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An Assertion Training Program for the
Improvement of Non-Assertive
Behavior in Selected DLSU Freshmen

A Thesis

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by

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Psychological Abstract

Title: An Assertiveness Training Program
for the Improvement of Non-Assertive
Behavior of Selected DLSU Freshmen

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The communication process is the key to all kinds of human interaction. As such, several problems of human relations can well be traced to flaws in the basic communication styles of different people. Specially among the youth, not a few have expressed difficulty in communicating with their superiors as well as their peers. The case of the proverbial communication gap, the young lad who can't say no to his "barkada", the young lady who can't deny an unreasonable request, arguments with teachers and superiors, — all these are representative of the problem of communicating effectively to others. Misunderstandings, quarrels and marred relationships are often the sorry results of not being able to say what one really feels or needs.

In general, the problem of communication boils down to the fact that one or more of the parties involved have problems in asserting themselves. Assertiveness which is defined as the proper expression of any emotion other than anxiety towards another person, is not that readily practiced by people. The case is either the non-assertive person who can't express anger, disappointment, happiness nor appreciation; or the assaulting, attacking individual who for lack of skills in expressing true feelings, hides behind loud voices and an aggressive style. In both cases, what is/la-



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cking is the ability to assert oneself properly.

Recently several studies have presented evidence that training programs aimed at improving both aggressive and non-aggressive behaviors are effective to a significant degree.

In 1976, Norman Briers made a study on a group program which was based on an assertiveness training. Here, seven 3-hour sessions were given to a group with the aim of developing the following qualities: (1) personal self-confidence and self-awareness; (2) the ability to take the initiative in social relations and to improve the capacity to interact comfortably and without embarrassment and (3) the ability to handle everyday situations where an expression of assertiveness is both appropriate and productive. Bryers found that there was a significant change in the capacity of group members to assert their rights within limits acceptable to their cultural mores. Also, some special fears of the participants were significantly lowered in strength, particularly those related to contact with people perceived as authority figures.

A local study based on the Bryers research is that of Corazon de la Cruz, 1979. This study was conducted to the students of St. Scholastica's College who were basically shy and non-assertive. The study made use of the Personal Orientation Inventory on which the experimental group registered significantly higher gain scores on majority of the factors involved. Also, the posttest scores on the Assertiveness Inventory showed the Experimental group gaining knowledge in several assertive skills.

Likewise, this study sets out to discover the effectiveness of an Assertiveness Training Program to non-assertive freshmen students. Unlike the other studies, however, this training program will not be conducted as weekly sessions, but will be held over one weekend where the participants will get a chance to relate and interact with one another for three straight days. The program design of this study also differs with the rest as this one focuses more



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on self-discovery and awareness. The researcher believes this to be a necessary factor before one can successfully internalize the meaning and implications of assertiveness.

METHODOLOGY

Design and Sample

LIA Freshmen of DLSU were the samples of the study. An Assertiveness Inventory was administered to two freshmen classes and the 12 lowest scorers from both classes were chosen as subjects. Each group was randomly assigned to the experimental and control group. The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) was administered as part of the pretest measure on the third week of January, 1981. This was from January 19 to 22. On the weekend of January 30 to February 1, the Assertiveness Training Program was given to the experimental group and the posttesting, consisting of the POI and the AI was held from February 23 to 25.

The Assertiveness Training Program

The program consisted of 8 sessions. However, the movement of the whole thing was more flowing than abrupt. The topics to be discussed and exercises to be staged were planned and sequenced beforehand but in presenting them to the participants, each session was not really distinguished from the other. As a result, the sessions came smoothly, one after the other.

In general, the goal of the program was to develop assertive behavior that would lead to effective social relations and personal growth. To achieve this goal, the researcher and facilitators outlined the following as the more specific objectives of the program:

1. To facilitate the learning of assertive behavior
2. To model assertive behavior.
3. To distinguish the different types of behavior, such as aggressive, assertive and non-assertive.
4. To improve interpersonal relations thru the learning of communication skills.



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5. To express the value of learning assertive behavior and its significance to one's personal growth.

Instruments

The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) served as an appropriate measure for this study. It was likewise used by Bryers and de la Cruz in their own researches and this could be attributable to the fact that the POI measures several factors related to and are indicative of assertiveness. The POI was created to meet the need for a measure of values and behavior seen to be of importance in the development of self-actualization.

The Assertiveness Inventory on the other hand, gives the researcher an idea of how the respondent reacts to different situations. It gives a general picture of a person's response style — that is, whether he/she is aggressive, assertive or non-assertive.

This study made use of the above tests as pretest and posttest measures. A comparison of the gain scores of both the experimental and the control group shall be the basis of the conclusions of this study.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The t-test was used as the basic statistical tool of this study. It was applied to test five hypotheses proposed by the research. One, to test the presence of any significant differences between the pretest of the experimental and control group; two, to test for significant differences in the posttests of the two groups; three, to test for differences between the pretest and posttests of the experimental group; four, the pretest and posttest of the control group and finally, to test for significant differences between the gain scores of both groups. P was set at .05 level.



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RESULTS

Pretest measures for both tests (POI, AI) showed initial equivalence between the two groups with regards to assertion levels. After the treatment however, significant improvements were observed in the experimental group where gain score t-value were significantly higher than the decision value of 2.09.

In the POI, the experimental group showed significant improvements in 6 out of 10 of the profile scores of the POI. Namely: existentiality ($t=5.18$); feeling reactivity ($t=3.93$); spontaneity ($t=3.00$); self-regard ($t=3.08$); synergy ($t=2.56$); and capacity for intimate contact ($t=4.73$). All these factors are indicative of higher assertion levels for those who underwent the assertiveness training program.

The results obtained led to the following conclusion: that an Assertiveness Training Program conducted to non-assertive students facilitates to a certain degree the modification of some non-assertive behaviors.



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