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## The effects of the interpersonal dimensions of empathy, positive regard and genuineness in a verbal conditioning paradigm

Raphael Louis Vitalo  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

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THE EFFECTS OF THE INTERPERSONAL DIMENSIONS OF  
EMPATHY, POSITIVE REGARD AND GENUINENESS  
IN A VERBAL CONDITIONING PARADIGM

A Dissertation Presented

by

Raphael L. Vitalo

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

MASTER'S DEGREE

April 1968

Major Subject: Psychology

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Approved as to style and content by:

William J. Samuels  
(Chairman of Committee)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Head of Department)

Harry J. Samuels  
(Member)

Julius M. Zimmer  
(Member)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Member)

April 1968

The Effects of the Interpersonal Dimensions of  
Empathy, Positive Regard and Genuineness  
in a Verbal Conditioning Paradigm. (April 1968)

Raphael L. Vitalo, B. A., Manhattan College

M. S., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Dr. Morton Harmatz

An attempt was made to discover whether the facilitative dimensions of empathy, positive regard and genuineness are significant variables within a verbal conditioning paradigm. Specifically, four Es were chosen to condition Ss to emit personal reference statements, i.e. sentences beginning with the pronouns 'I' or 'WE', in a Taffel type task. Two of the Es received relatively low (RL Es) ratings on the three facilitative dimensions while the remaining two Es received relatively high (RH Es) ratings. The Ss were assigned to one of four conditions: 1) CNI - Ss received contingent reinforcement with no pre-session interview; 2) CI - Ss received contingent reinforcement with a pre-session interview; 3) RNI - Ss received random reinforcement with no pre-session interview and 4) RI - Ss received random reinforcement with a pre-session interview. The last two groups served as controls. Ss were conditioned and extinguished twice, once by a RH E and once by a RL E. The order of encounter was counter-balanced.

Analysis of the non-interview acquisition data revealed no significant findings. Neither the RH Es nor the RL Es produced significant conditioning although the former group did produce higher learning rates in the Ss than the latter group. Analysis of the interview acquisition data resulted in the following findings: 1) the RH Es were the only ones



who produced significant learning in the Ss; and 2) the Ss displayed significantly greater learning rates when conditioned by the RH Es than when conditioned by the RL Es.

Analysis of the extinction data revealed that: 1) the Ss consistently showed significantly greater extinction rates when extinguished by the RH Es than when extinguished by the RL Es; 2) the extinction rates in the experimental groups (CNI & CI) were not significantly greater than those occurring in the control groups (RNI & RI) and 3) the presence of a pre-session interview appeared to have no effect upon extinction rates.

Implications of these findings as well as possibilities for future research were discussed.

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## INTRODUCTION

Recent and exciting research in psychotherapy has underscored the efficacy of certain therapist variables in determining patient outcome. In an attempt to unravel what therapist offered conditions facilitate constructive client change Truax (1961, 1962, 1962a) has operationally defined and devised scales of measurement for the concepts of empathic understanding, positive regard and therapist genuineness. These concepts have broadly based roots in multiple theoretical approaches to psychotherapy (Alexander, 1948; Schafer, 1959; Rogers, 1957; Strupp, 1960; Truax and Carkhuff, 1967; Wolpe, 1958). Research to-date has supported the efficacy of these variables in predicting client change on a number of outcome indices, e.g., MMPI scales, Rorschach protocols, length of hospitalization, adjustment inventories et al (Rogers, 1962; Truax, 1963; Truax and Carkhuff, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1965a, 1967; Bergin, 1966; Carkhuff, 1966; Truax and Wargo, 1966; Truax, Wargo, Frank, Imber, Battle, Hoehn-Saric, Nash and Stone, 1966; Van der Veen, 1967).

In studies reviewed by Rogers (1962), Truax has found that the therapist's level of positive regard along with his level of accurate empathy and self-congruence are significantly related to the client's depth of self-exploration which, in turn, has been related to change on a number of outcome indices (Truax and Carkhuff, 1967). In a study recently reported by Van der Veen (1967) psychotherapy with 15 hospitalized Schizophrenic patients was evaluated with reference to a combined improvement score on a number of indices including - MMPI, percentage of time hospitalized, scores on a 246 item Anxiety Scale and a self-ideal Q sort. While various dimensions were evaluated, of pertinence here was the finding that the therapist's level of functioning on empathy, positive

regard and genuineness correlated .58, .35 and .45 respectively with outcome.

Further support for the facilitative dimensions has been found in a study which included both a schizophrenic and counseling center population (Truax, 1963). The author found that high levels of the therapist offered conditions during therapy were related to patient improvement and that low levels of these conditions were related to patient deterioration. The latter finding is perhaps the most significant indication of the efficacy of these variables.

Truax, Wargo, Frank et al. (1966) have attempted a cross-validation of previous research on the therapist dimensions using an outpatient neurotic population. Assigning an equal number of "good and poor therapy risk" patients to moderately high and low functioning therapists, they found that, after four months of treatment, 90% of the higher functioning therapist patients showed improvement whereas only 50% of the patients treated by the lower functioning therapists showed similar improvement.

In process studies of the therapeutic dimensions Truax and Carkhuff (1965) have found that when a therapist intentionally lowers the levels of facilitative conditions he offers a client, the client shows a significant decrease in the extent to which he explores himself and his problem. When the therapist then reinstates his earlier higher level of functioning the client once again begins to explore himself deeply. Confirmation of these findings has been reported in a study by Cannon and Pierce (1968).

Such consistent findings have led Bergin (1966) to conclude: "Therapeutic progress varies as a function of therapist characteristics such as warmth, empathy, adequacy of adjustment...".

### Relevance of the Facilitative Dimensions to the Conditioning Process:

Although the three dimensions of empathy, warmth and genuineness appear contributors to outcome in traditional therapy, to-date their relevance to conditioning therapies and the conditioning process has not been investigated.

It has been noted that the reinforcing value of "uh-huh" varies greatly among experimenters. Lublin (1965) has found that effectively reinforcing experimenters tended to have higher scores on n Endurance and lower scores on n Abasement as measured by the EPPS, Wiess, Krasner and Ullman (1960) have found that hostile experimenters will produce a decrease in the number of verbal conditioned responses emitted by a subject where as an experimenter who displayed warmth, attention and interest produced an increase in the emmittance of the conditioned response.

Binder, McConnell and Sjöholm (1957) have attempted to evaluate the impact of the experimenter's physical and social characteristics on learning rates in a verbal conditioning paradigm. Using two experimenters, one a tall strapping male described as having rather unrestrained personality characteristics and the other - a soft-spoken petite female, subjects were conditioned to emit "mildly hostile verbs". Their findings supported the hypothesis that learning rates may be significantly effected by experimenter characteristics even when his participation consists in making a single reinforcing response. In a follow-up study, Ferguson and Buss (1960) attempted to sort out which variable, the sex of the experimenter or his aggressiveness, accounted for the results. Using the same task as Binder et al. they found that the aggressive experimenter produced no response acquisition. Reece and Whitman (1962) have found that the combination of experimenter warmth and verbal reinforcement produced the



greatest amount of subject verbalization in a free association task.

In a two-part study Sapolsky (1960) has investigated the effects on response acquisition of: a) The subjects attractedness to the experimenter and b) the compatibility of the subject and experimenter. He hypothesized that in a verbal conditioning process the experimenter exerts more influence on an "attracted" group than on an "unattracted" one. The results supported with hypothesis; subjects who were attracted to their experimenter displayed significantly greater response acquisition. To investigate the variable of compatibility, Sapolsky matched subjects and experimenters on the basis of their score patterns on the FIRO-B scale which measures needs in interpersonal relationships. It was found that under conditions of experimenter-subject incompatibility there was significantly less response acquisition.

Clearly, characteristics of the experimenter are potent variables in the verbal conditioning paradigm. His appearance, his personality, his attitudes may each significantly affect response acquisition by the subject. These findings do offer indirect support for the relevancy of the therapist dimensions (warmth, empathy and genuineness) to the conditioning process - yet, none of the experimenter variables investigated to-date can be equated with the three dimensions.

#### Questions Posed in this Study:

Truax (1966) has attempted a rapprochement between learning theory and his research findings concerning the therapist offered conditions. He suggests that therapists functioning higher on scales measuring accurate empathy, positive regard and genuineness are more effective because they are personally more potent reinforcers.

The purpose of this study was two-fold:

1. To investigate whether the dimensions of interpersonal functioning-accurate empathy, positive regard and genuineness-significantly influence the conditioning process.
2. To discover whether relatively high functioning experimenters are more effective conditioners.

#### METHOD

##### Subjects:

Twenty-eight (28) undergraduate students were chosen for this study. The group consisted of an equal number of male and female students.

##### Experimenters:

A total of four male experimenters were selected from a group of seven advanced graduate students in Clinical Psychology, Counseling Psychology and education. The experimenters were chosen on the basis of their ratings on the three facilitative dimensions. The evaluation of these dimensions was based on a taped therapy session submitted by each student. Three experimenters had no tape available. These three were asked to interview a standard client and the tape of this interview was submitted.

Two raters specifically trained for this study independently listened to a master tape. The master tape was composed in the following manner: four three minute segments were randomly selected from the taped session which each prospective experimenter (PE) submitted. These segments were in turn transcribed in a mixed order onto the master tape.

The raters independently listened to and evaluated the segments as they appeared on the tape. However, only one-half (14 excerpts) of the master tape was rated at a time. This occurred because one of the PEs was late in submitting a tape. Rather than have this tape rated separately, the author elected to postpone the completion of the master tape until this PE's tape became available.

Each rater evaluated the three dimensions separately. Of the four Es finally chosen for this study two had mean ratings lying between

1.49 and 1.87 on each of the dimensions. The remaining two had mean ratings between 2.73 and 3.37 on the dimensions (see Table I). The former group was designated as relatively low (RL) on the facilitative dimensions and the latter group as relatively high (RH).

Each E was contacted and asked to participate in a verbal conditioning study. In an effort to conceal the nature of the study, it was explained that the author simply needed help in running Ss for his masters thesis. However, as it turned out, three of the four Es guessed the study's basic purpose.

Each E was given a brief typewritten description of his role and what he would have to do. (see Appendix A). No training beyond this description was carried out. Of the four Es only one (a RL functioning E) had experience in conditioning Ss.

#### Scales Measuring the Facilitative Dimensions:

The scales used in this study were revised forms of the Truax scales for the measurement of accurate empathy (Truax, 1961), unconditional positive regard (Truax, 1962) and therapist genuineness (Truax, 1962a). The validity of these measures has been supported by an extensive body of process and outcome research in psychotherapy and other instances of interpersonal learning (Aspy, 1965; Bergin, 1966; Carkhuff and Truax, 1965; Cannon and Pierce, 1967; Carkhuff, 1966; Carkhuff and Berenson, 1967; Rogers, 1962; Truax, 1963; Truax and Carkhuff, 1964, 1965, 1965a, 1967; Truax, Wargo et al, 1966; Van der Veen, 1967). The revised scales retain the predictive power of the earlier Truax scales while incorporating a briefer format and a standard scale range of 1.0 to 5.0.

Accurate empathy is conceived of as involving both the therapist's



TABLE I

Experimenters' Level of Interpersonal  
Functioning

<u>Experimenter</u>	<u>Empathy</u>	<u>Pos. Regard</u>	<u>Genuineness</u>
RH E <sub>1</sub>	2.73	2.86	2.81
RH E <sub>2</sub>	2.99	3.33	3.17
RL E <sub>1</sub>	1.49	1.53	1.57
RL E <sub>2</sub>	1.69	1.72	1.87

sensitivity to the client's current feelings and his ability to communicate his "understanding in a language attuned to the client's current feelings" (Truax, 1961, p. 1). The scale (Appendix B) for the measurement of empathic understanding (Carkhuff, 1967) is a five point scale ranging from the lowest stage where the interviewer gives the appearance of being completely unaware or ignorant of even the most conspicuous surface feelings of the other person to the highest level where the interviewer comprehensively and accurately communicates his understanding of the other persons deepest feelings.

Therapist genuineness (Appendix B) refers to the degree to which the therapist presents a professional facade and the degree to which his responses reflect his real feelings rather than his defensiveness (Truax, 1962a). "Genuineness in Interpersonal Processes" (Carkhuff, 1967a) ranges from the lowest level where there is a wide discrepancy between the interviewer's experiencing and his verbalizations to the highest level where the interviewer is freely and deeply himself in a non-exploitive relationship.

Positive regard (Appendix B) for a client means an acceptance of the patient as a person with potentialities. It involves a non-possessive caring for another and a willingness to share equally the patient's joys and aspirations or his depressions and failures. The scale "Respect or Positive Regard in Interpersonal Processes" (Carkhuff, 1967b) is also a five point scale. It ranges from a low point where the interviewer communicates a clear negative regard to the interviewee to a high point where he manifests a warm and deep caring for the second person and a respect for his rights as a free individual.

### Materials:

The stimulus card consisted of 140 3x5 unlined index cards. In the center of each a different commonly used verb was typed in the past tense. Below this verb, the six personal pronouns - I, WE, YOU, SHE, HE, THEY - appeared. The order of these pronouns was randomized for each card. All words appearing on the card were typed in the upper cases. A standard set of instructions was supplied to each E which he, in turn, read to his Ss. The instructions were adapted from Sapolsky (1960) and represent a modification of Taffel's (1955) procedure.

### Instructions:

"You will see a word in the center of each card. I want you to make up a sentence using this word. Below the word in the center, you will see a group of other words. Take any one of these and use it to start your sentence. (Pause) Now it doesn't matter whether your sentence is long or short or even if it is complicated or simple. It is important that you answer with the first sentence that comes to your mind. (Pause) Everything that we say is being recorded so that it won't be necessary for me to write down your sentences now, but I will have a record of the sentences you make up. (Pause) Do you understand the instructions? Alright, let's begin."

### Procedure:

Sixteen Ss were randomly assigned to the experimental (C) group. The remaining twelve (12) Ss were assigned to the control (R) group. There was an equal number of male and female Ss in each.

In Treatment CI, E "chatted" with his S for 15 to 20 minutes before the conditioning session. E was given the set "to try and get to know the S" as best one could in the brief period allowed. Such a condition was provided because it was felt that the importance of the E's level of interpersonal functioning might be tempered by the amount of con-

versational exposure he has with his Ss. In addition, it permitted us to investigate the effects of a pre-session interview on conditioning. To date, the findings on this question have been inconsistent. Solley and Long (1958) have found that pre-session conversation augments conditioning while Ellis (1967) reports that it has a negative effect. Neither of these studies controlled for experimenter variables.

In Treatment CNI, no pre-session interview took place. E was instructed to move quickly into the task. He was cautioned however not to be abrupt in his manner.

Once the conditioning session began the E turned on the tape recorder and read the instructions to his S. He then placed before the S the deck of stimulus cards. Each set of 20 cards was considered a trial. E issued no reinforcements for the first trial. This was done in order to establish a baseline frequency for the emittance of personal reference statements, i.e., sentences which began with the pronouns "I" or "WE". On the three succeeding trials (next 60 cards), E was instructed to vocalize "mmm-hmm" in a flat, unemotional tone at the end of any sentence beginning with "I" or "WE". After the completion of four trials (80 cards), E was instructed to cease issuing reinforcements. This last phase constituted the extinction trials.

As an aid in keeping track of where an S was, each E was provided with record sheets. The sheet consisted of seven columns of numbers (1 thru 140) with a space alongside each. E was instructed to check off a number as the S gave his response. In this way E would know exactly where the S was throughout the session.

The remaining 12 Ss were assigned to a control (R) group. The R group constituted a full replication of the C group with one critical



exception - Es issued their reinforcements on a random basis. To accomplish this the same record sheet described above was used, however, randomly pre-selected item numbers between trials two and four inclusive were circled. When an S got to an item number that was circled, E issued a reinforcement at the conclusion of the sentence emitted by the S. The total number of reinforcements issued constituted a 50% rate of reinforcement distributed over the conditioning trials (2 thru 4). This compared favorably with the average rate of reinforcement received in the C group (46%).

All Ss were seen twice, once by an RH functioning E and once by an RL functioning E. The order of their encounter was counterbalanced. The interval between session ranged from one week to 10 days.

To summarize, a total of 28 Ss were assigned to one of the following conditions: Experimental group no-pre-session interview (CNI); Experimental group with interview (CI); Control group no-pre-session interview (RNI) and Control group with interview (RI). Each group was composed of an equal number of male and female Ss although the total number of Ss in each group was unequal (CNI, CI n=8; RNI, RI n=6). All Ss were seen twice, once by an RH functioning E and once by an RL functioning E. The order of presentation was counter-balanced.

#### S Awareness:

Following each S's second session an awareness questionnaire was administered (Appendix C lists these questions). Initially, the questions were administered orally. However, as the number of Ss run at one time increased, this became unfeasible. At this point the Ss were given a list of the questions and asked to respond in written form. Oral follow-up on vague or suggestive replies was made. An S's response that indi-

cated awareness of: 1) that the E was attempting to influence his responding; and 2) that certain pronouns were wanted - was classified as completely aware (CA). An S who indicated awareness of either of these factors was judged partially aware (PA). If neither of these factors were indicated the S was classified as unaware (UA). The CA, PA and UA groups contained 17.85% (5/28), 35.72% (10/28) and 46.42% (13/28) of the Ss respectively.

### RESULTS

Inter-rater reliabilities: Two reliability coefficients were computed. The first evaluated the agreement between raters on the entire 28 excerpts contained on the master tape. Pearson Product-Moment coefficients ranged from a low of .845 to a high of .933 (see Table II). Inter-rater reliabilities on the ratings of the excerpts representing the Es finally chosen for the study ranged from .864 to .946 (see Table III).

Intra-rater reliabilities: Table IV presents the rate-re-rate reliabilities on the entire 28 excerpts. The coefficients ranged from a low of .825 to a high of .945. Table V contains the reliability coefficients for the 16 excerpts representing the selected Es. In all cases the second ratings were completed after a three-week interval.

Statistical Analyses: The first step in analysing the data was to derive the linear slope for each S's acquisition and extinction curves. This was done by fitting a straight line to each S's data and then finding the slope of that line. The least-squares method was used (Reichman, 1962). The individual slopes were in turn used as the dependent measure in each of the statistical analyses performed.



TABLE II

Inter-rater Reliabilities for Ratings of the Facilitative Dimensions  
on Excerpts Representing the Entire 28 PEs

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<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>
Empathy	.845
Positive Regard	.912
Genuineness	.933

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TABLE III

Inter-rater Reliabilities for Ratings of the Facilitative Dimensions  
on Excerpts Representing the Selected Fs

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>
Empathy	.864
Positive Regard	.946
Genuineness	.937

TABLE IV

Intra-rater Reliabilities for Ratings of the Facilitative Dimensions  
on Excerpts Representing the Entire 28 PEs

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<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Rater 1</u>	<u>Rater 2</u>
Empathy	.863	.944
Positive Regard	.897	.936
Genuineness	.826	.949

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TABLE V

Intra-rater Reliabilities for Ratings of the Facilitative Dimensions  
on Excerpts Representing the Selected Es

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Rater 1</u>	<u>Rater 2</u>
Empathy	.883	.905
Positive Regard	.921	.938
Genuineness	.825	.945

Since a repeated-measurement design has not been used previously in verbal conditioning studies the first question asked of the data was whether having gone through a second session - independent of which E was seen - had any effect on acquisition or extinction rates. A t test for paired samples was performed on the learning slopes achieved during the first session vs those achieved during the second session. The results were not significant ( $t = .732$ ,  $df = 27$ ,  $p > .45$ ). Similarly, a t test on the extinction slopes yielded non-significant findings ( $t = .308$ ,  $df = 27$ ,  $p > .50$ ). The results indicate that the repeated-measures design was appropriate in this study. When the effects of a second session were considered independently of the E variable no significant findings occurred.

Separate analyses were computed for the acquisition and extinction data. Table VI presents the overall analysis of the acquisition data. The data was treated by a 2 between x 1 within Mixed Design (Myers, 1966). Neither main effects nor interactions were significant. Upon closer inspection of the data however, extreme heterogeneity of variance was found. A Hartley test yielded an  $F_{max} = 22.12$  ( $p < .01$ ). As one views the cell plots (Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4) it becomes apparent that there was much more consistency in the I group data (includes CI & RI) than in the NI data. While it was felt that the NI data would show at worst no E effect, i.e. Ss would condition about the same for the RH and RL functioning Es, the findings indicate that there was a significant but inconsistent difference in S response<sup>1</sup>. Apparently even in the NI group the Es had different effects. With this post hoc

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<sup>1</sup>A t test on the absolute change (irrespective of direction) between Ss' learning slopes under the RH vs RL functioning Es in the NI group is significant ( $t = 4.88$ ,  $df = 13$ ,  $p < .0005$ ).

SLOPE OF THE BEST-FITTING STRAIGHT LINE

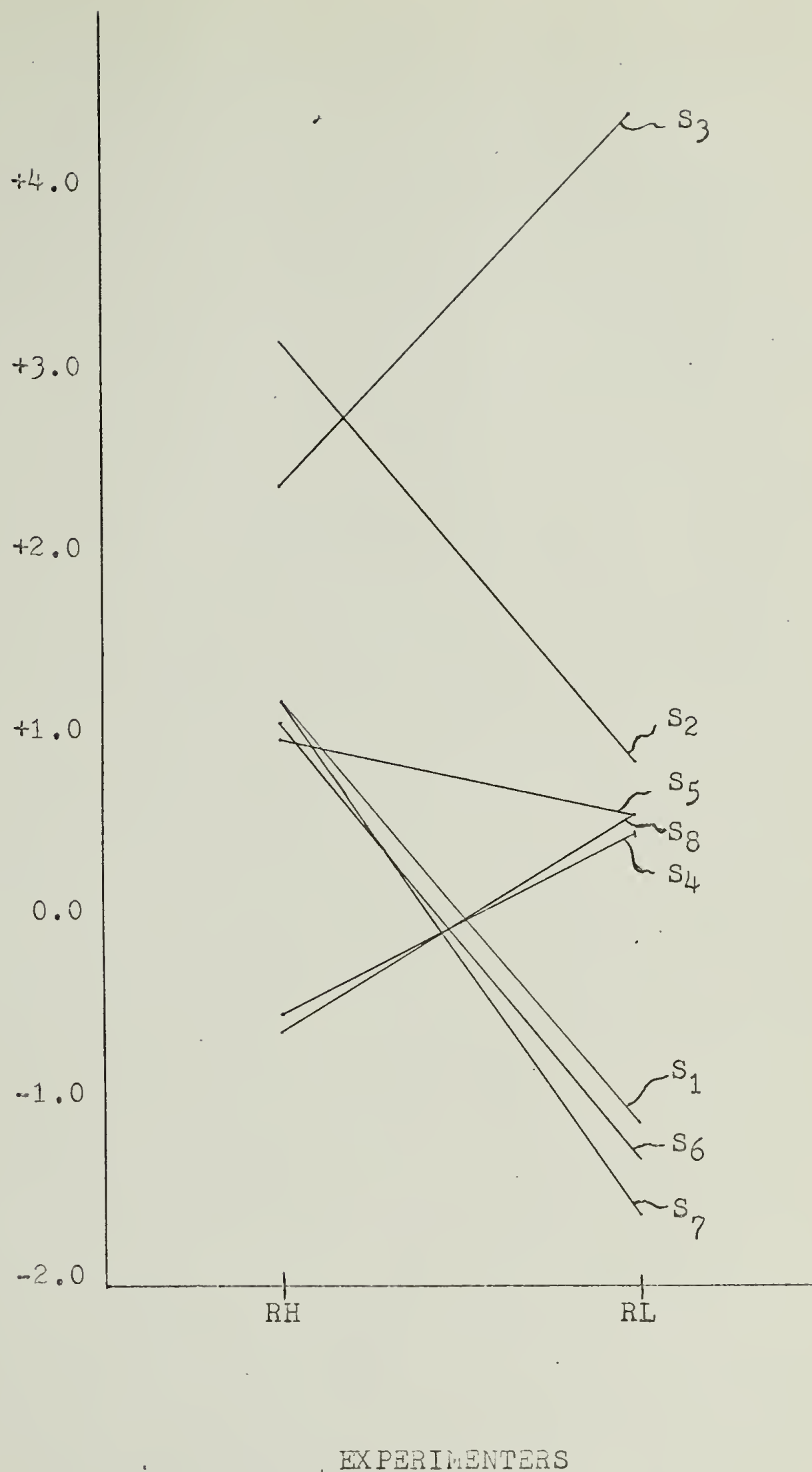


Fig. 1. Learning slopes achieved by Ss in the CMI group when seen by a RH and RL functioning experimenter.



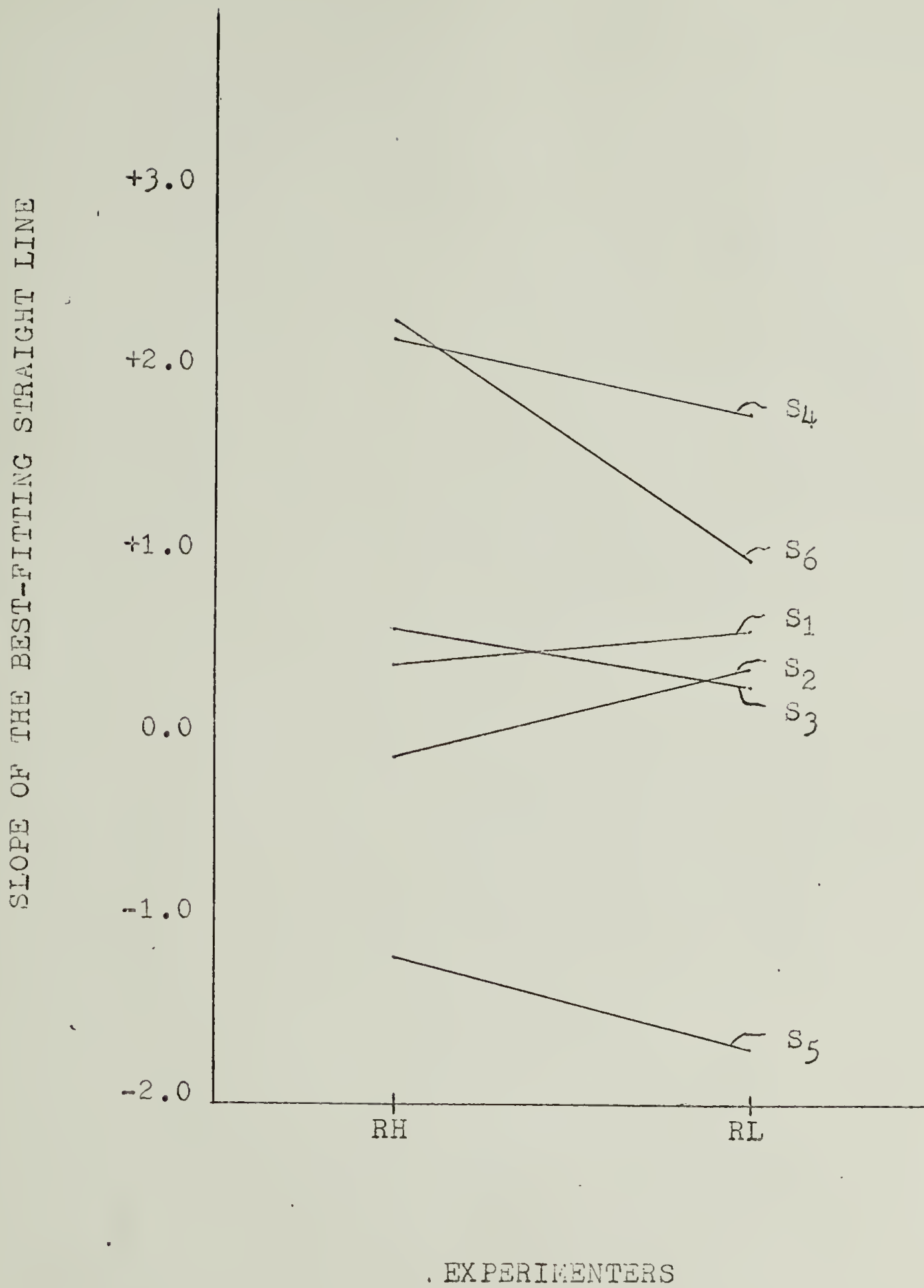


Fig. 2. Learning slopes achieved by Ss in the RNI group when seen by a RH and RL functioning experimenter.

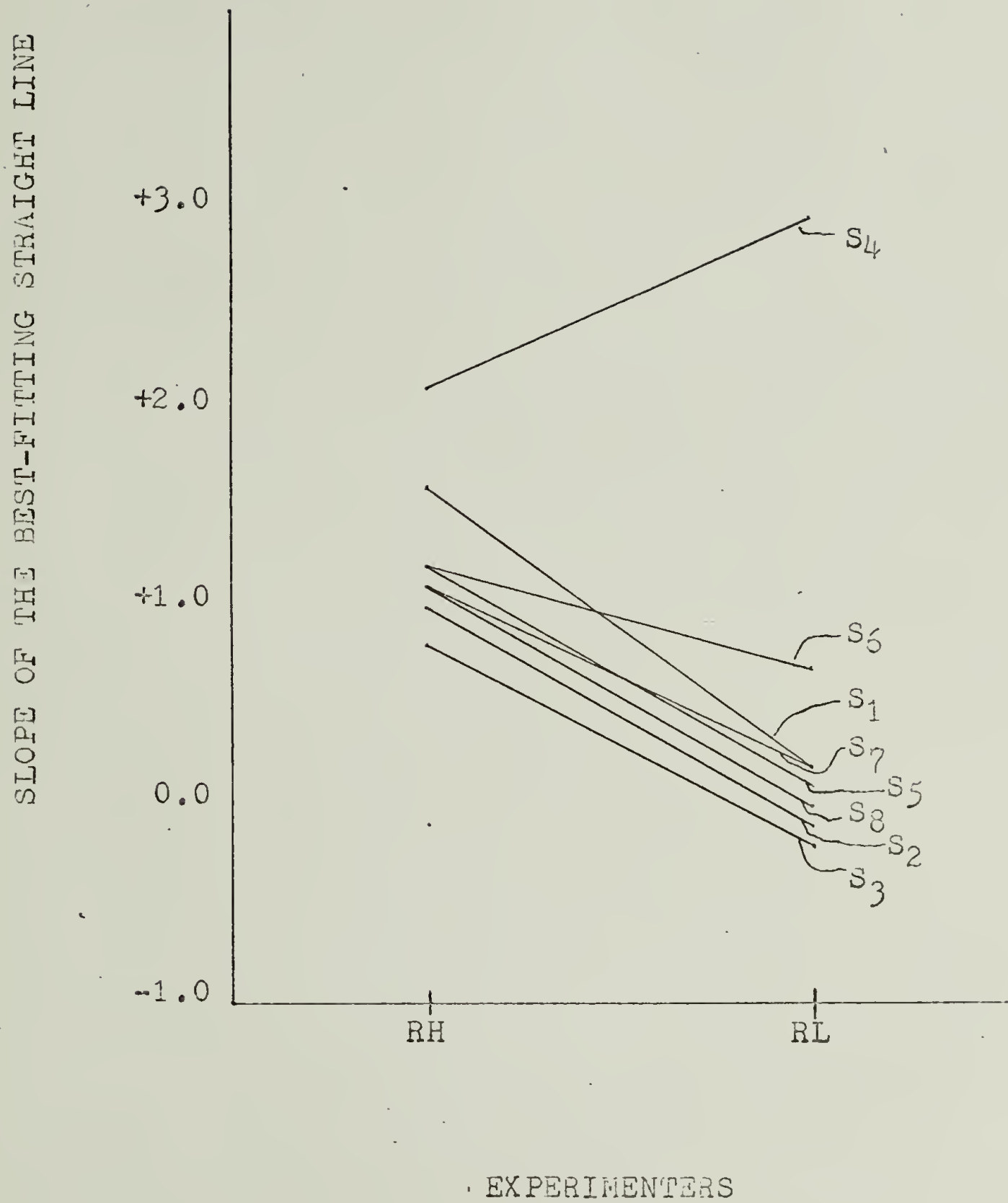


Fig. 3. Learning slopes achieved by Ss in the CI group when seen by a RH and RL functioning experimenter.

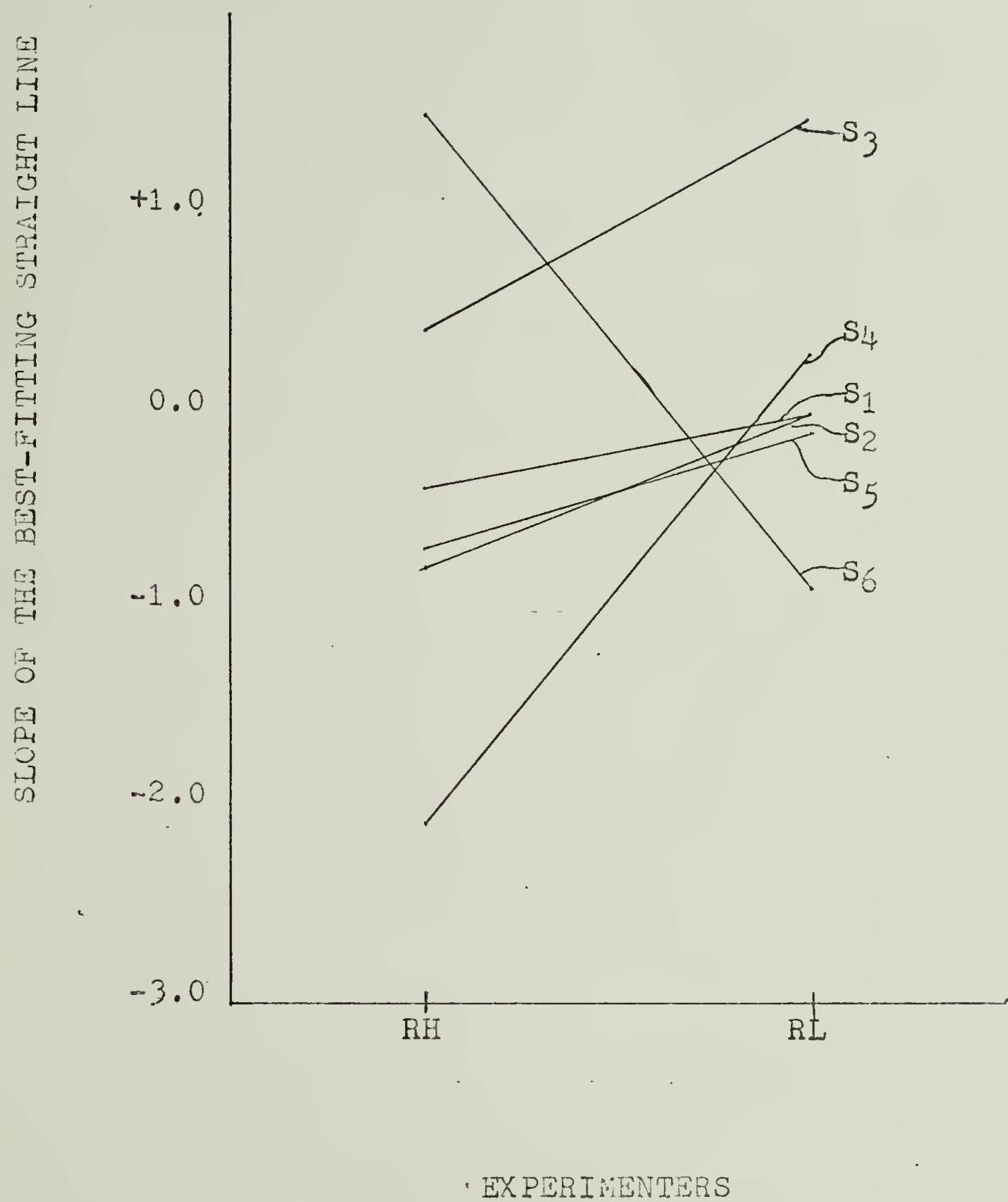


Fig. 4. Learning slopes achieved by Ss in the RI group when seen by a RH and RL functioning experimenter.

TABLE VI

Summary of Analysis of Variance for the  
Overall Acquisition Date

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F.ratio
Total Between-Ss	27	58.23		
Conditioning	1	4.86	4.86	2.30
Interview	1	0.65	0.65	<1
Interaction: CxI	1	2.06	2.06	<1
Error Between	24	50.66	2.11	
Total Within-Ss	28	28.01		
Experimenters	1	2.17	2.17	2.32
Interaction: ExC	1	2.45	2.45	2.62
Interaction: ExI	1	0.34	0.34	<1
Interaction: ExCxI	1	0.59	0.59	<1
Error Within	24	22.46	0.935	
Total	55	86.24		

knowledge the inconsistency in the S's response appears reasonable since each S had only a very brief contact with his Es. The S's behavioral response (his learning slope) was based on a very limited sampling of who each E was. When that sampling is extended (as in the I group) the S's behavioral response becomes much more consistent. In line with this reasoning, a second treatment of the acquisition data was carried out. Tables VII and VIII present these findings. Separate analyses were performed on the I and NI group data. In each case the data was treated by an analysis of variance 1 between x 1 within Mixed Design (Myers, 1966). With this separate treatment the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated in either Anova<sup>2</sup>. As Figures 5 and 6 indicate the RE functioning Es did produce greater rates of response acquisition than the RL functioning Es and learning was greater in the C group which was contingently reinforced than in the R group which was randomly reinforced. None of these differences however is significant (see Table VII).

Table VIII presents the analysis of the I data. The conditioning main effect falls just short of the conventional level of significance ( $p < .055$ ). There was no overall E effect but there was a significant experimenter x conditioning (EXC) interaction ( $p < .005$ ). Figure 7 permits a closer scrutiny of this interaction. As one can see, the differences between RH Es and RL Es reverses direction as a function of whether contingent or random reinforcement is issued. In the C group the RH functioning Es achieved greater learning than the RL functioning Es. A comparison of this difference yielded extremely signifi-

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<sup>2</sup>Hartley tests on the I and NI data yielded  $F_{\max} = 8.41$  and  $F_{\max} = 3.01$  respectively. Both are not significant.

TABLE VII

Summary of Analysis of Variance for the  
NI Acquisition Data

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F ratio
Total Between-Ss	13	39.71		
Conditioning	1	0.29	0.29	< 1
Error Between	12	39.42	3.29	
Total Within-Ss	14	16.83		
Experimenters	1	2.12	2.12	1.77
Interaction: ExC	1	0.33	0.33	< 1
Error Within	12	14.38	1.20	
Total	27	56.54		



TABLE VIII

Summary of Analysis of Variance  
for the I Data

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F ratio
Total Between-Ss	13	23.64		
Conditioning	1	6.63	6.63	4.67*
Error Between	12	17.01	1.42	
Total Within-Ss	14	5.41		
Experimenters	1	0.39	0.39	2.05
Interaction: ExC	1	2.17	2.17	11.42**
Error Within	12	2.31	0.19	

\*.050 < p < .055  
\*\*.001 < p < .005

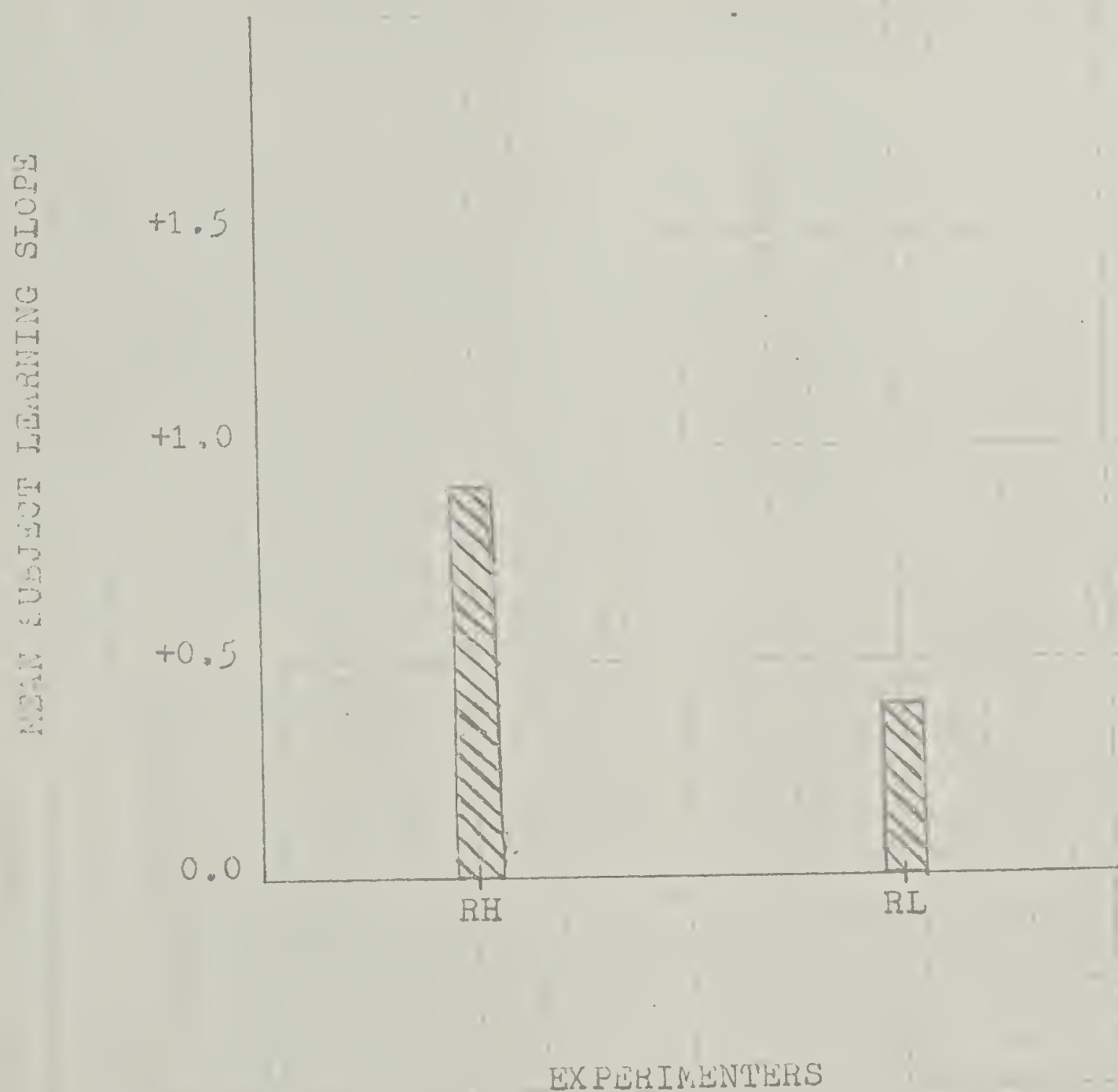


Fig. 5. The plot of the mean S learning slope achieved in the NI group by the RH and RL functioning experimenters.

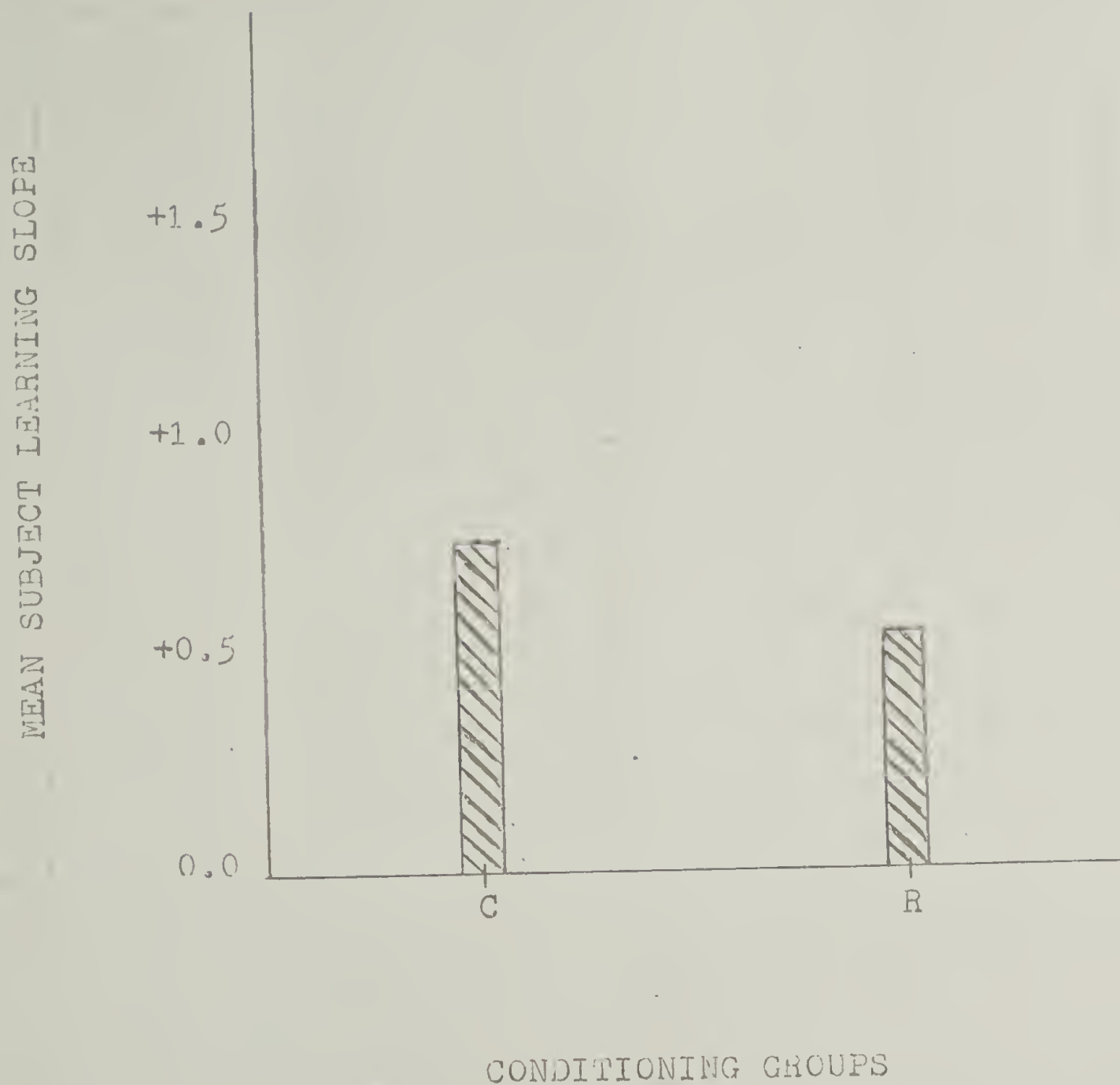


Fig. 6. The plot of the mean S learning slope achieved in the NI experimental group and in the NI control group.

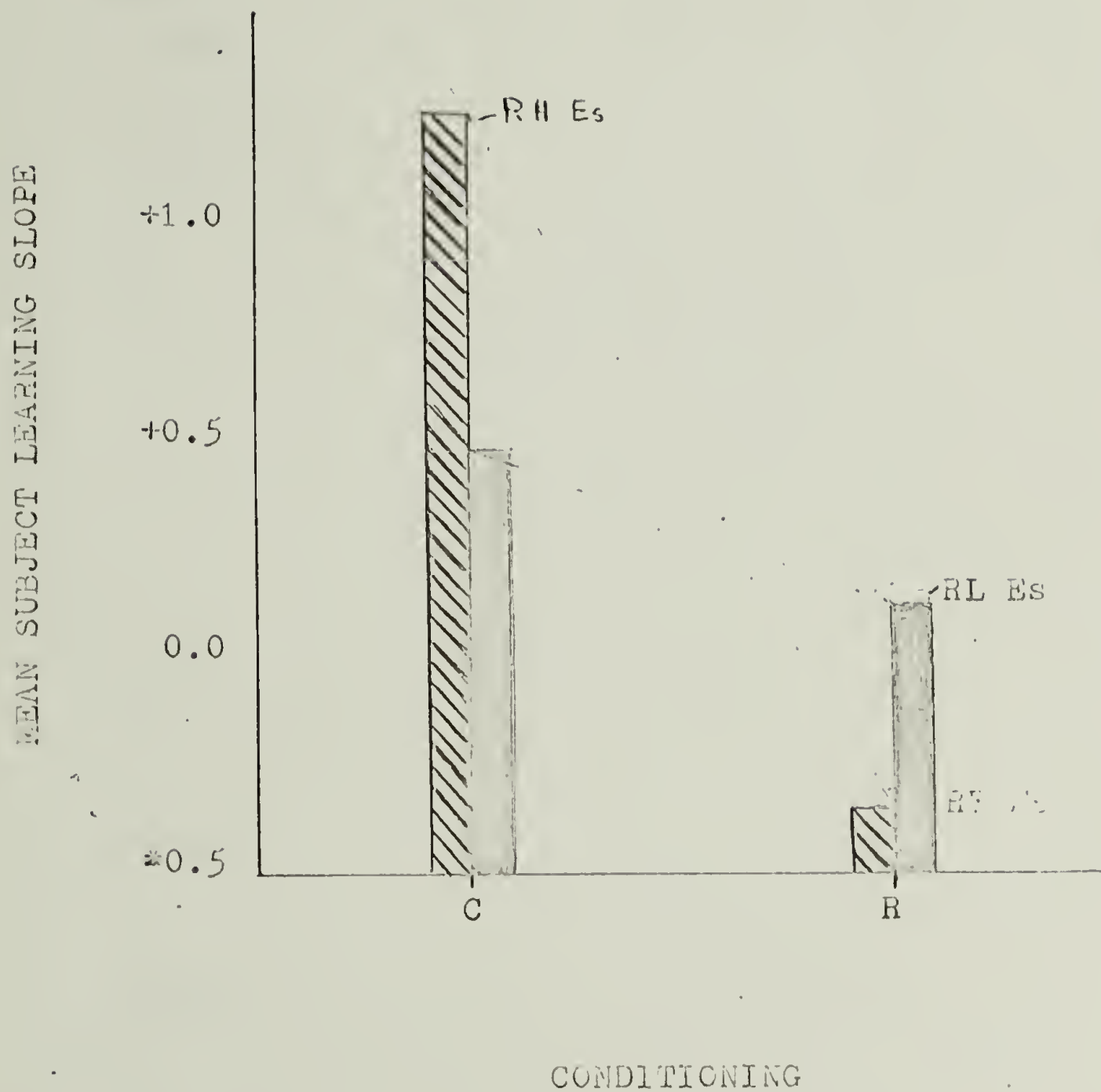


Figure 7. Plot of the mean S learning slopes achieved by the RH Es and RL Es in the Experimental (C) and Control (R) groups for the Interview Group Data.



cent findings ( $F = 12.42$ ,  $df = 1, 12$ ,  $p = .005$ ). Indeed the RH functioning Es do achieve significantly greater learning rates with the Ss. A comparison of the differences between Es in the R group yielded non-significant findings ( $F = 3.68$ ,  $df = 1, 12$  NS). Plotting the EXC interaction over Es (Figure 8) allows us a second view of this interaction. Here we see that the differences between conditioning and control varies considerably as a function of Es' level of functioning. A Dunnetts test (Myers, 1965) was performed to compare the learning achieved in the conditioning group run by the RH Es against the overall mean achievement in the control group. The results were significant ( $d = 2.49$ ,  $df = 2, 12$ ,  $p = .025$ ). A second test comparing the control group to the conditioning group run by the RL Es resulted in no significant findings ( $d = 1.09$ ,  $df = 2, 12$ , NS). Not only are the RH Es more potent conditioners than the RL Es, but their group is the only one which shows significant learning!

Table IX presents the analysis of the extinction data. Only an E main effect was significant ( $p = .025$ ). Throughout all conditions the RH functioning Es were more effective extinguishers of responses. This interpretation needs to be tempered however since the RL Es did not produce significant conditioning in the acquisition period. Perhaps the best description of the results is in terms of the Ss' initial operant level at the beginning of the extinction period. During the extinction phase this operant level showed a significantly greater decline when the RH Es ceased issuing reinforcements than when the RL Es ceased reinforcement.

The extinction rates produced in the experimental group were not greater than those occurring in the control group. Apparently the cessation of the reinforcing "bme-hmm" was equal effective in reducing the number of personal reference emitted by the S independently of whether he was previously conditioned or not. In addition, the presence of a pre-session interview appeared to have no effect upon S extinction rates.



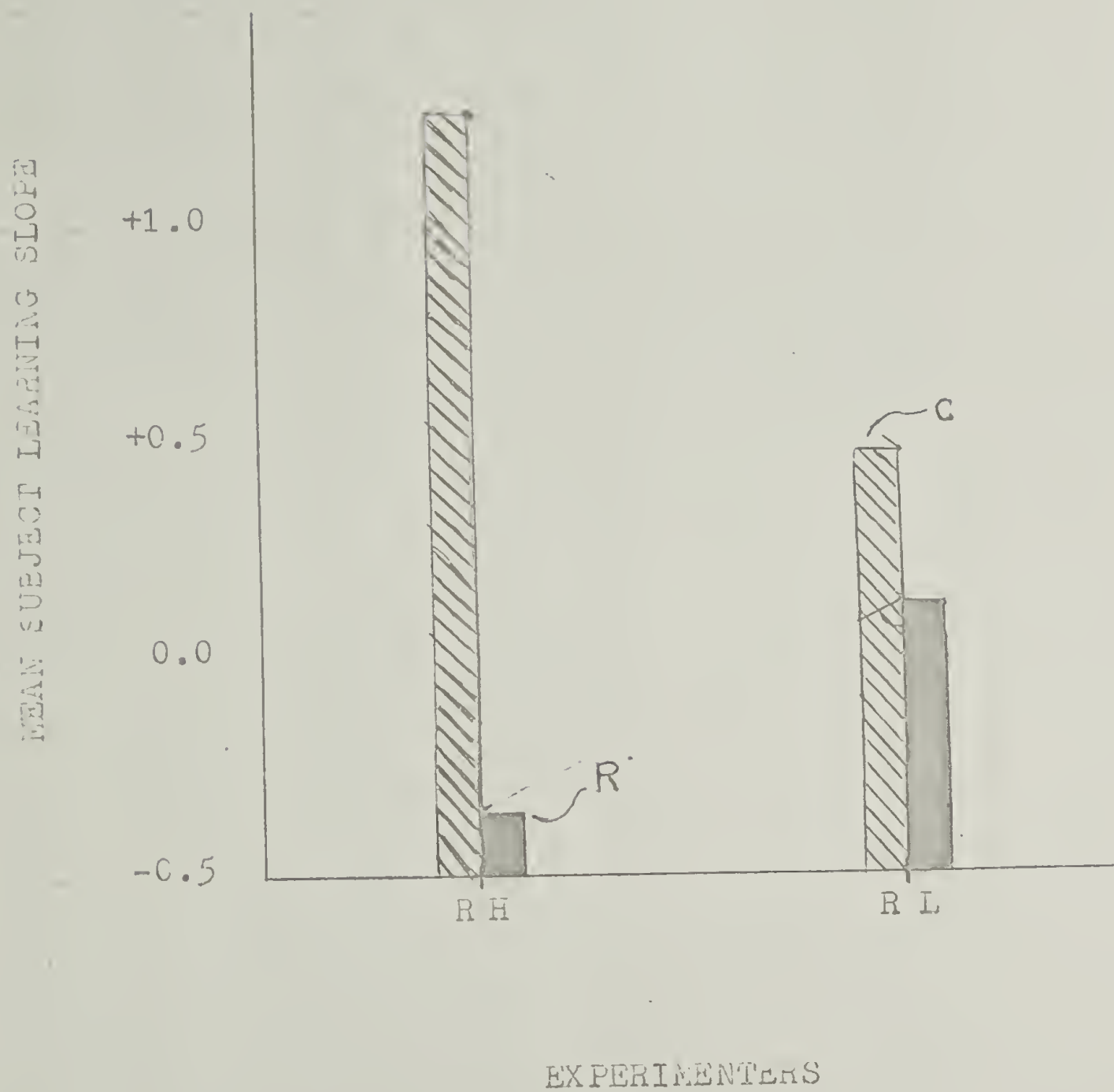


Fig. 8. Plot of the mean S learning slope produced in the Experimental (C) and Control (R) groups for the Interview Group Data as a function of which Es were seen.

TABLE IX

Summary of Analysis of Variance for the  
Overall Extinction Data

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F ratio
Total Between-Ss	27	45.71		
Conditioning	1	0.07	0.07	< 1
Interview	1	2.71	2.71	1.64
Interaction: CxI	1	3.39	3.39	2.05
Error Between	24	39.54	1.65	
Total Within-Ss	28	25.35		
Experimenters	1	5.85	5.85	7.41*
Interaction: ExC	1	0.22	0.22	< 1
Interaction: ExI	1	0.09	0.09	< 1
Interaction: ExCxI	1	0.16	0.16	< 1
Error Within	24	19.03	0.79	

\* .010 < p < .015

### DISCUSSION

Two findings have specific relevance to the verbal conditioning area. First, the need for control groups in verbal conditioning research is underscored by the results of this study. Analysis of the NI groups acquisition data led to no significant difference between the conditioning and the control groups. The issuance of "mmm-hmm" on a contingent basis did not result in significantly greater learning slopes than the issuance of the reinforcement on a random basis. The extinction data is even more striking. In no case were extinction slopes of the experimental group significantly greater than those of the control group. Apparently, the cessation of "mmm-hmm" led to a decrease in personal reference statements independently of whether the Ss were previously on a contingent or random schedule. This tendency for control groups to show learning and extinction slopes (see Table X) may point toward some type of general "rapport effect" produced by the mere presence of verbal utterances by the E. Intuitively one would expect this "effect" (if indeed it is a reliable phenomenon) to be limited to certain response classes - specifically those which are personally related to the S. One would not expect, for example, plural nouns to increase in frequency as a consequence to random reinforcement however the frequency with which an S emits emotional words may. Relevant here is a study by Lanyon (1967) in which his control group displayed an increase in "affective responses" in a free operant situation when administered reinforcement on a fixed interval schedule. Similarly, Harmatz (1967) has found a tendency for his control group to decrease in the emittance of negative self-references. These findings, while in no way conclusive, do cast doubt on the tradi-



TABLE X

Mean Learning and Extinction Slopes  
for the Control Groups

<u>Control Group</u>	<u>Mean Learning Slope</u>		<u>Mean Extinction Slope</u>	
	RH Es	RL Es	RH Es	RL Es
No Interview	0.70	0.40	-1.17	-0.33
Interview	-0.35	0.13	-0.12	0.63

tional approach of testing conditioning slopes against the hypothetical slope of zero.

The second finding refers to the question of pre-session interviews. While the manner in which the present data was analysed does not allow specific comparison of I vs NI groups the finding that the RH functioning Es produced significant conditioning with an interview while the RL functioning Es did not, does suggest as a critical question: "Who is doing the interviewing?". The discrepancy between the results reported by Solley and Long (1958) and those reported by Ells (1967) may be the function of differing Es. Indeed one would expect on the basis of the present study that an RH functioning E would show an increase in effectiveness with an interview while an RL functioning E would demonstrate a decrease in effectiveness. A fruitful direction for the solution of the interview question would be a study similar to the present one but employing a more homogeneous S population.

The most interesting and relevant finding in terms of the major purposes of this study is that RH and RL functioning Es do differ in their ability to condition and extinguish responses. Figure 9 pictorially represents these findings. The Es' level of functioning on the dimensions of empathy, positive regard and genuineness is a significant variable in a conditioning paradigm and appear as pre-requisites for the effective implementation of systematic conditioning procedures. This finding adds new support to the theoretical formulations offered by Carkhuff (1966). This author has proposed a comprehensive model for the teaching and helping processes. At its center is a primary core of facilitative interpersonal dimensions. To date, these dimensions include the levels of accurate empathy, warmth and genuineness offered



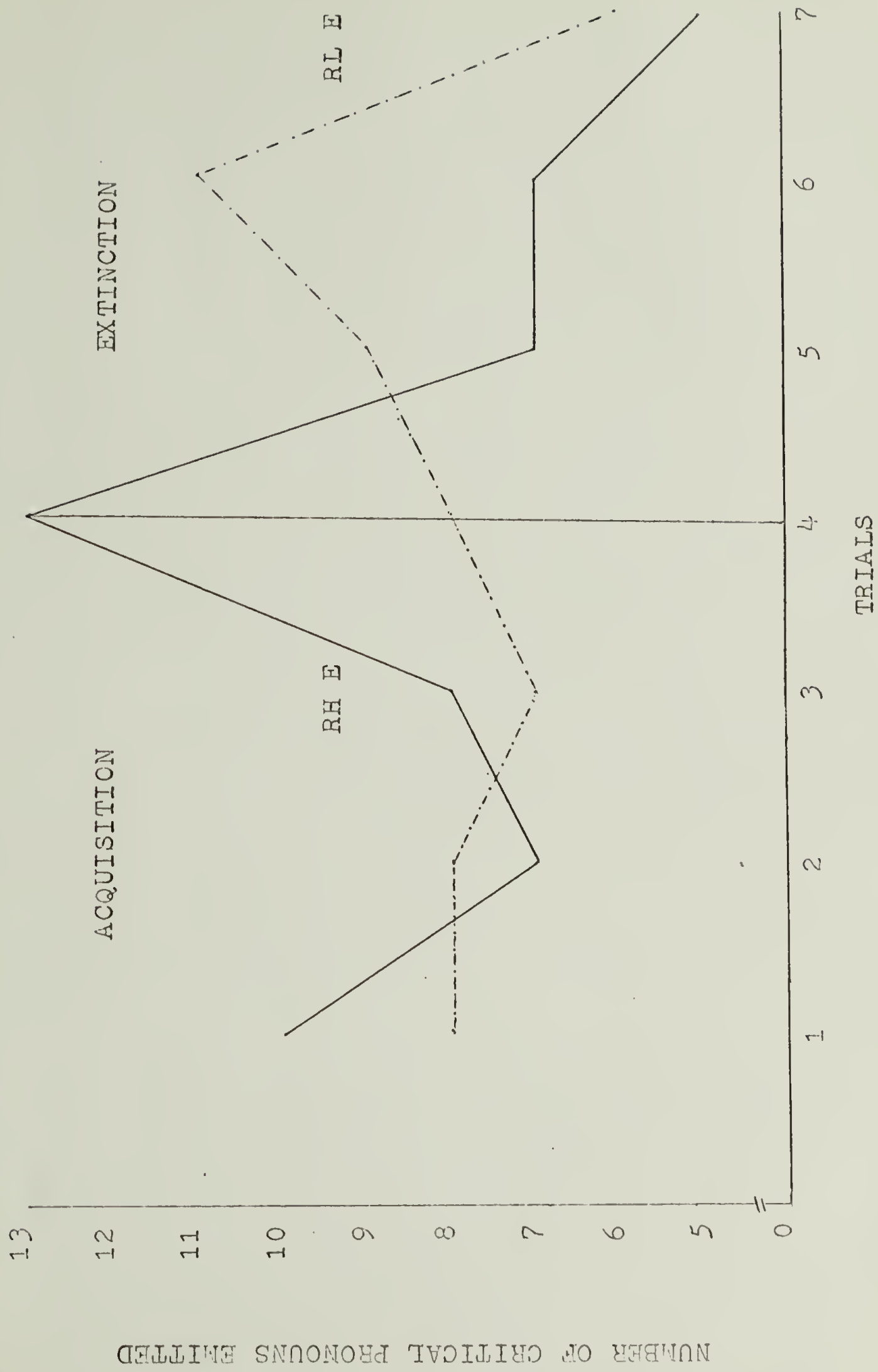


Figure 9 Curves showing the number of critical pronouns emitted by a typical S in the CI group when seen by a RH and RL functioning E.

by the "more knowing person". This central core of facilitative interpersonal dimensions is viewed as the critical differentiating factors between fruitful and barren interpersonal learning experiences ranging from the therapist-client relationship to the teacher-student relationship to the parent-child relationship (Truax and Carkhuff, 1967). Adjunct to this central core are specific techniques or modes of approach (behavioral approaches, hypnosis, non-directive approach etc.) whose own unique contribution is contingent upon the prior presence of the core dimensions. In essence, the individual who is able to accurately comprehend and communicate the meanings of another person's communications, who can feel and display warmth and concern for another and who can genuinely and appropriately share his own feelings and experiences is the necessary (but not sufficient) prerequisite for effective interpersonal learning. He alone can make effective use of the various special modalities which have been developed.

While previous research in traditional therapy (Truax and Carkhuff, 1967) and education (Aspy, 1965) settings has lent considerable weight to these formulations, the efficacy of the core dimensions in a conditioning paradigm has not previously been investigated. The findings of this study now extends support for their efficacy into this area. When an interview preceded conditioning, the RH functioning Es were the only ones who successfully conditioned their Ss. In addition the Ss displayed significantly greater learning rates when conditioned by these Es than when they were conditioned by the RL functioning Es. Even when no pre-session interview took place the E variable appeared to have potent although inconsistent effects. The findings were similar for the extinction data. The RH functioning Es consistently extinguished



responses to a significantly greater degree than the RL functioning Es.

What is most striking about these findings, if they hold-up with replication, is that the functioning of the RL Es in this study closely approximates the average functioning individual including teachers, therapists and therapists-in-training (Carkhuff and Berenson, 1967). The question that arises is whether most people in the helping professions are able to make effective use of the new and potentially efficient techniques being made available (e.g. conditioning therapies, programmed learning etc.). The answer based on this study and therefore highly tentative - is no! One wonders whether in five years or so Eysenckian type studies may not again appear - this time with Behavior Therapies as their target. This would be a tragic waste of creative innovations when the fault may not lie with the procedure but with the individual implementing it. A worthwhile direction for research in this area would be the direct investigation of the effects of the core dimensions within a behaviorally oriented treatment program.

Support is also found for Truax's (1967) speculation that the higher functioning individual is a more potent issuer of reinforcements. It is unclear however whether the RH Es' level of functioning augmented the reinforcements they offered. As an alternative, one may conceive of the RH Es' manner of relating to his Ss as a "setting event" which renders the S more accessible to the direction which the E subtly offers. This latter conception seems more fitting since during the conditioning session the RH Es made no verbalizations other than the reinforcement "mhm-hmm". Given Truax's formulations, one would expect that empathic, warmth or genuineness responses would have to appear concurrently with the reinforcement during the conditioning process.



In terms of possibilities for future research, the finding that the facilitative dimensions are significant variables within a verbal conditioning paradigm opens up a more accessible arena for their future study. Such questions as: At what level of functioning does an E first become effective?; Does the S's ability to discriminate levels of functioning contribute to his differential responding? and do Ss conditioned by RH Es show transfer of learning? - represent potentially productive directions for future research. Finally, it is recommended that replication of this study should include objective controls for other possible E differences. While it is felt that the four Es in this study were highly comparable on all indices from age to experience (except for one RL E), certainly objective data to support this is preferable.

#### SUMMARY

An attempt was made to discover whether the facilitative dimensions of empathy, positive regard and genuineness are significant variables within a verbal conditioning paradigm. Specifically, four Es were chosen to condition Ss to emit sentences beginning with the pronouns 'I' or 'WE' in a Taffel type task. Two of the Es received relatively low (RL Es) ratings on the three facilitative dimensions while the remaining two Es received relatively high (RH Es) ratings. The Ss were assigned to one of four conditions: 1) CNI - Ss received contingent reinforcement with no pre-session interview; 2) CI - Ss received contingent reinforcement with a pre-session interview; 3) RNI - Ss received random reinforcement with no pre-session interview and 4) RI - Ss received random reinforcement with a pre-session interview. The last two groups served as controls. Ss were conditioned and extinguished twice, once by a RH E and once by an RL E. The order of encounter was counterbalanced.

Analysis of the non-interview acquisition data revealed no significant

findings. Neither the RH Es nor the RL Es produced significant conditioning although the former group did produce higher learning rates in the Ss than the latter group. Analysis of the interview acquisition data resulted in the following findings: 1) the RH Es were the only ones who produced significant learning in the Ss; and 2) the Ss displayed significantly greater learning rates when conditioned by the RH Es than when conditioned by the RL Es.

Analysis of the extinction data revealed that: 1) the Ss consistently showed significantly greater extinction rates when extinguished by the RH Es than when extinguished by the RL Es; 2) the extinction rates in the experimental groups (CNI & CI) were not significantly greater than those occurring in the control groups (RNI & RI) and 3) the presence of a pre-session interview appeared to have no effect upon extinction rates.

Implications of these findings as well as possibilities for future research were discussed.



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APPENDIX A

Experimenters' Instructions

## INTRODUCTION

This is a verbal conditioning experiment. You are asked to condition your subjects to emit 'personal reference statements' - i.e. sentences beginning with the pronouns "I" or "WE". The reinforcement used is "mmm-hmm" uttered in an even voice.

The subject's task is to construct sentences from words printed on 3x5 index cards. For one group of Ss you will be issuing reinforcement at the completion of every sentence he constructs which begins with "I" or "WE". For another group of Ss you will be issuing reinforcements on a random basis.

Your materials are the following: 1) a tape recorder; 2) a deck of 3x5 cards with pronouns and verbs typed on them; 3) two types of record sheets and 4) a printed instruction sheet.

At the beginning of each conditioning session: 1) turn on the tape recorder; 2) announce the S's number (he will have it with him); 3) read the printed instructions to him and 4) begin turning the cards.

### Issuing Reinforcements:

You have two types of record sheets. One (Type C) has just numbers and spaces on it (in addition to the informational material - name, date etc). The other (Type R) has circles appearing around certain numbers. Type C sheet will be used with Ss who will be reinforced contingent upon their use of "I" or "WE" in beginning a sentence. DO NOT REINFORCE SENTENCES 1 THROUGH 20. Start reinforcing with the first sentence begun with "I" or "WE" after card 20. Use the record form to check off responses as they are given. This will enable you to keep track of where the S is.

The type R record sheet is used with Ss who are reinforced randomly.



The circled numbers indicate the points at which reinforcement is given. Again use the record sheet to keep track of the S's performance.

In both cases reinforcement ("mm-hmm") is issued at the end of a sentence. Also in both cases - AFTER 80 RESPONSES ARE COMPLETED CEASE ISSUING REINFORCEMENTS. This is the extinction phase.

#### Conversation:

There is conflicting data as to whether pre-session conversation helps or hinders conditioning. This is one question we will be looking at in terms of results. You are asked to talk with some of the Ss you condition before the conditioning. Your set is: to try to get to know them as best one can in 15 to 20 minutes. Do not spend more than 20 minutes on this. With the other Ss try to move right into the task. DON'T BE MUTE but don't try for a conversation.

#### Subjects:

You will be conditioning both males and females. They will be Fresh and Soph college students. When we set up meeting times, I'll be able to tell you which treatment each S receives (i.e. - random or contingent  $R_X$ ; conversation or no conversation).

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE SUBJECT (READ)

(Display the deck of cards) YOU WILL SEE A WORD IN THE CENTER OF EACH OF THESE CARDS. I WANT YOU TO MAKE UP A SENTENCE USING THIS WORD.

BELOW THE WORD IN THE CENTER YOU WILL SEE A GROUP OF OTHER WORDS. TAKE

ANY ONE OF THESE AND USE IT TO START YOUR SENTENCE. (Pause) NOW IT

DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER THE SENTENCE YOU MAKE UP IS LONG OR SHORT OR

EVEN WHETHER ITS COMPLICATED OR SIMPLE. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU

ANSWER WITH THE FIRST SENTENCE THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND. (Pause)

EVERYTHING THAT WE SAY IS BEING RECORDED SO THAT IT WON'T BE NECESSARY

FOR ME TO WRITE DOWN YOUR SENTENCES NOW. (Pause) DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE

INSTRUCTIONS....? ALRIGHT, LET'S BEGIN.

APPENDIX B

Scales Measuring Empathy,  
Positive Regard & Genuineness

A Scale for Measurement<sup>1</sup>

Robert R. Carkhuff

State University of New York at Buffalo

Level 1

The verbal and behavioral expressions of the first person either do not attend to or detract significantly from the verbal and behavioral expressions of the second person(s) in that they communicate significantly less of the second person's feelings than the second person has communicated himself.

Examples: The first person communicates no awareness of even the most obvious, expressed surface feelings of the second person. The first person may be bored or disinterested or simply operating from a preconceived frame of reference which totally excludes that of the other person(s).

In summary, the first person does everything but express that he is listening, understanding or being sensitive to even the feelings of the other person in such a way as to detract significantly from the communications of the second person.

Level 2

While the first person responds to the expressed feelings of the second person(s), he does so in such a way that he subtracts noticeable affect from the communications of the second person.

Examples: The first person may communicate some awareness of obvious surface feelings of the second person but his communications drain off a level of the affect and distort the level of meaning. The first person may communicate his own ideas of what may be going on but these are not congruent with the expressions of the second person.

In summary, the first person tends to respond to other than what the second person is expressing or indicating.

Level 3

The expressions of the first person in response to the expressed feelings of the second person(s) are essentially interchangeable with those of the second person in that they express essentially the same affect and meaning.

Example: The first person responds with accurate understanding of the surface feelings of the second person but may not respond to or may misinterpret the deeper feelings.

The summary, the first person is responding so as to neither subtract from nor add to the expressions of the second person; but he does not respond accurately to how that person really feels beneath the surface feelings. Level 3 constitutes the minimal level of facilitative interpersonal functioning.

Level 4

The responses of the first person add noticeably to the expressions of the second person(s) in such a way as to express feelings a level deeper than the second person was able to express himself.

Example: The facilitator communicates his understanding of the expressions of the second person at a level deeper than they were expressed, and thus enables the second person to experience and/or express feelings which he was unable to express previously.

In summary, the facilitator's responses add deeper feeling and meaning to the expressions of the second person.



Level 5

The first person's responses add significantly to the feeling and meaning of the expressions of the second person(s) in such a way as to (1) accurately express feelings levels below what the person himself was able to express or (2) in the event of ongoing deep self-exploration on the second person's part to be fully with him in his deepest moments.

Examples: The facilitator responds with accuracy to all of the person's deeper as well as surface feelings. He is "together" with the second person or "tuned in" on his wavelength. The facilitator and the other person might proceed together to explore previously unexplored areas of human existence.

In summary, the facilitator is responding with a full awareness of who the other person is and a comprehensive and accurate empathic understanding of his most deep feelings.

<sup>1</sup>The present scale "Empathic understanding in interpersonal processes" has been derived in part from "A scale for the measurement of accurate empathy" by C. B. Truax which has been validated in extensive process and outcome research on counseling and psychotherapy (summarized in Truax and Carkhuff, 1967) and in part from an earlier version which has been validated in extensive process and outcome research on counseling and psychotherapy (summarized in Carkhuff and Berenson, 1967). In addition, similar measures of similar constructs have received extensive support in the literature of counseling and therapy and education. The present scale was written to apply to all interpersonal processes and represent a systematic attempt to reduce the ambiguity and increase the reliability of the scale. In the process many important delineations and additions have been made, including in particular the change to a systematic focus upon the additive, subtractive or interchangeable aspects of the levels of communication of understanding. For comparative purposes, Level 1 of the present scale is approximately equal to Stage 1 of the Truax scale. The remaining levels are approximately correspondent: Level 2 and Stages 2 and 3 of the earlier version; Level 3 and Stages 4 and 5; Level 4 and Stages 6 and 7; Level 5 and Stages 8 and 9. The levels of the present scale are approximately equal to the levels of the earlier version of this scale.

The Communication of Respect in Interpersonal Processes. II

A Scale for Measurement<sup>1</sup>

Robert R. Carkhuff

State University of New York at Buffalo

Level 1

The verbal and behavioral expressions of the first person communicate a clear lack of respect (or negative regard) for the second person(s).

Example: The first person communicates to the second person that the second person's feelings and experiences are not worthy of consideration or that the second person is not capable of acting constructively. The first person may become the sole focus of evaluation.

In summary, in many ways the first person communicates a total lack of respect for the feelings, experiences and potentials of the second person.

Level 2

The first person responds to the second person in such a way as to communicate little respect for the feelings and experiences and potentials of the second person.

Example: The first person may respond mechanically or passively or ignore many of the feelings of the second person.

In summary, in many ways the first person displays a lack of respect or concern for the second person's feelings, experiences and potentials.

Level 3

The first person communicates a positive respect and concern for the second person's feelings, experiences and potentials.

Example: The first person communicates respect and concern for the second person's ability to express himself and to deal constructively with his life situation.

In summary, in many ways the first person communicates that who the second person is and what he does matters to the first person. Level 3 constitutes the minimal level of facilitative interpersonal functioning.

Level 4

The facilitator clearly communicates a very deep respect and concern for the second person.

Example: The facilitator's responses enables the second person to feel free to be himself and to experience being valued as an individual.

In summary, the facilitator communicates a very deep caring for the feelings, experiences and potentials of the second person.

Level 5

The facilitator communicates the very deepest respect for the second person's worth as a person and his potentials as a free individual.

Example: The facilitator cares very deeply for the human potentials of the second person.

In summary, the facilitator is committed to the value of the other person as a human being.

<sup>1</sup>The present scale, "Respect or Positive Regard in Interpersonal Processes," has been derived in part from "A tentative scale for the measurement of unconditional positive regard" by C. B. Truax which has been validated in extensive process and outcome research on counseling and psychotherapy (summarized in Truax and Carkhuff, 1967) and in part from an earlier version which has been validated in extensive process and outcome research on counseling and psychotherapy (summarized in Carkhuff and Berenson, 1967). In addition, similar measures of similar constructs have received extensive support in the literature of counseling and therapy and education. The present scale was written to apply to all interpersonal processes and represents a systematic attempt to reduce the ambiguity and increase the reliability of the scale. In the process many important delineations and additions have been made. For comparative purposes, the levels of the present scale are approximately equal to the stages of both the earlier scales, although the systematic emphasis upon the positive regard rather than upon unconditionality represents a pronounced divergence of emphasis and the systematic deemphasis of concern for advice-giving and directionality, both of which may or may not communicate high levels as well as low levels of respect.



Facilitative Genuineness in Interpersonal Processes

A Scale for Measurement<sup>1</sup>

Robert R. Carkhuff

Level 1

The first person's verbalizations are clearly unrelated to what he is feeling at the moment, or his only genuine responses are negative in regard to the second person(s) and appear to have a totally destructive effect upon the second person.

Example: The first person may be defensive in his interaction with the second person(s) and this defensiveness may be demonstrated in the content of his words or his voice quality and where he is defensive he does not employ his reaction as a basis for potentially valuable inquiry into the relationship.

In summary, there is evidence of a considerable discrepancy between the first person's inner experiencing and his current verbalizations or where there is no discrepancy, the first person's reactions are employed solely in a destructive fashion.

Level 2

The first person's verbalizations are slightly unrelated to what he is feeling at the moment or when his responses are genuine they are negative in regard to the second person and the first person does not appear to know how to employ his negative reactions constructively as a basis for inquiry into the relationship.

Example: The first person may respond to the second person(s) in a "professional" manner that has a rehearsed quality or a quality concerning the way a helper "should" respond in that situation.

In summary, the first person is usually responding according to his prescribed "role" rather than to express what he personally feels or means and when he is genuine his responses are negative and he is unable to employ them as a basis for further inquiry.

Level 3

The first person provides no "negative" cues between what he says and what he feels, but he provides no positive cues to indicate a really genuine response to the second person(s).

Example: The first person may listen and follow the second person(s) but commits nothing more of himself.

In summary, the first person appears to make appropriate responses which do not seem insincere but which do not reflect any real involvement either.

Level 3 constitutes the minimal level of facilitative interpersonal functioning.

Level 4

The facilitator presents some positive cues indicating a genuine response (whether positive or negative) in a non-destructive manner to the second person(s).

Example: The facilitator's expressions are congruent with his feelings although he may be somewhat hesitant about expressing them fully.

In summary, the facilitator responds with many of his own feelings and there is no doubt as to whether he really means what he says and he is able to employ his responses whatever they emotional content, as a basis for further inquiry into the relationship.

#### Level 5

The facilitator is freely and deeply himself in a non-exploitative relationship with the second person(s).

Example: The facilitator is completely spontaneous in his interaction and open to experiences of all types, both pleasant and hurtful; and in the event of hurtful responses the facilitator's comments are employed constructively to open a further area of inquiry for both the facilitator and the second person.

In summary, the facilitator is clearly being himself and yet employing his own genuine responses constructively.

<sup>1</sup>The present scale, "Facilitative genuineness in interpersonal processes" has been derived in part from "A tentative scale for the measurement of therapist genuineness or self-congruence" by C. B. Truax which has been validated in extensive process and outcome research on counseling and psychotherapy (summarized in Truax and Carkhuff, 1967) and in part from an earlier version which has been similarly validated (summarized in Carkhuff and Berenson, 1967). In addition, similar measures of similar constructs have received support in the literature of counseling and therapy and education. The present scale was written to apply to all interpersonal processes and represents a systematic attempt to reduce the ambiguity and increase the reliability of the scale. In the process, many important delineations and additions have been made. For comparative purposes, the levels of the present scale are approximately equal to the stages of the earlier scale, although the systematic emphasis upon the constructive employment of negative reactions represents a pronounced divergence of emphasis.

APPENDIX C

Awareness Questionnaire







