The Effect of Practice on Learning the Skill of Communicating Empathy in a Systematic Counselor Training Program for Beginning Counselors.

Joseph Peter Mazurkiewicz Jr

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/3813
INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this document, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or “target” for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is “Missing Page(s)”. If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark, it is an indication of either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, duplicate copy, or copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed. For blurred pages, a good image of the page can be found in the adjacent frame. If copyrighted materials were deleted, a target note will appear listing the pages in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed, a definite method of “sectioning” the material has been followed. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For illustrations that cannot be satisfactorily reproduced by xerographic means, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and inserted into your xerographic copy. These prints are available upon request from the Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.

University Microfilms International
300 N. Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
Mazurkiewicz, Joseph Peter, Jr.

THE EFFECT OF PRACTICE ON LEARNING THE SKILL OF COMMUNICATING EMPATHY IN A SYSTEMATIC COUNSELOR TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BEGINNING COUNSELORS

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col. PH.D. 1982

University Microfilms
International 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106
THE EFFECT OF PRACTICE ON LEARNING THE SKILL OF
COMMUNICATING EMPATHY IN A
SYSTEMATIC COUNSELOR TRAINING PROGRAM
FOR BEGINNING COUNSELORS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in
The Interdepartmental Program of Education

by
Joseph Peter Mazurkiewicz, Jr.
B.S., Trenton State College, 1975
M.Ed., Trenton State College, 1979
December, 1982
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my grateful appreciation to Dr. Thomas W. Hosie, my advisor and committee chairman. His consistent support, encouragement, and expertise in the area of counselor education were vital to my planning and completion of this dissertation.

My sincere appreciation is also offered to the other members of my dissertation committee, Dr. C. Robert Blackmon, Dr. Ralph Mason Dreger, Dr. James Firnberg, and Dr. Robert Von Brock. Their efforts in reading the drafts and offering constructive comments helped to focus and sharpen this investigation.

Special thanks are extended to Dr. James Mackey for the support and assistance in carrying out the logistical and procedural aspects of this study. A note of appreciation is offered to Lois Bell, Beverly Chaney, Karen Charbonnet, and Rocky Rausch for the time and effort devoted to the study.

A special thank you is given to Debra Bertrand for her calm competence in typing this report.

Finally, to my wife, Elizabeth, I wish to express my love and everlasting gratitude for her love, understanding, patience and support throughout this project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Data</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Analysis</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FURTHER RESEARCH</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Counselor Education</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Further Research</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIXES</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Rating Scale</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Communication Index Form I and II</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Prepared Counselee Concerns for Practice Sessions</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Expert Feedback Form</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Discrimination Index</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Inter-rater Reliability</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Study Sign-Up Form</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Gain Scores From Pretest to Posttest on Level of Communicating Empathy</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Analysis of Covariance Comparing Practice Plus Feedback, Practice Only, and No Practice Groups On Level of Communicating Empathy</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Analysis of Differences Among Adjusted Posttest Means on Level of Communicating Empathy</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Table of Adjusted Means for Level of Communicating Empathy</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF PRACTICE ON LEARNING THE SKILL OF COMMUNICATING EMPATHY IN A SYSTEMATIC TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BEGINNING COUNSELORS

The present study was designed to investigate the effect the practice component has on learning to communicate empathy. Specifically the aim of this study was to compare three training procedures: practice plus feedback, practice only, and no practice (control) on the dependent variable of rated level of communicating empathy.

The participants for this study were 30 graduate students enrolled in two sections of a basic course in facilitative communication. The participants were randomly assigned to the three treatment groups.

All participants were pretested using the Carkhuff (1976) Counselor-Counselee Audio Tape Series. They met for a three hour training session once a week for three weeks. During the training all three groups met together for instructions, didactic presentations, and modeling of the skill being taught. Upon completion of the didactic presentation the three groups separated. The practice
only group worked in dyads with one student role-playing a counselee presenting prepared counselee concerns while the other trainee responded as a counselor within a counseling session. The practice plus feedback group followed the same procedure but received feedback from experienced trainers. The no practice control group did not have an opportunity to practice responding; instead, they viewed a training film on the evolution of the Human Relations Development Model (Carkhuff, 1979).

Each of the practice sessions and film viewings was for 20 minutes. Immediately after the final session all participants were posttested using an alternate form of the pretest. Trained raters determined the level of empathetic communication using the five-point Carkuff Scale (1976).

The results of the ratings were analyzed to determine if the practice only group could attain a higher level of communicating accurate empathy than the no practice control group and if the practice plus feedback group could attain a higher level of communicating accurate empathy than the practice only group.
The results of this study suggest that the inclusion of feedback within the practice session may be an effective method for training counselors to communicate empathy. A more general suggestion based on these findings is that it is important to include feedback and practice when learning a more complex skill such as communicating accurate empathy.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Recently a growing emphasis has been placed on understanding the multiple components of Carkhuff's (1969) and Ivey's (1971) systematic counselor training programs. Both of the aforementioned programs are based on Bandura's (1969) principles of social learning theory which include: instructions, modeling, practice, and feedback.

While established bodies of research are available in demonstrating the effectiveness of modeling, feedback and instructions, no empirical evidence is available to support the effect of practice in counselor training programs. Skill simplicity, too low a ceiling of measurement, and confounding of practice with feedback were identified as design limitations that have led to inconclusive results for establishing the effectiveness of practice (Fuqua and Gade, 1982).

Even though practice is not based on empirical evidence, it is found in many widely used counselor training programs. Ivey and Authier's (1978) microcounseling program includes videotaping a 5 to 15 minute role-played practice session with feedback followed by an additional 5
to 15 minute role-played practice interview. The Inter-
personal Process Recall method developed by Kagan (1975) 
includes a role-played behavioral rehearsal of effective 
counselor behavior with feedback from peers and super-
visors. The Integrated Didactic-Experiential training 
programs developed by Truax, Carkhuff, and Douds (1964), 
and Truax and Carkhuff (1967) provide for two practice 
sessions. The training group verbally rehearses responses 
to audiotaped statements made by clients, and trainees 
role-play counseling interviews in dyads with one trainee 
acting as counselor and the other as the client. The 
practice sessions are taped so that the supervisor can 
give delayed feedback.

The focus of systematic counselor training programs 
is on learning several discrete counseling skills. Em- 
pathy, which is viewed as the most important skill, is 
considered basic to all counseling relationships 
(Carkhuff, 1969). Learning to communicate empathy is 
included in the early stages of all the systematic train-
ing programs. Regardless of theoretical orientation, 
counselors who possess the ability to communicate accurate 
empathy are viewed as effective in facilitating counselee 
change.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate experi-
mentally the effect of practice on acquiring the skill of
communicating empathy. It is not empirically known what effect practice has on learning the skill of communicating accurate empathy.

**Hypotheses**

I. The practice only group will be significantly greater than the no practice control group on communication of empathy, as measured by the five point Carkhuff Scale (1976).

II. The practice plus feedback group will be significantly greater than the practice only group on communication of empathy, as measured by the five point Carkhuff Scale (1976).

**Definition of Terms**

**Modeling** - Observation of a skilled counselor demonstrating a specific skill to be learned. The trainee not only hears what good techniques in counseling are, but he or she also sees them in action.

**Practice** - Behavioral rehearsal; trainees role-playing a counselor responding to a client statement.

**Feedback** - A trainer gives the trainee a simple verbal message of "good" if his/her response is correct or models the correct response if the trainee's response is not correct.

**Empathy** - The ability to understand and appreciate another person's experience. It is the ability to see the world as another person sees it and acknowledge the feelings and
thoughts the other's personal perceptions foster in him/her.

**Communicating Empathy** - A verbal response to the counselee's statement that is interchangeable with the counselee's experience of the situation and which demonstrates an understanding of his or her feelings and reasons for these feelings.

**Attending** - The verbal and nonverbal behaviors that are directly related to involving the helpee in the counseling process. Attending is communicating interest in the helpee through posture, physical gestures, and eye contact.

**Simplistic Skills** - Basic counseling skills (i.e., attending behaviors) that are easily mastered during the initial training phase (modeling or instructions) and do not require practice for acquisition.

**Low Ceiling of Measurement** - The measurement of the practice effect on simple skills that are easily mastered during the initial training phase (modeling and instructions) and do not require practice for acquisition.

**Systematic Counselor Training** - Comprehensive training programs that are designed to teach discrete counseling skills and are integrated into a complete counseling repertoire. These programs include: (a) Human Relations Training, (b) Interpersonal Process Recall, and (c) Microcounseling.
Counselor Tacting Response Leads - Verbal responses made by the counselor which help the client discuss abstract concepts in more specific terms.

Significance of Study

The training literature in the area of counselor education suggests that the practice component appears to be an important variable in developing specific counseling skills. In a recent review of the literature only one study was found that experimentally investigated the effect of practice on learning the skill of communicating accurate empathy (Stone, 1975). However, this study did not adequately control for the effect of practice because practice was confounded with feedback (Fuqua and Gade, 1982).

Ford (1979), in his review of counselor training literature, concluded that further research is needed to understand the many parameters of role-played practice and its value in learning to communicate accurate empathy. Fuqua and Gade (1982) and Froehle (1979) lend additional support for further research to establish empirical evidence for understanding the practice effect in counselor training programs.

The absence of experimental investigation that adequately controls for the effect of practice in counselor training raises serious questions about the efficiency and
effectiveness of the practice component in general, and specifically in learning the skill of communicating accurate empathy. Since practice is widely used in counselor training programs, it is imperative that research be undertaken so that counselor educators may be provided with information to help them understand the effect of practice in learning the skill of communicating accurate empathy.
CHAPTER 2

SELECTED LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of research related to this study. The first section presents a survey of literature that attempted to measure and understand the effects of practice in counselor training. The second section focuses on studies relating to the other important component parts of the counselor training program (i.e., modeling, feedback, and instructions). The final section is a presentation of findings in the literature relating to accurate empathetic responding.

Research on Practice

With the increased acceptance of training counselors in the skill of empathetic communication (Matarazzo, 1978) many researchers (Carkhuff, 1980; Ivey & Authier, 1978; and Kagan, 1975) have developed programs to train counselors systematically in accurate empathetic responding. The training paradigms previously mentioned are based on the social learning theory of Bandura (1969), which includes instructions, modeling, practice, and feedback. The widespread acceptance of these training programs has led many researchers to investigate the different components of this training paradigm.
Only five studies have investigated the effects of the practice component within the counselor training paradigm. As previously mentioned, design limitations, confounding of practice with feedback, and level of skill difficulty were reasons for the inconclusive evidence regarding the effectiveness of practice (Fuqua & Gade, 1982).

Stone and Vance (1976) randomly assigned forty-eight trainees to one of eight treatment groups which included all combinations of instructions, modeling and rehearsal (practice). The mean level of communication on the five-point revised Carkhuff Empathy Scale (1969) was used to determine the pre- and posttest level of empathetic responding on written and taped critical incident interviews. The authors concluded that there were no significant differences among treatment groups on the written measures of empathetic responding. An analysis of the critical incident interview data revealed a significant effect of modeling. Instructions and rehearsal facilitated performance but not significantly. The significant effect found for modeling was consistent with previous studies by Kuna (1975) and Perry (1975). Although the authors report evidence for the significant effect of modeling, they confounded the practice effect with supervisor feedback. These studies did not include a practice (rehearsal) only condition; therefore, the effect of practice on learning the skill of communicating empathy
remains inconclusive.

In a review of counselor training literature, Ford (1979) found only one study (Baily, Deardorf, and Nay, 1977) that systematically investigated the effect of practice on learning counseling skills. Baily, et al. (1979) included a practice only and practice plus feedback condition in investigating the effects of live practice, videotape feedback, and modeling. The dependent measures of rating verbal (open-ended questioning) and nonverbal (eye contact) behavior during a simulated interview revealed that the practice plus feedback group performed significantly better than the role-play practice only group. Role-play practice alone had little effect on training. The results of these analyses are consistent with Stone and Vance (1976) in concluding that groups receiving a combination of modeling, practice, and feedback performed significantly better than groups receiving single components. Modeling alone produced the most consistent effects. However, it was hypothesized by Fuqua and Gade (1982) that a low ceiling of measurement might have disguised the effect of practice in this study.

A study by Peters, Cormier, and Cormier (1978) investigated in the effects of four treatment groups (1) modeling only, (2) modeling and practice, (3) modeling, practice, and feedback, and (4) modeling, practice, feedback, and remediation. The authors concluded that
practice and feedback may not be needed in acquiring a nine-step counseling goals strategy. The results of this investigation are consistent with previous findings in concluding that modeling alone was effective (Baily, et al., 1977; Stone & Vance, 1976). However, this study contradicts previous evidence indicating that feedback has an effect when employed in conjunction with modeling and instructions (Dowd & Blocher, 1974; Eisenberg & Delaney, 1970).

O'Toole (1979) measured use of silence, open-ended questioning, and counselor-tacting-response leads in comparing written modeling, videotape modeling, written modeling plus practice, and videotape modeling plus practice treatment groups. When each of the skill ratings was analyzed separately no significant differences were found. However, when an overall performance index consisting of the sum of scores on all three skills was analyzed, significant differences were found. The authors concluded that groups receiving practice performed significantly better than groups without the practice component. However, the results of this study may be misleading because the effect of practice was confounded with feedback.

Stone (1975) investigated the effects of high and low fidelity simulation methods of teaching counselor tacting response leads. The treatments consisted of practice (written vs. role-play), modeling, (instructional manual and audiotape vs. videotape and in vivo) and assessment
(written vs. audio). The results of the analysis revealed that high fidelity situations (role-play, videotape, in vivo) scored significantly better than low fidelity treatment situations (written, instructional manual, audiotape). The results of this analysis lend support to Fuqua and Gade's (1982) hypothesis that too low a ceiling of measurement may have disguised the effect of practice in previous studies (Baily, et al., 1977; O'Toole, 1979; Peters, Cormier & Cormier, 1978; Stone & Vance, 1976).

In summary, the literature survey revealed no empirical support for understanding the effects of role-play practice in counselor training programs. Skill simplicity, too low a ceiling of measurement and confounding of practice with feedback have led to inconclusive evidence regarding the effects of role-play practice.

**Research Related to Components of Modeling, Instructions and Feedback**

Modeling has demonstrated effectiveness as a training component in several studies. Kuna (1975) and Perry (1975) found modeling to have an effect on the outcome of learning the skill of empathy. Frankel (1971) found that both modeling and feedback produced positive changes in trainee behaviors when rated on frequency of verbal response and trainee response to feelings. Payne, Weiss, and Knapp (1972) reported that the didactic method with modeling group performed significantly higher than a no
modeling group when rated on Carkhuff's (1969) five-point empathy scale.

Fyffe and Tian (1979) found that a combination of modeling and trainer feedback was most effective in learning the skill of reflection of feeling when compared to no modeling, no feedback, and feedback from trainer only treatment groups.

In investigating the effects of modeling and instructions on modeling, Goldberg (1971) found that modeling plus instructions performed significantly better than models alone in learning the skill of reflection of feelings. Instructions have been found to be equally effective in teaching relatively simple skills such as attending behaviors and encouragement to talk (Perry, 1975; Kuna, 1975). These two authors also found that instructions can enhance the effects of modeling when learning a more complex skill like empathy. The effect of instructions on feedback reveal similar results in that instructions can enhance the effect of feedback (Ford, 1979).

The feedback component has also been demonstrated to effect counselor skill acquisition. Kelly (1971), in studying the effects of supervision and self-reinforcement in learning counseling skills, concluded that supervisor reinforcement was the most powerful form of feedback.

In a study examining the effects of immediate and delayed feedback, Reddy (1969) found the immediate feed-
back group to be performing at significantly higher levels of empathetic responding than the delayed feedback treatment group.

In examining multiple components of the systematic training paradigm, Frankel (1971) found that modeling and feedback (as well as feedback alone) were significantly more effective than reading procedures, in terms of trainees' increase in response to feelings. O'Toole (1979) provides additional support for the effect of feedback. O'Toole found that groups receiving a practice session with feedback performed significantly better than groups without the feedback practice session. The results of the Baily, et al. (1977) investigation are consistent with the findings of Ivey and Authier (1978), that the use of multiple training components results in the greatest gain in skill acquisition.

Although practice has not been empirically validated as an effective counselor training component, several studies indicate that practice enhances the effect of modeling. Dalton, Sunbald, and Hylbert (1973) and Wallace, Heran, Baker, and Hudson (1975) report evidence that modeling has a greater effect when trainees are given the opportunity to practice the modeled response.

**Research on Empathy as an Outcome Measure of Training**

A number of studies during the 1960's investigating characteristics of counselors and their effect on client
outcome indicated that clients of counselors who demonstrated high level of facilitative conditions (i.e., respect, genuineness, concreteness, and accurate empathetic understanding) showed a wide variety of positive behavioral changes (Rogers, Gendlin, Kiessler, & Truax, 1967; Truax, 1968; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967).

Truax and Carkhuff (1965:5) defined empathy as "the skill by which the therapist is able to know and communicate the client's inner being." Genuineness refers to the counselor's ability to be himself in a non-exploitative relationship. Respect means that the counselor communicates in a non-judgmental way a deep respect for the client's self-worth as a human being and concreteness refers to the specificity of the counselor's response (Carkhuff, 1967).

In studying the natural variability of professionally treated groups Truax and Carkhuff (1967) concluded that counseling can be both helpful and harmful. They found that clients who received high levels of facilitative conditions made improvements while those receiving low levels of facilitative conditions remained the same or deteriorated.

The work of Truax and Carkhuff (1965) attempted to define empathy in terms that were clearly definable and measurable. This led to the development of scales to measure the level of empathetic responding by counselors (Carkhuff, 1969).
The empathy scales range from a low of one (which is a response that does not attend to the client's statement or distracts from the client's statement) to a high of five (which adds significantly to the feelings and meanings of the clients). An interchangeable response level of 3.0 (a response which expresses the same affect and meaning as the client) is considered to be the minimally facilitative level of functioning (Carkhuff, 1969).

In more recent attempts to define the conditions that lead to client change, empathy, respect, genuineness, concreteness, confrontation, immediacy, and self-disclosure were found to be related to positive client change (Carkhuff & Berenson, 1977; Carkhuff, 1969, 1971). Two main factors, responsiveness and initiative, were then obtained from a factor analysis of responses from both high and low functioning counselors. Empathy and respect accounted for responsiveness while initiative was comprised of confrontation and immediacy. The core conditions of genuineness and concreteness were found to load on both responsiveness and initiative (Berenson & Mitchell, 1974; Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967).

Basic responding skills of empathy, respect, and concreteness directly influence the degree to which the counselee will explore personally relevant material (Carkhuff, 1969; Rogers, et al., 1967; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Research has shown that counselors can deliberately increase and decrease their clients' depth of self-exploration by
directly changing the level of the responding skill (Cannon & Pierce, 1968; Holder, Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967).

The responding skills involve identifying and communicating the content and feelings that the client is experiencing. Responding skills facilitate the client's exploration of where he/she is in the world and where he/she wants to be. Responding skills help the counselor communicate his understanding of the client's problem by serving as a mirror image of the client's experience (Carkhuff, 1980; Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967, 1977; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967).

The aforementioned research on the level of responding is in agreement with Rogers (1957), who emphasized empathetic responding as a critical variable in facilitating the involvement of the clients' participation in exploring themselves in relation to their worlds. Carkhuff (1980) states responding empathetically is an important step in his helping process of exploration, understanding, and action.

The first phase of counseling, as outlined by Carkhuff (1969), concentrates on responding at the minimally facilitative level (3.0). It is at this interchangeable empathetic level that the clients are allowed to explore their understanding of where they are and where they want to be. Carkhuff (1969:96) describes the early stages of the helping dimensions in regards to empathetic
understanding in the following manner:

Empathetic understanding in turn is the key ingredient in the establishment of a viable communication process. At minimally facilitative level (level 3) the interchangeability of the helper's communications with those of the helpee indicates to the helpee that the helper will initially accept the helpee's experience at the level at which the helpee is expressing himself.

Summary

In the review of literature on counselor training, accurate empathetic responding was found to be an important counseling skill in facilitating positive client change. The development of systematic training programs by Carkhuff, Truax, and Ivey have led to a number of investigations in an attempt to understand the component parts of the training paradigm (i.e., instructions, modeling, practice, and feedback). Although empirical evidence exists to explain the effects of modeling and feedback, no empirical evidence was found to support the effects of practice. Methodological problems of measurement and skill simplicity have led to inconclusive results in understanding the effects of practice in counselor training programs. This proposed study is believed to be more
specific in controlling for the effect of practice by separating feedback from practice and no practice while measuring the outcome on the complex skill of communicating empathy.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This section discusses the procedures used in conducting this study. It includes a description of participants, the training procedures, the instrumentation, the training of raters, the instructions for giving feedback, and the plan for the statistical analysis.

Participants

The sample for the study consisted of thirty counseling students who had never before taken a counseling course. The thirty participants were enrolled in the basic course of facilitative communication at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge during the spring semester of 1982. This course is a requirement for all students working toward a master's degree in counseling, as well as being a requirement for those students who are minoring in counseling.

The sample consisted of 27 females and 3 males. Nineteen of the participants were enrolled in a program leading to a Master of Education in guidance and counseling. Of the remaining participants, five were taking the course as a requirement for the certificate of Educational
Specialist, one was enrolled in a Ph.D. program minoring in counseling, and the remaining five participants were taking the course as an elective.

All students were informed that this investigation would be a training program to increase their effectiveness in facilitative communication. Written consent forms indicating voluntary participation in the study were obtained prior to the start of the training. All thirty students agreed to participate in this study.

Procedures

The participants met together for a three hour session once a week for three weeks. All participants were randomly assigned to one of three training groups: practice plus feedback group ($T_1$), practice only group ($T_2$) and no practice control group ($T_3$).

The dependent measure for this study was pre- and post-training ratings of communicating empathy on the Carkhuff Communication Index (1976). (Appendix A.) All participants were administered the audio form of the Communication and Discrimination Index (1976) immediately preceding and immediately following the experimental procedures.

The first session consisted of an overview of the training course, obtaining consent forms, and the administration of the audio-recorded pretest. Three graduate students were assigned a group of ten participants
each, to which they administered the pretest. Each participant was administered the pretest individually. The participants were instructed to assume the role of a counselor and verbally respond to the four audio-taped counselee statements from form I of the Communication Index (Carkhuff, 1976) (Appendix B.) The participants' verbal responses were tape recorded by the graduate students administering the test. The test administrators were used to ensure that all participants followed the correct procedures. The test administrators did not offer any information beyond the instructions and recording of participant identification.

In the initial phase of the second session all participants met as one large group for didactic presentations, instructions, and modeling of the skills being taught. The didactic presentations and instructions were presented by an experienced counselor trainer. The use of one trainer to make all presentations and modeled responses was employed to control for differences that may arise as a result of trainer biases. The lectures and instructions were adapted from interpersonal communication training programs developed by Carkhuff (1980) and Kelly (1977). The modeling of the skills was presented by an advanced graduate student role-playing a counselee, and the trainer modeling the correct counselor response.

First, the entire group of participants were presented with a thirty-minute lecture consisting of an
introduction and overview of the goals and skills of facilitative communication. Second, all participants were introduced to the attending skills (eye contact, posture, and gestures) via a fifteen-minute lecture and modeling of appropriate attending behavior. Specific questions related to the skill being presented were answered by the trainer. Interaction between the trainer and participants was held to a minimum to help control for the effects of practice and feedback. The trainer accomplished this by not providing the participants with an opportunity to practice. The trainer did not provide feedback during the presentations to the entire group.

Next all participants were presented with a fifteen-minute instructional lecture introducing the skill of accurately identifying and responding to feelings by using a "you feel _______" statement. Following a question and answer period on responding to feelings, the entire group of participants observed the trainer modeling an accurate response to a role-played client statement using a "you feel _______" response. The role-played client statements and modeled responses were adapted from the Systematic Human Relations Training Program (Sydnor, Sydnor & Parkhill, 1979). A selection of modeled responses from an established list was used to ensure that the model was responding accurately.

The second phase of session two began by separating the three randomly assigned treatment groups into
different classrooms. This phase consisted of two twenty-minute practice plus feedback, practice only or no practice sessions.

The ten participants in the practice only group were divided into five dyads by the trainer. During the first twenty-minute practice session each participant of the dyad took turns presenting four prepared role-played client concerns, while the other participant attempted to respond with empathy. The role-playing participants were instructed to read the prepared counselee concerns portraying the feeling indicated on each of the four statements. (Appendix C.) When the first participant in each dyad had finished responding to the presented concerns, the sheet was collected and four different prepared concerns were presented. Each member in the dyad had a chance to practice in their attempt to respond with empathy. After completing the first interactive dyad session the participants were assigned new partners and participated in a second twenty-minute practice session. This practice session followed the same procedure as the first interactive session, but different prepared counselee statements were used. (Appendix C.)

The practice plus feedback group was also divided into five dyads, with each member of the dyad taking turns role-playing a counselee while the other member attempted to respond with empathy. The two twenty-minute practice plus feedback sessions followed the same procedure as the
practice only group but one trainer was assigned to each dyad to provide expert feedback to the responding participant. The prepared counselee concerns used in the practice plus feedback group were the same as those presented in the practice only group.

The five trainers providing feedback to their respective dyads had been trained in the procedure for giving feedback to the prepared counselee concerns. For each dyad interaction a trainer filled out an observer feedback form (Appendix D) which included discriminating between an interchangeable and non-interchangeable response, and writing down an alternate "you feel _______" statement. Feedback was given immediately following each of the counselors' responses during the practice session. If the response was interchangeable, the trainer verbally reinforced the statement by saying, "Very good." If the statement was not interchangeable the trainer gave an alternate "you feel _______" response.

While the other two groups were participating in a practice only and practice plus feedback session, the no practice group viewed the first forty-minutes of a video-tape by Carkhuff (1979), "The Evolution of Systematic Human Development Models". This video-tape is part of a training package developed to teach beginning counselors to become effective facilitators. Carkhuff's film was chosen because it discusses the research and development of counselor training programs while not providing the
additional instructions, modeling, or feedback which could have an effect on learning to communicate empathy. The practice only group was not provided an opportunity to practice communicating empathy. Each video-taped viewing session was monitored by a graduate student to ensure that participants did not practice during this forty minute session.

The third training session followed the same procedures as described in session two. During the initial phase of session three all participants together were presented with a fifteen-minute instructional lecture on responding to feelings and meanings. Following the lecture the entire group observed the trainer modeling a role-played response, by responding with "you feel _______ because ________".

As in session two, the participants reported to their respective group assignments in the three different classrooms for two twenty-minute practice sessions.

The same procedure of working in dyads, with members taking turns presenting concerns while the other attempted to respond to both feeling and meaning, was employed in the practice phase of session three. As in session two, each member of the dyad had a chance to present and respond to four different counselee concerns (Appendix C) in each twenty-minute practice session. As in session two feedback was provided by the same five trainers, each being randomly assigned to one dyad during each twenty-
minute practice session. The procedure for giving feedback was the same as the previous session, with the exception of using the alternate "you feel _______ because _______" on the expert feedback form. (Appendix D.)

The last phase of the third training session consisted of posttesting all participants following the same procedure as described in session one. However, four consellee statements from form II of the Carkhuff Discrimination Index (1976) were used as the posttest measure for this study.

**Expert Feedback Training**

Feedback was given by three advanced graduate students and two experienced counselor trainers, one with a master's degree and the other with a Ph.D.

Prior to the start of the investigation, all trainers were rated on their ability to discriminate accurate empathetic responses. A discrimination index (ability to make accurate judgments about the helping or therapeutic value of a response) was determined on the Kelly Discrimination Scale (1977). (Appendix E.) All trainers exceeded the minimum cut off score of 4.0 (very good) which is required to give accurate feedback. The scores of the trainers ranged from 1.25 (expert) to 3.5 (excellent) in discriminating a facilitative response.

To control for trainer bias, the trainers were in-
structed on the proper procedures for giving feedback. During the first meeting the trainers were given the prepared statements to be role-played during the participants' practice sessions. The statements were discussed and a list of possible accurate and inaccurate responses was suggested for each statement. (Appendix C.)

The second part of the expert feedback training consisted of instructions, modeling, and role-playing practice for the proper procedure of giving feedback. First the observation feedback form was introduced, questions were answered, and time was allotted to practice giving feedback. When all feedback trainees were rated as competent, the trainer conducted a review session to give additional feedback to the trainees.

**Instrumentation**

The Carkhuff Communication Index (1976) includes a continuum from 1 to 5, with 5 representing a very high level of facilitation in counseling relationships and 1 and 2 representing a low level of facilitation. The ability to respond on an interchangeable level (3.0) is considered by Carkhuff (1969) to be the minimal level of facilitative responding. It is at this interchangeable level (3.0) that the client is enabled to understand and explore where he/she is in relation to where he/she want to be.

The Carkhuff Empathy Rating Scale (1969) is the most
widely used scale found in counselor training research (Payne, Wiess & Knapp, 1972). The scales have been validated in extensive process and outcome research on counseling and psychotherapy (Truax & Carkhuff, 1976; Carkhuff, 1969; Carkhuff, 1968; Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967; Carkhuff, 1967). In comparing frequency tabulations and level of functioning, Carkhuff (1969) found that helpers rated at low levels of functioning received very few frequency tabulations of interchangeable responses, while those rated at high levels received greater numbers on interchangeable responses.

The counselee statements for this instrument were drawn from a larger number of responses that were rated and rerated by a panel of expert judges. An intra-rater reliability and inter-rater reliability of greater than .90 (p < .01) was found after one week, one month, and six months rate-rerate checking (Carkhuff, 1969). Each tape includes two parallel forms that allow for valid and reliable pre- and posttest measures.

Data Collection

Assessment of trainees' level of empathetic communication was required immediately prior to and following the treatment period. The pre- and posttest data were collected by tape recording each participant's verbal response to four audio recorded counselee statements, as described in the procedure section of this chapter.
Upon completion of the posttesting the participants' taped responses were coded for identification purposes and transcribed on to 3 x 5 file cards. The cards were shuffled, and one half of the total responses were distributed to the two raters. This procedure of rating the responses without knowledge of training condition was used to control for the halo effect of rater bias.

The raters then rated all of their assigned responses using the Carkhuff Communication Index (1976). When the ratings were completed, the responses were decoded, and the mean level of empathetic functioning was computed for each participant, for both pre- and posttest.

**Rater Training**

Two counselors with masters' degrees, both of whom were experienced in rating other counselors, were trained in the use of the Carkhuff Rating Scale (1976) by an experienced counselor trainer. The training was based upon the procedures outlined by Carkhuff (1969) for teaching discrimination between different levels of interpersonal functioning. The raters were trained in rating written responses to standard client statements as well as prepared responses from the Carkhuff Communication Index (1976).

To determine inter-rater reliability both raters were given 14 written counselor responses (Appendix F) to be rated upon completion of the training. A correlation analysis using the Pearson $r$ yielded a correlation
coefficient of .93 for the two raters. Ford (1975) indicated a reliability coefficient of greater than .75 to ensure inter-rater reliability.

**Design**

The basic design for this study is a pretest/posttest design with random assignment of all participants to three treatment groups. The three training procedures were the independent variable, with pre- and posttest ratings of each participant's level of communicating empathy as the dependent variable.

**Analysis of Data**

A one way analysis of covariance with pretest empathy ratings as the covariate was performed on the data to determine if there were significant differences among the adjusted means ($p < .05$). To assess Hypotheses I and II simple contrast comparisons ($t$ tests) were performed to determine whether specific adjusted means differed from each other ($p < .05$) (Netter & Wasserman, 1974).
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the results obtained from the statistical treatment of the data. Each hypothesis is stated along with a description and presentation of the results of the analysis. A summary of the results concludes this chapter.

Descriptive Data

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and gains in the level of functioning made by each of the three treatment groups on both pre- and posttests. An inspection of the means reveals that all three groups made positive gains in their level of communicating accurate empathy from pre- to post-training. As presented in Table 1, the practice plus feedback group demonstrated a greater gain in score (1.25) than the practice only (.837), which is greater than the no practice control group (.575).
TABLE 1
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND GAIN SCORES FROM PRETEST TO POSTTEST ON LEVELS OF COMMUNICATING EMPATHY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Plus Feedback</td>
<td>1.725</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>2.975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Only</td>
<td>1.788</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>2.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Practice</td>
<td>1.863</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>2.438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experimental Analysis

An analysis of covariance was conducted to determine if significant differences existed among the adjusted means of the three treatment groups. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE COMPARING PRACTICE PLUS FEEDBACK, PRACTICE ONLY, AND NO PRACTICE GROUPS ON LEVEL OF COMMUNICATING EMPATHY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS Adjusted</th>
<th>MS Adjusted</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Treatment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.924</td>
<td>.971</td>
<td>9.80**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Subjects</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.563</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.505</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Values

**F_2,26, .05 = 3.27**
**F_2,26, .01 = 5.53**
The test of differences among treatment effects produced an $F$ of 9.80 with 2 and 26 degrees of freedom, which was found to be significant beyond the .01 level. Thus, overall differences were found to exist among the three treatment groups on adjusted mean levels of communicating accurate empathy. As a test of Hypotheses I and II, contrast comparisons ($t$ tests) to test differences between adjusted posttest means were performed on the data (Netter & Wasserman, 1974). The results of the analysis of adjusted means are presented in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**

**ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCES AMONG ADJUSTED POSTTEST MEANS ON LEVEL OF COMMUNICATING EMPATHY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$T_2$-$T_3$</th>
<th>$2.628-2.392 = .24$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$T_1$-$T_2$</td>
<td>$3.018-2.628 = .39$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $T_1$ = Practice Plus Feedback

$T_2$ = Practice Only

$T_3$ = No Practice

$^x$ $p < .01, 26 \text{ df} = 2.78 \times .1403992 = .39$

$^xx$ $p < .05, 26 \text{ df} = 2.05 \times .1403992 = .29$

$^xT$ $p < .10, 26 \text{ df} = 1.71 \times .1403992 = .24$

Hypothesis I stated that the empathy level of the practice only group ($T_2$) would be significantly greater than the no practice control group ($T_3$). The difference.
between the adjusted posttest scores for $T_2$ and $T_3$, .24, did not exceed the critical $t$ value of .29 for 26 degrees of freedom; thus, it was not found significant at the .05 level. As determined by this analysis, Hypothesis I could not be supported; this indicates that there were no significant differences on the adjusted posttest levels of communicating accurate empathy for the practice only and no practice control groups.

Hypothesis II stated that the empathy level of the practice plus feedback group ($T_1$) would be significantly greater than the practice only group ($T_2$). The difference between the adjusted posttest scores for $T_1$ and $T_2$, .39, exceeds the critical $t$ value of .29, indicating significance beyond the .05 level ($p < .01$). According to this analysis, Hypothesis II is supported. The adjusted posttest levels of communicating accurate empathy for the practice plus feedback group were significantly greater than the practice only group.

Table 4 shows the adjusted posttest means. An inspection of the adjusted means reveals that the practice plus feedback group had the highest level of communicating accurate empathy. This is greater than the practice only group, which in turn is greater than the no practice control group.
### TABLE 4

**TABLE OF ADJUSTED MEANS**

**FOR LEVEL OF COMMUNICATING EMPATHY**

| Treatment               | N  | Mean X | Mean Y | Adjusted X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice Plus Feedback</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.725</td>
<td>2.975</td>
<td>3.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Only</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.7875</td>
<td>2.625</td>
<td>2.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Practice</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.8625</td>
<td>2.4375</td>
<td>2.392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

An analysis of covariance indicates that there were significant differences among the three treatment groups beyond the .01 level.

Hypothesis I predicted a significantly greater increase for the practice only group when compared to the no practice control group. This prediction was not upheld. There were no differences in adjusted posttest empathy levels for the practice only and no practice control groups.

Hypothesis II stated that the practice plus feedback group would have significantly higher levels of empathetic responses when compared to the practice only group. This hypothesis was upheld. The treatment combination of practice plus feedback produced a greater increase in empathy level than the practice only and no practice control treatments.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS
AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter summarizes the investigation and presents conclusions drawn from the results obtained in Chapter 4. Limitations, implications for counselor training and further research are discussed as they pertain to the results and conclusions obtained in this study.

Summary

The systematic counselor training programs of Carkhuff (1969) and Ivey (1971) are widely used for teaching beginning counselor skills. Based on Bandura's (1969) principles of learning these programs include: instruction, modeling, practice, and feedback. Recently, increased emphasis has been placed on understanding the multiple components of the aforementioned training programs.

In a review of the literature empirical evidence was found demonstrating the effectiveness of instructions, modeling, and feedback. However, no empirical evidence was found to support the effect of practice in learning counseling skills within counselor training programs.
Skill simplicity, too low a ceiling of measurement, and confounding the practice effect with feedback were identified as design limitations which have led to inconclusive results for establishing the effectiveness of the practice component (Fuqua & Gade, 1982).

The learning of several discrete counseling skills (i.e., attending, reflection of content, open-ended questioning, empathetic responding, confronting, and initiating skills) is the major focus of systematic counselor training programs. Regardless of theoretical orientation, the skill of communicating accurate empathy is considered basic to all counseling relationships (Carkhuff, 1969). Learning to communicate accurate empathy is included in the early stages of all systematic counselor training programs. Although practice is widely used to teach the skill of communicating accurate empathy (Carkhuff, 1969; Ivey, 1971; Kagan, 1975), it is not empirically known what effect practice has on learning this skill.

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the effect practice has on learning the skill of communicating accurate empathy. More specifically this investigation addressed design limitations identified by Fuqua and Gade (1982) by controlling for confounding of practice and feedback, skill simplicity, and too low a ceiling of measurement. The control for confounding was accomplished by including three separate training groups: practice plus feedback, practice only, and a no practice control
group. Skill simplicity and low ceiling of measurement were controlled by measuring the outcome of training on a more complex skill of communicating accurate empathy.

It was hypothesized that: a) the empathy level of the practice only group would be significantly greater than the no practice control group, and b) the empathy level of the practice plus feedback group would be significantly greater than the practice only group.

The participants for this investigation were thirty beginning counseling students enrolled in two sections of the Basic Course of Facilitative Communications at Louisiana State University during the spring semester of 1982. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the three training conditions. The trainees met together for a three hour session once a week for three weeks.

All participants received identical instructions, didactic presentations, and modeling of skills. After the presentation and modeling the three groups were separated for four twenty-minute practice sessions. The practice only group worked in dyads taking turns presenting prepared counselee concerns while the other role-played a counselor practicing responding with accurate empathy to the concerns. The practice plus feedback group followed the same procedure but had an experienced trainer provide immediate feedback to the practice responses. The no practice control group did not have an opportunity to practice the skill of formulating accurate empathetic
responses, instead, they viewed a training film while the other two groups were practicing.

The data for this study were obtained by tape recording the trainees' responses to eight audio recorded counselee statements (Carkhuff, 1976), four for the pretest and four for the posttest. The responses were then transcribed onto 3 x 5 cards, coded, shuffled, distributed, and rated by two trained raters using the Carkhuff Scale (1976).

The design of this study was a pretest/posttest design. The independent variable consisted of the three training procedures and the dependent variable was pre- and posttest ratings of trainees' level of communicating accurate empathy.

Conclusions

The present study was an attempt to provide empirical data relevant to the effect practice has on learning the skill of communicating accurate empathy. More specifically, this study was designed to determine if a practice only group performed significantly better than a no practice control group and if a practice plus feedback group performed significantly better than a practice only group. The results presented in Chapter 4 revealed that all three treatment groups made positive gains in learning to communicate accurate empathy. However, an analysis of covariance performed on the data indicated significant
differences among the three treatment groups beyond the .01 level.

A significant difference was not found between the practice only group and the no practice control group on adjusted posttest ratings of level of communicating accurate empathy. In comparing the difference between the practice plus feedback group and the practice only group a significant difference was found when measured on the adjusted posttest ratings of level of communicating accurate empathy. As a significant difference was not found between the practice only and no practice control groups and a significant difference was found between the practice plus feedback and practice only groups on the dependent variable, it is logical to conclude that the practice plus feedback group attained a higher level of communicating accurate empathy than either the practice only or no practice control groups. In that no significant difference was found between the practice only group and the no practice control group it can be concluded that practice without expert feedback does not significantly enhance the effect of the no practice model (instructions and modeling) in trainees' learning the skill of communicating accurate empathy. Therefore, it can be concluded from the significance found between the practice plus feedback and practice only groups that the inclusion of feedback within the practice component resulted in the significant training gains in this study. The training
gains were not the results of practice alone, rather the effect of including feedback within the practice sessions.

The results of this study are in agreement with Baily, Deardorf, and Nay (1977) and Stone and Vance (1976) in concluding that a combination of modeling, practice, and feedback produced significantly better results than in groups receiving single components. However, this study more adequately controlled for design limitations of confounding practice and feedback as identified in the Stone and Vance (1976) study while controlling for skill simplicity and low ceiling of measurement as indicated in the review of the investigation by Baily, Deardorf, and Nay (1976).

The findings of this study add to the previous body of evidence established by Dowd and Blocher (1974) and Eisenberg and Delaney (1970) indicating that feedback has an effect when employed in conjunction with instructions and modeling. The result of this investigation demonstrating a significant effect for the practice plus feedback group when compared to the practice only group contradicts findings reported by Peters, Cormier, and Cormier (1978) indicating that practice and feedback are not needed in acquiring a counseling goals strategy. As previously mentioned, the low ceiling of measurement may have negated the effect of practice and feedback in the aforementioned study while measurement of training effects on a more complex skill (empathy) supports the hypothesis
that practice plus feedback enhances instructions and modeling.

In light of the relatively short training period (six hours per group), the empathy level attained by the practice plus feedback group equalled the minimal level of facilitation as established by Carkhuff (1969). This high level of empathetic communication compares relatively well with other studies investigating more lengthy counselor training programs.

**Limitations**

Since this sample was only of one semester of new students the generalizations to all new students are limited. The sample included 27 females and only three males. However, it should be reasonable to make logical inferences to counselor education programs which offer similar courses, since the sample performed at the average level of empathetic communication for beginning counselors (Carkhuff, 1969). Because of the limited number of participants, it was not possible to establish additional training groups that might have more clearly explained the effect practice has on learning more difficult skills. Therefore, the results can only be generalized where communication of accurate empathy is concerned.

An additional limitation of this study relates to not including a follow-up investigation to examine the effect practice on retention of the skills being learned. Be-
cause the participants were all drawn from an ongoing course that required teaching additional skills, a follow-up evaluation was not possible in the investigation.

**Implications for Counselor Education**

The most obvious implication of this study is based upon the findings that the practice plus feedback group demonstrated significantly higher levels of communicating accurate empathy as a result of including feedback within the practice sessions. Considering the small amount of trainer time invested and the high level of empathetic communication attained, the method of providing immediate feedback within the practice sessions suggests an efficient and effective technique for training prospective counselors in learning a more complex skill of communicating accurate empathy.

The results of this study provide some support for Fuqua and Gade's (1982) hypothesis that too low a ceiling of measurement may have resulted in the inert effect of practice and feedback in previous studies by Peters, Cormier, and Cormier (1978), Stone (1975), and Stone and Vance (1976). The results of the aforementioned studies indicate that instructions and modeling are the most effective and efficient methods for teaching relatively simple skills (counselor-tacting-response-leads, developing a counseling goals strategy, and written responses). The implication for counselor education based on this
study is in agreement with Stone and Vance (1976) in that practice plus feedback is the preferred training method for teaching complex counseling skills.

Based on the theoretical framework, other variations of including feedback within the practice component can be devised. One possibility might be to develop prepared statements which include accurate responses that would allow peers to provide immediate and accurate feedback to fellow trainees role-playing counselors during practice sessions (Ford, 1979). Another suggestion would be to develop programmed audio or audio visual programs that provide immediate feedback through modeling of appropriate responses for practice purposes. Finally the implications for developing computerized training programs based on the results of this study show promising potential. The aforementioned implications would provide an even greater reduction in trainer time by making the entire practice process essentially an independent learning experience.

Implications for Further Research
The results of this study support the importance of including feedback within the practice component in training counselors in the skill of communicating accurate empathy. However, further research is needed to systematically explore different variations of practice as they interact with variations in skill difficulty. By including additional training groups, the effect of
different variations of practice (overt, covert, written, audio visual, immediate feedback, delayed feedback) with different levels of skill difficulty could be examined. This type of research may result in more conclusive evidence to support the hypothesis that the effect of practice is related to the level of skill difficulty (Fuqua & Gade, 1982). Another area in need of further research is understanding covert practice. The results of this study indicated that there was not a significant difference between practice only and no practice control group. The question has been raised as to the amount and effect cognitive rehearsal plays in learning counseling skills (Fuqua & Gade, 1982). To better understand this phenomenon an additional training group instructed in the use of covert rehearsal could be employed. By examining the effects of cognitive rehearsal strategy, a more complete understanding of the practice effect could be provided.

While the results of this investigation lend valuable support for the effect of including feedback within the practice component, the results are far from conclusive. Continued investigations specifically designed to understand the practice effect are an important area of research for counselor educators. Empirical evidence explaining the practice component is needed to help counselor educators develop the most effective and efficient counselor training programs.
REFERENCES


O'Toole, W. M. Effects of practice and some methodological considerations in training counseling interviewing skills. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1979, 26, 419-426.


APPENDIXES
Appendix A

RATING SCALE
Scoring Instructions for Communication Index

The Communication Index for both forms can be scored in the following manner:

1. Read the helpee stimulus statement and determine what the interchangeable (level 3.0) feeling and meaning responses could be. (See helper responses in Discrimination Index for examples).

2. Determine if the trainee's response is a level 3.0 or not. If it is not, determine the level of unhelpfulness by comparing it to levels 1.0 to 2.5 on the following scale. If it is at least a level 3.0, determine how additive it is by comparing it to levels 3.5 to 5.0 on the following scale.

Rating Scale

Level 1.0 Feeling and content both absent or both inaccurate.

Level 1.5 Indirect but accurate response to content but without any direction (e.g., a relevant question).

Level 2.0 Accurate response to content but feeling absent or inaccurate (e.g., accurate summary of content and/or directionful advice).

Level 2.5 Accurate response to feeling but content absent or inaccurate.

Level 3.0 Accurate response to content and feeling.

Level 3.5 Accurate response to feeling and personalized meaning.

Level 4.0 Accurate response to personalized problem, feeling and goal.

Level 4.5 Accurate response to personalized problem, feeling and operationalized goal.

Level 5.0 Accurate response to personalized problem and goal and accurate identification of steps.
Appendix B

COMMUNICATION INDEX
FORM I AND II
Instructions to be played:

"The following excerpts involve a number of expressions of problems in the counselor-counselee relations area. Please formulate the most helpful or most effective responses which you might make to each of these expressions. Be as helpful as you can in communicating your understanding and any helpful, new direction for the counselee. Formulate your response directly, just as you would if you were talking with the counselee.

The person presenting the problems might be considered helpees that you come in contact with in your daily living. They may or may not be formal counselees or helpees. They are simply people who sought your help at a time of need. In formulating your responses, assume that you have been interacting with the counselees for some time before they present you with the problems."

Excerpt I

"I don't know if I'm right or wrong feeling the way I do. But I find myself withdrawing from people. I don't seem to socialize and play their stupid little games any more."

Excerpt II

"Sometimes I question my inadequacy of raising three boys, especially the baby; well, I call him the baby--because he's the last. I can't have any more. So I know I kept him a baby longer than the others. He won't let anyone else do things for him. Only Mommy!"

Excerpt III

"Damn those people! Who do they think they are? I just can't stand interacting with them anymore. What a bunch of phonies!"

Excerpt IV

"I get so frustrated and furious with my daughter. I just don't know what to do with her. She's so bright and sensitive, but damn, she has some characteristics that make me so on edge. I can't handle it sometimes."
Posttest - Form II

Instructions to be played:

"The following excerpts involve a number of expressions of problems in the counselor-counselee relations area. Please formulate the most helpful or most effective responses which you might make to each of these expressions. Be as helpful as you can in communicating your understanding and any helpful, new direction for the counselee. Formulate your response directly, just as you would if you were talking with the counselee.

The persons presenting the problems might be considered helpees that you come in contact with in your daily living. They may or may not be formal counselees or helpees. They are simply people who sought your help at a time of need. In formulating your responses, assume that you have been interacting with the counselees for some time before they present you with the problems."

Excerpt I

"I love my children and my husband and I like doing most household things. They get boring at times, but on the whole, I think it can be very rewarding. I don't miss working, going to the office every day. Most women complain of being just a housewife and a mother. But, then again, I wonder if there is more for me."

Excerpt II

"It's not an easy thing to talk about. I guess it's sort of a sexual problem. I never thought I would have this sort of problem. But I find myself not getting the fulfillment I used to."

Excerpt III

"They wave that degree up like it's a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. I used to think that too, until I tried it. I'm happy being a housewife; I don't care to get a degree. But the people I associate with, the first thing they ask is, "Where did you get your degree?" I answer, "I don't have one." Christ, they look at you like you are some sort of a freak, some backwoodsman your husband picked up along the way. They actually believe that people with degrees are better."

Excerpt IV

"She's ridiculous! Everything has to be done when she wants to do it, the way she wants it done. It's as if nobody else existed. It's everything she wants to do."
Appendix C

PREPARED COUNSELEE CONCERNS
FOR PRACTICE SESSIONS
PRACTICE SESSION #1 (A1)

1) Well I don't think we can accomplish anything.  
   (discouraged)

2) Are you going to tell us our scores today?  I'm not sure 
   I want to know.  
   (anxious)

3) He's going to be here for the holidays!  
   (Happy, elated)

4) I can't get anything done with all this noise going on.  
   (angry, annoyed)

PRACTICE SESSION #1 (B1)

1) I've been here for three weeks and I haven't met anyone 
   yet.  
   (lonely, depressed)

2) When I think of the money I spent on that boy I could 
   cry.  
   (hurt, sad)

3) I'm tired of him giving me orders.  
   (angry)

4) My first check came today and I can pay my bills.  
   (relieved, happy)

PRACTICE SESSION #1 (A2)

1) It's no use, there's no way to work it out.  
   (trapped)

2) I don't care do what ever you want to.  
   (angry)

3) They finally called and everything is all right.  
   (relieved)

4) I'm concerned, I've got to get into a good school.  I'm 
   just not sure about my ACT scores.  
   (anxious)
PRACTICE SESSION #1 (B2)

1) I feel so sorry for them, they've lost everything.
   (concerned, sympathetic)

2) No one here but me and the dog. No one comes no one cares.
   (lonely, depressed)

3) I'm not sure what he wants but I think he's up to no good.
   (suspicious, doubtful, unsure)

4) That is the sweetest baby, he just melts me.
   (happy, good)

PRACTICE SESSION #2 (A1)

1) It seems to me that instead of getting better my problem is getting out of my realm. I don't think I'll be able to solve it because it's too deep.

   Feeling - hopeless
   Content - afraid that your problem is beyond you.

2) No one comes to see me. You'd think my children would have time to drop by even if they only stayed a minute. I know they are busy, but--well I'd like to see them.

   Feeling - hurt, lonely
   Content - it seems your children don't care about your loneliness.

3) I can't seem to buckle down to work. I try and try, but I can't concentrate anymore. I guess I'm losing my mind.

   Feeling - frightened
   Content - your losing control.

4) Perhaps it will work out. Things look better than they ever have before.

   Feeling - great, good, hopeful
   Content - things are working out so well.
PRACTICE SESSION #2 (B1)

1) I loathe my mother—she just disgusts me, but I can't leave her, I've no where to go.

*Feeling* - trapped, frustrated  
*Content* - can't get away from mother.

2) I used to tell myself that I could quit smoking anytime that I wanted to. Now I'm not sure I can quit at all. I'll tell myself—no more, and then in a few hours, I'm back at it.

*Feeling* - disappointed, disgusted  
*Content* - you can't stop/can't control.

3) What can I do? I would like to play football but my mother refuses to sign the consent form. I can't figure her out. I'd love to play. I've even thought about forging her name, but with my luck I'd get caught.

*Feeling* - frustrated  
*Content* - you don't see anyway you'll be able to play.

4) Mr. Smith sent me here. I don't know why. He just told me to come here. I don't see why I should talk to you.

*Feeling* - resentful, angry  
*Content* - forced to come and you don't want to talk to anyone.

PRACTICE SESSION #2 (A2)

1) I'm not really sure about myself. I want to do what is right, but I'm not sure.

*Feeling* - confused  
*Content* - not sure what's right for you

2) My baby was born prematurely and the doctor seems to feel that something is wrong.

*Feeling* - fearful, frightened  
*Content* - doctor is concerned about your baby.

3) What a great day. I just saw my professor and he said I passed my comprehensive exam. I can graduate now.

*Feeling* - elated, happy, joy  
*Content* - good news.
4) Things will never be the same. It's terrible. I'd just like to pull the covers over my head and quit.

**Feeling** - miserable
**Content** - your whole world has fallen apart.

PRACTICE SESSION #2 (B2)

1) It bothers me. I really do worry about him. I want to help but I just can't get through to him.

**Feeling** - frustrated
**Content** - can't help.

2) They're always picking on me--you know, ganging up on me and pushing me around--I don't even want to go to school anymore.

**Feeling** - scared
**Content** - they try to hurt you.

3) I do my homework every night, but as hard as I try I can't get the stupid stuff.

**Feeling** - angry
**Content** - the work is so hard.

4) You'll never believe what I made on the test at the employment office. I scored at the top for the science section.

**Feeling** - happy, thrilled
**Content** - because of your good test results.
Appendix D

EXPERT FEEDBACK FORM
Expert Feedback Form

Check one:

Is the response interchangeable

Is the response non-interchangeable

Write down an alternate response

You feel _____ or

You feel _____ because _____

If response is interchangeable

Respond with "Very Good"

If response is not interchangeable

Respond with: A more accurate response would be ____________________________ and give your response.
Appendix E

DISCRIMINATION INDEX
Discrimination Exercise

Instructions

The following are a number of expressions of problems in various areas of life. The persons presenting the problems are helpees that someone has come in contact with in his daily living or work. The expressions have been made early in the contact between the helpee and the helper. The persons presenting the problems may or may not be formal counselees or helpees. They are simply people who have sought help at a time of need.

Following each helpee excerpt are four helper responses. Rate each of the helper responses according to the degree that it is immediately helpful. In general, a helping response is one that communicates empathy and understanding for the helpee's problem. These elements are especially important in early phases of communication. It is a statement in which the helper is genuine and specific with his help. When appropriate, especially in later phases of helping, the helping statement contains the elements of confrontation and assertiveness.

Rate each of the helper responses according to the following scale:

No help at all or harmful
Somewhat less than helpful
Helpful
Very Helpful
Extremely Helpful

You may use intermediate (.5) ratings, for example: 1.5, 2.5, 3.5, 4.5.

Helpee Excerpts and Helper Responses

1. (Twenty year old male) I just can't seem to get myself together. Sometimes my head is all messed up. I really think it's kind of dumb to turn to drugs, but I still go along with everybody else at parties. I don't like living at home, yet I don't want to leave. I hate getting hassled, but I really don't talk up for myself. And I can't seem to make any real close friends either.

1. I remember that I was pretty mixed up when I was your age. But I got over it. Don't worry; you'll get over all this.

2. You feel mixed up about yourself because you can't seem to live out or follow through on the things you want to do.
3. You're a bit confused, but if you really work on some of these things, you'll start feeling better about yourself.

4. Your failure to get your head together and act on the things you want to do is really distressing to you. You realize you've got to get yourself together or you're going to be a kind of aimless nobody.

II. (Eleven year old male) This big guy just keeps picking on me all the time. He's the kind of guy that likes to fight. You know, he's big and likes to push other people around and beat people up. Well, I don't like fighting. I just like to be friends with people and get along. I don't know why he keeps picking on me, trying to make me fight. I never did any fighting and I don't know how to fight. If I was a different kind of person, I wouldn't mind fighting him. But I wish he would just leave me alone.

1. He's not a very nice person and you don't like him very much.

2. You don't like him because he's a bully and you can't get him to leave you alone.

3. This guy is making your life miserable. He's so big and mean that he makes you feel afraid to fight back at him. But it's getting so bad that you've got to find some way to handle him.

4. Is he in the same class with you?

III. (Nineteen year old male) What do you mean, do I have a job? Two days ago I went to a couple of places and the man took one look at my black skin and said, "We don't have any openings." Who does he think he's kidding!? It's just the same old story--if you're black, you've lost, I mean you're out before you're in. Sure I'd like a job, but I can't fight all that prejudice.

1. It's infuriating to keep beating your head against a wall of prejudice; you're sick of it. You don't see any way you can break through all that bias.

2. It's too damn infuriating to keep fighting all that racial hypocrisy and bigotry. It's getting to be more than you can take; like the struggle is becoming more than you're willing to go through to get what you really want--like the job.
3. For godsakes, is all you can do is gripe? You should know all the garbage I've had to put up with in my life. I know you got it bad, man, but we all got it bad at some time or other. Just get off your lazy butt and do something about it.

4. Have you tried the employment commission office?

IV. (High school junior, female) Mr. Smith—that's my history teacher--just keeps picking on me. I mean no matter what I do, he puts me down. I do my work...huh, I goof off just like everybody else and can't answer lots of his dumb questions. But other kids in that class cut up too. It's just that he keeps nagging at me. He doesn't like me, so he's out to get me all the time.

1. It makes you mad that Mr. Smith gets on you for some of the same behavior that he overlooks in others.

2. Well, Mr. Smith is trying his best. History is not an easy subject to teach. I've seen other history teachers do a much worse job than Mr. Smith does.

3. You resent Mr. Smith's singling you out for correction. He's not treating you fairly, even though you realize that some of your own behavior is not so good.

4. Sometimes a teacher doesn't act so nice toward a student and that can make the student feel kind of bad.

V. (High school junior, female) I think I made a big step yesterday. You know I've been off drugs completely for two months. Well, yesterday Sharon came up to me in the girl's room and slipped a couple of bennies into my hand. She just smiled and then got away so fast that I couldn't get them back to her. I went into the toilet stall and just stood there for a few minutes. My stomach was churning and I was beginning to get weak in the knees thinking about getting high. Then I just threw them in the toilet and flushed it. Oh man, it was hard, but I felt good when I walked out of there! I thought; "Now I'm kicking it. I mean maybe I'm really doing it for myself."

1. It's thrilling to you to have a new feeling of strength. You know it's not going to be easy, but it's great to know you've got an inner source of strength that will help you become the kind of person you want to be.
2. It's kind of nice when you're able to do something good for yourself.

3. Don't get too excited now. One sparrow doesn't make the spring. You've got to be very careful because a situation like that can go either way.

4. It makes you feel really great that you could pass a big test like that all by yourself.

VI. (High school teacher, male) If one more of those smart-alecky kids gives me any more lip, I think I'll bust him. I know I'm supposed to control myself, but there's a limit to everything, don't you think? Some of those kids are hopeless and sometimes I think that the only thing they're going to understand is a good roughing-up.

1. That's no way to talk about those kids. If anybody heard you talking like that, you'd lose your job.

2. Some of those kids make you so damn mad that you'd like to just knock some sense into their heads. They're pushing you to your limit and you don't know whether you can keep on dealing with them without blowing up.

3. You're so completely fed up with some of those kids' behavior that you're ready to blow up and really straighten them out.

4. I know some of those kids are enough to drive a guy crazy, but you've got to get hold of yourself.

VII. (Adult female) Talking to you like this isn't easy. (Pause) I know I need to talk to somebody, but I grew up in a family where we just didn't talk to outsiders about our problems. (Pause) And this problem is so...so personal. It's hard to know where to begin.

1. Your feelings are so deep and personal, it's very hard to open up to someone you don't know well yet. Beginning is particularly difficult, but you're convinced it's important for you.

2. Now, you don't mean to tell me that you've never talked to a stranger before. Sure you have. Well, I'll bet you talk to a new person at least every week or so, even if it's only a word or two.
3. I know you're just a little shy to say some of the things that are on your mind.

4. You feel nervous because it's difficult for you to speak about your personal problems to an outsider.

VIII. (Adult male) I can't stand to be around that guy... he's such a phony. He comes around with all that smiling, "how-are-you-doing-today" crap, but in fact he never fails to let you know that he's the boss and he's going to run the whole operation his way. He talks about democracy but he really runs things his way. I wish I could tell him just what I think about him and this crazy situation, but I just can't bring myself to do it.

1. A guy like that can really make you mad, but what you've got to do is just go up to him and let him know how you feel. Otherwise, he's just going to keep walking over you, isn't he?

2. Don't you think maybe you've judged him too harshly. If he does smile and ask how you're doing, maybe he really cares. I think you have to be more tolerant and try to see his side of things.

3. He's got you angry with his hypocrisy but you're afraid to tell him how you feel.

4. You're thoroughly disgusted with his phoniness and the way he works to manipulate you. You want to confront him with what you're thinking and feeling, but you're afraid you couldn't handle the situation and the possible consequences.
Appendix F

INTER-RATER RELIABILITY
#1. "I don't know if I'm right or wrong feeling the way I do. But I find myself withdrawing from people. I don't seem to socialize and play their stupid little games anymore."

"Who are these people that make you so angry? They can't control your existence. You have to be your own person." Response __________

#2. Sometimes I question my adequacy of raising three boys, especially the baby. Well I call him the baby because he is the last. I can't have anymore. So I know I kept him the baby longer than the others. He won't let anyone else do anything for him. Only Mommy!

"You feel unsure as to what you are doing is right for your child." Response __________

#3. "I love my children and my husband and I like doing most household things. They get boring at times, but on the whole, I think it can be very rewarding. I don't miss working, going to the office every day. Most women complain of being just a housewife and a mother. But, then again, I wonder if there is more for me."

"You don't know if there is more out there for you. You don't know if you can find more fulfillment than you have." Response __________

#4. "It's not an easy thing to talk about with you. I guess it's sort of a sexual problem. I never thought I would have this sort of problem. But I find myself not getting the fulfillment I used to."

"What about your relationship with your wife, her role as a mother and companion." Response __________

#5. "Damn those people! Who do they think they are? I just can't stand interacting with them anymore. What a bunch of phonies."

"You're angry at them." Response __________

#6. "They wave that degree up like it's a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. I used to think that, too, until I tried it. I'm happy being a housewife; I don't care to get a degree. But the people I associate with, the first thing they ask is, "where did you get your degree?" I answer, "I don't have a degree." Christ, they look at you like you are some sort of freak, some backwoodsman your husband picked
up along the way. They actually believe that people with degrees are better."

"What do you mean "it makes me sick?" Do you honestly feel a person is worse or better because she has a degree?" Response __________

#7. "I get so frustrated and furious with my daughter. I just don't know what to do with her. She's so bright and sensitive, but damn, she has some characteristics that make me so on edge. I can't handle it sometimes."

"Although you are very angry, you really care what happens to her." Response __________

#8. She's ridiculous! Everything has to be done when she wants to do it, the way she wants it done. It's as if nobody else existed. It's everything she wants to do."

"It makes you furious when you think of the one-sidedness of this relationship." Response __________

#9. "I finally found somebody I can really get along with. There is no pretentiousness about them at all. They're real and they understand me. I can be myself with them."

"Now that you've found these people, why don't you invite them over and spend time with them." Response __________

#10. "I'm really excited! We are going to California! I'm going to have a second lease on life. I found a marvelous job! It's great! I just can't believe it's true! I have a secretarial job, and I can be a mother and have a part-time job, too. I know I'm going to enjoy it."

"You're feeling anxious about the big change in your life." Response __________

#11. "I'm so pleased with the kids. They are doing just great! They have done so well at school and at home; they get along so well together. It's really amazing!"

"You mentioned your boys. How about your husband, is he happy?" Response __________

#12. "I'm really excited the way things are going at home with my wife. It's just amazing! We get along great together now. Sexually, I didn't think anyone could
be that happy. I didn't know we could be that happy. It's just marvelous! I'm so pleased, I don't know what else to say."

"Your marriage seems to be going great for you at this time." Response __________

#13. "Gee, I'm so disappointed. I though we could get along together and you could help me. We don't seem to be getting anywhere. You don't understand me, you don't even know I'm here."

"It's disappointing and disillusioning to think that you have made so little progress." Response ________

#14. "There are times when I feel like school is not important to me. Since I'm not going to college, there isn't much use for me to waste my time here."

"It sounds like you are thinking about dropping out." Response ________
Appendix G

STUDY SIGN-UP FORM
STUDY SIGN-UP FORM

My signature, on this sheet, by which I volunteer to participate in the study on Differential Counselor Training Methods, conducted by Joseph P. Mazurkiewicz, Investigator, indicates that I understand that all participants in the project are volunteers, that I can withdraw at any time from the study, that I have been or will be informed as to the nature of the study, that the data I provide will be anonymous and my identity will not be revealed without my permission, and that my performance in this investigation may be used for additional approved projects. Finally, I shall be given an opportunity to ask questions prior to the start of the study and after my participation is complete.

Participant's Signature
VITA

Joseph Peter Mazurkiewicz, Jr., was born in Bound Brook, New Jersey, on May 11, 1953. He attended grammar school at Lamont Elementary School and was graduated from Bound Brook High School in 1971.

He received a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from Trenton State College in May, 1975. Upon graduation he entered the Peace Corps and worked as a teacher trainer in the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, until June, 1977.

In January, 1978 he entered the Master of Education program in counseling at Trenton State College and was graduated in May, 1979. During this time he was employed as a counselor at Bonnie Brae School for Emotionally Disturbed Adolescents.

He entered the Graduate School at Louisiana State University in August, 1979. He is employed as a counselor at the University of Southwestern Louisiana Counseling and Testing Center, Lafayette, Louisiana.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Joseph Peter Mazurkiewicz, Jr.

Major Field: Education

Title of Thesis: The Effect Of Practice On Learning The Skill Of Communicating Empathy In A Systematic Counselor Training Program For Beginning Counselors

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

November 29, 1982