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**A Descriptive Study of the Listening Skills
of Chief Probation Officers for the State of Nebraska**

A Thesis

**Presented to the
Department of Speech
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha**

by

Patricia A. Crosby

March 1976

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts, University of
Nebraska at Omaha.

Thesis Committee

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April 26, 1976
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Introduction

Twenty years ago the place of listening in our educational system was neglected. Instruction in listening skills, even at the college level, was virtually nonexistent. Today, at all educational levels, training in listening is "coming of age." Listening is beginning to be recognized as an area of important communication skills. More important, it is being considered as fundamental skills which can and must be taught.

In observing the role of probation officers who function as an arm of the courts within the criminal justice system, it became apparent that much of their job entails listening. They are charged with the responsibility of securing vast amounts of information through this communication skill. Since probation officers are a product of the educational system, it seemed reasonable to suspect that they also suffered neglect in listening training.

The purposes of this descriptive study were: first, to secure data on the listening skills of the Chief Probation Officers in the State of Nebraska; second, to collect information from the Chief Probation Officers regarding their assessments of their current listening skills and needs; third, to compare the listening efficiency of the Chief Probation Officers to that of college freshmen as tested by the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test; and fourth, to determine how many Chief Probation Officers have had

instruction in listening skills, as well as the kind and extent of instruction which they have received.

Many Criminal Justice personnel agree that the investigator or counselor must, of necessity, listen with a purpose. In the case of probation officers, they have been given the responsibility for two major functions in the court system. The first function is that of an investigator to gather information for a presentence report. The second function is that of supervising court orders and counseling defendants who are granted a period of probation in lieu of going to jail.

Listening appears to be extremely important in gathering information for presentence reports. The primary objective of the presentence report is to help determine the character and personality of the defendant, to offer insight into his problems and needs, to help understand the world in which he lives, to learn about his relationships with people, and to discover those salient factors that underlie his specific offense and his conduct in general. According to the Nebraska Probation System Manual (1975), the presentence investigation report is designed to serve several functions: "(1) to aid the court in determining the appropriate sentence, (2) to aid the probation officer in his rehabilitative efforts during probation supervision, and (3) to serve as a source of pertinent information for systematic research" (chap. 7, p. 1). In other words, the presentence

report is an essential aid in selecting candidates for probation.

That the presentence investigation requires effective listening is evidenced by the preceding account of the types of information, both factual and inferential, that it is necessary to gather through an initial interview for the use of the courts in sentencings. Upon examination of the probation officers' jobs, it appears that much of their time is spent in listening to and assimilating information for a presentence report.

The second function of the probation officer is supervision of defendants who have been granted probation. The problems of the offender are complex and a trained officer is needed to deal with these problems. Circumstances which bring offenders through the criminal justice system are frequently symptoms of deeper problems which are multiple and require diverse kinds of treatment. It then becomes the objective of the supervising officer to develop a relationship with the defendant that will encourage him to relate his needs as he sees them. Therefore, the process of supervision becomes one of therapeutic and empathic listening. The probation officer must become aware of the factors which influence the defendant.

The acceptance and reflection of the individual's feelings cannot be achieved by a repetitious, "I see," "I understand," "uh-hum." If the officer really listens and is able

to restate what has been expressed in simple, meaningful terms, the client begins to feel that he is understood and accepted. It is a widely accepted belief that being able to talk out a problem with someone who is listening objectively seems to reduce emotional tension. According to Borman, Howell, Nichols, and Shapiro (1969) the acceptance and clarification of negative feelings tends to diminish negativism and makes room for a positive approach to more acceptable behavior.

Survey of Literature

Frequently referred to as "the orphan of the language arts," listening is gradually recovering from a long period of neglect. Educators have been giving increasing attention to teaching listening as a communication skill, particularly since the Harvard Report of General Education (1945) advised, "Communication is not speaking only but listening as well; you cannot succeed in communicating your ideas unless the other person wishes to hear and knows how to listen" (p. 68).

With the invention of the printing press nearly four centuries ago, listening slowly gave way to reading as a measure of literacy. The art of listening and the culture of oral tradition were gradually displaced by the book and magazine. More recently, however, media innovations such as the radio, motion picture and television have placed a premium on listening, returning this skill to a degree of its

former pre-eminence as a means of gaining information.

After cataloging the language skills used most often in the daily life of college students, Searson (1924) found that of the 1,335 graduates who had responded to his questionnaire 1,307 (30%) reported difficulties in listening during interviews and conferences.

Paul Rankin (1928) stressed the importance of listening with an investigation which is still considered significant. He collected data on 21 adults for every 15 minutes of their waking day for six days and found that the average adult spent nearly 70 per cent of his waking day in some form of communication. Of the total time given to communication, listening comprised 42 per cent, speaking 32 per cent, reading 15 per cent, and writing 11 per cent. Although a considerably greater amount of time was devoted to listening, a disproportionately smaller amount of time was devoted to teaching listening skills. He concluded:

Instruments for measuring development of listening ability should be devised and the question of whether or not there are significant differences in listening abilities among school children and adults answered. If such differences exist, there is the additional question of developing effective procedures for training children to become good listeners. (p. 629)

The National Council of Teachers of English recognized the importance of listening when they created a committee on listening in 1945, charged with the responsibility of investigating problems in listening skills at all educational

levels. The Commission on English Curriculum (1952) concluded that pupils from pre-school through college learn more frequently by listening than by any other means. The first of a series of five volumes which reviewed the research of the committee recommended that listening instruction should be organized, sequential, and continuous.

Finch (1946) in discussing listening as a "neglected 4th phase of communication," commented that a listener may agree or disagree with opinions expressed, but went on to state "a non-listener leaves each discussion with all his previous prejudices intact" (p. 535).

Nichols (1948) made an intensive review of research on listening and concluded that listening comprehension has a momentous impact in the lives of both children and adults, and research in the area of listening was a chronicle of neglect. Harold A. Anderson (1949) stated that at all educational levels listening had been a forgotten art for generations and asked that the schools provide direct and systematic instruction in listening comparable to that which was provided in developmental and remedial reading. Four years later, Anderson (1954) again expressed the need for instruction in listening. A study by Wilt (1949) re-emphasized the importance of listening as a communicative activity by research which indicated that school children spend more time in listening than in any other activity. The importance of listening was described, demonstrated, and

documented by Donald E. Bird (1953). Perhaps his own studies contributed as much relevant and objective data as any he surveyed. Bird cited studies which indicated that listening is more important than reading for achieving scholastic success at the undergraduate level in 38 to 42 percent of the college courses taken by freshmen.

Many dangers may accrue when man listens halfheartedly, unintelligently, and indiscriminately. Pointing out the importance of critical listening, Mersand (1951) suggested that the very fact of our democracy may well rest with the listener who accurately audits and analyzes what is said or implied by the persuasive speaker.

Colleges and universities began to recognize the significance of listening about twenty years ago and started teaching listening with Communication Skills in the freshman year. Nichols and Stevens (1957) reported that 360 colleges and universities were teaching their freshmen students the four communicative skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Although encouraging, it must be remembered that this was still a small proportion of the total number of colleges.

After summarizing and evaluating research on listening, Duker and Petrie (1964) concluded that the skills involved in this very important communicative activity may have been sufficiently defined so that instruction can be organized in such a way that improvement in listening comprehension is

possible.

Studies Related to Measurement of Listening Ability

Even before there was evidence of separate listening abilities, some attempts were made to measure listening. The lack of an integrated theory of listening meant that there was little agreement among the investigators as to what they were measuring and how they might profitably evaluate the results of the measurements. Yet a review of literature regarding measurement of listening ability seems to justify three generalizations pertinent to this study:

(1) listening comprehension is measurable in quantitative terms provided a valid and reliable measure is used; (2) a valid listening test will measure the accuracy of the reception of aural communication, the discrimination of major ideas from subordinate details, and the accuracy with which the listener evaluates and/or reflects upon what he has heard presented; and (3) a reliable listening test will be based upon a realistic, functional situation common to the subject's daily experiences.

Spache (1950) was one of the first to construct a test to measure auditory comprehension. His test employed materials from college texts which he read orally to subjects. He reported a significant relationship existing between reading comprehension and auditory comprehension. The ausing skills which he considered necessary for scholastic success were auditory vocabulary, note-taking and the

ability to organize and summarize.

At the same time, Blewett (1951) constructed a listening test composed of two parts, the first measuring retention of details, and the second the ability to derive conclusions. "The Stephens College Listening Test" developed by Blewett is an untimed test based on four assumptions:

- (1) material composed of extensive excerpts from talks presents a realistic, functional situation common to the students daily experiences;
- (2) the passages, one primarily explanatory and the other primarily argumentative, represent two very common listening situations;
- (3) testing the subject's recognition of main ideas and details, logical inferences, and relationship of ideas will give a valid measure of the subject's general listening ability;
- (4) pre-testing and post-testing of such general ability, with intervening instruction in listening, will yield a measure of growth in this ability.

Nicholas and Keller (1953) developed a "Listening Efficiency Test" at the University of Minnesota, and Dow (1953) developed a listening comprehension test for Michigan State College freshmen which has been used in their communication courses. Neither has been published nor used in any published research.

The listening sub-test of the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP) was published in 1958 by the Cooperative Test Service after extensive investigations. Buros (1959) reports that this test measures listening

comprehension from passages read orally. It is standardized at the college level with a reliability of .91. In the STEP test, basic listening skills are identified and organized around four aspects: the main idea, significant details, organization of details, and the meaning of words. At each level are passages such as those typically found in silent reading comprehension tests, and exercises which consist of short talks of argumentation or persuasive nature, oral directions, instructions, and explanations. The examiner reads both the question and the possible answers aloud, while the subjects complete a response booklet which also contains the possible answers.

James Brown (1949) completed a comprehensive study of listening ability with the construction of a diagnostic test of listening comprehension. After two experimental tryouts and consequent revision, in which Brown was assisted by G. Robert Carlsen, Form Am of the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test was constructed. This form, comprising 76 items, measures five important listening skills: immediate recall, following directions, recognizing transitions, recognizing word meanings, and lecture comprehension. Although the test is divided into parts, each measuring to some extent a different aspect of listening skill, only a total listening score is derived. This form was standardized on thousands of students, including more than 3,000 college freshmen. Form Bm was developed to closely parallel

Form Am in organization and type of content. The test has been commercially published by Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., with national norms for grades 11 through 14. The split-half reliability coefficient is .90.

In Buros' Fifth Mental Measurements Yearbook (1959) Lorge evaluated the Brown-Carlsen Test as follows:

Historically, the test represents an attempt at measuring an important educational objective and component of scholastic success. Especially valuable are the subsections on recognizing transitions and lecture comprehension. (p. 578)

Duker and Petrie (1964) stated: "The wide use and the general satisfaction with the Brown-Carlsen Test is considerable evidence of its reliability" (p. 247).

Based on the survey of literature relating to the testing of listening skills, the decision was made to test the Chief Probation Officers with the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test because it has been proven reliable, it appeared to have been more widely used than most comparable tests, and the material and method of presentation of material seemed to have a commonality to the subject's daily experiences.

Problem

The survey of literature indicated that listening is one of the four major communication skills. However, it has not kept pace with instruction in the other major communication skills of reading, writing, and speaking. No empirical evidence exists concerning either the importance of

listening skills to the maximum job performance of probation officers, or at what level of listening competency they function.

The purpose of this investigation was to describe the listening skills of persons who work as Chief Probation Officers in the State of Nebraska, any training they have had in listening, and their opinions concerning their own need, as well as that of the entire probation system, for more training in the skills of listening.

Research Questions

Four specific questions were posed in this descriptive study. They were: (1) How do scores of Chief Probation Officers on the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test compare with scores of college freshmen? (2) How do Chief Probation Officers rank listening skills in relation to other communication skills necessary in the performance of their job? (3) What training have Chief Probation Officers had in developing their listening skills? (4) Do Chief Probation Officers feel that training in listening skills would be beneficial to them and to the entire probation system?

It seemed reasonable to expect that the Chief Probation Officers would listen more efficiently than the average person, since the majority of the time that they spend on their job involves some form of listening.

It was also anticipated that since so many of their

required duties involve listening, Chief Probation Officers would have previous training in listening skills.

Since the basic concern of this descriptive study was to describe the listening skills of Chief Probation Officers of the State of Nebraska, the results of this effort should help focus attention on the listening proficiency of these Officers. By describing and evaluating their levels of retention and understanding, it should be possible to determine if more training in this vital area of communication might be advisable.

Limitations

This research was initiated with the realization of limitations in the study. An investigation which relies on questionnaires and tests for its data is limited by the structures of these instruments. Limitations result from such factors as techniques of sampling, availability of respondents, and economics. Specific limitations of this study include the following:

1. Only the 13 Chief Probation Officers for the State of Nebraska were used as the source of the data.
2. No social history was obtained on the respondents to insure their anonymity.
3. The Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test was the only measuring device used.

Definition of Terms

1. Chief Probation Officers: Those persons charged with the responsibility of managing an effective presentence investigation and supervision system for the courts in the 13 Districts of Nebraska.
2. Listening Skills: Composite score of the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test, Form Bm.

Instruments and Procedures

The respondents in this study were all 13 Chief Probation Officers for the State of Nebraska. There are 12 males and 1 female, ranging in age from 24 years to 61 years. They are located throughout Nebraska, serving both urban and rural communities. All are white and have varying amounts of formal education. The identities of the individual officers were not revealed in order to make the study as non-threatening as possible. It was felt that their cooperation was essential in this study to insure their support for further study of the entire probation system.

Each respondent was given coded tests identified by A,B,C, etc. This was done in order to compare the standardized test results with the attitude questionnaire. Also, the subjects were asked to remember their alphabetical letter for the purpose of requesting their own personal test results if they so desired.

The primary source of data was the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test, Form Bm, an instrument designed to measure five important listening skills:

1. Immediate Recall--the ability to keep sequence of details in mind until a question is asked that requires thinking back over the sequence.
2. Following Directions--the ability to follow oral instructions.
3. Recognizing Transitions--awareness of the function of transitional words and phrases within sentence contexts.
4. Recognizing Word Meanings--the ability to deduce the meanings of words from context.
5. Lecture Comprehension--the ability to listen for details, get the central idea, draw inferences, understand organization, and note degree of relevance in a brief lecture presentation.

The Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test was administered from a tape recording made specifically for this study by Fritz Lee, Program Director for KVNO at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The decision to administer the test by tape rather than live was based on research by Johnson and Frandsen (1963) which found that in administering the Brown-Carlson to 2,400 freshmen, the taped administration produced the most reliable results.

The second source of data was a Listening Skills Questionnaire consisting of eight questions designed to

examine the opinions of the Chief Probation Officers regarding the importance of listening skills in their work (see Appendix A for Listening Skills Questionnaire). The questionnaire was prepared by this writer, and was tested by administering it to the Probation Officers in the Douglas County Probation Office in Omaha, Nebraska. It was then revised to eliminate any ambiguity indicated from their responses.

The data were collected October 3, 1975, at the regular meeting of the Chief Probation Officers for the State of Nebraska in Kearney, Nebraska. This three-day meeting had included the assistance of Dr. Melvin LeBaron from the University of Southern California to examine and identify the training needs for the state probation system. This researcher was allowed to conclude the sessions by administering the tests for the purposes of gathering research data and identifying any potential need for training in listening skills. Approval for this study was obtained from the Probation Administrator for the State of Nebraska, Mr. Edwin H. Garrison (see Appendix B for letter of endorsement).

Prior to the administration of the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test, the Listening Skills Questionnaire was given to obtain information regarding the officers' attitude toward listening as well as to get them actively thinking about what kind of data this study was attempting to collect.

Results

The results of the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test are shown in Table I with the subjects identified by code letter. Along with each raw score is presented the percentile at which this score would fall on the distribution of scores made by 3000 college freshmen on which the test was normed. Only 3 of the 13 subjects are above the mean for college freshmen, and 3 are in the very bottom percentile. The mean score of 45.69 places the group in the 28th percentile for college freshmen.

Table I
The Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test Results

Subject	Score	%-ile, College freshmen
J	67	99
F	63	95
D	54	62
A	50	42
K	50	42
N	50	42
E	48	35
I	47	29
M	42	12
B	40	8
H	29	1
L	29	1
C	25	1

The responses to the Listening Skills Questionnaire are included in Tables II, III, and IV. Each of the questions is stated, discussed, and interpreted as follows:

Question 1

Please rank these communications skills in the order of their importance to you as a probation officer:

WRITING, SPEAKING, LISTENING, READING

Responses to Question 1 are summarized in Table II. Twelve of the 13 respondents ranked "listening" as the most important communication skill while 10 of the 13 indicated that "reading" was least important. Nine ranked "speaking" as their second choice and seven placed "writing" in this category. None of the respondents ranked "listening" as least important.

Table II
Importance of Communication Skills

	Most important	Least important	
LISTENING	12	1	
SPEAKING	9	3	1
WRITING	4	7	2
READING	1	2	10

Question 2

Please rank the following qualities which you feel would be most essential to effective listening as a probation officer:

warmth, sincerity, trustworthiness, non-authoritarian,
sensitive, non-judgmental, empathic

The mean ranks which were given to these qualities are shown in Table III.

Table III

Quality	Mean rank
Sincerity	1.9
Trustworthiness	3.0
Non-judgmental	4.0
Warmth	4.3
Sensitive	4.4
Non-authoritarian	4.5
Empathic	5.5

Question 3

What specific techniques do you utilize in your role as a probation officer to enhance your listening skills to elicit information and feelings from your probationers?

Responses to this question totaled 28 separate items; only 7 of which were mentioned twice and none were repeated more than twice. The results have been grouped into five categories, some of which may overlap.

A. Non-directive, non-evaluating orientation

1. Establish a feeling of personal interest so they will have a desire to have me listen
2. Taking amount of time needed
3. I don't get shocked at what they say

4. Non-judgmental
 5. Let them talk
 6. Non-authoritarian
 7. All of the above (referring to Question 2)
 8. Trust
 9. Willingness to help
 10. Confidentiality
 11. Being patient
- B. Facilitative verbal behaviors
1. Explanation of purpose
 2. Establish common ground
 3. Establish that you will be fair in judgments
 4. Ask leading questions
 5. Who, what, when, where
 6. Stay clear of yes and no questions
 7. Feedback feelings
- C. Facilitative non-verbal behaviors
1. Receptive attention
 2. Eye contact
 3. Lean forward
 4. Set relatively close to probationer
- D. Facilitative physical environment
1. Eliminate interruptions
 2. Environmental setting
 3. Privacy
 4. Coffee breaks

E. Personal growth

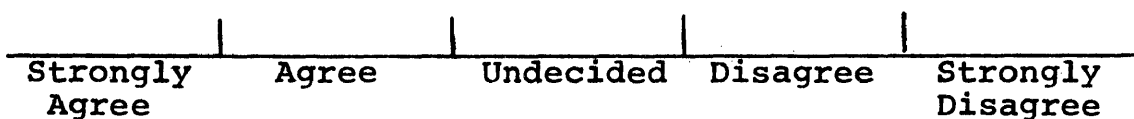
1. Yoga

2. Trancendental Meditation

Question 4

"Hearing and Listening are synonymous."

Please mark the following scale to indicate how you feel about the above statement.



One respondent agreed that hearing and listening are synonymous, 5 disagreed and 7 strongly disagreed. Combining disagree and strongly disagree, there were 12 of the 13 who believed that hearing and listening are not synonymous. This indicates that the Chief Probation Officers apparently distinguish between these concepts.

Question 5

What are some conditions that frequently make it difficult for you to listen as effectively as you would like to probationers?

The number of responses varied from one to several on Question 5, but eight identifiable negative conditions were cited by the probation officers. "Outside interruptions" was the most common difficulty mentioned, with 10 of the 13 respondents declaring it. "Lack of time" was another frequently mentioned difficulty, with 7 of the 13 officers

identifying it as a detriment to effective listening. Two of the 13 officers stated that "personal problems" were making it difficult to listen effectively to probationers. It appears from the data shown in Table IV that the majority of Chief Probation Officers feel that difficulties in listening are caused more often by physical environmental conditions than by personal limitations.

Table IV
Conditions Causing Difficulty in Listening

Conditions	Number of respondents
Outside interruptions	10
Lack of time	7
Lack of privacy	5
Telephone	4
Probation Officer's personal problems	2
Probationer's inability to communicate	2
Appearance	1
Ethnic dialect	1

Question 6

Do you feel that as a result of the great amount of time spent in active listening that probation officers would score higher than the average person on a Listening Skills Test?

Of the 13 respondents, 8 said "yes," 3 said "no," and 2

had "no opinion." This indicates that the Chief Probation Officers feel that they do listen better than the average person.

Question 7

As a probation officer, have you had any formal training in developing listening skills?

Eight respondents reported "no," while five said "yes." None had had specific classes in listening skills; they reported training only in conjunction with other classes such as Trancendental Meditation, Transactional Analysis, a "training session" with Dr. Steyer, and one with a class in interviewing techniques while in the military.

Question 8

Do you feel that there is a need for listening skills training for probation officers?

If so, why? If not, why not?

Eleven of the 13 respondents said "yes," and two were "uncertain." None of the officers responded with "no." Most related a need for training based on the importance of listening in their jobs.

Discussion

This study of the listening skills of Chief Probation Officers was the first such research conducted in the Nebraska Probation System. It must be kept in mind that since this is an initial descriptive study, the results are not definitive; further research is essential.

The results of the Brown-Carlson Listening Skills Test indicate that Chief Probation Officers for the State of Nebraska score lower, as a group, than college freshmen in listening ability. Again, these findings indicate that further attention should be given to these important communication skills of listening.

Chief Probation Officers ranked listening as the most important communication skill in the performance of their job. There was a discrepancy, however, in their reporting of what was causing their difficulty in listening and what they reported doing to improve their listening. When responding to Question 5, the majority indicated physical environmental conditions as the major inhibitors of their listening, but when asked in Question 3 to list techniques that they use to enhance their listening, the majority listed a variety of adjusted personal behaviors far more frequently than alterations of their physical environment.

It would appear that the Chief Probation Officers recognize their deficiencies in the area of listening skills, but tend to blame outside conditions rather than their own lack of skills. Although the majority indicated that they have had no formal training in listening skills, they are apparently engaging in a variety of adjusted behaviors to compensate for their lack of skills. Their efforts indicate a real concern regarding their communication abilities, but their lack of a systematic approach for achieving an

acceptable functional level indicates a void in their training and knowledge of fundamental communication theory and process. For example, with regard to Question 2, when asked to rank qualities most essential to effective listening, empathic listening was ranked least important, but according to Kelly (1962) and Carkhuff (1969) empathic listening is considered one of the most important skills to effective communication.

Through this study it has become apparent that the Chief Probation Officers in Nebraska are vitally concerned and introspective regarding their ability to communicate effectively. Their responses to Question 8 indicate that they feel a need to participate in training that will enhance their professional skill. Finally, as indicated by the Listening Skills Questionnaire, the majority of Chief Probation Officers feel that there is a need for listening skills training for all probation officers.

Recommendations

The results of this study demonstrate a need for further research into the field of listening skills in the probation system of the State of Nebraska. It should be recalled that this sample was limited to a small population, namely the 13 Chief Probation Officers in Nebraska. A larger study should be undertaken which would include the entire staff of probation officers. In addition, it is recommended that base line data be collected in order to

establish some standardization for professionals using the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test. The base line data could include age, sex, educational background, length of service as a probation officer, any previous training in listening skills, and any prior interviewing and counseling experience. This could result in a more comprehensive approach to establishing some possible causes of listening difficulties.

It must be remembered that the Brown-Carlsen is still not a first-rate instrument for measuring listening skills, but since there are only three published standardized listening skills tests, it would be difficult to select a more appropriate measuring device. Also, the oral administration of a multiple choice test introduces extraneous factors that contaminate the measuring of listening. According to Kelly (1967) the results of his studies support the theory that listening is improved when subjects know that they are being tested.

In much of the literature reviewed, the indication was that there is a high correlation between competence in listening skills and I.Q. It might be advisable to survey the field for other measuring devices which could be used to substantiate the data collected using the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test. There seems to be a strong need to analyze the listening behavior most important in the probation officers' roles, and to develop a test of

performance on these skills.

Reflecting upon the results of this study, it is further recommended that the development of a course in interpersonal communication be designed and implemented for the probation officers of Nebraska. This would necessarily include systematic training in listening as well as introducing a knowledge and understanding of listening as a communication process. It is conceivable that through this initiation a system could be designed which would facilitate the communication process between probation officer and probationer.

Appendix A

Listening Skills Questionnaire

1. Please rank these communication skills in the order of their importance to you as a probation officer:

WRITING, SPEAKING, LISTENING, READING

Most important 1.
2.
3.
Least important 4.

2. Please rank the following qualities which you feel would be most essential to effective listening as a probation officer:

warmth, sincerity, trustworthiness, non-authoritarian,
sensitive, non-judgmental, empathic

Most important 1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
Least important 7.

3. What specific techniques do you utilize in your role as a probation officer to enhance your listening skills to elicit information and feelings from your probationers?

4. "Hearing and listening are synonymous."

Please put a check mark () on the following scale to indicate how you feel about the above statement.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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5. What are some conditions that frequently make it difficult for you to listen as effectively as you would like to probationers?

6. Do you feel that as a result of the great amount of time spent in active listening that probation officers would score higher than the average person on a Listening Skills Test?

_____ Yes

_____ No

_____ No opinion

7. As a probation officer, have you had any formal training in developing listening skills?

If so, what type and by whom?

8. Do you feel that there is a need for listening skills training for probation officers?

If so, why? If not, why not?

Appendix B

NEBRASKA DISTRICT COURT
JUDGES ASSOCIATION



EDWIN H. GARRISON
STATE PROBATION ADMINISTRATOR
P. O. BOX 94652

September 22, 1975

STATE OF NEBRASKA

LINCOLN 68509

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Please be advised that the State Probation Administrator feels that the research project on "Listening Skills of Probation Officers" which has been chosen by Patricia Crosby would be valuable to our system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin H. Garrison". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name.

Edwin H. Garrison
State Probation Administrator

EHG:cs

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