives (tels que mesurés par le Educational Process Opinionnaire) observés au moment du post-test ne se sont pas maintenus au moment du test final. Les évaluations subjectives que les participants ont complétées lors du test final indiquent que pour la plupart d'entre eux, l'expérience du groupe avait eu des effets positifs et durables.

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