

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
LaCrosse, Wisconsin 54601  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Candidate: Duane F. Oudenhoven

We recommend acceptance of this thesis in partial fulfillment of this candidate's requirements for the degree Master of Science in Education: College Student Personnel. The candidate has completed his oral report.

Mike Holler  
Thesis Chairperson

4/26/84  
Date

Reid F. Horle  
Thesis Committee Member

4/26/84  
Date

Bob Norton  
Thesis Committee Member

5/2/84  
Date

This thesis is approved for the College of Education.

Howard C. Rose  
Dean, Graduate Studies

5/3/84  
Date

THE EFFECT OF A REALITY THERAPY BASED IN-SERVICE  
TRAINING PROGRAM ON THE SELF-ASSESSED JOB  
PERFORMANCE OF RESIDENCE HALL DIRECTORS

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A THESIS

Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science in Education:  
College Student Personnel

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by

Duane F. Oudenhoven

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## ABSTRACT

During the 1980-81 academic year, the Housing Office at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse implemented a 30 hour in-service training program based on the principles of Reality Therapy. This study was designed to determine what effect the 30 hours of Reality Therapy based training had on the residence hall directors.

Two sample groups, an experimental group drawn from the hall directors at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse and a control group drawn from the hall directors at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, comprised the groups for testing. The relationship between in-service training and job performance of the hall director was measured utilizing a pre/posttest and by subjecting the mean scores to t-testing to determine significance. In addition, analysis of variance was performed on any t-test results that indicated significance. Participants were asked to do an initial rating and were administered the same instrument six months later. The instrument contained 19 items related to one-to-one communication skills and was designed to have participants rate themselves utilizing a 5 point Likert scale.

The results of the testing indicated that both groups were basically equal prior to the beginning of in-service training. Several individual items produced significant differences but these differences were attributed to sampling error.

Significant differences were found for three of the 19 items of pre/posttest scores of the experimental group. These differences may have been the result of the treatment, but were not enough to state that the overall posttest scores were significantly different from the experimental group's pretest scores.

The category pertaining to the Delivery of Services (System) had results which indicated a significance between the pre and posttest scores. However, the results for the Delivery of Services category were not enough to indicate a significant difference on the pre/post-test scores for the three categories (professional expectations (self), delivery of services (self) and the person (student/RA) with whom you are working) combined.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Recently, student personnel programs and more specifically, residence hall programs, have increasingly emphasized a developmental focus. In their article pertaining to the accountability of residence programs, Stimpson and Simon (1974) discuss the necessity for student personnel philosophy to reflect "a focus on individuals as whole functioning persons with a concern for overall intellectual, social, and personal development" (p. 238). Residence hall directors are being encouraged to commit themselves to the idea of helping people to expand in productive and rewarding ways. Riker (1974) states that "one objective of the residence educator is to contribute to the personal growth and development of the students" (p. 155).

This developmental approach has required a change not only in the orientation of the residence director (away from *in loco parentis*) but also in the training of the residence director. If development of the student is the top priority, a basic skill level in the educational role of the residence hall director is necessary when the individual assumes the position. What happens to the residence hall director in terms of continued training or in-service after he/she has assumed the position becomes of even greater importance.

As Miller (1974) points out, "Too often in-service education is considered a "frill" or a nonessential element for the full time staff

member who has previously completed a program of preservice education which qualified him/her for a professional level position in the first place" (p. 166).

As a result of the rapid changes occurring within residence hall environments, previous learning may become quickly outdated. Those people who are responsible for implementing in-service education programs for professional staff members need to identify the essential skills and competencies necessary for successful performance. In his article on the preparation and development of residence educators, Miller (1974) maintains in-service training is necessary to enable residence educators to "keep abreast of future learnings which will be demanded by our dynamic and changing field of endeavor" (p. 166). Assuming this to be true, hall directors must continue their educational development throughout their careers if they are to continue to perform effectively.

#### Statement Of The Problem

If the development of the whole student is the hall director's objective, how well can it be achieved without the ongoing, continual development of the whole hall director? During the 1980-81 academic year, the Housing Office at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse (hereafter referred to as UW-LaCrosse), implemented a 30 hour in-service training program based entirely on the theories and concepts of Reality Therapy. Beginning in September, 1980, the 30 hours were spread over a five month period and were completed in February, 1981. This study was designed to determine what impact the 30 hours of Reality Therapy based in-service had on the hall directors as a group as well as

individually. In addition, this study attempted to determine whether any impact that took place was personally and/or professionally growth producing.

#### Importance Of The Study

Since the inception of the Academic Staff hall director position at UW-LaCrosse, there has been periodic hall director in-service training offered. Provided with varying degree of intensity, there has been no in-service training with the magnitude of the 30 hour Reality Therapy program. Due to the depth and magnitude of the in-service, this study serves the vital function of evaluating the effectiveness and usefulness of the resources and commitment provided by the UW-LaCrosse Housing Office to implement the training. Further, it seeks to determine any change in the delivery of services by the residence hall directors and any change in professional expectations of self of the hall directors.

Despite the purported importance of professional development activities within the field of student personnel, there is little available literature on the subject. Although articles presenting in-service training models do exist, a minimum of empirical information exists which deals with the effectiveness of in-service training. A most important contribution of this study would be a method of measuring the effectiveness of in-service training for residence hall directors. These findings in combination with other subjective information could be utilized to strengthen and improve hall director in-service training or to determine the relative worth of the utili-

zation of Reality Therapy concepts for hall directors' in-service training.

#### Related Literature

While staff development means different things to different people, Beeler (1977) describes it as "in-service continuing education, or staff training, designed to enhance the competencies, skills and knowledge of individuals and to enable them to provide better services to their clientele" (p. 38). Most of the writing related to professional staff development deals with in-service that encompasses the entire division of Student Affairs and little pertaining specifically to in-service for professional residence hall directors. Over all, in-service training in student personnel work seeks to improve the quality of both its members and its programs. The reasons offered for the development and maintenance of such a program are numerous. Truitt and Gross (1966) cite the following reasons:

- 1) To improve inadequate or unrelated preservice training;
- 2) For continued professional growth of members;
- 3) To effect productive change in student personnel programs;
- 4) To provide continuity for a specialized and changing staff;
- 5) To assist in raising aspiration of staff members (p. 20).

Further, Stamatakos and Oliaro (1977) state, "In-service development is a vital method of maintaining the necessary level of information and competence to allow student personnel workers to meet the challenges of their job in an assertive, productive fashion" (p. 267).

Joseph Federico (1975) takes staff development one step further in stating, "Both personal and professional growth are the ultimate

goals of the staff development experience. Both goals are realized when the focal point in such an experience is the individual. Too often an arbitrary and artificial separation is made in regard to the development and growth of the person and the growth of the professions" (p. 8).

As much as Federico emphasizes the development of the individual, Wanzek and Cannon (1975) take the position that objectives for staff development are mainly concerned with providing staff members in student affairs with the opportunity to develop new skills that could be translated into programs with a developmental impact on students. Additionally, they believed that content should be included that staff members at various levels would view as making a contribution to their daily professional activities.

Shaffer (1967) points out that staff development is not simply an institutional responsibility to the student personnel employee but is an essential aspect of effective student personnel work. "A person cannot help other people grow if he himself has stopped growing. Individual staff members have this personal obligation.....a staff climate encouraging such an attitude does not just happen, it must be planned and developed" (p. 82).

Much of the writing related to staff development emphasizes the need for staff development, but due to the scarcity of literature on the topic, it appears that little is being done in the area. Stamatokos and Oliaro (1977) feel that "in a list of day-to-day administrative priorities, in-service development does not assume a lofty position" (p. 269). In their opinion, the former is the status of the

present situation in the majority of student personnel programs, and that consequently the professional development needs of both student personnel and programs are not being met. In a national study of staff development activities in student affairs programs, reported by Miller (1975) and sponsored by the Continuing Education Committee of the American College Personnel Association it was pointed out that "only one of every five institutions has formalized a policy statement concerning in-service education staff development programming" (p. 259). Much of the in-service activity for student personnel workers occurs off-campus in the form of local, state, and national professional association conventions, conferences, and workshops. Also, according to Miller it is that type of continuing education that receives the greatest amount of financial support. In comparison, on-campus in-service education receives one-tenth of the total staff development budget. In-service varies greatly from campus to campus both in emphasis and design. Lembcke (1973) identified 98 institutions, out of a total of 123 reporting, which indicated that they had some form of in-service education program for their residence hall student staff members who had no formal education designed to prepare them to accomplish their tasks. Twenty percent of those surveyed had no in-service for student staff and it is predictable that an even higher percentage had no in-service for full time staff members who had previously completed some type of professional education.

Miller (1974) states that "...residence educators, like everyone else in society, must continue their educational development throughout their careers if they are to continue to perform successfully" (p. 166).

In spite of the importance of professional development its components are imprecisely understood. However, in-service training as a general topic has received some attention (Truitt and Gross, 1966, and Stamatakos and Oliaro, 1972) and some campus models have been reported.

Passons (1969) reported a pilot project of in-service training for student personnel staff focusing on a single aspect of counseling - empathic understanding. In the pilot project, there were four sessions of approximately 90 minutes at weekly intervals, with each session designed as an interrelated unit in the series. Twenty-two prospective participants were suggested by staff personnel from two offices within the Student Affairs Division of the University of Pennsylvania and three chose to take part. Passons' conclusions, drawn from participants' subjective evaluations, stated that the format seemed to be an appropriate avenue in the development of an in-service training program. Further, the findings showed that:

- a) Eleven of the 13 participants would have repeated the project;
- b) Ten of the 12 who would be maintaining their positions indicated an interest in continuing;
- c) Twelve of the 13 participants felt they would recommend the experience to their associates (p. 38).

Updating counseling skills and practice was also the objective of an in-service training for student personnel workers at the Clearwater Campus of St. Petersburg Junior College and at the St. Petersburg campus. Jones (1971) reported that as a result of the 30 hour, ten week seminar, a degree of change seemed to take place in counselor attitude and technique, specifically in the areas of responding

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techniques, listening techniques, and sensitivity to feeling levels.

Whereas Passons (1969) and Jones (1971) concentrated on a single dimension regarding in-service training, the majority of literature illustrated a more comprehensive topic area for in-service training. Lambert and Geffen (1974) described how seventeen institutions in New York State implemented a consortium approach to in-service education during the 1972-73 academic year. With a one afternoon per month setup, ten in-service programs were held that had close to 100 different professionals participating in at least one session. The participating institutions reflected a comprehensive diversity of types: two year, four year, private, parochial, public commuter, residential, coeducational, and unisex. The institutions reflected a true diversity of philosophical concepts, with the student personnel departments ranging in size from 1 to 22 professionals. The consortium approach to contemporary problems covered information pertaining to union negotiations, justification of staffing and salary, developmental counseling, professional resources, and in-service training. According to Lambert and Geffen (1974) the most important aspect of the training was "the development of an atmosphere and attitude of professional concern. People seemed to really care about people" (p. 318).

Perhaps the most prevalent model of those student affairs divisions that do plan and implement a complete in-service training program for all departments is that of a "free university" setup.

Meyerson (1974) summarized how the Division of Student Affairs at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln planned and implemented an innovative staff development program on its campus. Staff development

was implemented in two phases, the first of which had primary emphasis on "colleague interaction" and "informational emphasis". Colleague interaction provided the opportunity for all levels of staff from all departments to personalize their relationships in order to maximize individual professional and social growth. Informational emphasis provided an opportunity for each staff member to learn as much as possible of the philosophy, organization and services existent in each of the departments. Colleague interaction and informational emphasis needs were met via a "staff development week" in which each department head scheduled talks with groups of eight to ten staff members from other departments. In the second phase, emphasis was placed on "skill training" and "thinking time" needs of the staff. Skill training provided an opportunity for staff to develop more effectively those actual skills that are necessary in everyday work performance. Thinking time provided an opportunity for staff to critically examine and study current issues and emerging philosophies in higher education. Skill training and thinking time needs were met through a Free University model. The Free University model was entitled "Mini-University" and offered a number of short term courses on a variety of topics.

Spanning a period of three months, the Free "mini-university" provided an opportunity for all staff members including janitorial and secretarial staff to participate. The mini-university offered 16 courses ranging from higher education in Nebraska to life planning. Each course was comprised of anywhere from two to six one hour sessions. Individuals with appropriate expertise, experience and

interest comprised the faculty. A total of 162 individuals enrolled in the offered mini-courses.

As a result of the mini-university, Meyerson (1974) feels that, "we have found a training formula that simultaneously appeals to the student activity advisor, office worker, maid in the residence halls and many more whom we were unable to reach with past efforts." Further, he states that "staff members are more meaningful interacting with one another and identifying with the institution with greater pride and confidence" (p. 33).

Beeler (1975) offers a case study of professional staff development used by the Division of Student Affairs at Eastern Michigan University. To achieve specific instructional objectives with a small group of learners in a brief period of time a mini-course format was designed. Mini-U, the in-service training program, had three objectives:

- 1) To provide staff with the opportunity to enhance, refresh, and learn skills and techniques useable in daily student personnel work;
- 2) to provide staff with the opportunity to examine timely issues; trends, and concerns in student personnel work, and
- 3) to provide staff with the opportunity to interact with fellow professionals from other student personnel offices and with other persons within the university community (Beeler, p. 40).

Mini-U course proposal outline forms were made available to all members of the Division of Student Affairs. Eleven non-tuition Mini-U courses were generated by the division for the fall semester. All staff members in the division were expected to participate in the Mini-U either as a learner or as an instructor. Seven of the eleven Mini-U

courses met the set enrollment minimums. The fall semester calendar for the Mini-U covered the last two weeks in October and the first two weeks in November. Classes met once a week for two hours and participants had the opportunity to earn partial Continuing Education Units (CEU's). In the seven courses offered during the fall semester, there were 50 participants. The winter semester Mini-U calendar covered the last two weeks in February and the first two weeks in March. Again, seven courses were offered and there were a total of 63 participants.

For evaluation, a six-item questionnaire was sent to all professional staff members regardless of their involvement either semester. Thirty-one out of the 36 respondents supported the continuation of the Mini-U. Through the evaluations of the Mini-U, Beeler (1975) believes that "the student affairs staff has substantially endorsed the continuation of some form of the current in-service program" (p. 43).

Wanzek and Canon (1975) reported that a professional growth committee at Northern Illinois University expanded the concept of the use of mini-courses for in-service training.

At the beginning of the second semester, the Professional Growth Committee used the resources of faculty and staff from various departments to conduct mini-courses for division personnel. Twelve courses were offered ranging from departmental budgeting to health and patient care and were spread over a three month period. Attendance for the courses varied from four persons to as many as fifty.

In addition to the mini-courses, an opportunity for professional staff to develop was presented in the form of a mini-grant program.

The mini-grant program was aimed at allowing professional staff to be exposed to successful programs on other campuses that were developmentally oriented. Staff members were invited to submit grant proposals to the Professional Growth Committee with preference given to those that incorporated the following conditions:

- a) staff members from more than one office in student affairs were involved;
- b) there was provision for a pilot run of the program on the NIU campus in the current academic year;
- c) the program could make effective use of undergraduate paraprofessionals and was thus capable of wider dissemination; and
- d) an evaluation scheme was described (Wanzek and Canon, 1975, p. 243).

Awards for mini-grants averaged between \$700 and \$800. Of the twelve mini-grant proposals reviewed, six received approval. In addition, recipients were encouraged to present their experience through a mini-course.

Wanzek and Canon (1975) pointed out that as a result of the year's staff development efforts, "there was a breakdown in the isolation and self-interest of the individual departments and a greater cohesiveness and interest in the service to students in the entire division. Morale was noticeably improved with the emphasis on the importance of each individual's contribution to the goals of the division" (p. 421).

Although much of the in-service/professional development literature focuses on in-service training as a general topic or cites specific campus models, Rhatigan and Crawford's (1978) survey assessment provided some empirical data on the value of selected professional development experiences to student personnel practitioners. The

principal purpose of their study was to determine how major student affairs administrators (N=40) rated potential professional development activities. Highly placed student personnel administrators from 464 institutions of higher education were asked to convey the amount of help they would receive from twelve professional development activities. Responses for subgroups defined by highest degree earned, institutional type (two year/four year, public/private) and professional organization affiliations did not differ from each other.

The following summarizes the results of the survey:

The administrators saw the personal exchange of ideas with others (discussions with a) student personnel colleagues at other institutions, b) students at my institution, and c) faculty and other administrators at my institution) as their most helpful source of professional development. Attending professional meetings received the next highest rating, with smaller meetings being more attractive than national conventions. Reading activities ranked as the least satisfactory source of professional development to practicing administrators (Rhatigan and Crawford, 1978, p. 51-52).

Rhatigan's and Crawford's findings that personal exchange of ideas with others is the most helpful source of professional development are supported and reflected in other literature. Beeler (1975) cites that "providing staff with the opportunity to interact with fellow professionals from other student personnel offices (p. 40) was one of the main objectives of Eastern Michigan University's Mini-U in-service program. "Colleague Interaction: The opportunity for all levels of staff and from all departments to personalize their relationships in order to maximize individual professional growth," (Meyerson, 1974, p. 31) was a main categorical need for the University of

Nebraska's mini-university in-service program. In addition, Lambert and Geffen (1974) point out that as a result of the inter-institutional consortium approach to in-service training, "sharing and cooperation took place with the genuine desire to help a colleague and also with the knowledge that similar assistance in return was available for the asking" (p. 318).

Much of the literature pertaining to professional development centers on models of in-service training for a wide range of student personnel participants, with topics taking less of a priority than the delivery of the in-service training. However, one focus most prevalent in the literature on in-service training is (the focus on) counseling. Counseling related skills such as understanding, empathy, respect, genuineness and specificity have been identified by authorities (Avila, Combs, and Purkey, 1971) as being of special importance in promoting change in clients, both individual and group alike. Miller (1974) points out that "even though individual or group counseling may not be listed as a specific responsibility of every residence educator, no one should attempt to function within the role without exposure to facilitation-skill building experiences" (p. 170).

In Passons' previously mentioned in-service pilot project, the training sessions focused on empathic understanding (of counseling). This project was based in part on Berdie's (1966) position that, "the definition, purposes, and avenues of student personnel work are dependent on the methods we employ. If any one tool is basic in our kit, it is counseling" (p. 131).

In another previously mentioned article, Jones (1971) cited the student personnel staff of the Clearwater Campus of St. Petersburg Junior College's conclusion that "we needed to enhance our procedures and techniques of working with students individually - we needed to update our counseling practice" (p. 1).

At the conclusion of the 30 hour in-service training project, the counselors rated the degree of change the seminar provided. The greatest degree of change seemed to be in "counselor attitude and technique, specifically in the areas of responding techniques, listening techniques and sensitivity to feeling levels" (Jones, 1971, p. 3).

Boggarth conducted a pilot training program for residence hall counselors in 1971 which used three major interpersonal dimensions related to client outcome in counseling as a general base. All three dimensions (empathy, warmth and genuineness) were considered validly measurable. A pilot training project was conducted focusing on one dimension empathy. A group which would receive training in empathy was selected as well as a control group. Both groups consisted of residence hall counselors from one university. The pilot project included six hours of training which consisted of three phases: didactic review, listening to high-empathy counseling tapes, and role playing. The results were as follows:

The initial ratings of all the participants were below two (on a 10 point empathy scale). The results suggested: 1) a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-scores in the levels of empathy for both the experimental and control groups. The increase being from 1.6 to 3.9

for the experimental group and from 1.75 to 2.5 for the control group (Boggarth, 1970, p. 45).

Staff members of residence halls at the University of North Dakota were given counseling-oriented in-service training to meet the educational and developmental needs of resident students (Jackson, 1967). Training materials and techniques were developed to provide sub-professional counseling skills to 12 head residents and 12 undergraduate assistants. Approximately 20 two hour training sessions were held covering self understanding, counseling theory and process, recognition and referral of symptoms and problems, and developmental psychology of college students. Films, lectures, role playing, and group discussions were utilized in the training. Jackson (1967) concluded that "the training program proved practical, trainees displayed an increase in understanding responses in counseling situations, and changes in job performance were observed" (p. 49).

Terrell and Gordon (1978) investigated the effects of micro-training in attending behavior on the response behavior and attending behavior of 25 paraprofessional orientation leaders for the 1976 New Student Orientation Program at Mississippi State University.

Intensive paraprofessional training in attending behavior was conducted during a once-a-week, three hour training session. The students were also administered a pretest Helper Response Preference Inventory. Taped interview sessions were rated for attending behavior using the Aldridge Rating Scale (Aldridge, 1972). Next, the subjects received microtraining in attending behavior skills. The subjects' attending behaviors were again video taped and rated. The final step

was to administer the Helper Response Preference Inventory as a post-test.

Summarizing the findings, Terrell and Gordon (1978) found:

- 1) There was a significant difference from pre-rating to postrating in attending behavior.
- 2) There was a significant difference from pretesting to posttesting in response behavior.
- 3) There was no significant difference in pre and postcorrelations between the two criterion variables (attending behavior and response behavior) (p. 190).

Although counseling skills are the most commonly shared and utilized skills among all members of the student personnel field, there exists a wide variety of styles within the area of counseling and the area of counseling skills. One specific counseling method utilized in this study is that of Dr. William Glasser and his concept, Reality Therapy. The concepts of Reality Therapy are applicable in a variety of settings and in almost any helping relationship. One of the strengths of Glasser's work according to William Appel (1974) is that "he can be understood by an intelligent person who is interested in changing behavior" (p. 58-59).

Reality Therapy's general applicability is further illustrated by Muro (1976) who points out how "counselors, psychologists, and teachers have discovered that the principles of Reality Therapy provide working guidelines for counseling, therapy, and teaching" (p. 94).

The basic premise of Reality Therapy is that a person is accountable for his/her behavior. Responsible behavior is the basis for one's happiness. Responsible behavior means fulfilling one's needs for love and worth without hurting others in the process.

Corsini (1973) in his review of current psychotherapies offers the following summary of the eight principles based on the concepts of Reality Therapy.

- 1) The relationship must be personal.
- 2) We must focus on the present behavior rather than emotions, because only behavior can be changed.
- 3) We must focus on the present, on what the individual is doing now, and his present attempts to succeed.
- 4) We must have the individual make a value judgement about what he is now doing that is contributing to his failure.
- 5) The individual is assisted in developing a plan to alter his behavior and plan a better course.
- 6) He must choose a better way and commit himself to his choice. It is from commitment that individuals develop maturity.
- 7) When an individual has made a commitment to change his behavior, no excuse is accepted for not following through. The therapist, in a nonjudgemental manner, assists the individual in developing a new plan rather than focusing on the reasons the old ones failed.
- 8) The therapist eliminates punishment and instead invokes discipline (p. 315).

Through accepting responsibility for one's own behavior, symptoms begin to disappear and one will be more able to gain respect, love and most important (in Glasser's theory), a success identity.

#### Assumptions and Hypotheses

Within the broad question to be answered by the study lay several more specific assumptions and hypotheses. The major questions raised by this study have been expressed in null hypotheses form.

#### Assumptions

1. The size of the residence hall and the sex of the residence hall population will have no effect on the individual hall director's self assessment of their delivery of service or professional expectations.

2. The academic background of the individual hall director will have no effect on the individual hall director's self assessment of their delivery of service or professional expectations.
3. The sex of the individual hall director will have no effect on the individual hall director's self assessment of their delivery of service or professional expectations.
4. The number of years of service as a hall director will have no effect on the individual hall director's self assessment of their delivery of service or professional expectations.

#### Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the pretest self assessment scores of the control group and the experimental group.
2. There is no significant difference in the posttest self assessment scores of the control group and the experimental group.
3. There is no significant difference in areas of professional expectations, delivery of services and the person with whom they are working between the control group and the experimental group.

#### Limitations

The following limitations may have had some effect on the results and must be considered by the reader:

1. Between the initial testing and posttesting, subjects may have become influenced by experience gained on the job rather than the treatment.
2. Subjective self evaluation used to measure the effects of treatment is a somewhat unreliable technique and a threat to the

validity of the experiment. Changes in evaluative standards due to an increased insight or skill over the period of time between the tests may have introduced error.

3. The small sample sizes create a situation that requires a large change from the pretest to the posttest scores to reach a level of significant difference. Also, the possibility of sampling error is great due to the sample size.
4. The samples are not necessarily representative of the target population; consequently results cannot necessarily be generalized to any groups other than the participating groups.

#### Definition Of Terms

The following terms were used throughout this thesis.

Reality Therapy - A therapy that leads all individuals toward reality, toward grappling successfully with the tangible and intangible aspects of the real world.

Perceptions - The process of becoming "aware of" in one's mind, to achieve understanding of a situation.

Impact - Effect or influence an experience has on an individual.

Student Personnel Worker - Professional person employed in a variety of student services in higher education.

Residence Hall Director - A person who focuses primarily on student needs, development of student responsibility and welfare of the hall community and directly responsible for the administration of a college residence hall.

Residence Hall - Building on a college campus that houses college students.

Housing Office - Coordinating center of the residence hall program responsible, in part, for maintaining a positive social atmosphere within the residence halls.

In-Service - Additional training that takes place during the academic term to maintain and foster professional staff development.

Job-Performance - Results, both tangible and intangible, of one's professional occupational efforts.

Needs Assessment - Instrument designed to measure an individual's level of proficiency in a certain area or combination of areas.

Areas of Job Performance:

Self - Professional expectation of the individual skills.

Service - Delivery of services with the job position.

Student/RA - The person with whom the hall director is working.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### Sample and Setting

This study consisted of two sample groups, an experimental and a control group, both drawn from the pool of university residence hall directors. The experimental sample group was drawn from the residence hall director staff at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse. This staff was selected based on their participation in an existing in-service training program. The control group was drawn from the residence hall director staff at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Included in the experimental group were the full time, academic staff hall directors of UW-LaCrosse. One graduate assistant hall director was not included due to an inability to regularly participate in the in-service training program. A total of ten hall directors were included in the study, of which eight had completed a Masters degree program with a Counseling and Guidance or College Student Personnel emphasis.

A control sample group consisting of five residence hall directors, was drawn from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire housing program. Of the five who participated, all were full time, academic staff hall directors and four had completed Masters degree programs either in Counseling and Guidance or College Student Personnel.

The existing in-service training program for the residence hall directors at UW-LaCrosse provided the means for accomplishing this study. Participants in the in-service training program comprised the experimental group. The study was conducted to fulfill the thesis requirement within the College Student Personnel Program at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse.

### Research Design

In an attempt to empirically measure the relationship between in-service training and perceived job performance of the residence hall director, a pre/posttest with equivalent groups was utilized. This design enabled the independent variable to be tested by subjecting the mean scores to t-testing to determine significance. In addition, an analysis of variance using pretest scores as covariates strengthened the research design.

Between the pre and the posttests, the experimental group participated in a 30 hour in-service training program. Beginning in September and concluding in February of the 1980-81 academic year, the in-service consisted of the presentation and utilization of the concepts of Reality Therapy. The in-service training was the independent variable tested in this study and perceived job performance of the residence hall director was the dependent variable. Participants were asked to rate statements pertaining to their job performance according to the degree to which they found them to be true. Participants were asked to do an initial rating and were administered the same questionnaire six months later.

Due to the fact pre and posttests were administered six months apart, the participants ability to recall the questions on their previous responses was limited. However, because the questions pertained to self perceived job performance, some concern was given to the fact that participants had six months of work experience to draw upon between the pre and posttests.

Selection bias may have been introduced when the intact hall director in-service group was used as the experimental group. With five out of a possible nine participating in the control group it may appear that some selection bias was also present in the control group. However, all nine were invited to participate and the five who did take part were a random grouping. Also, they were not recruited as a control group and participated in the study unknowingly.

Due to the nature of this study, a totally random selection of subjects was not possible. Any generalizations drawn from this study would pertain only to a like section of the population (residence hall directors). Because this study was designed to find the results of an existing program, it eliminates any possibility of participants knowing they were experimental subjects.

#### Instrumentation

The test instrument was constructed by Dr. Robert Norton, an instructor in the College of Education at UW-LaCrosse. Dr. Norton, a certified Reality Therapist, was the instructor of the 30 hour in-service for the residence hall directors.

The instrument (Appendix A) contained 19 items related to one-to-one interpersonal communication skills, and was designed to have

participants rate themselves using a 5 point interval scale.

Items one through eight pertained to the residence hall director's professional expectation of him/herself. The second grouping contained five items pertaining to the hall director's delivery of services. Six statements pertaining to the person (student/RA) with whom the residence hall director worked comprised a third grouping.

On each of the 19 items, the evaluator was asked to rate the statement according to the degree to which he/she found it to be true. The rating utilized a 5 point Likert-type scale that ranged from little or no indication or evidence that the statement was true to strong indication or evidence that the statement was true.

In general, the instrument measured the hall director's one-to-one interpersonal communication skills. For the purpose of this study, the one-to-one communication skills are related to job performance. This raises some questions regarding the validity of the instrument. However, the instrument was designed to enable the individual to rate him/herself skillwise but in direct relation to his/her work as a hall director.

Because of the situational nature of the study, the reliability of the instrument is difficult to assess. Even if there was no sure method of describing and measuring attitudes and beliefs, "the measurement of opinion, in many instances, may be closely related to the actual feeling or attitude of the individual" (Best, 1959, p. 169). Use of a Likert-type scale value takes into account the inference of attitude through objective ranking. As a result, it would be reasonable to expect similar results with repeated use of the instrument.

### Procedure

On September 2, 1980, during the first in-service training session, the pretest was administered to the experimental group - the ten hall directors at UW-LaCrosse. Over the next six months, the experimental group participated in 30 hours of in-service training based on the concepts of Reality Therapy. Conducted by Dr. Robert Norton, a certified Reality Therapist, the in-service related the concepts of Reality Therapy to one-to-one communication skills. Presented in four hour segments on a bi-weekly basis (monthly in December and January), participants were given both an overview of the concepts and an experimental application. A posttest utilizing the identical pretest instrument was administered upon the conclusion (February 16, 1981) of the 30 hour in-service training.

Residence hall directors at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire were selected for a control group. The selection was based on the similarity of the residence hall director position at the two schools. Both institutions employ professional, full time hall directors with Masters degrees. Five hall directors at UW-Eau Claire participated as the control group. The control group was pretested on October 8, 1980. Over the following six months, there was no interaction with the control group. A posttest of the control group was administered to the five participants on March 5, 1984. After completing the posttest instrument, members of the control group were given an overview of the experimental group's in-service training program.

### Data Analysis

A series of non directional (two tailed) t-tests were administered to seven separate sets of scores. These seven sets ranged from the comparison of pre and posttest scores from within the experimental group. Any results of the seven separate t-test run that indicated a substantial statistical difference were then to be subjected to an analysis of variance (ANOVA). ANOVA was utilized to help determine the relationship between the posttest scores of the two groups and the pretest scores using pretest scores as the variable.

### Delimitations

The following delimitations must be considered by the reader:

1. Findings may apply only to full time, post graduate hall directors. Hall directors with different hiring and/or job requirements (part time) were not included in the study.
2. Results apply only to the residence hall directors at UW-LaCrosse and UW-Eau Claire since residence hall directors from other schools were not included in the study.
3. Findings apply only to the self perceived job performance of the individual hall director since no other objective evaluation was a part of the study.
4. Due to the nature of the study, the sample size of the experimental group (N=10) and the control group (N=5) were small. These small n's required such a great amount of change in posttest scores from pretest scores that statistical significance was unlikely.

5. The possibility of selection bias was so great that the internal validity of the research was questionable.

CHAPTER III  
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

In order to determine what, if any, effect in-service training had on the professional skills of the participating group of residence hall directors, a series of non-directional (2 tail) t-tests were administered. A total of seven separate t-tests were completed and data analyzed.

The first t-test examined whether there was any significance between the means of the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups. Results of the first test are shown in Table 1. T-values from items ten, twelve and thirteen all surpassed the critical t-value and indicate a significance in the difference between the two group means on each of the three items.

TABLE 1  
PRETEST BETWEEN GROUPS

STATEMENT	GROUP	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
Professional Expectation (self)				
1. I possess knowledge....	Experimental	3.70	10	1.49
	Control	4.20	5	
2. I manage successfully....	Experimental	3.80	10	0.0
	Control	3.80	5	
3. I am competent....	Experimental	3.90	10	1.16
	Control	3.20	5	

Table 1, cont.

STATEMENT	GROUP	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
4. I have developed....	Experimental	3.60	10	0.00
	Control	3.60	5	
5. My interaction with....	Experimental	4.20	10	.60
	Control	4.40	5	
6. I am able to relate....	Experimental	3.90	10	.28
	Control	3.80	5	
7. I feel confident....	Experimental	4.20	10	.00
	Control	4.20	5	
8. I am capable....	Experimental	3.20	10	.60
	Control	3.40	5	
Delivery of Services (System)				
9. My role and responsibilities....	Experimental	3.30	10	1.49
	Control	3.80	5	
10. My work place....	Experimental	4.00	10	3.29*
	Control	3.00	5	
11. Necessary written....	Experimental	4.10	10	.63
	Control	3.80	5	
12. Staff members agree....	Experimental	3.40	10	2.33*
	Control	2.60	5	
13. Staff interaction....	Experimental	3.70	10	2.68*
	Control	2.80		
The Person (student/R.A.) with whom you are working:				
14. is able to acquire....	Experimental	4.20	10	.69
	Control	4.00	5	
15. has a significant....	Experimental	3.60	10	.00
	Control	3.60	5	
16. understands what is....	Experimental	4.10	10	.62
	Control	4.40	5	

Table 1, cont.

STATEMENT	GROUP	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
17. understands to whom....	Experimental	4.10	10	.62
	Control	4.40	5	
18. accepts responsibility for....	Experimental	3.90	10	.22
	Control	4.00	5	
19. accepts responsibility for....	Experimental	4.10	10	.28
	Control	4.20	5	

df = 13, t-value  $\leq$  2.16

A second t-test was run to determine whether there was any significance in the difference between the two groups' means on the posttest scores. Table 2 shows the test results and the data revealed a significant difference between the two groups on items ten, twelve, and thirteen.

TABLE 2

## PRETEST BETWEEN GROUPS

STATEMENTS	GROUP	MEAN	N	t-TEST
Professional Expectations (self)				
1. I possess knowledge....	Experimental	4.00	10	0.00
	Control	4.00	5	
2. I manage successful....	Experimental	4.00	10	0.00
	Control	4.00	5	
3. I am competent....	Experimental	4.10	10	.22
	Control	4.00	5	
4. I have developed....	Experimental	3.70	10	.80
	Control	4.00	5	
5. My interaction with....	Experimental	4.30	10	.29
	Control	4.40	5	

Table 2, cont.

STATEMENT	GROUP	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
6. I am able to relate....	Experimental	4.50	10	.86
	Control	4.20	5	
7. I feel confident....	Experimental	4.40	10	.00
	Control	4.40	5	
8. I am capable....	Experimental	3.80	10	.56
	Control	4.00	5	
Delivery of Services (System)				
9. My role and responsibilities....	Experimental	3.700	10	.73
	Control	3.40	5	
10. My work place....	Experimental	4.70	10	2.26*
	Control	3.80	5	
11. Necessary written....	Experimental	4.10	10	.24
	Control	4.20	5	
12. Staff members agree....	Experimental	4.00	10	5.37*
	Control	2.00	5	
13. Staff interaction....	Experimental	4.40	10	9.71*
	Control	1.60	5	
The person (student/R.A.) with whom you are working:				
14. is able to acquire....	Experimental	4.30	10	.98
	Control	4.00	5	
15. has a significant....	Experimental	4.10	10	1.16
	Control	3.60	5	
16. understands what is....	Experimental	4.40	10	1.73
	Control	3.60	5	
17. understands to whom....	Experimental	4.50	10	1.29
	Control	4.00	5	

Table 2, cont.

STATEMENT	GROUP	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
18. accepts responsibility for....	Experimental	4.10	10	1.87
	Control	3.40	5	
19. accepts responsibility for....	Experimental	4.10	10	1.62
	Control	3.40	5	

The data in Table 3 indicated a significant difference between the two groups on the pretest scores for the second category of questions. Category two was titled Delivery of Services (System) and consisted of items nine through thirteen.

TABLE 3

## PRETEST BETWEEN GROUPS

CATEGORY	GROUP	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
1. Professional Expectation (Self) (items 1-8)	Experimental	30.50	10	.07
	Control	30.60	5	
2. Delivery of Services (System) (items 9-13)	Experimental	28.50	10	2.98*
	Control	16.00	5	
3. The person (student/RA) with whom you are working (items 14-19)	Experimental	24.00	10	.29
	Control	24.60	5	

When analyzing using t-tests, the difference between the two groups on the posttest of the three categories, category two was significant at the .05 level. In addition, the third category yielded a marginally significant t-value. Table 4 illustrates the results of

the posttest between the groups according to categories.

TABLE 4  
POSTTEST BETWEEN GROUPS

CATEGORY	GROUP	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
1. Professional Expectations (Self) (items 1-8)	Experimental	32.80	10	.12
	Control	33.00	5	
2. Delivery of Services (System) (items 9-13)	Experimental	20.90	10	5.93*
	Control	15.00	5	
3. The person (student/RA) with whom you are working (items 14-19)	Experimental	25.50	10	2.14
	Control	22.20	5	

The difference between the paired pre and posttest scores with both groups combined are shown on Table 5. The difference between the paired samples on items six, eight and ten were significant.

TABLE 5  
PRE/POSTTEST PAIRED SAMPLES

STATEMENT	TEST	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
Professional Expectations (Self)				
1. I possess knowledge....	Pre	3.8667	15	.81
	Post	4.000		
2. I manage successfully....	Pre	3.80	15	.90
	Post	4.00		
3. I am competent....	Pre	3.667	15	1.70
	Post	4.0667		
4. I have developed....	Pre	3.60	15	.90
	Post	3.80		

Table 5, cont.

STATEMENT	TEST	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
5. My interaction with....	Pre	4.2667	15	.32
	Post	4.3333		
6. I am able to....	Pre	3.8667	15	4.00*
	Post	4.4000		
7. I feel confident....	Pre	4.20	15	1.15
	Post	4.40		
8. I am capable....	Pre	3.2667	15	2.20*
	Post	3.8667		
Delivery of Services (System)				
9. My role and responsibilities....	Pre	3.4667	15	.69
	Post	3.600		
10. My work place....	Pre	3.6667	15	4.78*
	Post	4.4000		
11. Necessary written....	Pre	4.000	15	.52
	Post	4.133		
12. Staff members agree....	Pre	3.1333	15	.82
	Post	3.3333		
13. Staff interaction....	Pre	3.4000	15	.21
	Post	3.4667		
The person (student/RA) with whom you are working:				
14. is able to acquire....	Pre	4.1333	15	.32
	Post	4.2000		
15. has a significant....	Pre	3.6000	15	1.00
	Post	3.9333		
16. understands what is....	Pre	4.2000	15	0.00
	Post	4.2000		

Table 5, cont.

STATEMENT	TEST	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
17. understands to whom....	Pre	4.2000	15	.41
	Post	4.333		
18. accepts responsibility for....	Pre	3.9333	15	.22
	Post	3.8667		
19. accepts responsibility for....	Pre	4.1333	15	1.00
	Post	3.8667		

df = 14, t-value  $\leq$  2.14

With the t-test performed to determine significance between the paired samples within the experimental group for pretest-posttest, items six, ten and thirteen were found to have significant differences (Table 6). Item twelve was found to have a marginally significant difference.

TABLE 6

## PRE/POSTTEST EXPERIMENTAL (Within Group)

STATEMENT	TEST	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
Professional Expectations (Self)				
1. I possess knowledge....	Pre	3.7000	10	1.41
	Post	4.000		
2. I manage successfully....	Pre	3.8000	10	.61
	Post	4.000		
3. I am competent....	Pre	3.9000	10	.61
	Post	4.1000		
4. I have developed....	Pre	3.6000	10	.43
	Post	3.7000		
5. My interaction with....	Pre	4.2000	10	.36
	Post	4.3000		

Table 6, cont.

STATEMENT	TEST	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
6. I am able to relate....	Pre Post	3.9000 4.5000	10	3.67*
7. I feel confident....	Pre Post	4.2000 4.4000	10	1.00
8. I am capable of....	Pre Post	3.2000 3.8000	10	1.62
Delivery of Services (System)				
9. My role and responsibilities....	Pre Post	3.3000 3.7000	10	1.81
10. My work place....	Pre Post	4.000 4.7000	10	4.58*
11. Necessary written....	Pre Post	4.100 4.00	10	0.00
12. Staff members agree....	Pre Post	3.4000 4.000	10	2.25
13. Staff interaction....	Pre Post	3.7000 4.4000	10	2.69*
The person (student/RA) with whom you are working:				
14. is able to acquire....	Pre Post	4.2000 4.3000	10	.36
15. has a significant....	Pre Post	3.6000 4.1000	10	1.34
16. understands what is....	Pre Post	4.1000 4.4000	10	.76
17. understands to whom....	Pre Post	4.1000 4.5000	10	.94

Table 6, cont.

STATEMENT	TEST	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
18. accepts responsibility for....	Pre	3.9000	10	.48
	Post	4.1000		
19. accepts responsibility for....	Pre	4.1000	10	.00
	Post	4.1000		

df = 9, t-value  $\leq$  2.26

Within group analysis of the pretest-posttest scores of the control group is shown on Table 7. Of the nineteen items, only two (number 3 and 13) had differences that were significantly different.

TABLE 7

PRE/POSTTEST		CONTROL (WITHIN GROUP)		
STATEMENT	TEST	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
Professional Expectations (Self)				
1. I possess knowledge....	Pre	4.2000	5	1.00
	Post	4.000		
2. I manage successfully....	Pre	3.8000	5	1.00
	Post	4.000		
3. I am competent....	Pre	3.200	5	4.00*
	Post	4.000		
4. I have developed....	Pre	3.6000	5	.78
	Post	4.000		
5. My interaction with....	Pre	4.400	5	.00
	Post	4.400		
6. I am able to relate....	Pre	3.800	5	1.63
	Post	4.200		
7. I feel confident....	Pre	4.200	5	.53
	Post	4.400		
8. I am capable....	Pre	3.4000	5	1.50
	Post	4.000		

Table 7, cont.

STATEMENT	TEST	MEAN	N	t-VALUE
Delivery of Services (System)				
9. My role and responsibilities....	Pre	3.800	5	1.63
	Post	3.400		
10. My work place....	Pre	3.000	5	2.14
	Post	3.800		
11. Necessary written....	Pre	3.800	5	1.63
	Post	4.200		
12. Staff members agree....	Pre	2.600	5	2.45
	Post	2.000		
13. Staff interaction....	Pre	2.8000	5	3.21*
	Post	1.6000		
The person (student/RA) with whom you are working:				
14. is able to acquire....	Pre	4.000	5	0.0
	Post	4.000		
15. has a significant....	Pre	3.6000	5	0.0
	Post	3.6000		
16. understands what is....	Pre	4.4000	5	1.18
	Post	3.8000		
17. understands to whom....	Pre	4.4000	5	1.00
	Post	4.0000		
18. accepts responsibility for....	Pre	4.0000	5	2.45
	Post	3.4000		
19. accepts responsibility for....	Pre	4.2000	5	2.14
	Post	3.4000		
df = 4, t-value $\leq$ 2.78				

Overall, the item by item results contained only a few items that proved to be statistically significant. In addition to the t-tests, the design of the study called for the category data that indicated significance by t-testing to be subjected to an analysis of variance. F-tests were computed on each of the items within category 2 as well as the overall category data generated by the combined totals of each of the individual items which comprised the category.

The ANOVAS (Table 8) computed to test for significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores of the two groups, showed that a significant difference existed on items 12 ( $F = 16.104$ ), item 13 ( $F = 57.778$ ) and category 2 ( $F = 14.954$ ).

TABLE 8

SOURCE	SUM OF SOURCES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F-RATIO
<u>Item #9</u>				
Between groups	1.1555	1	1.1555	2.730
Within groups	5.078	12	.423	
Total	6.233	13	.479	
<u>Item #10</u>				
Between groups	.041	1	.041	.106
Within groups	4.650	12	.387	
Total	4.691	13	.360	
<u>Item #11</u>				
Between groups	.088	1	.088	.146
Within groups	7.245	12	.604	
Total	7.332	13	.564	

Table 8, cont.

SOURCE	SUM OF SOURCES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F-RATIO
<u>Item #12</u>				
Between groups	7.094	1	7.094	16.104*
Within groups	5.286	12	.440	
Total	12.38	13	.952	
<u>Item #13</u>				
Between groups	17.294	1	17.294	57.778*
Within groups	3.592	12	.299	
Total	20.886	13	1.606	
<u>Category 2</u>				
Between groups	47.076	1	47.076	14.954*
Within groups	37.777	12	3.148	
Total	84.853	13	6.527	
<u><math>p \leq .05</math></u>				

Discussion

In undertaking the study, the researcher expected the experimental group to indicate a significant gain in their one-to-one interpersonal communication skills, as a result of participation in the 30 hours of in-service training. In addition, the researcher expected both groups to be relatively equal on their pretest scores. These expectations were based on earlier studies which indicated that participants in counselor training workshops did acquire increased ability as an outcome of workshop participation.

As expected, the data from the study illustrated the equality of the two groups prior to the 30 hours of in-service training for the experimental group. Of the 19 items tested, only three were found to have significant differences (Table 1). The three, items 10, 12, 13

were under the Delivery of Services category, and pertained to the hall director's ability to establish productive interpersonal relationships (item 10), staff members' ability to agree on intervention strategies (item 12) and staff interactions characterizing positive and active involvement (item 13). Since the pretest was meant to demonstrate the equality between the groups, the finding of significant differences must be attributed to sampling error. With  $n=5$  in the control group, significance was more likely a result of sampling error. When data for the three categories was examined for pretest differences (Table 3), the Delivery of Services (category 2) showed significance. However, this significance can be attributed to the statistical differences found on the pretest scores of three of the five items in the category that previously were explained to be a result of sampling error. Due to the few significant differences in the pretest data and with the significance due to sampling error, the results supported hypothesis 1; that there was no significant difference in the pretest self assessment scores of the control group and the experimental group.

Only a few of the posttest scores indicated that 30 hours of in-service training significantly changed the participants' one-to-one interpersonal communication skills. When comparing the posttest scores of the two groups significant differences were found for items 10, 12 and 13 (Table 2). This set of posttest scores compared the means between the two groups. Any significance for item 10 must be discounted due to the sampling error identified for item 10 in the between group pretest. In actuality, the control group showed a greater increase (.8) on item 10 than the experimental group (.7) on the post-

test. An analysis of variance completed on item 10 indicated no significant difference (Table 8).

The significance suggested by the data for the between group posttest for items 12 and 13 cannot be attributed to the effects of the treatment. The control group's mean scores decreased for items 10 and 12 from 2.6 to 2.0 and 2.8 to 1.6 respectively on the pre to posttest. There were changes in the experimental group scores on items 12 and 13 that may have been due to the in-service training, but the change could not be considered statistically significant due to the decrease in the control group's posttest scores. Items 12 and 13 pertain to staff members' perceived relationship with their supervisor, and the decrease in the scores may be a result of effects over time. The pretest was administered near the beginning of the year, and the beginning of the staff relationship. The posttest may have been a reflection of staff dynamics over the course of the year.

When analyzing the data from the pre and posttest scores of the control group (Table 7) items three and 13 were found to have had significant differences. Item three pertained to the hall director's competency in discussing any subject or problem with another person. While item three indicated significance for the control group, this significance must have been a result of effects over time (on the job training) or sampling error. A significant difference was found on item 13 but the difference was due to a decrease in the posttest score from the pretest score (1.2).

Significant differences as a result of treatment were found on items six, 10 and 13 on the pre and posttest scores of the experimental

group. Item six pertained to the hall director's ability to relate to a person with minimal interfering emotion, especially anger. Due to the nature of the treatment (reality based communication) this result may be attributed to the treatment. Since the work place allows the hall director to establish productive interpersonal relationships (item 10), and since staff interaction characterizes positive and active involvement were supported by the in-service itself, the significance was not surprising.

Although three of the 19 items showed significance on the comparison of the pre and posttest scores of the experimental group they were not enough to reject the second null hypothesis. Hence, there was no significant differences in the posttest self assessment scores of the control and experimental group.

With the 19 items subdivided and grouped within the three categories (Professional Expectation (Self), Delivery of Services (System) and The person (student/R.A.) with whom you are working) the data indicated a significant change only in the Delivery of Services (System) category (Table 8). The differences found between the groups was highly significant. However, this difference was due to the change in the control group scores as well as the size of the control group. The increase in posttest scores for the experimental group may well have been due to the treatment, but because the control group mean score(s) decreased on the posttest the change was more likely due to sample error than an absolute difference between the groups. As a result, the third null hypothesis must be accepted; that there were no significant differences between the experimental and control groups in

the areas of Professional Expectations (Self), Delivery of Services (System) and The person (student/R.A.) with whom you are working.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

Canon (1984) pointed out that, "on our individual campuses, in-service staff development programs continue to emerge" (p. 107), and as the related literature illustrated, in-service training and/or staff development programs are prevalent for student affairs professionals. Although such programs have increased in number, critical examination of the usefulness of the programs via research has not been as prevalent. Very little of the current literature contained any evaluation by testing.

This study was designed to measure the impact of a 30 hour in-service training program on a group of professional hall directors. More specifically, the self assessed job performance of residence hall directors at UW-LaCrosse was recorded both before and after their participation in a 30 hour in-service training program. Based on the concepts and techniques of the one-to-one communication method utilized in Reality Therapy, the in-service training was designed to increase the one-to-one interpersonal communication skills of the participating group members. The training began in September, 1980, continued for 30 hours over a five month period, and was completed in February, 1981.

Since the inception of the Academic Staff residence hall director position at UW-LaCrosse, there has been periodic in-service training provided. However, the commitment to a 30 hour program dedicated to a single topic and aimed at skill building, was by far the most ambitious and intense in-service program implemented by the UW-LaCrosse Housing Office.

The major purpose of this study was to measure the change in self-assessed job performance of the participants in an in-service training program. Results of the participants' self assessments were compared with test results from an equivalent group that did not participate in any in-service training.

The test instrument used to measure change was constructed by Dr. Robert Norton, a certified Reality Therapist, and an instructor in the College of Education at UW-LaCrosse. The test contained 19 items related to one-to-one interpersonal communication skills and was designed to have participants rate themselves using a five point interval scale. The 19 items were also grouped into three categories (Professional Expectation, Delivery of Services, The person with whom you work) pertaining to hall director job related functions.

During the first in-service session, the pretest was administered to the experimental group; UW-LaCrosse Hall Directors. A control group consisting of residence hall directors from UW-Eau Claire was administered the pretest at approximately the same time. Posttests were administered to both groups in March, 1981. Data from the tests were examined by the use of t-tests and analysis of variance, and used to test the hypothesis.

The following null hypotheses were utilized for this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the pretest self assessment scores of the control group and the experimental group.
2. There is no significant difference in the posttest self assessment scores of the control group and the experimental group.
3. There is no significant difference in the areas of professional expectations, delivery of services, and the person with whom they are working between the control group and experimental group.

In regards to null hypothesis one, the study revealed significant differences on three of the 19 items, but the significance was most likely due to sampling error. Sixteen of the items indicated no significant difference between the pretest scores of the two groups.

In regards to null hypothesis two, the results indicated a few items with statistical significance, but again, most of the significance could be attributed to sampling error or the effects of time on the control group. Posttest results of the experimental group showed some significance that could be attributed to the treatment (in-service), but overall, the results accepted the second null hypothesis.

In regards to null hypothesis three, the category pertaining to the hall director's delivery of services yielded significant results. Although the change in the experimental group could be attributed to participation in the in-service, overall significance must be discounted because the control groups scores dropped on their posttest scores.

The third null hypothesis was also accepted.

#### Recommendations

1. A formalized, on-going in-service training program for residence hall directors based on a single topic is more of a frill than a skill building professional development activity. A change in format would better serve the overall staff development needs of the group.
2. If the hall director position's chief role and responsibility is toward the one-to-one interaction with students then an in-service training program based on developing one-to-one interpersonal communication skills should be offered.
3. In-service training for residence hall directors must be targeted for developing the many aspects of the positions. Attempts at single facet skill building does not result in improvements in overall job performance.
4. On campus in-service training for residence hall directors should continue to be offered. Such efforts provide for the sharing of talents as well as developing a sense of professional community among the group.
5. Additional research on the impact of staff development/in-service training programs is necessary. Research could be designed to determine whether the in-service is meeting the professional development needs of the participants.

#### Conclusions

Although 30 hours of in-service training appeared to be a substantial amount of time, the relative effects were minimal. Perhaps

the concepts of Reality Therapy were too much material to cover in 30 hours and a scaled down amount of material would have increased the amount of change due to in-service training.

Since a majority of the participants had some sort of background in personal counseling (either a graduate degree or as part of graduate work) there simply was not a real need for the information presented. As a result, the Reality Therapy one-to-one communication model became more of an "add on" technique rather than a basic component of job performance for the hall directors. Also, participants had the option to utilize the techniques in their day to day work. If an individual chose not to use the techniques then the chances of change in job performance due to in-service training were non existent.

Because the results from the category titled "Delivery of Services" did yield some significance, there is some indication that in-service training focusing on a single aspect of counselor training for residence hall directors would be worthwhile.

Overall, improvement in self-assessed job performance by hall directors seemed to have been more of a result of "on the job training" than in-service training based on the concepts of Reality Therapy. In general, it appears an isolated skill may be improved through training, but improved overall job performance will probably be a result of a combination of job experience and training.

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## Appendix A, cont.

The person (Student/R.A.) with whom you are working:

14. is able to acquire and maintain a sense of personal worth.
15. has a significant role in determining intervention strategies to be implemented.
16. understands what is expected of him/her.
17. understands to whom he/she must go for assistance.
18. accepts responsibility for attempting/making necessary changes.
19. accepts responsibility for his/her own behavior.

Existing  
Condition
