

HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING AND PUPIL CONTROL IDEOLOGY:

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of this research was to explore the effect of experiential courses in human relations on teachers' pupil control ideology. Both Qualitative and Quantitative methods were used to collect data from the members of the course during the training. The quantitative approach employed a traditional pre-test post-test control group research design, using questionnaires to provide evidence of change in scores on tests. The qualitative data was provided by interviews. This investigation was carried out with 85 teachers. The experimental group in this study were forty three (43) teachers. Forty two (42) teachers who were colleagues of the experimental group were used as a control group. The sample for this research were all part-time students on the M.Ed./diploma course in human relations for 1990-1992. They were all practising teachers in a range of different educational contexts. The research provided an evaluation of the outcomes of the first year of the course which involved 90 hours experiential learning. The research indicated that the course did reduce reported stress.

Pupil Control Ideology :

The study of pupil control ideology has had an extensive history since the construct was originated by Willower, Eidell and Hoy in 1967. Beginning with the early works of Willower and Jones (1967), pupil control has been identified as a significant variable in schools and in the classroom. Over the past decades, a considerable body of research has been developed around the concept of Pupil

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Control Ideology as a means of describing the values which underlie the teacher's view of the teacher/child relationship. This kind of research is built around the simple but compelling theory that many teachers are in a work environment in which there are constant challenges to their personal status (from such sources as large classes, demanding parents, an overbearing principal, an unfamiliar school environment, or for the new teacher, inexperience) and that their likely response to such threats is a tendency to adapt relatively custodial attitudes towards the children in their charge. One extensive investigation of pupil control in the US public schools began in 1962. When Willower and his colleagues investigated this issue. An initial study conducted by Willower and Jones involved the description and analysis of the social processes within a 1600- pupil high school. Observation and interview techniques were used over a 14 month period to gather data and to identify particular social patterns based on field notes (Willower and Jones, 1967). The investigation of this one school convinced Willower and Jones that pupil control was a pervasive social theme affecting the relationship of all groups in the school (Willower and Jones, 1967). Faculty common rooms and other group meetings were employed by more experienced teachers to socialise new teachers into the norm of "tough" discipline. A new principal was untested until he could prove his strong stance on discipline. Teachers gathered support among themselves against students who were failing or considered to be troublemakers (Willower and Jones, 1967). Willower and Jones viewed this strong emphasis on pupil control as functional in that it helped the school make the best of difficult situations overcrowding, and low teacher pay. But they also saw this emphasis as dysfunctional in terms of a broader view of what education ought to be. They viewed their research as providing an integrative concept worth further study in educational organisations (Willower and Jones, 1967). Willower and Jones made some theoretical statements about the broader concept of pupil control:

Pupil control is a form of social control, the process by which social order is established and maintained. Control implies requirements for behaviour and restraints upon behaviour, and it is an essential ingredient of group life. In formal organisations, such requirements and restraints may take the form of rules and regulations. A much more inclusive concept than

rules is that of norms, or standards for behaviour. A similar but somewhat narrower concept than norms, is that of role expectations- the rights and obligations of those in a given social position or status (Willower and Jones, 1967).

Compliance is assured by a system of sanctions or rewards and penalties. The nature of this system of sanctions can be used to specify types of control. When control is based upon sanctions which are primarily punitive, employing devices such as coercion, and the withholding of rewards, we speak of external control. When control is based upon sanctions which are more personal and appeal to the individual's sense of right and wrong, stressing self-discipline rather than imposed discipline, we speak of internal control. It is non-punitive and implies an optimistic view of those being controlled (Willower, 1963). Willower's earlier concept of internal control was similar to Gilbert and Levinson's (1957) definition of humanism and his concept of external control was similar to their definition of custodialism. The prototypes for custodial and humanistic orientation to pupil control were defined by Willower and his colleagues in this manner. The rightly traditional school serves as a model for the custodial orientation. This kind of organisation provides a highly controlled setting concerned primarily with the maintenance of order. Students are stereotyped in terms of their appearance, behaviour, and parents' social status. They are perceived as irresponsible and undisciplined persons who must be controlled through punitive sanction. Teachers holding a custodial orientation conceive of the school as an autocratic organisation with rightly maintained distinctions between the status of teachers and that of pupils: Both power and communication flow downward, and students are expected to accept the decisions of teachers without question (Willower and Jones, 1967). The model of humanistic orientation is the school conceived of as an educational community in which members learn through interaction and experience. Students' learning and behaviour are viewed in psychological and sociological terms rather than moralistic terms. The humanistic teacher, optimistic that through close personal relationships with pupils and the positive aspects of friendship and respect, believes that students will be self-disciplining rather than disciplined. A humanistic orientation leads teachers to desire a

democratic classroom climate with its attendant flexibility in status and rules, open channels of two-way communication, and increased student self-determination (Willower, Eidell, and Hoy, 1973). Some writers suggest that a solution to the problem is to change the curriculum (Gardiner, 1980). However this is unlikely to change the person into an effective teacher. As the problem relates to the ideology of teachers, perhaps first we ought to try and change the teachers' ideology. Other studies have researched the personal and classroom implications of such an ideological orientation, but there has been little research into strategies for changing it. It might be expected that a move away from a custodial orientation could be accompanied by a reduction in teacher stress and dissatisfaction, and thus reduce the likelihood of teacher 'burn-out'. This research therefore has been designed to examine the possibility of changing teachers from a custodial to a humanistic approach to student control. Since most of the antecedents to threat seem difficult or impossible to change, the focus of intervention research should be upon those changeable elements most likely to produce maximum benefit. The only facet that has this potential is the communication and psychological skills area. In 1973 Willower and others suggested that the key to effective humanistic teaching is that it must be grounded upon relatively complex sociological and psychological theories requiring highly competent, well-prepared teachers who are able to make the necessary connections between those theories and applications in specific situations. In a similar vein, Gorton (1976) indicates that in-service courses are needed to develop a more positive philosophy and attitude on the teachers' part toward student behaviour, with emphasis on the role that a teacher needs to play in promoting student self-discipline. There are several in-service courses based on experiential learning for teachers that have potential for achieving effective humanistic teaching including those based upon behaviourist theories or individual psychology. In this research the course used is based on a humanistic orientation and attempts to minimise the custodial orientation. An inspection of these characteristics and those described by Willower et al. (1973) in their original descriptions of humanistic and custodial teachers reveals a remarkable correspondence between humanistic psychology and humanistic ideologies, and between the traditional and custodial ideology. When we foster close interpersonal relationships and a positive communication environment for teachers they tend to more humanistic behaviour. It

seems reasonable to believe that the Nottingham University Human Relation Course is a good opportunity for teachers to move to a more humanistic approach. However, there has been no research on the possibility of changing teachers' ideology from custodial to humanitarian. This research addresses that particular issue.

The sample for this research were all part-time students in the M.Ed. diploma course in human relations for 1990-1992. They were all practising teachers in a range of different educational contexts. The research provided an evaluation of the outcomes of the first year of the course which involved 90 hours experiential learning. The part-time group was chosen because they were engaged in an ongoing way in their professional lives while the course was in progress. This permitted an examination of the ways in which the students applied their learning outside the course. The research was limited to the first year because of time constraints.

The whole group of new students were asked to fill in questionnaires before they came on the course. All of the subject were asked to invite a colleague who was most like themselves in term of status, age and gender to fill in an identical set of questionnaires to those sent to each subject. This provided the necessary data for a control group. It was made clear that this was optional and forty-three of the teachers handed in the completed forms they were given on the first day of the course together with those of their colleagues. Participants were asked to provide their age and gender and these demographic characteristics of the experimental group. The age dividing old from young participants is thirty five years. The same group were asked to fill in the same questionnaire one year later. At this stage forty-one participants replied giving a loss of two subjects at the post-test.

4.1.b.iv. Pupil Control Ideology Form :

Willower and Others (1967) developed an operational measure of pupil control ideology, the **Pupil Control Ideology Form**, which is generally used for research into pupil control ideology. This appeared to be the only available questionnaires in this area. An early version of the test invited positive responses to a

humanistic orientation. This encouraged a mental set to respond in a certain way and for the respondents to provide answers that favour the humanistic orientation. Willower and his colleagues dealt with this problem by rewriting them and reversing the point of view making them more favourable to the custodial orientation (Willower, Eidell and Hoy, 1973).

A rough draft, thirty-eight item version of the PCI for was administered in seven Pennsylvania school in order to determine through item analysis the discriminating power of each statement. Biserial correlation techniques were employed to select the final twenty items. The biserial correlation coefficient of correlation for each the twenty items retained was greater than 0.325. Reliability was determined by employing split-half reliability coefficient techniques. The resulting Pearson product-moment coefficient was 0.91. Application of the Spearman-Brown formula yielded a corrected-coefficient of 0.95. The Pupil Control Ideology Form (PCI) measures the pupil control ideology of educators on a humanistic-custodial continuum. Custodial was characterised by strict pupil control, whereas the humanistic view was exemplified by a more democratic approach. The pupil Control Ideology Form (PCI) consists of 20 Lickert-type items. Responses are scored from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree); the higher the overall score, the more custodial the ideology of the respondent.

HYPOTHESIS:

The subjects will have a more humanistic approach to student control.

TABLE 1: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON PUPIL CONTROL IDEOLOGY

Experimental Group	Number of Cases	Mean	S.D.	S.E	Dependent t-test
Pre-test	39	47.25	9.02	1.4	4.11**
Post-test		42.69	6.39	1.0 2	

p < 0.01:**, p < 0.05:*, p < 0.1: ?, Not Significant: NS

Here the results show that there is a highly significant difference between pre-test and post-test for the experimental group. Before attending the course the mean of the experimental group was 47.25 after the course they report a more humanistic score on the post-test 42.69. The difference is a highly significant ($p < 0.01$).

TABLE 2: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST SCORES FOR THE CONTROL GROUP FOR PUPIL CONTROL IDEOLOGY

Control Group	Number of Cases	Mean	S.D.	S.E.	Dependent t-test
Pre-test	38	42.07	12.00	1.94	-1.92?
Post-test		44.89	8.15	1.32	

p < 0.01:**, p < 0.05:*, p < 0.1: ?, Not Significant: NS

The control group reports a marginally significant difference between pre-test and post-test in pupil control ideology. Diagram 1 shows a comparison of pre-test and post-test means for control and experimental group for pupil control ideology.

DIAGRAM 1

PUPIL CONTROL IDEOLOGY (PCI)

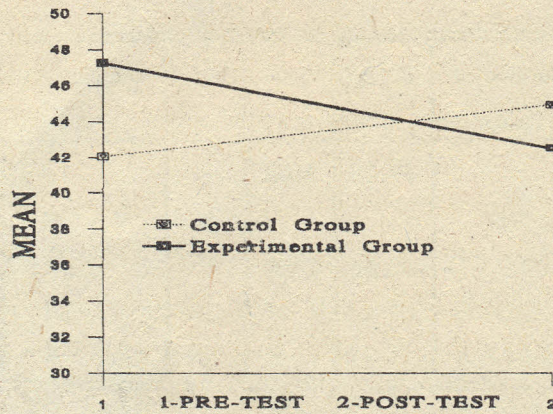


TABLE 3: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EXPERIMENTAL AND THE CONTROL GROUP FOR PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST AND THEIR RESIDUAL SCORES FOR PUPIL CONTROL IDEOLOGY

Variables	Number of Cases	Mean	S.D.	S.E.	Independent t-test
Exp. Pre-test	42	47.45	8.92	1.37	2.44*
Cont.	42	41.93	11.66	1.80	
Exp. Post-test	40	42.98	6.56	1.04	-1.11NS
Cont.	39	44.82	8.06	1.29	
Exp. Residual	39	-2.11	4.92	0.79	-3.35**
Cont.	38	2.16	6.16	1.00	

$p < 0.01$: **, $p < 0.05$: *, $p < 0.1$: ?, Not Significant: NS

Table 3 presents a comparison of the residual scores for pupil control ideology and demonstrates the significance of the gain for the experimental group ($p < 0.01$) between pre-test and post-test for pupil control ideology. Here the hypothesis was confirmed as there is a highly significant change between the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group. As stated above, the higher the overall score, the more custodial the ideology of the respondent; the lower the overall score, the more humanistic the ideology of the respondent. After the course the experimental group became more humanistic in their approach to student control compared with the control group. Table 3 also shows that there is a significant difference between experimental and control group on the pre-test. But there is no significant difference between experimental and control group on post-test.

Discussion:

Hypothesis was confirmed as there is a highly significant change between pre-test and post-test. From the summary of results it can be said that after the course, the experimental group became significantly more humanistic in their approach to the student control. The wealth of research involving teachers' pupil control ideology suggests that a human relations course could be extremely useful for teachers. There is a great deal of concern over the difficulty in controlling pupils within the classroom. Willower and Jones (1967) found that pupil control plays a central part in school life. Recent studies have shown that teachers in the schools experience their work as stressful. Teachers are concerned with the increase of disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Recently Docking (1985) conducted a 10-week in-service course for the teachers of a small elementary school in Australia. The course itself focused on management techniques with a view to reducing stress and anxiety. The results showed that all the teachers who attended the course moved in the humanistic direction. On the pupil control ideology scale it was also found that class management behaviour was less custodial after the course, teaching anxiety was reduced and discipline anxiety in all but one teacher decreased following the course. The results of this research is in line with these earlier studies. It goes some way towards explaining what happens to teachers who attend human relations courses. If teachers were better

prepared in their initial training with human relations courses, perhaps they would be in a stronger position to deal with the discipline problems in the classroom.

There is further research that supports the results of this investigation. Berenson (1971) compared a human relations training group with a didactic training group, a Hawthorne Effect control group, and a control group, on their levels of interpersonal functioning. After attending the training, the human relations training group demonstrated the highest level of interpersonal functioning and the group members appeared significantly better than the other groups in total competency, classroom management, understanding students, and being more humanist with the students. Moracco (1981) summarised the outcome of human relations training :

- 1- The teachers will be more able to listen to their students
- 2- The teachers will tend to pay more attention to their relationship with students
- 3- The teachers will be able to develop a more humanitarian atmosphere in the classroom
- 4- The teachers will be able to accept pupils' ideas as innovative and challenging rather than reacting to them with threats and insisting on conformity
- 5- The teachers will be able to work out interpersonal conflicts with pupils, rather than dealing with them in a disciplinarian or punitive manner.

All these outcomes of human relations training show that most of the teachers who attended the course will be able to be more humanistic with their pupils. Most professional training programmes in universities generally focus on cognitive intellectual skills. They give little emphasis to the students' emotional development. The provision of an education enabling students to make a creative responses in a rapidly changing world, suggests a need to pay more attention to personal and social development and the acquisition of interpersonal skills. Even after school has finished and during our professional lives, in spite of meeting people and working with them

we are not given any special training in interpersonal skills. This situation creates many problems in our social-life. Many educational institutions are now beginning to respond to this need or are in the process of reviewing their provision in this area. One of them is Nottingham University. Since the early seventies there has been a gradual growth of courses where experiential learning methods are used to enable teachers to improve their interpersonal relations. The aim of this research was to explore the effect of experiential courses in human relations on teacher pupil control ideology and that these. A further aim was to explore if human relations training would increase the use of counselling skills in both professional and personal life. The research described in this thesis provides an evaluation of an extended human relations course for practising teachers. The results suggest that after the one-year course there were clear gains for the participants in terms of changes in their attitudes and in their behaviour. This is reflected in both the quantitative and qualitative data. There were highly significant changes in pupil control ideology in the participants, who shifted towards a more humanistic orientation and away from a custodial orientation. There were many reports in the interview data to support this finding. Most of these responses came from indirect questions, which were not specifically asking about changes in relationships with students. This adds to the authenticity of the responses. Again, the assumption is that it is a good thing to make changes in this direction. Certainly, the participants reported that the change had had a positive effect on their relationships and with their students, that it helped to reduce their stress and gave them a better sense of control over their own lives. The last paragraph indicates the clear links between the three main variables used in this research and supports the results of earlier research which found a relationship between pairs of these variables and confirms the work of Harris and others (1984) and Cadavid and Lunenberg (1991) who demonstrated the relationships between all three. Training of this nature appears to move the participants forward in a number of areas at the same time and gives an indication of the potency of training of this nature.

A further finding was that the learning was more effective for the younger and female participants. Perhaps new learning is easier for younger people and psychological research does support this. As has been mentioned before, a stereotype

of women is that they are more concerned with human relations in education rather than the content of the curriculum and this particular result does provide indirect support for the stereotype. This is not to say that the training is not appropriate for either old and male participants. The research has evaluated one form of experiential learning and the question had to be raised as to whether the findings can be generalised to other forms of training with the same name. Because the courses are experiential and each participant is learning in a unique manner, then it is difficult to replicate the research exactly. What is required is an evaluation of a whole series of studies of different courses in different institutions to see if consistent patterns emerge from these studies. Already, this work supports the findings of Hall, Woodhouse and Wooster (1984), which was evaluating short intensive courses. Perhaps the common effect which produced the similar result is experiential learning, which had similar effects irrespective of the broader structure of the course. In conclusion, this particular form of human relations training does appear to have a positive effect on the participants. Many forms of training in the helping professions provide experiential forms of human relations training. The organisers of this training must be convinced that it is useful thing to do on the basis of their experience. This research provides evidence that there are positive gains from this form of training and that it could be made more widespread in teaching and in other professions. The positive outcomes of the research do have important implications for teacher training and probably also for other helping professions. Further research could identify which specific aspect of a complex training process were the most effective or which professional group gains most from this form of training.

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