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THE MEASUREMENT OF CHANGES IN PERCEPTION OF SPOUSE AND
MARRIAGE FOLLOWING A MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT EXPERIENCE

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Ph.D. 1985

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THE MEASUREMENT OF CHANGES IN PERCEPTION OF SPOUSE AND MARRIAGE
FOLLOWING A MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT EXPERIENCE

by

Sarah Swann Catron

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Approved by


Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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March 22, 1985
Date of Acceptance by Committee

March 22, 1985
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The purpose of this research was to study changes in the perception of spouse and marriage by couples who participated in a marriage enrichment course. Several instruments used to measure these perceptions were examined for their sensitivity to change as a result of the course. The dependent variables included each person's perceptions of his or her own spouse and marriage, the "ideal" marriage, and "most other" marriages. Demographic variables which might be related to these changes also were studied. The experimental group was composed of 56 persons (28 couples) enrolled in two classes of a seminary marriage enrichment course. Thirty-four subjects (17 couples) from a comparable seminary who did not participate in a marriage enrichment course served as a control group. All subjects completed the same pre- and posttest measures.

The experimental and control groups did not differ significantly on pretest scores or on demographic variables. At posttest, mean scores for the experimental group declined and were significantly lower than control group scores on two measures of the perception of one's own spouse and marriage (Relationship Inventory and Dyadic Adjustment Scale). Mean posttest scores on other measures (Marital Satisfaction Scale and Dyadic Trust Scale) were also below pretest levels for the experimental group while control group scores on all measures were above the pretest level. In contrast, the mean score for the

experimental group was significantly higher than the control group on a self-report of change given at posttest only (Relationship Change Scale).

Lower levels of pretest scores were significantly related to greater pre- to posttest change, but gender, age, years married, number of children, and level of education were not associated with change. The amount of discrepancy between ratings of one's own, the "ideal," and "most other" marriages did not change from pre- to posttesting.

Variables which may have influenced these results included (a) time of posttest, (b) negative reactions to the enrichment course, (c) disruptive effects of the course, (d) response shift, (f) effects of pretesting, and (g) limits of the measurement scales.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Only two decades ago, a few groups of couples were beginning to meet together for purposes later described as marriage enrichment. Emerging from roots in the human potential movement and from religious groups, this new focus on marriage relationships has gained wide recognition. The historical development of this movement has been documented by Herbert Otto (1975) and by David Mace (1982).

Marriage enrichment groups began meeting in the early 1960's and by ten years later, a rapid proliferation of enrichment programs was taking place (Otto, 1975). In December, 1973, thirty delegates from various denominations with marriage enrichment programs met to draw up the definitions of marriage and family enrichment programs. The following is a typical definition statement:

Marriage enrichment programs are for couples who have what they perceive to be fairly well-functioning marriages and who wish to make their marriages even more mutually satisfying. (The programs are not designed for people whose marriages are at a point of crisis, or who are seeking counseling help for marital problems.) Marriage enrichment programs are generally concerned with enhancing the couple's communication, emotional life, or sexual relationship; with fostering marriage strengths, personal growth, and the development of marriage and individual potential while maintaining a consistent and primary focus on the relationship of the couple. (Otto, 1975, p. 14)

The programs and experiences of marriage enrichment have been conducted almost exclusively with groups of couples. All approaches have used couple interaction and the majority of programs also use group interaction as part of the enrichment process.

Although there has been a rapid development of enrichment programs, systematic research on the effectiveness of the programs has lagged behind. In a survey of enrichment programs conducted in 1973-74, only three of the 30 respondents were conducting any research (Otto, 1975). A review of controlled outcome studies of marriage enrichment groups by Beck (1976) contained only three dissertations on enrichment programs which had ten or more cases in the study. Not only has the amount of research conducted been sparse, but the number of subjects in the studies has been too few for adequate statistical analysis.

Two basically different types of enrichment programs developed under the general definitions of marriage enrichment. One type emphasized skills development, such as communication or conflict resolution. Examples of this type include the Minnesota Couples Communication Program (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1975) and the Relationship Enhancement Program (Guerney, 1977). The second type of program has been generally focused and more loosely structured than the skills development types. Such programs include those sponsored by the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME) and most of the programs sponsored by various religious groups (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1980).

Programs for skills development have been developed primarily within university settings, often in conjunction with graduate students' theses or dissertations. As a result, there has been a rapid increase in the number of research studies conducted with marriage

enrichment programs. Following the first research review of three studies (Beck, 1976), Gurman and Kniskern (1977) reviewed 29 studies, and Hof and Miller (1981) reported on 40 studies. A recent review of marriage and family enrichment (Giblin, 1982) included 85 studies. A majority of these 85 studies were conducted with the skills development type of program.

There is still very little research on the effects of the enrichment programs sponsored by churches or those conducted by leader couples trained by the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment. Various explanations have been offered for this lack of systematic research. Leaders of church-related and ACME programs are often couples who lack skills in research methods and procedures and who view themselves as practitioners rather than researchers (Garland, 1983; Hof & Miller, 1981). Additionally, there has sometimes been an assumption that research must be conducted in a complex, rigorous manner in order to be useful (Garland, 1983). Frequently, these programs are oriented to couple interaction, and leader couples often tailor enrichment programs for needs of a particular group of couples so that the program is never exactly duplicated (Garland, 1983).

Instruments designed to measure change in enrichment settings have not been readily available. Although there are many measures of marital quality and interaction available (Garland, 1983), most of these were developed as diagnostic or counseling tools. Such instruments have commonly been used in enrichment research, but their usefulness for evaluating outcomes of enrichment experiences has been questioned.

Research with enrichment programs of the more general or "mixed experiences" type (Hof & Miller, 1981) have included studies such as the outcome of Quaker model retreats sponsored by ACME (Swicegood, 1974), a program of communication exercises to help focus on positive aspects of the marriage relationship (Nadeau, 1972), a program designed to improve interpersonal communication through relating honestly with feeling and sensitivity (Travis & Travis, 1976), the effects of Marriage Encounter weekends (Doherty & Lester, 1982; Hawley, 1979/1980), the effectiveness of the Baptist marriage enrichment model (Strickland, 1981), and studies to determine the effects of structure and location of events (Brunworth, 1982; Davis, Hovestadt, Piercy, & Cochran, 1982; Rupel, 1983).

Caution has been advised in accepting the claims of positive change reported by participants in marriage enrichment events until systematic research has been developed. As studies have been conducted, however, there has been increasing evidence of a predominantly positive effect of enrichment programs on participants and this effect has been found consistently in research reviews (Beck, 1976; Giblin, 1982; Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Hof & Miller, 1981).

The most recent review of marriage and family enrichment research was a meta-analysis of 85 studies of premarital, marital, and family enrichment programs (Giblin, 1982). These studies represented 3,886 couples or families and 8,365 individuals. Results from these studies were statistically aggregated and the average effect-size for these data, across all types of outcome measures, research designs, and

program types, was .44 standard deviation units. Giblin interpreted these results as indicating that the average enrichment participant is better off than 67% of persons in control groups who did not participate. Giblin concluded, on the basis of his findings, that "enrichment deserves valid consideration as a change agent" (Giblin, 1983, p. 6).

Although these studies provided evidence that some change usually occurred as a result of enrichment programs, still very little knowledge has been gained about the variables which were associated with the change. Gurman and Kniskern (1977) noted that the components which are primarily responsible for change in marital enrichment programs have yet to be identified. Various enrichment research needs have been highlighted (Garland, 1983; Giblin, 1982; Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Mace, 1975) which center around variables associated with change, the durability and generalizability of change, and measurement problems.

The aim of the present study was to use a marriage enrichment experience of sufficient content, intensity, and duration that positive changes in the perception of spouse and marriage could reasonably be expected to occur, based on previous research findings. This anticipated change was expected to provide the foundation for identifying evaluation instruments which were most sensitive to change in the perception of spouse and marriage for participants in marriage enrichment events. Other preexisting variables which may have been associated with the change also were examined in this study.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this research was to study changes in the perception of one's own spouse and marriage by couples who participated in a marriage enrichment experience. There were three major parts to the study:

1. To examine several instruments used to measure perceptions of spouse and marriage for their sensitivity to change as the result of a marriage enrichment course.

Many instruments used in marriage enrichment research have been developed to measure marital dysfunction and their applicability for use in marriage enrichment has been questioned. This study used a marriage enrichment experience that was expected to provide optimal conditions for change to occur. By using this optimal experience, instruments previously used for evaluating dysfunctional relationships could be examined to determine their usefulness in measuring changes in well-functioning marriages. Through the use of several instruments, it was expected that one could determine which instruments, or which items within instruments, were most sensitive for measuring change due to a marriage enrichment experience.

2. To study the effect of a marriage enrichment experience on each participant's perception of his or her own marriage, the "ideal" marriage, and "most other" marriages.

How a person evaluates his or her own marriage has generally been thought to be related to his or her expectations of marriage. This study attempted to determine whether changes in the perception of one's own marriage were related to changes in the perceptions of the

"ideal" and "most other" marriages. The experiences of this marriage enrichment course were expected to have a measurable effect on each participant's perceptions of marriage. In addition, the critical examination of one's own marriage, the group setting, and the married couple leadership of the enrichment event were expected to provide enough exposure to other marriage relationships to allow some correction of distorted or unrealistic expectations of marriage to be made.

3. To examine context or preexisting variables to determine whether they are related to changes in perception of one's own spouse or marriage as the result of a marriage enrichment experience.

Context or preexisting variables examined were level of pretest scores, sex, age, number of years married, education level, and number of children.

Significance of the Study

Most of the research studies in marriage enrichment have been conducted with programs designed to develop specific interactional skills, such as communication and conflict resolution. This has left a large number and variety of marriage enrichment activities untouched by systematic evaluation or research. It seems likely, however, that the term marriage enrichment has been more closely associated with the general programs than with the more highly researched skills development programs. If marriage enrichment is to maintain its credibility and effectiveness, the knowledge which can be gained through research is urgently needed for all types of enrichment activities.

One barrier to conducting research and to using research findings for improved programming has been the lack of appropriate instruments for measuring change. In addition, there have been so many different instruments used that it has been very difficult to extract any general conclusions from previous research findings.

The results of this study were expected to provide information on instruments which are sensitive to change and which could be used fairly easily and by marriage enrichment leaders who work with enrichment programs which have had no systematic research in the program development or in the evaluation of its implementation. Through the development and use of common instruments, it should be possible to systematically study marriage enrichment programs by combining results across studies to form a pool of information to serve as baseline data. Using this baseline data, one could begin to systematically study the process, program, and structural variables of marriage enrichment events. One way to accomplish this systematic study would be to use a consistent and recurring population of subjects for the development of instruments appropriate for marriage enrichment research. Married students who are enrolled as couples in a marriage enrichment course might be a suitable population for developing and testing instruments. Every time the course is taught, another population becomes available for further testing.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature will follow the three major parts of the study. The first section will focus on instruments used in the measurement of changes in perception of spouse and marriage in marriage enrichment research. The second section will include the theoretical perspective and review the literature related to changes in perception of the "ideal" marriage and "most other" marriages that are expected to accompany changes in perception of one's own marriage. The third section deals with other variables associated with changes in perception of one's own spouse and marriage as a result of a marriage enrichment experience.

Instruments Used in Marriage Enrichment Research

Many instruments have been used in marriage enrichment research. In the recent meta-analysis of marriage and family enrichment research (Giblin, 1982), 89 different instruments were used in the 85 studies reviewed. Garland (1983) listed 95 evaluation tools which she suggested may be useful to leaders of marriage and family enrichment programs in evaluating their programs.

The most frequently used instruments for measuring some aspect of perception of one's spouse or marriage in marriage enrichment research have been (in decreasing order of frequency) the following:

1. Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959)
(including various modifications)

2. Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976)
3. Relationship Change Scale (Guerney, 1977)
4. Relationship Inventory (Barrett-Lennard, 1962)
5. Caring Relationship Inventory (Shostrom, 1975)
6. Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation--
Behavior FIRO-B (Shutz, 1958)
7. Conjugal Life Questionnaire (Ely, Guerney, & Stover, 1973)
8. Interpersonal Check List (LaForge & Suczek, 1955)
9. Marital Happiness Scale (Azrin, Naster, & Jones, 1973).

Two closely related measures of frequency or quality of marital communication, the Marital Communication Inventory (Bienvenu, 1971) and the Primary Communication Inventory (Navran, 1967), have also been widely used. In addition to these measures, many instruments have been used in only a few studies, and there have been many individually designed measures reported which were used for only one specific study.

This diversity of instruments, combined with the wide variation in methodology and content of enrichment experiences, has contributed to the difficulty in comparing findings from research studies of enrichment programs (Garland, 1983; Hof & Miller, 1981). It has also presented a bewildering puzzle to the marriage enrichment practitioner who wished to conduct research.

Research in marriage enrichment requires instruments that are capable of making fine discriminations at different levels of functioning, yet marriage enrichment research has frequently used instruments that were not designed to evaluate enrichment programs. Most of the instruments, especially those used to measure marital

satisfaction or adjustment, were designed to distinguish between distressed and nondistressed couples (Garland, 1983; Hof & Miller, 1981). The two instruments most frequently used in marriage enrichment research, the Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), are examples of this type of instrument. If couples in enrichment events are evaluated on instruments which were developed for troubled couples, the measurement scale may be too limited to show the kind of change expected in marriage enrichment (Garland, 1983).

Garland (1983) and Sabatelli (1983) have criticized measures of marital adjustment and satisfaction because of values or biases inherent in the definition of good marital adjustment which are built into the instrument. On the Dyadic Adjustment Test (Spanier, 1976), for example, low levels of shared activity and high conflict scores produce low adjustment scores. When this same instrument has been used for enrichment purposes, the assumption implicit in the test construction has been that the lower the frequency of conflict and the higher the number of shared activities, the greater is the marital adjustment. Garland (1983) and Sabatelli (1983) have detailed the fallacies of these assumptions.

Many instruments now used in marriage enrichment were originally designed to assess the relationship at a given time -- not to measure change. Hof and Miller (1981) have noted that effective research on the outcomes of marriage enrichment "will depend partially on the development of measures that can assess improvement in couples' relating from the satisfactory to the more-than-satisfactory level" (p. 52).

In their review of 29 marriage enrichment studies, Gurman and Kniskern (1977) cited important methodological shortcomings and specific empirical issues which needed to be addressed in marriage enrichment research. Problems with instruments were not mentioned in their article, but recent researchers and reviewers have highlighted instruments as a major research issue. Hof and Miller (1981) observed that along with the common problems of research, there has been "methodological difficulty that is particularly troublesome for conducting research on marriage enrichment: selection of appropriate measures of change" (p. 51).

Garland (1983) stated that appropriate instruments have yet to be developed and called for creative work to meet this pressing need. She suggested five criteria which should be met, along with the requirements of reliability and validity. Instruments must (a) measure relevant variables, (b) evaluate the current status of the relationship, (c) measure change in a particular relationship, (d) allow for small increments of change across a wide span of relationship evaluations, and (e) provide information to be used to make programs more effective. Garland speculated that the type of instruments used in previous studies may explain why research has shown marriage enrichment programs to be more effective in changing behavior than in changing marital satisfaction. Giblin's report (1983), following the meta-analysis of enrichment studies, stated the problem even more strongly. He concluded, "Based on the findings of this study, the most important area for future enrichment research concerns measurement problems and possibilities" (p. 7).

Enrichment research has been criticized because of its heavy reliance on self-report, particularly when used without other, more objective measures (Garland, 1983; Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Hof & Miller, 1981). The need for more objective approaches to evaluation has been evident. It was the assumption of this study, however, that a subjective view of the marriage relationship will remain an important index of the effectiveness of a marriage enrichment program. "It is not what happens in the marriage, but how the partners understand or define what has happened, that is critical" (Rhyne, 1981, p. 942). The present study used several measures of the perception of one's spouse and marriage in an attempt to determine which instruments, or parts of instruments, were most sensitive to change as the result of a marriage enrichment experience.

Evaluation of Instruments

An evaluation of instruments used in marriage enrichment research was included in a study by Wampler and Powell (1982). These authors recommended the use of the Relationship Inventory (Barrett-Lennard, 1962) and described the advantages of its use in the measurement of marital satisfaction with nondistressed couples. Their recommendation of this instrument was based on the theoretical perspective on which the items were developed and on results from an analysis of the correlations between the Relationship Inventory and other measures of marital satisfaction. They also cited several studies that demonstrated the ability of the Relationship Inventory to discriminate between distressed and nondistressed couples.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), an instrument that has been widely used in marriage enrichment research has been examined from the point of view of its psychometric properties by Sharpley and Cross (1982). Statistical procedures used to evaluate this instrument included discriminant analysis, item analysis, and factor analysis. The discriminant analysis was used to identify those items which discriminated between high and low scoring groups. The purpose of this procedure was to extract items which could be most powerfully used to construct a separate instrument. From these results, six items were identified which could classify subjects into high or low scoring groups with 92% accuracy, compared with classification using the total 32-item scale. The item analysis and factor analysis procedures were used to verify Spanier's original results and conclusions. The significant positive change anticipated by participants in the experimental group was expected to permit the identification of items which discriminated between the high change (experimental) and low change (control) groups.

No other studies were located that specifically attempted to evaluate instruments being used in marriage enrichment research. Statistical procedures such as those used by Sharpley and Cross were planned for the four pre- to posttest measures used in the current study in the hope of identifying the most discriminating items for positive change as a result of a marriage enrichment course.

Changes in Perception of the "Ideal" and "Most Other" Marriages

In studying the effect of a marriage enrichment experience on one's perception of his or her spouse and marriage, the typical approach has been to use at least one measure of marital satisfaction, adjustment, interaction, or perceived quality of the relationship. Such a measure has been used at pretest and compared with scores at posttest. In a majority of studies of this type, a positive change in the perception of the spouse and the marriage has been found. This study attempted to measure not only the perception of one's own spouse and marriage but also one's perception of the "ideal" marriage and "most other" marriages. The expectation that these perceptions are interrelated has both theoretical and empirical bases.

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory has provided a theoretical framework for viewing perceptions of spouse and marriage. This theory has increasingly been applied to the understanding of the development, maintenance, and dissolution of close relationships such as marriage. From the social exchange perspective, the processes involved in interpersonal exchange, as well as the way these exchanges are evaluated, are related to some standard of expectations (Homans, 1974; Scanzoni, 1979; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Homans (1974) used the term distributive justice to describe the supposition that persons expect that a given amount of investment in a relationship should result in a "fair" amount of rewards. How a person evaluates interaction within the marriage, from this viewpoint, is to a great extent dependent on the person's subjective impressions of the balance of investment and

rewards within the relationship. It is a question of whether or not an individual gets what he or she expects from the relationship.

This subjective aspect of social exchanges has been further elaborated in the theory of interdependence (Scanzoni, 1979; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). One assumption of this theory is that a person's evaluation of his situation must always take into account the person's expectations. A key concept in this process is the individual's Comparison Level (CL). The Comparison Level has been defined as the standard against which a person evaluates the attractiveness of a relationship or how satisfactory it is. It is the standard by which a person evaluates rewards and costs of a given relationship in terms of what he or she feels is deserved (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

From the social exchange perspective, each partner in a marriage relationship brings to the relationship a backlog of experiences and knowledge about relationships which form a standard (the CL) against which the marital relationship is judged. If the marital relationship is above this CL, the person perceives his marriage as "happy," "satisfactory," or "pleasant." Opposite terms would be used if the marriage relationship is below this CL.

Applications of the social exchange theory to marital relationships have often focused on marital satisfaction or quality and stability (Lewis & Spanier, 1982; Nye, 1982). The degree of satisfaction experienced in the marriage has been theorized to reflect the perception of rewards minus costs, weighed against what the person feels he or she deserves. Sabatelli (1983) recently developed a measure of marital satisfaction which used the CL in the test

construction. Persons taking this instrument are instructed to use the mid-point of the scale as the CL or standard for each item, and then to rate their own marriage above or below this level.

Assessment of changes in perception of a marital relationship might be expected to be accompanied by an assessment of changes in the expectation level. The research in the present study used pretest and posttest ratings on the perception of the "ideal" marriage and of "most other" marriages as measures of each participant's expectation level. Such ratings permitted the study of whether changes in perception of one's own marriage were associated with changes in the standards by which one's marriage was presumably judged.

Group Process Factors

Because of group interactions and processes which have been thought to occur during marriage enrichment experiences, changes in one's perception of the "ideal" marriage and "most other" marriages might be expected. Much of the knowledge about the dynamics of group process related to marriage enrichment has come from therapy or counseling groups. Yalom (1975) described the changes or benefits of counseling groups as "curative factors." One of these factors has particular relevance to changes in the perception of marriage which may occur in a marriage enrichment group: universality or identification. These terms have referred to the group process by which participants in the group learn that other couples have situations similar to theirs, that they share common concerns with others, and that they are "all in the same boat."

Couples in marriage enrichment groups have used these same terms to describe the benefits of enrichment experiences (Mace, 1982). A marriage enrichment event may have been the first time a person has ever heard anyone talk openly about marriage relationships and the development of strong feelings of identification and universality have frequently been reported. The group setting of marriage enrichment experiences has provided a context in which misperceptions such as "I thought we were the only ones who had that problem" can be corrected (Mace, 1982).

The barrier to openness in talking about marriage relationships and the resulting lack of opportunity to correct distortions in perception have been explained by Mace (1982) as the "intermarital taboo." From a similar viewpoint, Vincent (1973) has cited the "myth of naturalism," the idea that couples naturally know how to "live happily ever after," as a major obstacle to realistic perceptions about marriage. If misperceptions of marriage have existed due to these barriers, then a marriage enrichment experience would be expected to produce some modification or correction in these misperceptions. Measures of the perception of the "ideal" marriage could be expected to have lower scores on posttest and both "ideal" and "most marriage" scores could be more like one's own marriage because of the first-hand experience of learning from other couples in a marriage enrichment event.

Caution has been raised about marriage enrichment experiences, especially those that are short-term and emotionally intense. There has been concern that the emotional high produced by the experience may

raise expectations of marriage to unrealistic levels and leave couples feeling disillusioned (Doherty, McCabe, & Ryder, 1978). If this occurred, the posttest scores for the "ideal" marriage could be expected to increase.

Empirical Studies

A few studies have attempted to measure perceptions of the ideal marriage. A "choice awareness" program was used to help couples learn to make desired changes in their relationship through specific attention to choices involving thoughts, feelings, and actions. The Caring Relationship Inventory (CRI) (Shostrom, 1975) was used to assess the difference between the real marriage relationship and the ideal relationship. Couples were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Subjects who participated in the enrichment group perceived their marriage relationship to be more like their ideal following the program than did the control group (Nelson & Friest, 1980).

Travis and Travis (1976) used pre- and posttest measures on the CRI (Shostrom, 1975) to measure effect of the Pairing Enrichment Program (Travis & Travis, 1976). Subjects completed the instrument relative to the feelings and attitudes about their own spouse and immediately re-took the same instrument to assess their feelings and attitudes about an ideal mate. Following the three-week enrichment experience, subjects completed the same measures. At posttest, there was a significant reduction in discrepancy between their ratings of their ideal mate and their own spouse. Ratings for the ideal mate remained relatively constant from pretest to posttest.

Couples who participated in enrichment groups using sexual enhancement and fair fighting training (Kilmann, Moreault, & Robinson, 1978) rated their partner closer to their "ideal" mate than did a control group on one scale of the CRI (Shostrom, 1975). These results should be viewed tentatively, however, because of the very small sample size.

Powers (1981) studied the effects of a Marriage Encounter weekend, also using the CRI (Shostrom, 1975). On pre-, post-, and follow-up measures, no change was found in wives' ratings of their husbands and their "ideal" mate. Husbands' ratings changed as the result of the weekend, with more congruity between their "ideal" mate and their own spouse. No studies were found which used ratings of "most other" marriages.

Other Variables Associated with Change

Level of Pretest Scores

Marriage enrichment programs have often been described as being appropriate for couples in fairly well-functioning relationships who want to make their relationship better and to prevent serious problems from developing (Mace, 1982; Otto, 1976). Much of the research on enrichment programs has focused on the effectiveness of enrichment programs for participants and only recently have studies begun to examine the initial level of marital satisfaction as a relevant variable.

Hof and Miller (1981) constructed a continuum of marital relationship function/dysfunction and suggested that couples at the

extreme ends of the continuum would profit least from enrichment programs. In other words, couples who already possessed a very high or very low degree of marital satisfaction and individual functioning would benefit less from marriage enrichment programs than would couples within the middle range. According to Hof and Miller (1981), this middle range includes couples with primarily well-functioning relationships and relatively minor problems as well as couples with relatively major problems.

Powell and Wampler (1982) reported that in studies which they conducted, as well as in other studies which they reviewed, couples participating in marriage enrichment events had lower pretest scores on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scales than did control subjects. Based on these findings, the authors suggested that subjects who participated in enrichment programs may have been somewhat less satisfied with their marriages initially than couples who did not participate.

Marriage enrichment programs which emphasize relationship skills development have been found to be effective for couples with low marital satisfaction scores. Brock and Joanning (1983) used subjects in which both members of the couples scored at or below average on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). On both the Minnesota Couples Communication Program (MCCP) (Miller et al., 1975) and the Relationship Enhancement Program (Guerney, 1977), couples made significant gains in communication skills and in marital satisfaction. However, the Relationship Enhancement Program was found to be superior to the MCCP program for the low satisfaction group. The Brock and Joanning (1983)

study did not contain a comparison of high satisfaction with low satisfaction groups.

The level of a person's pretest score was found to be a significant variable in another study using the MCCP. Larsen (1974) found that persons who initially scored low on the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) (Bienvenu, 1971) made significant gains in MCI scores as the result of a MCCP program. Persons who scored high on the MCI initially did not make such gains.

Giblin's meta-analysis of marriage and family enrichment studies (1982) indicated that distressed subjects in enrichment events had the greatest amount of change as the result of enrichment experiences. Giblin observed that these results "appear to challenge the belief that enrichment 'works' only with healthy, non-distressed populations" (Giblin, 1983, p. 6).

In a summary of results of marriage enrichment research, Garland (1983) suggested that caution should be used in interpreting any comparison of marriage enrichment change on the basis of pretest scores. She noted that most research instruments, especially those used to measure marital satisfaction, were designed for troubled couples. On many of these instruments, higher pretest scores have left little room for measuring change and subjects could demonstrate only limited improvement.

In the present study, the level of pretest scores on each pretest instrument was examined for its association with changes in perception of spouse and marriage following an enrichment course.

Sex Differences

Jessie Bernard (1972) claimed that there is a "considerable body of well-authenticated research to show that there really are two marriages in every marital union, and that they do not always coincide" (p. 5). Bernard described these differences in perception and experience as "his" marriage and "her" marriage.

Rhyme (1981) investigated gender differences in marital satisfaction. Her results indicated that the same factors contributed to marital satisfaction for both men and women, but the degree of satisfaction was different. Men reported higher levels of satisfaction than women. Another study by Wills, Weiss, and Patterson (1974) found that husbands and wives perceived their sources of marital satisfaction as deriving from different areas in the relationship. In an earlier study, Corsini (1951) also reported that marital satisfaction for husbands and wives was different. If there is a difference in the way in which husbands and wives perceive their marriage, it seemed important to investigate whether there are also sex differences in the amount of change in marital perceptions following a marriage enrichment experience.

Enrichment studies which have examined gender effects have reported mixed results. No sex differences were found in communication skills or marital adjustment following a Relationship Enhancement Program (Collins, 1977) or in a study comparing a social exchange model and the Baptist Basic Retreat model (Strickland, 1982). Giblin's meta-research (1982) also revealed no differences in change due to gender.

Powers (1981) studied the effects of a marriage encounter experience using the Caring Relationship Inventory. He found that, following the weekend retreat, husband's ratings of how they viewed themselves, their spouse, and their relationship were in closer agreement than ratings by their wives. In contrast, Davis, Hovestadt, Piercy, and Cochran (1982) compared the results from a five-week marriage enrichment series to a weekend experience and found that wives in both groups had more change on an attitude questionnaire than did husbands.

Willingness to participate in marriage enrichment groups has typically been greater for women than for men. This general observation has been consistent with related data which indicated that women have been more willing to participate in surveys and research than men (Hill, Rubin, Peplau, & Willard, 1979). If willingness to participate in enrichment activities is gender related, future research may find this willingness to be a more salient factor than gender per se.

Number of Years Married, Age, and the Number of Children

Changes in perception of spouse and marriage over the life span have been explored by a number of researchers. Almost all studies of marital satisfaction over the life cycle have found a decline in marital satisfaction after the first child, especially for women. This decline has been found whether results are from retrospective data (LeMasters, 1957) or from pretest to posttest scores (Ryder, 1973; Waldron & Routh, 1981). Spanier and Lewis (1980) have noted the continuing interest among researchers on the effects of children on

marital quality. A recent study from a random sample of persons in a midwestern city offered updated evidence that family life cycle and number of children are significant predictors of marital quality (Anderson, Russell, & Schumm, 1983).

Further studies have shown the decline in marital satisfaction continuing through the child-rearing years until a low point is reached in the child-launching years (Rollins & Cannon, 1974). Early studies (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Pineo, 1960) found that marital satisfaction declined over a 20- to 25-year period, then leveled to an L-shaped curve. Other studies have supported a U-shaped curve, with decline in satisfaction during child-rearing years, followed by an increase in satisfaction during the postparental years (Anderson et al., 1983; Deutscher, 1964; Rollins & Feldman, 1970).

Researchers have given various explanations for the life-span variations in marital satisfaction. Blood and Wolfe (1960) cited disenchantment, due to the very high level of "fit" at the time of marriage and an inevitable decrease in this level of fit over time. Role strain has been cited by Rollins and Cannon (1974) with role strain greatest and marital satisfaction least during the child-launching stages. Decrease in role profit (ratio of rewards to costs) during intermediate stages of marriage has been proposed by Condie and Doan (1978) as accounting for the decline in marital satisfaction. Regardless of the reasons, the decline in satisfaction with the marital relationship during the early years of marriage has been fairly consistently reported across studies.

Variables which have been associated with perceptions of marriage at a given time of measurement may also be variables related to change in these perceptions. If couples participate in a marriage enrichment event which has been designed to produce more positive perceptions of the spouse and marriage, couples who have been married for long periods of time may change at a different rate or on different measures than couples married a short time. Similarly, presence of children in the home may also be related to change in perceptions of spouse and marriage as the result of an enrichment event.

Marriage enrichment studies have seldom reported variables of age, length of marriage, or presence of children in their results. Strickland (1981, 1982) compared the effects of a social exchange retreat model with the Basic Baptist Retreat model and a control group. He found that age and length of marriage were associated with significant increase in scores on marital satisfaction and communication for both retreat models. In contrast, length of marriage had no effect on marital satisfaction scores for the 10 couples who participated in the Imig Marital Enrichment program (Hart, 1979). Giblin (1982) concluded that the effects of a marriage enrichment experience were not dependent upon the number of years married or life stage, although larger effect sizes were associated with younger subjects. These results were based on 85 enrichment studies which included family enrichment studies. Hof and Miller (1981) reported no evidence based on any of these three variables in their research review.

In the present study, the variables of number of years married, age, and number of children in the home were examined for their

association with change as the result of a marriage enrichment experience. No significant relationship was expected between these variables and the amount of change because the seminary student population was thought to be relatively homogenous on these variables.

Level of Education

Marriage enrichment, to date, has been largely identified with middle-class, well-educated participants (Garland, 1983; Giblin, 1982; Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Hof & Miller, 1981). The cost of many events has been thought to prevent widespread participation. In addition, the educative, preventive emphasis of most enrichment programs may appeal to persons who have higher levels of education (Hof & Miller, 1981).

In the enrichment studies which have reported on the educational level attained by participants, the average participant had achieved an educational level equal to three years of college (Giblin, 1982). Giblin reported some evidence that persons with lower levels of education had more positive change as the result of an enrichment experience; however, further analysis of the data failed to support this conclusion.

Subjects in the current study were all seminary students and their spouses. Because of the consistently high level of educational achievement for subjects in the study, the amount of change as the result of a marriage enrichment course was not expected to be associated with variability in the number of years schooling.

Hypotheses

Several hypotheses were stated in order to achieve the purposes of this study. The first purpose was to examine instruments used to assess

pre- to posttest change to determine which instruments and which items were most sensitive to change as the result of a marriage enrichment experience. Such an examination assumed that the enrichment experience was of sufficient duration and intensity that change might reasonably be expected to occur, based on a review of the research literature. The first two hypotheses were used to test for evidence of change in perception of spouse and marriage as a result of the marriage enrichment experience.

1. The experimental and control groups will not differ significantly on any pretest measure.
2. There will be a significant increase in scores on each measure of the perception of own spouse and marriage from pretest to posttest for the experimental group. No significant change is expected for the control group.

Two additional hypotheses were tested to evaluate the instruments used to measure change as the result of the enrichment event.

3. There will be a significant positive correlation between all pre-post measures of the perception of one's own spouse and marriage.
4. Self-report scores on the Relationship Change Scale will not differ significantly from change scores computed from pre- to posttest scores on the other measures.

If the expected pre- to posttest score increases occurred for the experimental group, post hoc analyses were planned to identify specific scales or items which contributed most to the change.

The second purpose of this research was to study the effect of a marriage enrichment experience on each participant's perception of his or her own marriage, the "ideal" marriage, and "most other" marriages. The following hypothesis was used to test for these effects:

5. Discrepancy scores between ratings of one's own marriage and the "ideal" marriage and between one's own marriage and "most other" marriages will be significantly reduced from pre- to posttest for the experimental group. No significant changes in discrepancy scores are expected for the control group from pretest to posttest.

The remaining hypotheses were designed to achieve the third purpose of the study, the examination of other variables related to change in perception of one's own spouse or marriage as a result of a marriage enrichment experience.

6. In the experimental group, persons with low pretest scores on perception of own spouse and marriage will have significantly greater pre- to posttest change scores than persons with high pretest scores.
7. Pre- to posttest change will not be significantly related to variables of sex, age, number of years married, education level, and the number of children.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Changes in perception of spouse and marriage as the result of a marriage enrichment course for couples were examined. Several instruments were used to help determine which instruments are most sensitive to change. In addition, one of the instruments was adapted to measure change in the perception of the "ideal" marriage and "most other" marriages as a result of the marriage enrichment experience. Data were analyzed for evidence of change on each of the instruments used and further analyses were conducted to examine variables associated with these changes.

Design

The basic design for this study was a pretest-posttest design using experimental and control groups. The design included a treatment group, couples enrolled in a seminary marriage enrichment course, and a control group, couples at another seminary not enrolled in a seminary marriage enrichment course. Couples in both the experimental and control groups received pretest and posttest measures, but the control group did not participate in any enrichment program.

Subjects

Subjects for the experimental group were married couples who enrolled in a semester-long marriage enrichment course at a seminary in the South. The course was an elective, but enrollment as a couple was

required and at least one member of each couple had to be taking the course for credit. Participation in the research was voluntary, although the course instructors requested that each couple participate in the research. An information sheet describing the research project was distributed by the instructors (see Appendix A) during the first part of the class period in which the pretest was administered. Couples who completed all testing were promised a summary of results.

All students from two different classes participated in the research. Forty-six subjects (23 couples) from one class and 8 subjects (4 couples) from a second class completed the pre- and posttests. There were originally 22 couples in the second class who completed the pretest measures. Through a misunderstanding between the instructor and his graduate assistant, the posttest data were not collected from the remaining class members.

Couples in the control group were from another seminary of the same religious denomination, also located in the South. At least one member of each couple in the control group was enrolled as a student in the seminary. Participation in the research was voluntary. Subjects were recruited through regularly scheduled classes at the seminary and faculty members in the class encouraged students to participate in the research project.

Students in the control group were recruited by the researcher who visited the classes and distributed an information sheet describing the research project (see Appendix A). Students who indicated an interest in participating were given a postcard (see Appendix A) and were asked to use the information sheet to talk with their spouses. If both

husband and wife were willing to participate, they each signed the card and mailed it to the researcher. Control subjects who completed all testing were promised a one-year gift membership in The Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment and a summary of results from the completed study. Forty-two subjects (21 couples) volunteered to participate in the study and 34 subjects (17 couples) completed both pretest and posttest measures.

Treatment

The treatment consisted of a semester-long marriage enrichment course for couples enrolled in the seminary. Classes met for weekly three-hour sessions over a full 14-week semester period for a total class time of 42 hours. The course included instructional periods, small group sessions, couple interaction, between-class assignments for individual reflection and journal writing, and a written project.

One of the stated purposes of the course was to enrich the marriages of class participants while they also learned about marriage and marriage enrichment from the perspective of several disciplines. The syllabus for the marriage enrichment course is in Appendix B.

Two instructor couples led the course, one couple for each of the semesters in which data were collected. Both couples had had extensive training and experience in teaching, group work, and in marriage enrichment leadership with groups of couples. One member of each of the instructor couples (the husband) was a faculty member at the seminary. The leader couples used the same syllabus but there was opportunity for each instructor to adapt the materials to an individual instructional style for their particular group of students.

Description of Variables

The dependent variables used in this study were seven scores of perceptions of spouse and marriage. The independent variable was the marriage enrichment seminary course. Moderator variables were the level of pretest score, sex, age, educational level, number of years married, and the number of children.

Research Instruments

Five instruments were used for measuring the perception of one's own spouse and marriage, and two additional instruments were used to measure ratings of the "ideal" marriage and "most other" marriages. The instruments were selected on the basis of their frequent use in marriage enrichment research or their potential usefulness for marriage enrichment research. A copy of each instrument is included in Appendix C. With the exception of the Relationship Change Scale, used only at posttest, these instruments were administered at pretest and again at posttest. In addition, an 11-item general information sheet (see Appendix C, Section 1) was used at the time of pretest. Each subject responded to 155 items at pretest and 171 items at posttest.

The following is a list of the instruments in the order in which they were administered.

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Marital Satisfaction Scale (Short Form)
(Roach, 1981) | 24 items |
| 2. Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980) | 8 items |
| 3. Relationship Inventory (Empathy Scale)
(Barrett-Lennard, 1962) | 16 items |

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 4. Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976) | 32 items |
| 5. DAS (adapted for rating the "ideal" marriage) | 32 items |
| 6. DAS (adapted for rating "most other" marriages) | 32 items |
| 7. Relationship Change Scale (Guerney, 1977) | 27 items |
- (posttest only)

The Marital Satisfaction Scale

The Marital Satisfaction Scale - Short Form (MSS) (Roach, 1981; Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981) was used as the measure of marital satisfaction (see Appendix C, Section 2). Each subject was asked to respond to a 24-item scale by checking the level of agreement or disagreement with each item. The Likert-type scale included categories of "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," "strongly agree," which were scored from one to five. The score of five was given the most favorable response indicative of marital satisfaction. The possible range of scores on the scale was 24 to 120 with the higher total score being indicative of greater satisfaction with the marriage.

Roach (1981) defined marital satisfaction as "an attitude of greater or lesser favorability toward one's own marital relationship at a given point in time" (p. 1). Such a view recognized that the attitude one has toward his or her marriage is a changeable perception and is, therefore, in contrast to other measures of marital satisfaction which have attempted to determine the quality of the marriage relationship.

In the original Marital Satisfaction Inventory (Roach, 1981), 73 items were generated, using criteria that items must (a) deal with opinion or attitude toward some aspect of one's marriage, (b) be

capable of reflecting change between pretest and posttest, (c) avoid contamination with social desirability or marital conventionalization as much as possible, (d) be capable of evoking both agreement and disagreement in normal populations, (e) not be drawn from the traditional item pool, and (f) have a single-item style throughout the scale which could be easily scored (Roach et al., 1981). In order for an item to have been included, it must have achieved complete agreement by three experienced judges on its favorability or unfavorability. Roach tested this version in several studies described in this section.

An initial study with 88 subjects indicated a high level of internal consistency (Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was .98). A subsequent study was conducted using the 73 items with a sample of 309 subjects, mostly young adults. In this study, 52 of the items had correlations of .50 or better with the total score. Again, a high level of internal consistency was found (Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, .97). Concurrent validity, based on a correlation with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test scores was .78 (Roach et al., 1981). No sex bias was found and there was a low (nonsignificant) degree of contamination of the scale with social desirability as measured by the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. Another study (Roach et al., 1981) assessed concurrent validity using satisfied and dissatisfied couples and the means for the two groups were significantly different.

Following these studies, items which did not correlate higher than .50 with the total scale were eliminated and this revision resulted in a 48-item version, known as the Marital Satisfaction Scale. The range of possible scores was 48 to 240, using the same one-to-five scoring

system. High internal consistency was maintained (Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, .97) for the 48-item scale, using an extended sample of 463 subjects.

The Short Form of the test (Roach, 1981) was produced by using the 24 items with the highest correlations of item-total score using the above sample of 463 subjects. Internal consistency of the Short Form (Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, .96) has been determined to be almost as high as the measures of internal consistency for the 73- and 48-item scales. Other validity and test-retest reliabilities have not yet been established for the Short Form and must be presumed from evidence from the longer instruments from which the MSS has been derived (Roach, 1981).

Dyadic Trust Scale

The Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980) was used as a measure of the level of interpersonal trust within the relationship (see Appendix C, Section 3). Subjects marked their level of agreement with each of the eight items. Each item was rated on a scale from 1 to 7 with categories of "strong agreement," "moderate agreement," "some agreement," "neutral," "some disagreement," "moderate disagreement," and "strong disagreement." The possible range of scores is 8 to 56, with 56 indicating the highest level of trust. Five of the eight items are reverse-scored to reduce acquiescence response bias.

The Dyadic Trust Scale was designed for research into the level of interpersonal trust in close relationships. The definition of trust used in the scale was that trust exists to the extent that one person perceives another person to be benevolent and honest (Larzelere & Huston, 1980).

In developing the scale, 57 items were borrowed or adapted from other scales which had been used to measure some type of trust. These items were given to 319 subjects who were in various levels of relationships, including casual dating, exclusively dating, engaged or cohabiting, newlywed, longer married, separated or divorced, and ex-dating partner. Factor analyses were used to determine the unidimensionality of the scale and other criteria were used for the selection of items which maximized reliability and minimized social desirability, repetitiveness, and skewness.

The eight items chosen for the final scale had high item to total score correlations, ranging from .72 to .89. Subsequent data from subjects not used for item selection indicated that the Dyadic Trust Scale had a reliability of .93 (Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha). Evidence of discriminative validity was provided by no to low correlations with social desirability ($r = .00$ between the Dyadic Trust Scale and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale) and with generalized trust ($r = .17$ with Wrightsman's Trustworthiness Scale and $r = .02$ with Rotter's Interpersonal Trust Scale) (Larzelere & Huston, 1980).

Larzelere and Huston (1980) also reported that dyadic trust has been associated with depth of self disclosure using 60 items from Taylor and Altman's Scale ($r = .26$, $p > .01$) and with dyadic love measured by the Rubin Love Scales ($r = .47$, $p > .001$). Mean Dyadic Trust scores have been found to vary by relationship status, with trust increasing with commitment (i.e., from casual dating to newly married), and declining with relationships that are terminated (Larzelere & Huston, 1980).

Relationship Inventory (Empathy Scale)

The Relationship Inventory (Barrett-Lennard, 1962) was developed to measure the perceived quality of relationships. The Empathy Scale from this inventory was used in this study to measure the degree of empathy which a person feels his or her spouse displays (see Appendix C, Section 4). Each subject responded to the 16-item Empathy Scale by rating each item according to how strongly the subject felt the item was "true" or "not true" of his or her partner. The possible range of scores for the Empathy scale is 24 to 96, with each item having a score range of 1 to 6. Eight of the items are worded positively and eight are worded negatively.

The Relationship Inventory (RI) was initially developed by Barrett-Lennard (1962) as a measure of the therapeutic relationship between a therapist and a client, following the theory of Carl Rogers. It was designed to measure the perceived quality of the relationship by recording immediate perceptions and feelings rather than opinions. Empathic understanding was defined as the "extent to which one person is conscious of the immediate awareness of another" (Barrett-Lennard, 1962, p. 3).

Originally, there were 84 items in the inventory. In 1964, the author developed an improved 64-item revision, including four subscales: Empathic Understanding, Congruence, Level of Regard, and Unconditionality of Regard. Gurman (1977) reviewed studies using the RI in therapeutic relationships and reported mean internal reliability coefficients for the total scale of .91 and for the Empathy Scale, .84. The mean test-retest reliability of all studies reporting

coefficients for the total scale was .90 and for the Empathy scale, .83 (Gurman, 1977).

Several studies have used the RI with marital relationships (Epstein & Jackson, 1978; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980). Correlations with other measures of marital satisfaction are $r = .68$ for Total and $r = .61$ for Empathy with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and $r = .74$ and $r = .65$ for Total and Empathy with the Marital Adjustment Scale (Wampler & Powell, 1982). Studies using the RI with distressed and nondistressed couples (Quick & Jacob, 1973) found that all the RI subscales discriminated between the two groups.

Although there are no norms for the RI, Wampler and Powell (1982) reviewed eight studies and reported mean subscale and total scores found in each study. They have claimed that the Relationship Inventory taps directly into the process dimension of a relationship and may be a more sensitive indicator of change than other global measures of marital satisfaction (Wampler & Powell, 1982).

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) was used as a measure to assess the quality of the marriage relationship (see Appendix C, Section 5). The 32-item scale measured each partner's perception of the adjustment level within the relationship. Subjects were asked to determine the degree of agreement or disagreement between themselves and their spouse on several issues and also the relative frequency of certain behaviors or perceptions. There are four separate subscales: dyadic satisfaction, dyadic consensus, dyadic cohesion, and affectional expression. The scale has a score range of 0-151.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was developed from a pool of all items which had ever been used on any scale measuring marital adjustment. Judges then rated these items for content validity, eliminating those not meeting criteria of relevance for the 1970's or being suitable indicators of marital adjustment. The remaining 200 items were empirically tested using samples of married, divorced, and never-married cohabiting couples. Items were eliminated if the mean item scores for married and divorced samples were not significantly different. Additional items were eliminated because of low factor loadings or duplicate wording, leaving a scale of 32 items.

Items included in the DAS were evaluated by three judges for content validity. Evidence of concurrent validity was found through the significant correlation of each item with the external criterion of marital status. The mean total scale scores for the married sample was 114.8 and the mean for the divorced sample was 70.7. These total scores are significantly different at the .001 level. Construct validity was established by the correlation of .86 and .88 with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale for the married and divorced samples. Further evidence of construct validity was reported through factor analysis which found four interrelated components, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, and affectional expression. Reliability estimates (Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha) for the total scale and for the four subscales were: Total, $\underline{r} = .96$; Dyadic Consensus, $\underline{r} = .90$; Dyadic Satisfaction, $\underline{r} = .94$; Dyadic Cohesion, .86; and Affectional Expression, $\underline{r} = .73$.

Spanier and Thompson (1982) have reported another analysis of the DAS using a sample of recently separated men and women. Although the subscales were not perfectly replicated, the researchers reported that the results confirmed the DAS as a valid and reliable measure, with especially strong evidence for its use as a global measure of marital functioning. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale was selected for use in this study because of its widespread use as an outcome measure in marriage enrichment research.

Perceptions of "Ideal" and "Most Other" Marriages

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976) was adapted for ratings of each person's perception of the "ideal" marriage and of "most other" marriages. The wording of items was changed only to the extent necessary to secure ratings from these two perspectives. The adapted scale for "Ideal" ratings is in Appendix C, Section 6 and the adapted scale for "Most Other" ratings is in Appendix C, Section 7. Discrepancy scores were computed for each person's "ideal"-own scores and for the "most other"-own scores at pretest and posttest.

Relationship Change Scale

The Relationship Change Scale (RCS) developed by Schlein and Guerney (Guerney, 1977) was used as a posttest measure to assess perceived change in the relationship as a result of the marriage enrichment course (see Appendix C, Section 8). Each experimental and control subject marked his or her feelings or beliefs about change during the past few months on 26 items. Response options for scale items were distributed on a 5-point scale with the higher scores indicating the highest degree of positive change.

The RCS was developed as a measure of change in the quality of a relationship. The items deal with a variety of relationship areas, such as satisfaction, communication, trust, intimacy, sensitivity, openness, and understanding. The measure can be used simply as a postmeasure, using a retrospective view of change over the course of treatment or a specified period of time (Guerney, 1977).

Guerney noted that internal reliability tests would not be appropriate for such a measure designed to be sensitive to short-term change, since the retesting interval would have to be very brief. The authors claimed that adequate reliability for purposes of group testing as well as construct validity can be reasonably inferred from the fact that the experimental hypotheses tested by the RCS were confirmed in studies reported by Guerney and others (Guerney, 1977). Significant correlations were found with Handling Problems Change Scale ($r = .29$) and with the Satisfaction Change Scale ($r = .49$), measures designed to assess specific components of relationship change.

Procedure for Data Collection

Data were collected from each subject in the experimental and control groups. Each couple used a 4-digit identification (ID) number and this ID was used on all instruments in all administrations. Each subject also identified his or her gender on each instrument. The ID and gender designation permitted identification of pretest and posttest data for each person by couple.

Subjects in the experimental group were asked to complete all pretest instruments during the second class session of the marriage enrichment course. No time limits were imposed and subjects used 20 to

35 minutes for completing the items. Posttest data were obtained during the final class session of the course. Data were collected in this manner from students in two separate classes. In the second class, test materials were distributed but not completed during the final class session. Students were instructed to complete the forms and return them to the office of the enrichment course leaders. Through a misunderstanding between the course leaders and the graduate assistant, no follow-up was made and only eight students returned the forms. This misunderstanding was not clarified until several weeks later and resulted in the loss of several subjects.

For control subjects, the pretest instruments were mailed to each couple. An instruction sheet and a preaddressed stamped return envelope were enclosed with the test materials. Students were instructed to complete the forms without consulting with their spouses and to return the forms within 10 days after their receipt. Posttest forms were completed in a similar manner following a time period comparable to the duration of the marriage enrichment course.

Instructions for completing the instruments at pretest and posttest sessions for both the experimental and control groups are in Appendix C. Appendix A contains the information sheet and card used in recruiting control subjects.

Data Analysis

Scoring was completed by two scorers using random checks for accuracy. Scores were recorded on code sheets, entered on computer disks, printed, and checked for accuracy. Data were computer analyzed

using the statistical package, SPSS--Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975).

The following data were computed for each subject: (a) a pretest score on each instrument, (b) a posttest score on each instrument, (c) a change score (difference between pretest and posttest score) for each item and for each instrument, and (d) discrepancy scores (difference between ratings of own-"ideal" and between own-"most other" marriages) at pretest and posttest. Analyses of variance, regression analyses, correlation analyses, and t tests were used to test the hypotheses of the study.

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to study changes in the perception of one's own spouse and marriage by persons who participated in a marriage enrichment experience. Assessment of change was made by (a) examining results obtained from several instruments used to measure perceptions of spouse and marriage, (b) examining the effect of a marriage enrichment experience on the perception of each participant's own marriage, the "ideal" marriage, and "most other" marriages, and (c) examining other variables which might be related to change in these perceptions of spouse or marriage. These evaluations were made by examining pretest to posttest scores obtained from several instruments for persons who participated in a marriage enrichment course and comparing them with the pretest to posttest scores on the same instruments for persons who did not participate in a marriage enrichment course.

The results of this evaluation will be presented in the following sequence: (a) description of the population, (b) analyses of data for testing hypotheses, and (c) discussion of the analysis of the data.

Description of the Population

The couples participating in this research were all from two seminary communities where at least one member of each couple was enrolled as a student in the seminary. See Table 1 for the summary of the demographic information.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Experimental and Control Groups

Years	Experimental (n = 56)				Control (n = 34)			
	M	F	Total	%	M	F	Total	%
Age of Subjects								
20-24	3	7	10	17.8	4	5	9	26.5
25-29	14	14	28	50.0	4	4	8	23.5
30-34	8	5	13	23.2	4	3	7	20.6
35-39	2	1	3	5.5	2	2	4	11.8
40-44	-	-	-	-	1	5	6	8.8
45-49	-	1	1	1.7	1	1	2	5.9
50-52	1	-	1	1.7	1	-	1	2.9
Mean Age	28.5	27.8	28.6		31.9	30.0	31.0	
Median	28.2	26.5			30.8	29.0		
Length of Marriage (by couples)								
5-2			11	39.3			5	29.4
3-4			5	17.8			4	23.5
5-9			5	17.8			4	23.5
10-14			5	17.8			1	5.9
15-19			1	3.6			2	11.8
20-24			-	-			1	5.9
25-29			1	3.6			-	-
Mean Years Married			5.9				6.2	
Median Years Married			3.1				4.0	

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

Years	Experimental (n = 56)				Control (n = 34)			
	M	F	Total	%	M	F	Total	%
Educational Level Completed								
8-12	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	11.8
13-14	-	6	6	10.7	-	2	2	5.8
15-16	-	14	14	25.0	1	7	8	23.5
17-18	14	5	19	33.9	6	3	9	26.5
19-20	14	3	17	30.3	10	1	11	32.3
Mean	18.8	15.9	17.3		18.7	14.9	16.8	
Median	18.5	15.9			18.9	15.6		
Times Married								
1	27	27	54	96.0	14	15	29	85.3
2	1	1	2	4.0	3	2	3	14.7
Number of Children								
0	17	18	35	62.3	8	6	14	41.2
1	4	3	7	12.5	1	3	4	11.8
2	4	3	8	14.3	4	4	8	23.5
3	3	3	6	10.7	3	3	6	17.6
4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	5.9

Age

The subjects who participated in the experimental treatment had a mean age of 28.6 years with an age range of 23 to 50 years. The control group was slightly older, with a mean age of 31.0 and an age range of 20 to 52 years. In both the experimental and control groups, the mean age of husbands was higher than the mean age of wives.

Length of Marriage and Number of Times Married

In both the experimental and control groups, the number of years married covered a wide range of years from less than 1 year to more than 20 years. The mean length of marriage was 5.9 years for participants in the experimental group and 6.2 for the control group. With the exception of two subjects (one couple) who had been married once before, all experimental subjects had been married only once. In the control group, the husband and wife in two couples and the husband in another couple were in their second marriage. All other persons in the control group had been married only once.

Number of Children

Participants in the experimental group were less likely to have had children than participants in the control group. Sixty-two percent of couples in the experimental group had no children, compared to only 41% of the couples in the control group who had no children. For those couples with children, the mean number of children was 1.9 for the experimental group and 2.3 for the control group.

Educational Level

The educational levels achieved by participants in both the experimental and control groups were high, as might be expected of a

seminary population. The mean number of years of schooling completed for the experimental group was 17.3 and the control group mean was 16.8. All subjects in the experimental group had completed some post-high-school education, whereas one woman in the control group had completed only eight years in school and three other women had only a high school education. The range of completed years in school was 13 to 20 for the experimental group and 8 to 20 for the control group.

In both the experimental and control groups, the mean educational level of husbands was higher than the educational level of wives. There was an overall mean difference of 2.9 years in the number of years of schooling completed by husbands and wives in the experimental group. Husbands in the experimental group had completed 18.8 years in school compared to 15.9 years for the wives. Larger mean differences in educational level were obtained between husbands and wives in the control group. In the control group, the mean number of years in school completed by husbands was 18.7, and the mean for their wives was 14.9, yielding a difference of 3.8 years.

Analyses

The results of the analyses of data are presented in this section in relation to the previously stated purposes and hypotheses. Pre- and posttest total scores were computed for the dependent variables, Marital Satisfaction Scale, Dyadic Trust Scale, Relationship Inventory (Empathy Scale), and the three ratings on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The differences between the pre- and posttest measures were computed for each individual so that these difference or change scores could be

used in the data analysis. Totals were also computed for the dependent variable, Relationship Change Scale, which was given only at posttest. Discrepancy scores for differences in ratings of own-"ideal" and own-"most other" marriages also were computed for pretest and posttest.

The procedure for handling missing data within individual scales was to assign the value of the subject's own mean score for the scale or subscale to that particular item. Missing data were found in 16 of the 180 pre- and posttest protocols. In 12 of the 16 cases, only one value was missing (out of a total of 171 values) and the other four cases had two to six values missing.

Tests for Difference Between Groups at Pretest

The first hypothesis was tested by an analysis of variance procedure.

1. The experimental and control groups will not differ significantly on any pretest measures (Marital Satisfaction Scale, Dyadic Trust Scale, Relationship Inventory, and Dyadic Adjustment Scale).

Results for equivalence of the experimental and control groups at pretesting on each of the dependent variables are shown in Table 2. No significant differences between the experimental and control groups were found at pretest on any of the four measures. The experimental and control groups were assumed to be equivalent at the pretest period.

Tests for Pre- to Posttest Change by Groups

Separate analyses were performed for each of the measures given at pre- and posttest (Marital Satisfaction Scale, Dyadic Trust Scale,

Table 2

Analysis of Variance for Pretest Scores on the MSS, DTS, RI, andDAS by Groups

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Significance of F
Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS)				
Main Effects				
Group	1	0.85	0.01	0.93
Residual	88	116.99		
Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS)				
Main Effects				
Group	1	6.56	0.12	0.70
Residual	88	42.28		
Relationship Inventory - Empathy (RI)				
Main Effects				
Group	1	0.35	0.003	0.96
Residual	88	120.11		
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DS)				
Main Effects				
Group	1	35.26	0.26	0.61
Residual	88	136.95		

Relationship Inventory, and Dyadic Adjustment Scale) to test the second hypothesis.

2. There will be a significant increase in scores on each measure of the perception of own spouse and marriage from pretest to posttest for the experimental group. No significant change is expected for the control group.

Table 3 contains summary data of the results from the pre- to posttest change on each dependent variable measure for the experimental and control groups. No support was found for this hypothesis. In fact, these data show that pre- to posttest changes were opposite to the direction predicted. The mean posttest score for the experimental group was lower (although not significantly lower) than the mean pretest score on each of the pre- to posttest measures. In contrast, the mean posttest score for the control group was higher than the pretest on each of the four pre- to posttest measures, and the posttest score was significantly higher on one measure, the Relationship Inventory ($p > .04$).

The results of the analyses of variance for change scores by groups (experimental and control) and by sex for each of the pre- to posttest measures are presented in Table 4. Pre- to posttest change scores were significantly different for the experimental and control groups on two of the measures (Relationship Inventory and Dyadic Adjustment Scale) and approached the .05 level of significance on one other measure, the Marital Satisfaction Scale. Although there was no difference between the experimental and control groups at pretest, the

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations (SD), Change Scores, and Range of Scores
for MSS, DTS, RI, and DAS by Group

Group	Pre		Post		Change	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS)						
Experimental (n = 56)	107.45	10.22	104.96	12.74	-2.48	10.12
Range of Scores	82 to 119		59 to 120		-35 to 25	
Control (n = 34)	107.65	11.73	109.71	11.31	2.06	10.32
Range of Scores	75 to 120		70 to 120		-16 to 32	
Range of Scores Possible on the MSS: 24 to 120						
Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS)						
Experimental (n = 56)	50.82	6.50	50.25	6.71	-0.57	6.84
Range of Scores	28 to 56		29 to 56		-21 to 25	
Control (n = 34)	50.27	6.52	51.79	4.15	1.53	6.61
Range of Scores	26 to 56		39 to 56		-9 to 30	
Range of Scores Possible on the DTS: 8 to 56						
Relationship Inventory (RI)						
Experimental (n = 56)	67.39	10.46	65.79	11.77	-1.61	9.24
Range of Scores	48 to 88		35 to 89		-25 to 20	
Control (n = 34)	67.27	11.74	71.41	10.17	4.15	11.03
Range of Scores	41 to 92		45 to 88		-16 to 33	
Range of Scores Possible on the RI: 16 to 96						
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)						
Experimental (n = 56)	115.77	10.44	114.57	11.07	-1.20	9.31
Range of Scores	91 to 136		81 to 131		-34 to 21	
Control (n = 34)	117.06	13.53	120.09	13.58	3.03	9.07
Range of Scores	87 to 139		85 to 142		-21 to 21	
Range of Scores Possible on the DAS: 0 to 151						

Table 4

Analysis of Variance for Change Scores on Dependent Variables,MSS, DTS, RI, and DAS by Group and Sex

Source	df	Mean Square	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>
Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS)				
Group	1	436.24	3.80	0.06
Sex	1	6.94	0.06	0.81
Group x Sex	1	52.87	0.46	0.50
Residual	86	114.88		
Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS)				
Group	1	93.37	2.01	0.16
Sex	1	17.78	0.38	0.54
Group x Sex	1	2.24	0.05	0.83
Residual	86	46.42		
Relationship Inventory (RI)				
Group	1	700.48	7.18	0.01
Sex	1	266.94	5.74	0.43
Group x Sex	1	62.78	0.64	0.43
Residual	86	97.51		
Dyadic Adjustment Scale				
Group	1	377.79	4.36	0.04
Sex	1	17.78	0.21	0.65
Group x Sex	1	4.86	0.06	0.81
Residual	86	86.74		

combined effect of negative change scores for the experimental group and positive change scores for the control group contributed to the significant differences in the pre- to posttest change for the two groups.

Evaluation of Instruments Used to Measure Change

One purpose of this study was to examine the instruments or measurement scales used to assess change as the result of a marriage enrichment experience. All measures were expected to be positively correlated. Furthermore, if the anticipated changes occurred as a result of the enrichment experience, additional procedures were planned to identify the specific items which accounted for the change.

A correlational analysis was used to test for the association between the pre- and posttest measures as stated in Hypothesis 3.

3. There will be a significant positive correlation between all pre- and posttest measures of perception of own spouse and marriage (Marital Satisfaction Scale, Dyadic Trust Scale, Relationship Inventory, and Dyadic Adjustment Scale).

Table 5 contains the results of this analysis at pretest and at posttest. These results supported the hypothesis of a significant positive correlation between all measures at both pretest and posttest.

Self-report of Change

In addition to the change scores computed from comparing the pretest with the posttest scores, an additional measure was given to all participants at the posttest period. This measure, the Relationship Change Scale (RCS), required each subject to rate the amount of change which had been made in his or her own marriage during the time

Table 5

Correlation Coefficients Between Measures Used at Pretest and Posttest

	Pretest			Posttest		
	DTS	RI	DAS	DTS	RI	DAS
MSS	0.59*	0.73*	0.69*	0.75*	0.73*	0.71*
DTS		0.44*	0.46*		0.66*	0.23*
RI			0.70*			0.69*

*p .001

MSS = Marital Satisfaction Scale

DTS = Dyadic Trust Scale

RI = Relationship Inventory

DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale

period of the experimental treatment. Table 6 contains a summary of the obtained results on this measure for the experimental and control groups.

Table 7 contains the results of the analysis of variance procedure which tested the significance of the RCS score differences by group and sex. The analysis indicated that the experimental group reported more positive change during the time period of the marriage enrichment course than did the control group ($p > .03$). These results are in contrast with the change scores computed by comparing pre- to posttest scores on the other four dependent variables. As reported in Table 3, computed change scores indicated less positive change for the experimental group than for the control group.

Correlational analyses were conducted to test the association between the change reported on the RCS and the pre- to posttest change scores computed on each of the other measures for Hypothesis 4.

4. Self-report scores on the Relationship Change Scale will not differ significantly from change scores computed from pre- to posttest scores on the other measures.

Table 8 contains the results of this analysis. These results indicate that the self-reported change score did not differ significantly from change scores computed from all four of the pre- and posttest measures for the experimental group. A significant relationship was also found between the self-reported change score and three of the pre- and posttest measures for the control group.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for the Relationship Change
Scale (RCS) by Group

	Experimental		Control	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Relationship Change Scale	100.18	10.13	94.94	12.39
Range of scores	78 to 124		73 to 129	

Note. Range of scores possible on the RCS: 26 to 130.

Table 7

Analysis of Variance for Reported Change Scores on the Relationship
Change Scale (RCS) by Groups and Sex

Source	df	Mean Square	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>
Group	1	580.30	4.72	0.03
Sex	1	57.60	0.47	0.50
Group x Sex	2	88.22	0.72	0.40
Residual	86	126.84		

Table 8

Correlation Coefficients for Self-Reported Change and Change on
Pre- and Posttest Measures

	MSS	DTS	RI	DAS
Experimental Group:				
RCS	.48**	.32*	.47**	.51**
Control Group:				
RCS	.40*	.03	.50**	.42*

* $p > .01$

** $p > .001$

RCS = Relationship Change Scale
MSS = Marital Satisfaction Scale
DTS = Dyadic Trust Scale
RI = Relationship Inventory
DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Analysis of Items

The marriage enrichment course was expected to produce significantly positive pre- to posttest changes for participating couples. The proposed evaluation of instruments used to measure change included the identification of specific items which contributed most to this change.

Evidence has already been presented which shows that the expected pre- to posttest score increases did not occur for the experimental group. Therefore, additional analyses to identify specific items which contributed to change as a result of the marriage enrichment course were unwarranted.

Change in Ratings of "Ideal" and "Most Other" Marriages

Table 9 shows the pretest and posttest means for ratings of one's own, "ideal," and "most other" marriages. Ratings for the "ideal" marriage were consistently higher than for one's own marriage, and "most other" marriages were rated consistently lower than one's own marriage.

An own-"ideal" discrepancy score and an own-"most other" discrepancy score were computed for each subject at pretest and again at posttest. Discrepancy scores at pretest were compared with discrepancy scores at posttest using correlated t tests to test Hypothesis 5.

5. Discrepancy scores between ratings of one's own marriage and the "ideal" marriage and also between ratings of own and "most other" marriages will be significantly reduced from pretest to posttest for

Table 9

Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations (SD) for Own, "Ideal," and
"Most Other" Marriages

	Experimental				Control			
	Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Own	115.77	(10.44)	114.57	(11.07)	117.06	(13.55)	120.09	(13.58)
"Ideal"	125.77	(10.12)	124.62	(10.57)	127.09	(10.10)	128.88	(10.91)
"Most Other"	85.98	(12.00)	86.75	(12.06)	89.00	(13.99)	92.68	(12.56)

the experimental group. No significant change in discrepancy scores is expected for the control group.

Table 10 contains the data for discrepancy scores and the results of this analysis. There were no significant pre- to posttest changes in rating discrepancies for either the experimental or control groups. The hypothesis of reduced discrepancy between ratings of one's own marriage and ratings of the "ideal" marriage and "most other" marriages was not supported by the results.

Tests for the Effects of Level of Pretest Score

The level of pretest score was expected to be a significant variable in the amount of pre- to posttest change as stated in Hypothesis 6.

6. In the experimental group, persons with low pretest scores on perception of own spouse and marriage will have significantly greater pre- to posttest change scores than persons with high pretest scores.

Evidence of the relationship between level of pretest scores and pre- to posttest change was obtained through correlational analysis. For each of the pretest measures, the pretest score of each subject was correlated with the pre- to posttest change scores. Table 11 shows the results of this analysis for the experimental and control groups.

The results indicated significant negative correlations between level of pretest score and the amount of change from pretest to posttest for both the experimental and control groups. Low pretest

Table 10

Pretest and Posttest Discrepancy Scores and t Tests for the
Significance of Differences

	Experimental			Control		
	Pretest	Posttest	<u>t</u>	Pretest	Posttest	<u>t</u>
Own-"Ideal" Discrepancy	-10.00	-10.05	0.03	-10.03	-8.79	0.63
Own-"Most Other" Discrepancy	29.77	27.82	1.18	28.06	27.41	0.29

Table 11

Correlation Coefficients for Pretest Scores with Pre- to Posttest
Change Scores for MSS, DTS, RI, and DAS

Pretest Score vs. Change Score	Experimental (n = 56)	Control (n = 34)
Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS)	-0.27*	-0.48**
Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS)	-0.49**	-0.80**
Relationship Inventory (RI)	-0.29*	-0.60**
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	-0.38**	-0.33*

* $p > .05$
** $p > .01$

scores were associated with greater change scores on each measure of perception of spouse and marriage for both groups.

Other Variables Associated with Change

Additional variables related to change as a result of a marriage enrichment experience were examined by analysis of variance and regression analyses to test Hypothesis 7.

7. Pre- to posttest change will not be significantly related to variables of sex, age, number of years married, education level, and the number of children.

Analysis of variance results have already been reported which indicated that sex was not a significant variable in change scores resulting from a marriage enrichment course (Table 4). Stepwise multiple regression analyses were used to test for the significance of the relationship between change scores and the level of pretest scores, age, number of years married, education level, and the number of children. Level of pretest score was included in the regression analysis in order to measure the effect of the other variables after the effect of level of pretest scores had been taken into account. Table 12 shows the results of this analysis for the experimental group.

On each of the four dependent measures given at pretest and posttest, the variable which was identified as having greatest influence on change as a result of a marriage enrichment experience was the level of pretest score. This variable accounted for as much as 24% of the variation in change scores on one measure (the Dyadic Trust Scale) and 14, 8, and 7 percent on the other measures.

Table 12

Multiple Regressions of Variables Related to Pre- to Posttest
Change Scores for MSS, DTS, RI, and DAS

Variables	Multiple R	R ²	Simple R	b	Beta
Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) (n = 56)					
Level of Pretest Score	.27	.07*	-.27	-.35	-.33
Years Married	.31	.10	-.09	-.69	-.39
Education Level	.34	.12	.10	.56	.10
Age	.36	.13	-.04	.41	.21
Number of Children	.36	.13	-.01	.53	.05
Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS) (n = 56)					
Level of Pretest Score	.49	.24*	-.49	-.54	-.51
Education Level	.51	.27	.08	.16	.05
Years Married	.52	.27	-.05	-.60	-.53
Age	.54	.29	-.00	.45	.36
Number of Children	.54	.29	-.09	.91	.14
Relationship Inventory (RI) (n = 56)					
Level of Pretest Score	.29	.08*	-.29	-.24	-.27
Number of Children	.30	.09	.18	2.63	.30
Years Married	.36	.13	.03	-.53	-.35
Age	.36	.13	.02	.14	.08
(Education Level was not entered in the equation)					
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (n = 56)					
Level of Pretest Score	.38	.14*	-.38	-.36	-.41
Number of Children	.47	.22	-.27	-1.89	-.22
Years Married	.48	.23	-.19	-.16	-.40
Age	.49	.24	-.14	.60	.34
Education Level	.49	.24	-.04	-.32	-.07

*Increase in variance explained is significant at .05 level.

The influence of the other four variables are also listed in Table 12 in decreasing order of importance for each of the dependent measures. The contribution of these variables to the variation in change scores on the dependent measures failed to reach the .05 level of significance. These results indicate that after the effect of level of pretest had been taken into account, variables of age, number of years married, education level, and number of children did not contribute significantly to change scores.

Discussion of the Results

This study was based on an assumption that couples who participated in a marriage enrichment course would rate their marriages more positively following the course than would control subjects who were not in an enrichment course. The results showed that the enrichment course did not produce more positive ratings, and there was a trend toward more negative evaluations of one's spouse and marriage at posttest by the experimental group. In contrast, the control subjects tended to rate their spouse and marriage more positively after a time interval equivalent to the length of the enrichment course. Although there were no differences between the experimental and control groups on mean pretest scores, there were significant differences between mean posttest scores for the two groups on two of the four measures used. On each of the four measures, the posttest scores for the control group went up, indicating more positive perceptions while the mean posttest scores for the experimental group went down, indicating more negative perceptions of one's own spouse and marriage.

Giblin (1982) reported that negative effects were observed in 20% of the combined posttest and follow-up scores in the 85 studies analyzed in his study. Less than 1% (.8%) of these were significantly negative. The unexpected results from this study have raised important questions about why scores for the experimental group failed to increase and tended to be lower following the marriage enrichment course and why scores for the control group increased. Several post hoc analyses were conducted to help explain these results.

Post Hoc Analyses

Difference between seminary classes in experimental group. The experimental treatment was conducted during two semesters, using different leaders for each of the two classes. Because of the possibility that these two classes might have yielded different results, a post hoc analysis was run to determine whether there were significant differences between the two classes in the trend toward negative posttest scores. The groups were unequal in size with 48 subjects in the first group and 8 subjects in the second group. Mean change scores and standard deviations for the four measures of one's own spouse and marriage are contained in Table 13.

The effect of using two different classes in the experimental group was evaluated through analysis of variance procedures. Table 14 shows the results of this analysis for each of the four measures. These results indicated that there were no significant differences in pre- to posttest change for the two classes.

Analysis of follow-up data. An additional post hoc analysis involved follow-up data. Four months after the posttest

Table 13

Change Score Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for the
Experimental Classes

Measure	Class 1 (n = 48)		Class 2 (n = 8)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Marital Satisfaction Scale	-3.17	10.07	1.63	14.65
Dyadic Trust Scale	-0.56	7.10	-0.63	5.34
Relationship Inventory	-1.46	9.25	-2.50	9.75
Dyadic Adjustment Scale	-1.50	8.89	0.63	12.07

Table 14

Analysis of Variance of Pre- to Posttest Change by Experimental Class

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Significance of F
Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS)				
Main Effects				
Class	1	157.44	1.26	0.25
Residual	54	116.01		
Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS)				
Main Effects				
Class	1	0.03	0.001	0.98
Residual	54	47.59		
Relationship Inventory (RI)				
Main Effects				
Class	1	7.44	0.09	0.77
Residual	54	86.81		
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)				
Main Effects				
Class	1	20.96	0.35	0.56
Residual	54	86.70		

administration, a follow-up test battery, identical to the posttest, was mailed to all subjects in the experimental group. A stamped, addressed, return envelope was included with the follow-up measures. Data were obtained in this manner from 26 of the 56 subjects in the experimental group. Twenty-two subjects from one experimental class and four subjects from the second experimental class completed and returned the follow-up material. Table 15 shows the mean scores at pretest, posttest, and follow-up for the measures of the perception of one's own spouse and marriage.

These results suggested that after the four-month interval between posttest and follow-up, the negative trend that was manifest at posttest was no longer evident. Mean follow-up scores for the experimental subjects who returned the follow-up data were higher than posttest mean scores for the entire experimental group and were very close to the results obtained at pretest. These shifts in mean scores did not reach the .05 level of significance; however, the consistent trends give some indication that the variables which produced the lower scores at posttest were no longer acting to suppress scores at follow-up.

Effect of extreme cases. The data were examined, after the fact, to determine if the negative trends of experimental group scores were due to a few extreme cases. A scattergram was made to plot pretest against posttest scores. This plotting revealed that there was one couple in the experimental group for whom there was a very sharp decline in scores between the pretest and posttest measures. Further analysis was conducted to determine the extent of the effect of these

Table 15

Means and Standard Deviations (SD) at Pretest, Posttest, and
Follow-up on MSS, DTS, RI, AND DAS

Measure	Pretest (n = 56)		Posttest (n = 56)		Follow-up (n = 26)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
MSS	107.45	10.22	104.96	12.74	107.15	8.95
DTS	50.82	6.50	50.25	6.71	51.15	5.53
RI	67.39	10.46	65.79	9.24	67.50	10.71
DAS	115.77	10.44	114.57	44.07	114.96	8.18

MSS - Marital Satisfaction Scale

DTS - Dyadic Trust Scale

RI - Relationship Inventory

DAS - Dyadic Adjustment Scale

extreme cases. The analysis revealed that removing these two extreme scores did not eliminate the negative trend of the overall results. The scattergram also revealed that a majority of the posttest scores for the experimental group were below pretest scores on all four measures.

Other Possible Explanations for Outcomes

Time of posttesting. One possible explanation for the negative trends of posttest scores for the experimental group is that the posttest was administered during the last class session, immediately prior to semester exams. Some evidence for a negative effect due to time of posttesting was contained in one of the test protocols in which the subject spontaneously wrote on the back page, "One reason my ratings are so low is because of the intense pressure I am under at this time."

Satisfaction with one's marriage relationship has been found to be significantly influenced by other aspects of a person's life (Hicks & Platt, 1971). In the present study, the end of the semester pressures of finishing course requirements and anxiety about impending exams may have had a negative influence on ratings of spouse and marriage by participants in the marriage enrichment course.

For control subjects, the posttest was taken after the semester was over, during a holiday period when the academic pressures were presumably reduced. The administration of the pretest for control subjects could not be scheduled as early in the semester as for the subjects who were enrolled in the marriage enrichment course. As a

result, the comparable length of time between pretest and posttest for the control group fell after the semester was complete.

Negative reaction to the enrichment course. A second plausible reason for these unexpected results could be that students may have reacted negatively to the marriage enrichment course itself. In an open-ended written evaluation of the course conducted by the course leaders, a few students commented that the course was too demanding, that the journal writing required too much time, that the small groups were not helpful, and that parts of some class sessions were irrelevant. Students who reacted negatively to the course content, structure, or work demands, may have extended those negative feelings to the posttest ratings.

Disruptive effects of the marriage enrichment course. An additional explanation of these results may be that the experimental treatment disrupted old patterns of interaction or habitual ways of perceiving one's spouse and marriage relationship. Negative change scores have been attributed to this disruption in other studies (Giblin, 1982; Shoffner, 1976). Miller et al. (1975) have described such a disrupted period as the "Awkward Use" stage, a period of increased awareness of marital issues along with confusion and difficulty in interaction with one's spouse. If posttest measures were taken prior to the integration or reorganization of new patterns, the disruption may have been reflected in negative scores.

The 14-week duration of this marriage enrichment course might have been expected to be long enough for reorganization to occur. However, if the course continued to uncover new dimensions of the relationship,

integration may not have occurred in one area before another was disrupted. This continued process of disruption in many different areas of the relationship may have interfered with integration and the disruption may have been experienced as cumulative. The question raised by this explanation is whether or not the marriage enrichment course created continued disruption without opportunity for integration or reorganization. Follow-up data obtained from half of the experimental group after four months provided some support for this explanation.

Response shift. "Response shift" is another possible explanation for the lower scores for the experimental group. This term has been applied to an effect which may occur in research studies which use self-report instruments (Howard, Schmeck, & Bray, 1979). With self-report measures, there is an assumption that the individuals who are evaluating themselves have an internalized standard by which they rate themselves on a given variable. When the purpose of the experimental treatment is to change a subject's awareness or understanding of the variable being measured, there may be a different reference point at the time of posttest. This change in the internal reference point or standard by which the subject rates himself or herself has been referred to as a "response shift."

In the present study, the marriage enrichment course would be expected to produce an awareness and understanding about marriage relationships that may have led to a higher standard being used by the experimental group at posttest. The enrichment course may have taught couples that their relationship with their partner could be

considerably better. When posttest ratings were made, the couples may have rated themselves according to their new reference point. To whatever extent a response shift occurred in this study, posttest scores of the experimental group would be lowered. Couples may also have been more willing to disclose a lower score following the marriage enrichment course.

Effects of pretesting. A possible explanation for the increase in scores by the control group is that taking the pretest may have had an effect on posttest scores. Campbell and Stanley (1963) have identified pretesting as one of the extraneous variables which potentially cause problems in a research design. Exposure to a pretest may have a sensitizing effect on all subjects, both experimental and control, which may result in increased scores on posttest. In the case of experimental subjects, the effects of taking the pretest could even interact with the effects of the treatment and heighten the treatment effects.

In this study, any pretest effects and treatment effects might have been expected to combine, thus heightening positive outcomes for couples in the marriage enrichment course. Since positive outcomes did not occur for the experimental group, any enhanced effects of the pretest were apparently offset by other variables which produced lower scores at posttest. For the control group, the exposure to the pretest may have had a sensitizing effect on subjects in the control group which resulted in increased scores on posttest. This sensitizing could have produced an awareness of issues and areas of relationship that had been overlooked or taken for granted. Since the control group did not

have an enrichment course in which they examined these issues more deeply, couples may have focused on the positive awareness without experiencing any of the potentially disruptive effects of a marriage enrichment course.

Scale limits on instruments. One potential problem in marriage enrichment research has been that high levels of pretest scoring may not leave sufficient room on the instrument scale for the measurement of pre- to posttest gain. Such a ceiling effect may be particularly relevant when instruments have been developed primarily for use with couples who seek counseling or therapy.

Results have already been reported in Table 11 indicating that level of pretest score was significantly related to the amount of pre- to posttest change for the experimental and control groups in this study. The issue being considered in this section is whether or not the level of pretest scores was a relevant variable in the failure of the experimental group to show pre- to posttest score gains.

Pretest score means obtained by subjects in this study were somewhat higher than mean scores reported in other studies using the same instruments with non-distressed married couples. Roach (1981) reported a mean score of 100.08 (SD = 16.36) for married subjects on the Marital Satisfaction Scale. In the current study, the mean MSS pretest score for the experimental group was 107.45 (SD = 10.22) and the control group mean score was 107.65 (SD = 11.73). The mean score reported by Larzelere and Huston (1980) for the Dyadic Trust Scale was 48.71 (SD not reported) with couples married 6 months to 20 years.

Mean pretest DTS scores in this study were 50.82 (SD = 6.50) and 50.27 (SD = 6.52) for the experimental and control groups.

Powell and Wampler (1982) reported a mean score equivalent to a converted score of 66.56 across five studies using the Relationship Inventory (SD not reported). In this study, experimental subjects obtained a mean score of 67.39 (SD = 10.46) and control subjects obtained a mean score of 67.27 (SD = 11.74). Married couples in the original sample for the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) obtained a mean score of 114.8 (SD = 17.8). On the same instrument, married couples in the current study had mean scores of 115.77 (SD = 10.44) and 117.06 (SD 13.56) for the experimental and control groups.

Although pretest mean scores in this study were higher than instrument norms or reports from other studies, there appeared to be ample room for some pre- to posttest score increases on most measures. The positive change scores obtained by the control group provided evidence that posttest scores could increase from pretest levels, although the reasons for the control group increases are still unknown.

The instrument on which there was least room for pretest to posttest gain in scores was the Dyadic Trust Scale. On this measure, the highest score possible was 56 and the mean scores obtained by the experimental and control groups (50.82 and 50.27) were close to this ceiling level. In addition, the median pretest score for the experimental group was 53.61, leaving little room for gain for the upper half of the group.

For the other instruments, the failure of the experimental subjects to show positive gain following a marriage enrichment course

does not appear to be due to the high level of their pretest scoring or to scale limitations of the instruments.

Computed Change vs. Self-Report of Change

There was a positive correlation between the amount of change directly reported by subjects on the Relationship Change Scale and the amount of change computed from their pre- to posttest ratings. There was also evidence that these two sets of change scores may represent different aspects of the perception of one's spouse and marriage. When change scores were computed using differences in pre- to posttest ratings, mean change scores for the experimental group were significantly lower than mean scores for the control group. On all instruments, mean scores for the experimental group were lower (less positive) at posttest than at pretest. However, when subjects were asked direct questions about the amount of change which had occurred in their relationship during the time period covered by the marriage enrichment course, the experimental group reported significantly greater (more positive) change than did the control group.

An examination of the items contained in the scales provides one possible explanation for the differences in these scores. The questions on the RCS, which asked about the amount of change during the past semester, were predominantly questions about the subject's degree of understanding, ability, sensitivity, or awareness of various aspects of the marriage relationship. Such questions inquired into cognitive aspects of the relationship and were probably more closely related to the content of the course than were the more general, subjective questions about the perceptions or feelings about one's spouse and

marriage at a given time. The seemingly inconsistent results may indicate that participants in the marriage enrichment course felt that they had learned more about their spouse and marriage, but they did not perceive their spouse and marriage more positively as a result of the course.

Increase in Scores from Posttest to Follow-up

The increase in mean follow-up scores for the experimental group was an unexpected finding. A review of results from previous studies revealed no instances of score increases being reported from posttest to follow-up. Giblin (1982) reported that of all studies which reported follow-up data, scores at follow-up were lower than posttest scores, but remained higher than at pretest levels.

The apparent increase in mean follow-up scores in this study should be cautiously interpreted. The trend to more positive scores at follow-up appears to give some support to the interpretation that the negative trend of scores from pretest to posttest for the experimental group may have been due to negative or disruptive effects of the course or to the exam-week timing of the posttest. However, because follow-up data were only received from 26 of the 56 subjects in the experimental group there may have been some bias in the sample. Perhaps only those subjects with more positive perceptions of their spouse and marriage completed and returned the follow-up data. The higher mean scores at follow-up may, therefore, reflect selective subject attrition rather than any actual increase.

Relationship Between Level of Pretest Score and Change

One finding of this study was that the level of pretest scores was significantly related to the amount of pre- to posttest change for the experimental and control groups. Persons with low pretest scores had greater pre-post change scores.

In this study, some subjects scored at or within a few points of the maximum score at pretest. On one instrument, a majority of subjects scored within three points of the maximum score. There were obvious limits to the amount of score increases which were possible for subjects who scored at a high level at pretest. For this reason, the interpretation of the negative correlation between the level of pretest score and the magnitude of change should be made cautiously. The conclusion that greater gains in marriage enrichment are made by couples who are distressed or who are initially more dissatisfied (Giblin, 1982) seems unjustified without taking into account the limits of possible change for subjects who score high at pretest.

Analysis of Items

The analysis of items which had been proposed for this study was not appropriate because of the unexpected lack of positive change by the experimental group and the unexplained positive change by the control group. These results raise some questions about the measurement of effects of a marriage enrichment course which must be answered before any detailed analysis of items would be appropriate. However, for the purpose of further research comparison, the mean change scores for each item were computed and t tests were run to test for significant differences between the experimental and control

groups. Items on which the change scores differed significantly are listed in Appendix E. These items are, of course, limited in value unless further research provides confirmation or explanation as to why these items changed opposite from the direction expected.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The overall purpose of this research was to study changes in the perception of spouse and marriage by couples who participated in a marriage enrichment course. There were three major parts of the study: (a) an examination of several instruments used to measure perceptions of spouse and marriage for their sensitivity to change as a result of a marriage enrichment course, (b) a study of the effect of a marriage enrichment course on each participant's perception of his or her own marriage, the "ideal" marriage, and "most other" marriages, and (c) an examination of other variables to determine their effects on changes in the perceptions of spouse and marriage as a result of a marriage enrichment course. The marriage enrichment course was a full semester (14 weeks) seminary course for couples. At least one member of each couple was a student taking the course for credit.

The sample consisted of 90 subjects (45 couples) in two seminary communities. The experimental group was composed of 56 subjects (28 couples) enrolled in two classes of the marriage enrichment course. The control group was 34 subjects (17 couples) from a comparable seminary who did not participate in any structured marriage enrichment experiences. There were no significant differences between the experimental and control groups on demographic variables such as level of education, age, or number of years married. Subjects in both groups responded to pre- and posttest measures.

The instruments used to measure change as the result of the marriage enrichment experience included four pre- to posttest measures of the perceptions of one's own spouse and marriage. An additional posttest measure was used as a retrospective self-report of the amount of change which had occurred during the course. Two other pre- to posttest measures were used to assess each person's perceptions of the "ideal" and "most other" marriages.

The study was based on the assumption that significant positive changes in perception of spouse and marriage would occur for participants in the marriage enrichment course. This assumption was based on previous research which suggested that the scope, duration, and expected intensity of the enrichment course would provide optimal conditions for producing positive pre- to posttest change.

Analysis of variance techniques were used to test for the significance of change scores as a result of the marriage enrichment course. Evidence of reduced discrepancies between ratings of one's own marriage and the "ideal" and "most other" marriages was obtained through t tests. Correlational and regression analyses were used to determine the effects of other variables on pre- to posttest change scores.

Seven hypotheses were formulated and tested by this research. The first two hypotheses stated that there would be no pretest score differences between the experimental and control groups, but at posttest, the experimental group would have more positive perceptions of spouse and marriage (i.e., higher scores) than the control group. The results indicated that there were no pretest differences between the

two groups. The hypothesis that the subjects who participated in the marriage enrichment course would have more positive perceptions of spouse and marriage at posttest was not supported. On two of the four pre- to posttest measures, posttest scores for the experimental group were significantly lower than for the control group. The mean posttest scores for the experimental group were lower than the mean pretest scores on all four of the measures used. In contrast, mean posttest scores for the control group were higher than their mean pretest scores, and the mean score on one measure was significantly higher at posttest. The only support for the hypothesis of more positive posttest ratings for the experimental group was on the self-report measure of change given at posttest only. On this measure, participants in the marriage enrichment course reported that they had experienced significantly more positive change during the time period covered by the marriage enrichment course than control group subjects reported for a comparable period of time.

Two additional hypotheses were related to the instruments used to measure change resulting from the marriage enrichment course. A significant positive correlation was expected between all instruments used for pretest and posttest measures. In addition, the self-report of change scores obtained at posttest were not expected to differ significantly from the computed pre- to posttest change scores on the other instruments. The results supported these hypotheses. Significant positive correlations were found between all pre- to posttest instruments at each administration. The change scores computed from the difference between scores at pretest and scores at posttest on each

instrument were also significantly related to the self-report change score obtained at posttest. Although all change scores were correlated, there were important differences between the computed change scores and the self-reported change scores. As noted earlier, computed change scores for the experimental group were negative on all four pre- to posttest measures, and experimental group change scores were significantly lower than control group scores on two of the measures. On self-report of change, however, scores for the experimental group were significantly higher than the control group scores.

If the expected score increases had occurred for the experimental group, additional analyses were planned to identify specific items which discriminated between "high change" and "low change" groups. The expected differences as a result of the marriage enrichment course did not occur. The unexpected and unexplained pre- to posttest decrease in scores for the experimental group and the contrasting increase in scores for the control group indicated that the analysis of specific items was not appropriate.

The marriage enrichment course was expected to have an effect on ratings of the "ideal" and "most other" marriages. The stated hypothesis was that there would be reduced discrepancy from pre- to posttest between ratings of one's own marriage and the ratings of the "ideal" and "most other" marriages. The results showed no change in discrepancy among any of these ratings.

The remaining hypotheses examined the influence of other variables on change as the result of the marriage enrichment experience. Because of the relative homogeneity of the subjects, variables of sex, age,

years married, number of children, and educational level were not expected to be related to change. The level of pretest scores was hypothesized to be significantly related to change scores. The results supported these hypotheses. Low pretest scores were associated with greater pre- to posttest changes. No significant relationships were found between other variables and the amount of change from pre- to posttesting.

Post hoc analyses were conducted to help explain the unexpected negative trend of posttest ratings by the experimental groups and the contrasting increase in posttest ratings by the control group. There were no significant differences between results from the two classes in the experimental groups and the negative trend was not due to a few extreme cases. Follow-up data obtained four months after posttest for approximately half of the experimental group provided some evidence that the perceptions of spouse and marriage returned to pretest levels. Other plausible explanations included (a) time of posttest, (b) negative reactions to the enrichment course, (c) disruptive effects of the course, (d) response shift, (e) effects of pretesting, and (f) limits of the measurement scales.

Conclusions

1. The assumption that a marriage enrichment course for seminary students will have an immediate positive effect on participants' views of their own marriage has been brought into serious question.
2. The seminary situation which provided controls for many variables, such as education level and length of marriage, may have contained

several other variables that had not been anticipated, such as the pressures of the exam week when posttesting was conducted.

3. One of the instruments used in this study, the Dyadic Trust Scale, appears to have limited use for marriage enrichment research with seminary student couples because of the percentage of pretest scores which were at or near the maximum score for the instrument.
4. The proposed identification of items which contribute most to the measurement of positive change as a result of a marriage enrichment experience should be delayed until major questions (i.e., effect of pretesting and academic pressures at the time of posttesting) have been addressed. Likewise, further study of the discrepancies between ratings of one's own marriage and ratings of comparison groups should be delayed.
5. Self-report through direct questions about the amount of change in the relationship across the time period of the marriage enrichment course may yield different results than computed pre- to posttest change for participants in the enrichment course. Participants in a marriage enrichment course may have increased knowledge about marriage and marriage enrichment without experiencing the enrichment course as improving their own relationship.
6. Persons who rate their spouse and marriage lower at pretest show more change in ratings at posttest, partly because of the limits of the instrument scales.
7. The major results from this study (greater positive change for the control group than for the experimental group) were not consistent

with results from most other studies and many questions for further research have been raised.

8. The appropriateness of presently available instruments for the evaluation of marriage enrichment experiences continues to be strongly questioned.

Recommendations

1. Replicate this study. Administrative problems in one of the experimental classes resulted in the loss of many subjects from the study. Data from an additional class would permit more confidence in the results.
2. Restructure this study in the following ways: (a) secure written evaluations which can be linked by ID number to specific test protocols, (b) conduct personal interviews with randomly selected participants to gain additional information about the impact of the enrichment course, (c) control for the possible effect of school-related pressures on posttest ratings, (d) randomly assign control group subjects to two groups, with one group taking both pretest and posttest and the other group taking only the posttest, (e) administer the test battery part way through the marriage enrichment course for both the experimental and control groups, and (f) remove the Dyadic Test Scale and the scales for rating the "ideal" and "most other" marriages from the test battery.
3. Using the shortened test battery, conduct research with other seminary marriage enrichment courses which use different content, structure, and experiential emphasis.

4. Use follow-up studies to assess the long-term effects of the marriage enrichment experience.
5. Continue work on the development of new evaluation procedures and measures specifically for use with marriage enrichment programs and populations. Currently used instruments, typically developed for use with distressed couples, have continued to yield inconclusive results. New approaches and measures appropriate for evaluating the outcomes of marriage enrichment experiences are urgently needed.

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APPENDIX A
INFORMATION SHEETS

Information Sheet - Experimental Group*

REQUEST FOR HELP IN A MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT RESEARCH PROJECT

(This research project is being conducted by Sarah Catron as part of the requirements for a doctoral dissertation at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC. Sarah is the Executive Director of the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME) and this research is part of a larger program to help develop and implement programs to improve the quality of marriages.)

Purposes of the research:

1. To study current perceptions of spouse and marriage.
2. To evaluate various measurement scales to gain more knowledge about which instruments are appropriate for measuring these perceptions.

What is needed:

Married couples at Southern Seminary interested in helping with this research.

Requirements:

1. Willingness on the part of both husband and wife to participate in the study.
2. Complete forms at two different times. The scales used in this study are published scales which have been used many times in work with married couples. Items in the scale ask questions about aspects of your personal relationship with your spouse and your perception of other marriage relationships.
3. Approximately one-half hour is needed to complete the forms each time.

Confidentiality: An ID number will be used on all forms so that your name will not appear on any of the forms you complete. Names of participants in the study will be kept in a secure place with access limited to the director of the research. Identifying data will be destroyed as soon as you have completed and returned all forms.

What's in it for you?

1. An interesting experience. Couples who have participated in the past have reported that they enjoyed filling out the forms and reflecting on their marriage relationship.
2. A summary of the overall results of the study will be sent to you.
3. You will be contributing to research designed to strengthen marriage relationships.

More information may be obtained from:

Sarah S. Catron, 139 Rosedale Circle, Winston-Salem, NC 27106
Telephone: (919) 748-0530 (home); or (919) 724-1526

Participation in this study is voluntary and subjects may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Information Sheet - Control Group*

REQUEST FOR HELP IN A MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT RESEARCH PROJECT

(This research project is being conducted by Sarah Catron as part of the requirements for a doctoral dissertation at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC. Sarah is the Executive Director of the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME) and this research is part of a larger program to help develop and implement programs to improve the quality of marriages.)

Purposes of the research:

1. To study current perceptions of spouse and marriage.
2. To evaluate various measurement scales to gain more knowledge about which instruments are appropriate for measuring these perceptions.

What is needed:

Married couples at Southeastern Seminary interested in helping with this research.

Requirements:

1. Willingness on the part of both husband and wife to participate in the study.
2. Complete forms at two different times. The scales used in this study are published scales which have been used many times in work with married couples. Items in the scale ask questions about aspects of your personal relationship with your spouse and your perception of other marriage relationships.
3. Approximately one-half hour is needed to complete the forms each time.
4. The forms will be mailed to you with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your use in returning the material. The forms should be completed and returned within 10 days after you receive them.

Confidentiality: An ID number will be used on all forms so that your name will not appear on any of the forms you complete. Names of participants in the study will be kept in a secure place with access limited to the director of the research. Identifying data will be destroyed as soon as you have completed and returned all forms.

What's in it for you?

1. An interesting experience. Couples who have participated in the past have reported that they enjoyed filling out the forms and reflecting on their marriage relationship.
2. A summary of the overall results of the study will be sent to you.
3. You will be contributing to research designed to strengthen marriage relationships.
4. A one-year membership in ACME which includes the monthly newsletter, MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT.

Next steps for you:

If you are married and have interest in participating in this project:

1. Take one of the post cards.
2. Talk with your spouse about participating.
3. If BOTH of you are willing to participate, fill out the card and drop it in the mailbox as soon as possible.

More information may be obtained from:

Sarah S. Catron, 139 Rosedale Circle, Winston-Salem, NC 27106
Telephone: (919) 748-0530 (home); or (919) 724-1526

Participation in this study is voluntary and subjects may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Return Card - Control Group

We would like to participate in the Marriage
Enrichment Research Project.

Wife's name _____

Husband's name _____

Address to which materials should be mailed:

Telephone number (____) _____

APPENDIX B

SYLLABUS OF THE MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT COURSE

SYLLABUS

Course: Marriage and Family Enrichment 3516

Time: Tuesday evenings 7:00-9:55

- I.
 - A. To participate in a clinical study of marriage and marriage enrichment by examining, understanding, and enriching the marital relationship of class participants.
 - B. To learn what the human sciences (psychology, sociology) and the human potential movement have discovered about marriage and marriage enrichment and to evaluate these perceptions from a theological point of view.
 - C. To study Biblical/theological perspectives on marriage and develop a theology of marriage enrichment as a ministry of the church.
 - D. To develop methods of marriage enrichment suitable to ministry in the local church.
- II.
 - A. Participate in class exercises and discussions
 - B. Read the following textbooks (follow this order and class schedule)
 - 1) Talking Together, Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman
 - 2) Clergy Marriage, Maces
 - 3) Equality and Submission in Marriage, Howell
 - 4) The Gift of Sex, Penners
 - C. Keep a Marriage Enrichment Journal (50% of grade) (due by Friday, December 3)
 - D. Write a paper on "Theology and Marriage" (25% of grade) due Tuesday, October 26)
 - E. Plan a marriage enrichment event for a church (25% of grade) (due Tuesday, December 7)
- III. MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT JOURNAL

An important aspect of marriage enrichment events is to capture the knowledge and insight discovered in the process. What is learned during this time can be a meaningful guide to living and intentional marriage in the future. Toward this end each couple will keep a "Marriage Enrichment Journal" in which to record:

1. Response to Texts

As you read the texts record both your thinking and feeling responses. What new understandings and insights does it provide about you, your spouse, the relationship? What are you learning about your marriage? What does the book invite you to change or develop? What new ideas about marriage do you have from the point of view of your Christian faith?

2. Response to Class Exercises

Each class period will include various exercises and assignments which will focus attention on specific aspects of your marriage. Often these exercises require written notes. Include these notes, plus reflections on what you learned, in your journal.

3. Reflections

As the two of you assess and enrich your marriage, record important discoveries about strengths, weaknesses, joys, patterns of relating, personality differences, etc. Also make note of particular steps you take to enrich your marriage (decisions, changes, experiments, covenants, etc.).

NOTE: Each partner is expected to contribute equally to each section of the journal. We will periodically give specific instructions about your work in the journal.

Only the instructors (Judy and Andy Lester) will read your journal. The content will remain privileged information between the two of you and the two of us. The journal will, of course, be returned to you for your future use. Remember--we will not be evaluating your marriage, only how seriously and carefully you study it!

IV. PAPER ON THEOLOGY AND MARRIAGE

Choosing from the topics below, write a paper which explores the relationship of your Biblical/theological beliefs to marriage. Choose a subject that would be most relevant to your marriage so you can profit from your study. If a particular area of concern in your marriage is not covered by these suggested topics talk with us about shaping your paper which would address your personal needs.

This paper should be typed, footnoted (in the body of the paper, not at the back), with bibliography. It should be no longer than seven (7) pages. Please give us (2) copies. We will return one with comments.

- (1) Theology and Money - Discuss a theology of stewardship and its potential impact on the use of money in marriage. What are the problems of handling money in your marriage? What money management techniques would help couples handle money more responsibly?
- (2) Theology and Sex - Discuss a theology of sexuality which explains the meaning and purpose of sexuality. What is the place of sex in Christian marriage? What Christian principles can guide creative sexual encounters?
- (3) Theology of Marriage - Why did God create a bi-sexual world? What does marriage mean in the structure of God's creation? What does God want us to experience in marriage?
- (4) Theology and Relationship - How do Christian doctrines of personhood effect how husbands and wives relate? What does the doctrine of human freedom have to say about authority in marriage? What does it say about roles and responsibility? What does our Christian idea of community say about need-meeting in marriage?
- (5) Theology and Marriage Enrichment - What Biblical/theological principles contribute to your idea that marriage enrichment should be a ministry of the church?
- (6) Theology and Anger/Conflict - What Christian principles can help couples deal with anger/conflict in marriage?
- (7) Theology and Communication - What Christian doctrines (revelation and "word") or principles guide us in understanding the place of communication in marriage? Is there a Christian ethic about communication?
- (8) Theology and Parenting - What Christian principles can aid parents in the process of relating creatively to children?

V. PLANNING A MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT EVENT FOR YOUR CHURCH

Write a paper describing a marriage enrichment event (class, retreat, workshop, seminar, group, etc.) which you, as a couple, could do in a local church, perhaps your present place of ministry. If you are not presently in a place of ministry, fantasize about one in the future and plan an event for this imaginary (but realistic) situation.

Include the following in your plans:

- a) Describe briefly the church and your professional role or position.
- b) How would you set up the event? (when, where, with whom, for how long, etc.)
- c) What would be your goals and objectives?
- d) What would you do? Describe what you would do in each session and how you would do it. Describe content and methodology.
- e) How would you go about evaluating the event?

The paper should be typed and footnoted. Put references in the body of the paper not at the end. Use up to ten pages as needed. Do not use the content of this class as a model! Use the Bibliography. Submit only one copy.

CLASS SCHEDULE

August 31	<u>Introduction</u>
September 7	<u>Affirmation/Communication</u> - Read <u>Talking Together</u> , Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2
September 14	<u>Communication/Needs</u> - Read <u>Talking Together</u> , Chapters 3 & 4
September 21	<u>Need-Meeting/Negotiation</u> - Read <u>Equality and Submission</u> Chapters 1-3
September 28	<u>Interpret Myers-Briggs</u> - Read <u>Equality and Submission</u> , Chapter 4
October 5	<u>Anger/Conflict</u> - Read <u>Equality and Submission</u> , Chapters 5 & 6
October 12	<u>Anger/Conflict</u> - Read Xeroxed Mace Article
October 19	<u>Miscellaneous</u> - Read <u>The Gift of Sex</u> , pp. 17-102
October 26	<u>Sexuality</u> - Read <u>The Gift of Sex</u> , pp. 103-254
November 2	<u>Sexuality</u> - Read <u>The Gift of Sex</u> , pp. 255-344
November 9	<u>Miscellaneous</u> - Read <u>Clergy Marriage</u>
November 16	<u>Spirituality</u> - Read <u>Clergy Marriage</u>
November 30	<u>Miscellaneous</u>
December 7	<u>Dinner, Evaluation, and Worship</u>

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Section 1 - General Information Sheet*

Identification Number _____

Male _____

Female _____

General Information:

Age _____

Number of years you have been married _____

Number of times you have been married _____

Number of children _____ Ages of children _____

Number of years completed in school (circle one)

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19+

Describe your main occupation _____

Have you ever participated in a marriage enrichment event? Yes _____

No _____

If yes, what type of event was it? Weekend retreat _____

One day _____

One evening _____

Series of sessions _____

Other (describe) _____

Who sponsored the event? _____

Approximately how many couples attended the event? _____

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Section 2 - Marital Satisfaction Scale*

The following statements concern your current feelings, beliefs, or attitudes toward your present marriage. There are no right or wrong responses to these statements. The answer that best describes you, your spouse, or your marital relationship as it is right now is the desired response.

There are 24 items in this inventory. For each statement, a five-point scale is provided for indicating your response.

The response symbols and their meanings are:

- SD - Strongly disagree (not true)
- D - Disagree (probably not true)
- N - Neutral (undecided, cannot say)
- A - Agree (probably true)
- SA - Strongly agree (true)

Circle the appropriate symbol to indicate your response to each statement. Work rapidly without spending too much time on any one statement. It is important that you respond to each statement. Use the Neutral (N) response as little as possible.

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. I regard my marriage as a success. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 2. I worry a lot about my marriage. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 3. If I were to start over again, I would marry someone other than my present spouse. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 4. I feel competent and able to handle my marriage. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 5. My marriage is too confining to suit me. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 6. I feel that I am "in a rut" in my marriage. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 7. I know where I stand with my spouse. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 8. My marriage has a bad effect on my health. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 9. I get discouraged trying to make my marriage work out. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 10. My marital situation is pleasant enough for me. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 11. My marriage give me more real personal satisfaction than anything else I do. | SD | D | N | A | SA |

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 12. My marriage is becoming more and more difficult for me. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 13. I become badly flustered and jittery when my spouse does certain things. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 14. I get along well with my spouse. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 15. I must look outside my marriage for those things that make my life worthwhile and interesting. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 16. The future of my marriage looks promising to me. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 17. I am really interested in my spouse. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 18. Lately, I wish I had not married my present spouse. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 19. My marriage helps me toward the goals I have set for myself. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 20. My spouse is willing to work at improving our relationship. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 21. My spouse lacks respect for me. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 22. I have definite difficulty confiding in my spouse. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 23. My spouse usually understands the way I feel. | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 24. I am definitely satisfied with my marriage. | SD | D | N | A | SA |

Section 3 - Dyadic Trust Scale*

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following items:

	Strong Agreement	Moderate Agreement	Some Agreement	Neutral	Some Disagreement	Moderate Disagreement	Strong Disagreement
1. My partner is primarily interested in his/her own welfare.							
2. There are times when my partner cannot be trusted.							
3. My partner is perfectly honest and truthful with me.							
4. I feel that I can trust my partner completely.							
5. My partner is truly sincere in his/her promises.							
6. I feel that my partner does not show me enough consideration.							
7. My partner treats me fairly and justly.							
8. I feel that my partner can be counted on to help me.							

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Section 4 - Relationship Inventory (Empathy Scale)*

Listed below are a variety of ways that one person may feel or behave toward another. Consider each statement with reference to your present relationship with your partner.

Mark each statement in the left margin, according to how strongly you feel that it is true or not true in this relationship. Please mark every statement.

Write in +3, +2, +1, or -1, -2, or -3 to stand for the following answers:

- +3: Yes, I strongly feel that it is true.
- +2: Yes, I feel that it is true.
- +1: Yes, I feel that it is probably true, or more true than untrue.
- 1: No, I feel that it is probably untrue, or more untrue than true.
- 2: No, I feel it is not true.
- 3: No, I strongly feel that it is not true.

- _____ 1. My partner wants to understand how I see things.
- _____ 2. My partner may understand my words but he/she does not see the way I feel.
- _____ 3. My partner nearly always knows exactly what I mean.
- _____ 4. My partner looks at what I do from his/her own viewpoint.
- _____ 5. My partner usually senses or realizes what I am feeling.
- _____ 6. My partner's own attitude toward some of the things I do or say prevents him/her from understanding me.
- _____ 7. Sometimes my partner thinks that I feel a certain way, because that is the way he/she feels.
- _____ 8. My partner realizes what I mean even when I have difficulty in saying it.
- _____ 9. My partner usually understand the whole of what I mean.
- _____ 10. My partner just takes no notice of some things that I think or feel.
- _____ 11. My partner appreciates exactly how the things I experience feel to me.
- _____ 12. At times, my partner thinks that I feel a lot more strongly about a particular thing than I really do.
- _____ 13. My partner does not realize how sensitive I am about some of the things we discuss.
- _____ 14. My partner understands me.
- _____ 15. My partner's response to me is usually so fixed and automatic that I don't really get through to him/her.
- _____ 16. When I am hurt or upset, my partner can recognize my feelings exactly, without becoming upset himself.

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Section 5 - Dyadic Adjustment Scale*

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Disagree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Handling family finances						
2. Matters of recreation						
3. Religious matters						
4. Demonstrations of affection						
5. Friends						
6. Sex relations						
7. Correct or proper behavior						
8. Philosophy of life						
9. Ways of dealing with parents or other in-laws						
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important						
11. Amount of time spent together						
12. Making major decisions						
13. Household tasks						
14. Leisure time interests and activities						
15. Career decisions						
	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?						
17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?						
18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?						
19. Do you confide in your mate?						
20. Do you ever regret that you married?						
21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?						
22. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves?"						

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

23. How often do you kiss your mate? (circle one)

Every Day Almost Every Day Occasionally Rarely Never

24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? (circle one)

All of them Most of them Some of them Very few of them None of them

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas.						
26. Laugh together.						
27. Calmly discuss something.						
28. Work together on a project.						

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no)

29. Being too tired for sex Yes _____ No _____
30. Not showing love Yes _____ No _____

31. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

Extremely Fairly A Little Happy Very Extremely Perfect
 Unhappy Unhappy Unhappy Happy Happy

32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? (Check one)

- _____ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
- _____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
- _____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
- _____ It would be nice if my relationship succeeds, but I can't do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- _____ It would be nice if it succeeds, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- _____ My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

Section 6 - Dyadic Adjustment Scale adapted for "ideal"*

In an ideal relationship, what would be the extent of agreement or disagreement between partners for each item on the following list.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occa- sionally Disagree	Fre- quently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Dis- agree
1. Handling family finances						
2. Matters of recreation						
3. Religious matters						
4. Demonstrations of affection						
5. Friends						
6. Sex relations						
7. Correct or proper behavior						
8. Philosophy of life						
9. Ways of dealing with parents or other in-laws						
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important						
11. Amount of time spent together						
12. Making major decisions						
13. Household tasks						
14. Leisure time interests and activities						
15. Career decisions						
	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occa- sionally	Rarely	Never
16. How often would an ideal couple discuss or consider divorce, separation, or terminating their relationship?						
17. In an ideal marriage, how often would one partner leave the house after a fight?						
18. How often would an ideal couple think that things are going well between them?						
19. How often would an ideal couple confide in each other?						
20. In an ideal marriage, would the couple regret that they married?						
21. How often would an ideal couple quarrel?						
22. How often would the ideal couple "get on each other's nerves?"						

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Section 7 - Dyadic Adjustment Scale adapted for "most other"*

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between partners in most marriage relationships for each item on the following list.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occa- sionally Disagree	Fre- quently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Dis- agree
1. Handling family finances						
2. Matters of recreation						
3. Religious matters						
4. Demonstrations of affection						
5. Friends						
6. Sex relations						
7. Correct or proper behavior						
8. Philosophy of life						
9. Ways of dealing with parents or other in-laws						
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important						
11. Amount of time spent together						
12. Making major decisions						
13. Household tasks						
14. Leisure time interests and activities						
15. Career decisions						
	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occa- sionally	Rarely	Never
16. How often would most couples discuss or consider divorce, separation or terminating their relationships?						
17. In most marriages, how often does one partner leave the house after a fight?						
18. How often do most couples think that things are going well between them?						
19. How often do most couples confide in each other?						
20. Do most couples regret that they married?						
21. How often do most couples quarrel?						
22. How often do most couples "get on each other's nerves"?						

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

23. How often do most couples kiss each other? (circle one)

Every Day Almost Every Day Occasionally Rarely Never

24. How many outside interests do most couples engage in together? (circle one)

All of them Most of them Some of them Very few of them None of them

How often would you say the following events occur between most couples?

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas.						
26. Laugh together.						
27. Calmly discuss something.						
28. Work together on a project.						

There are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below causes differences of opinions or are problems from time to time in most relationships. (Check yes or no)

29. Being too tired for sex Yes _____ No _____

30. Not showing love Yes _____ No _____

31. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in a marriage relationship. Circle the dot which you think best describes the degree of happiness in most marriages.

Extremely Unhappy Fairly Unhappy A Little Unhappy Happy Very Happy Extremely Happy Perfect

32. Which of the following statements best describes how most people feel about the future of their own marriage relationship? (Check one)

- _____ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
- _____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
- _____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
- _____ It would be nice if my relationship succeeds, but I can't do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- _____ It would be nice if it succeeds, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- _____ My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

Section 8 - Relationship Change Scale*

This is a questionnaire to determine whether, and in what ways, your relationship with your partner has changed during the past two or three months. Please complete the statements by underlining the phrase that most accurately completes each statement.

Give as accurate and honest an account of your own feelings and beliefs as possible.

1. My satisfaction with myself as a person has become:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
2. My satisfaction with my partner as a person has become:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
3. I feel my mate views me as a satisfactory partner:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
4. My mate views herself/himself with satisfaction as a person:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
5. Our relationship with each other has become:
(a) much worse (b) worse (c) unchanged (d) better (e) much better
6. I am clearly aware of my partner's needs and desires:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) more (e) much more
7. I understand my own feelings:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) more (e) much more
8. I understand my partner's feelings:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) more (e) much more
9. Our ability to communicate has become:
(a) much worse (b) worse (c) unchanged (d) better (e) much better
10. My sensitivity toward my partner as a person is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
11. My concern and warmth toward my partner has become:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
12. My self-expression and openness in relation to my partner is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

13. My ability to understand my partner's feelings is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
14. My listening abilities with my partner are:
(a) much worse (b) worse (c) unchanged (d) better (e) much better
15. My trust in my partner is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
16. My feelings of intimacy with my partner are:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
17. My confidence in our relationship is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
18. Our ability to handle disagreements constructively is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
19. Our satisfaction with our sexual relationship is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
20. My difficulty in talking with my partner is:
(a) much more (b) more (c) unchanged (d) less (e) much less
21. My ability to express positive feelings toward my partner is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
22. My ability to constructively express negative feelings toward my partner is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
23. My willingness to share my personal concerns with my partner is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
24. My capacity to believe and accept positive feelings my partner expresses toward me is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
25. My capacity to deal constructively with negative feelings my partner expresses toward me is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater
26. My understanding of the kind of relationship I want to have in the future with my partner is:
(a) much less (b) less (c) unchanged (d) greater (e) much greater

APPENDIX D
INSTRUCTIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Instructions for Pretest - Experimental Group***Instructions**

1. Each couple should select a 4-digit identification (ID) number to be used on the first sheet. (Use something like the last 4 digits of your telephone number so that you can remember what your ID number is).

You and your spouse should use the same ID number and this number should be used on pre-test, post-test, and follow-up forms. In other words, we need a way to identify which individuals are married to each other and also to identify the pre-, post-, and follow-up data for each individual.

2. Each person should complete the forms individually. Please do not consult with your partner as you fill out the forms or compare your ratings with those of your partner. Only after both of you have completed and returned the forms should you discuss your ratings with each other.
3. Read the instructions for each scale carefully. One of the scales is repeated. You will be asked to respond to the same items from three different perspectives -- your own relationship, most marriage relationships, and the ideal relationship.
4. Answer each item. Do not worry about repetitions or inconsistencies. Rate each item in the way that seems best at the time you read it.
5. Complete each item in the order that it is presented. Please do not skip items with the idea that you will answer them later.

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Instructions for Posttest - Experimental Group***Instructions**

1. Each couple should use the same identification (ID) number that you used on the pretest forms. You and your spouse should use the same ID number and this number should be used on all forms you complete.
2. Each person should complete the forms individually. Please do not consult with your partner as you fill out the forms or compare your ratings with those of your partner. Only after both of you have completed and returned the forms should you discuss your ratings with each other.
3. Read the instructions for each scale carefully. One of the scales is repeated. You will be asked to respond to the same items from three different perspectives --your own relationship, most marriage relationships, and the ideal relationship.
4. Answer each item. Do not worry about repetitions or inconsistencies. Rate each item in the way that seems best at the time you read it.
5. Complete each item in the order that it is presented. Please do not skip items with the idea that you will answer them later.

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Instructions for Pretest - Control Group*

Instructions

1. Each couple should select a 4-digit identification (ID) number to be used on all forms. (Use something like the last 4 digits of your telephone number so that you can remember what your ID number is).

You and your spouse should use the same ID number and this number should be used on all forms you complete (pre-, post-, and follow-up). In other words, we need a way to identify which individuals are couples and also to identify the pre-, post-, and follow-up data for each individual.

Since we do not want your name to appear on any of the completed forms, I am enclosing a card on which you should list your name and ID number and return this with the forms. This card will be the only linking of your name with the ID number and it will be used only as a reference for future mailing.

2. Each person should complete the forms individually. Please do not consult with your partner as you fill out the forms or compare your ratings with those of your partner. Only after both of you have completed and returned the forms should you discuss your ratings with each other.
3. Read the instructions for each scale carefully. One of the scales is repeated. You will be asked to respond to the same items from three different perspectives -- your own relationship, most marriage relationships, and the ideal relationship.
4. Answer each item. Do not worry about repetitions or inconsistencies. Rate each item in the way that seems best at the time you read it.
5. Complete each item in the order that it is presented. Please do not skip items with the idea that you will answer them later.
6. After both of you have completed the forms, return them in the envelope provided for that purpose.

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Instructions for Posttest - Control Group*

Instructions

1. Each couple should use the same identification (ID) number that you used on the pretest forms. You and your spouse should use the same ID number and this number should be used on all forms you complete.
2. Each person should complete the forms individually. Please do not consult with your partner as you fill out the forms or compare your ratings with those of your partner. Only after both of you have completed and returned the forms should you discuss your ratings with each other.
3. Read the instructions for each scale carefully. One of the scales is repeated. You will be asked to respond to the same items from three different perspectives -- your own relationship, most marriage relationships, and the ideal relationship.
4. Answer each item. Do not worry about repetitions or inconsistencies. Rate each item in the way that seems best at the time you read it.
5. Complete each item in the order that it is presented. Please do not skip items with the idea that you will answer them later.
6. After both of you have completed the forms, return them in the envelope provided for that purpose. Then drop the envelope in the mailbox as soon as possible.

Thank you for your help.

*This label was not on the form given to participants.

Letter to Accompany Pretest - Control Group

Dear

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the marriage enrichment research project being conducted at Southeastern Baptist Seminary. Your help is a vital part of learning how to evaluate enrichment programs so that they can more effectively strengthen marriages.

Enclosed is the first set of forms for each of you to complete. An instruction sheet is included for your use. The two of you should individually complete the forms, then return them to me in the enclosed stamped envelope. Please return the completed forms within ten days, if possible.

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,

Sarah S. Catron

Letter to Accompany Posttest - Control Group

Dear

Thank you for your participation in the marriage enrichment research project at Southeastern Baptist Seminary. You are contributing to knowledge that will help evaluate programs to strengthen marriages.

Enclosed is the second set of forms to be completed. An instruction sheet is included for your use.

You may remember that I promised you a one-year membership in the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME) in appreciation of your help in this study. This complimentary membership includes the monthly newsletter of ACME. I am enclosing a brochure with an attached membership form. Please fill out the membership form and return it with the completed research forms. The membership form is prepaid. Upon receipt of these materials, your names will be placed on the mailing list and you will begin receiving the newsletter regularly.

A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed for returning the materials. Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,

Sarah S. Catron

Reminder Letter - Control Group

(Date)

Dear

Recently, I mailed you a packet which contained material to be filled out for the research project being conducted with .
At this time, I have not received your completed packet.

Your participation is very important to this project. If you have not yet completed and returned the forms, please take about 30 minutes to fill them out and return them to me.

I appreciate your help in making this research possible.

Sincerely,

Sarah S. Catron

APPENDIX E

LIST OF ITEMS ON WHICH CHANGE SCORES DIFFERED
SIGNIFICANTLY BY GROUP

Items on Which Change Scores were Significantly Different for the
Experimental and Control Groups for each Pre-Post Measure*

Item #	Item
Marital Satisfaction Scale	
5	My marriage is too confining to suit me.
6	I feel that I am "in a rut" in my marriage.
8	My marriage has a bad effect on my health.
12	My marriage is becoming more and more difficult for me.
14	I get along well with my spouse.
20	My spouse is willing to work at improving our relationship.
23	My spouse usually understands the way I feel.
24	I am definitely satisfied with my marriage.
Dyadic Trust Scale	
8	I feel that my partner can be counted on to help me.
Relationship Inventory (Empathy Scale)	
1	My partner wants to understand how I see things.
2	My partner may understand my words but he/she does not see the way I feel.
3	My partner nearly always knows exactly what I mean.
11	My partner appreciates exactly how the things I experience feel to me.
15	My partner's response to me is usually so fixed and automatic that I don't really get through to him/her.
Dyadic Adjustment Scale	
6	Extent of agreement/disagreement between you and your partner on sex relations.
13	Extent of agreement/disagreement between you and your partner on household tasks.
29	Whether there have been differences of opinion or problems during the past few weeks about being too tired for sex.

*p .05