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ABSTRACT

The current importance of growth groups in fostering and enhancing individual development gave rise to the research effort described herein. Its purpose is to determine whether or not an individual's self concept will change after involvement in a single twelve hour growth group. Subjects were four heterogeneous groups comprised of 39 individuals and a 21 member control group which received no growth group experiences. The Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) was used to evaluate participants prior to and after their group experiences. The findings include the following: (1) on pre-testing the control group scores were consistently higher on the Positive Self Concept scales; and (2) on the post-testing the growth group's Positive Self Concept scale scores equalled and, on three scales, surpassed those of the control group. The author concludes that the growth group's consistent self concept improvement should greatly encourage those persons who are committed to the development of this mode of group experience. (TL)

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EFFECTS OF GROWTH GROUPS ON SELF CONCEPT AS MEASURED BY THE TENNESSEE SELF CONCEPT SCALE[1]

Preliminary Report

by

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University of Georgia

INTRODUCTION

There has been an emergence and proliferation of various group procedures associated with humanistic or "third force" psychology. Encounter group, sensitivity group, T-group, human relations training, and growth group are terms becoming firmly established in the professional literature, as well as in popular magazines and movies. The encounter or growth group experience is fast becoming a contemporary happening on many American campuses. Often these groups are time-extended "marathon groups" lasting for as much as 24 hours. Interpersonal communication among members in a growth group would ideally be characterized by openness, honesty, communication on the level of feelings, and be focused on the here and now, rather than on the past or the future.

The present study is concerned with four growth groups conducted at the University of Georgia during the past fall and winter quarters. These groups had as their primary goal the provision of a mean-

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[1] Presented at the American Personnel and Guidance Association National Convention, 1970, New Orleans, Louisiana.

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ingful group experiences for the participants and the fostering and enhancing of individual development. This development, for present purposes, is considered to be best defined and assessed by evaluating how an individual feels, views, perceives, or conceives of himself, i.e. self concept. The theoretical position assumed is that an individual's self concept is extremely influential in determining how effectively he functions. If a person feels worthy, then intra and interpersonal functioning will reflect the quality of that feeling. If, on the other hand, he views himself negatively, then this too will be apparent in his personal functioning.

The research effort from which this preliminary report is based has as it's purpose the exploration of whether or not an individual's self concept will change after being involved in a twelve hour growth group in a single day.

PROCEDURES

Group Leader:

The growth groups were led by the author who is on the staff of the University of Georgia's Mental Health Division. The position taken by the leader for the four growth groups was that of a professional guide, resource model, and active personal participant.

Participants:

The 39 individuals who participated in the growth groups were interviewed by the author, although it is important to note that up until the time that the groups were filled each person requesting the experience was accepted. The composition of the growth groups was varied with students and non-students, married and unmarried, old and young participants.

Growth Groups:

There were four separate growth groups which met for 12 hours each on a Sunday from 9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. While the group members differed in how they approached the experience and how they responded, there were some structured micro-lab exercises in the initial hours of each group. Participants were asked to be open and honest, and to attempt to express feelings, ideas, and opinions rather than judge or explain what they or another person were feeling. The groups took place at the University Health Services on the campus of the University of Georgia.

Control Group:

A control group of twenty-one individuals was utilized to obtain comparative date. This group was made up of undergraduate and graduate students who were enrolled in an interdisciplinary mental hygiene course. They received no growth group experiences, although in class they were exposed to some micro-lab exercises between administration of the pre and post measurement of self concept.

Assessing Self Concept:

The Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) was used to evaluate participants prior to and after their group experience. Pre-testing was accomplished during the week prior to the Sunday on which the group was held. Post-testing was done on an average of about one month after the group met. Control subjects were administered the TSCS on two occasions approximately five weeks apart.

RESULTS

Because this is a preliminary report of a continuing research project the statistical treatment will be limited to exploring evident trends and their implications as indicated by composite TSCS profiles. Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 represent the various profile comparisons. Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 report means, standard deviation scores, and the results of t-tests. Profiles comparing pre and post data for experiemental and control subjects indicate the following: (1) On pre-testing the control

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Insert Tables 1, 2, 3, & 4

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group scores were consistently higher on the Positive Self Concept scales indicating a more positive self concept than the experimental or "growth group" (see Table 1). The controls exhibited less "conflict", "deviant signs" (NDS), and more "personality integration" (PI), than the experimental groups. In short, the controls looked like a "healthier" group, although they did have a higher score on the "general maladjustment" scale (GM). Generally, scores on the empirical scales favored the control group.[2]

(2) On the post-testing the experimental groups Positive Self Concept scale scores reveal that they have risen to, and on three scales surpassed, the control group composite scores (see Table 2). In addition, the experimental group scored equally well on personality integration and higher on "distribution" (D - a measure of personal certainty) (see Table 2). Interestingly the experimental group increased their level of self criticism (SC) whereas the control groups' self criticism score declined. On the empirical scale of N (Neurotic) the experimental group increased whereas the control group decreased slightly.

When comparing the experimental group to itself on pre and post tests, the Positive Self Concept scales reveal an average increase of approximately six T-Score points on the post test profiles. Specific scale increases and their statistical level of significance are given in Table 3. In addition, considerable increase occurred on distribution as well as on personality integration and self criticism. "Total conflict" decreased and the following empirical scales changed significantly: DP and PI. The post test pattern of empirical scales indicated a "flattening" out or normative effect.

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[2] The empirical scales on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale are provided for research purposes. They are DP - Defensive Personality, GM - General Maladjustment, PSY - Psychotic, PD - Personality Disorder, N - Neurotic, and PI - Personality Integration.

The pre and post test scores for the control group indicate that the Positive Self Concept scales increased slightly, none significantly (approximately two T-Score points), while self-criticism (SC) decreased, as did "net conflict" and variability". The empirical scale patterns for the pre and post control profiles were almost identical, although there was a significant drop of GM. Personality integration and deviant signs remained about the same.

DISCUSSION

Examination of the TSCS profiles and the comparison of means via t-tests indicate that initial differences between the experimental and control groups existed and this makes comparison of the two groups tenuous. The reason for the difference is probably related to the inclusion of "mental health clinic clients" in the experimental group. They made up approximately 1/2 of the participants and hence probably affected the composite profile. At any rate the primary strategy of the study is to utilize each participant as his own control. Interestingly enough both groups "improved" their self concept scores, although the participants of the growth groups improved on an average of three times as much as the control group. One possible explanation of the increase in the control group scores might be that they were all enrolled in a course which had as one purpose the improvement of personal understanding and functioning. In addition this course experience may be the reason underlying the decrease in GM post scores for the controls.

While it is too soon to offer generalizations attesting to the effectiveness of the growth group as a change agent of self concept, the TSCS profile and analysis of scale means obtained support and affirm an attitude of optimism, if not elation. The consistent improvement on the positive self concept scores of the growth group participants is encouraging to those persons committed to the development of this mode of group experience. The pattern of empirical scales for the control and experimental group profiles need more exhaustive study. Further exploration is needed to ascertain the many subtle and obvious effects of the growth group experience on self concept.

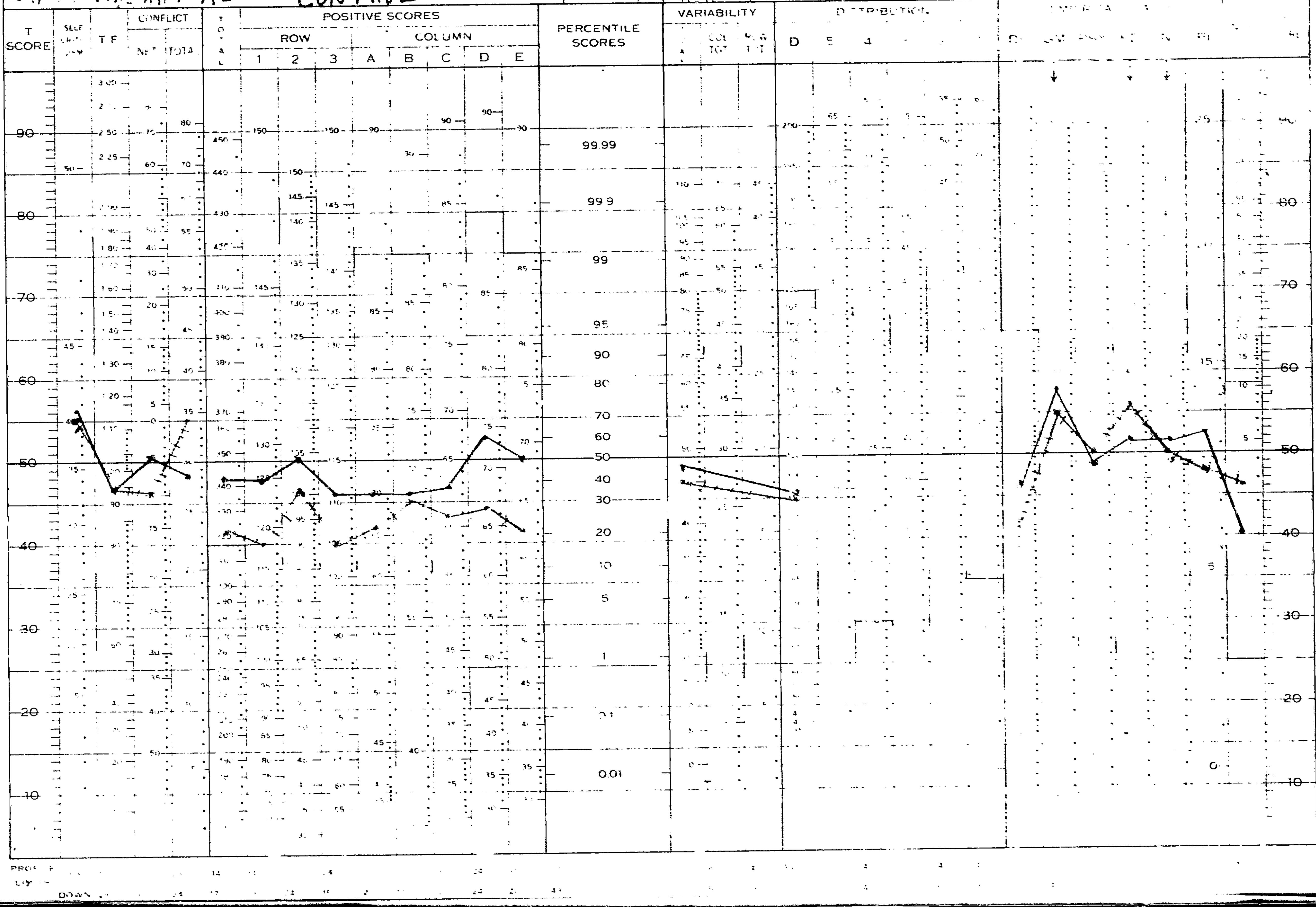
Tennessee Self Concept Scale

William H. Fitts 1964

PROFILE SHEET #1

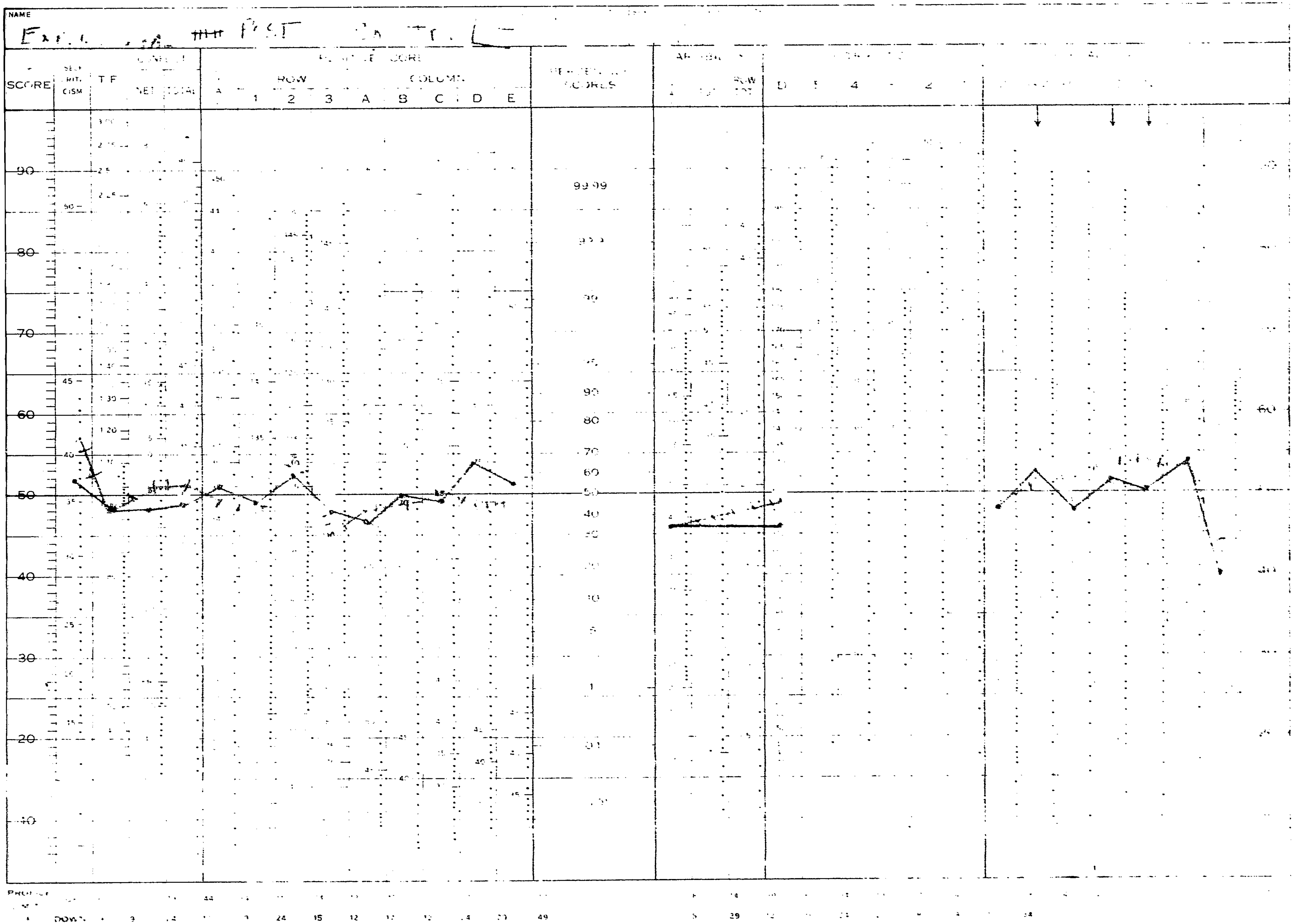
Counselor Recordings and Tests
Box 6184 Acklen Sta
Nashville, Tenn 37212

NAME	SCHOOL GRADE	SEX M ☐ F ☐	AGE	DATE	TOTAL TIME
E... PRE CONTROL —					



Tennessee Self Concept Scale

PROFILE SHEET

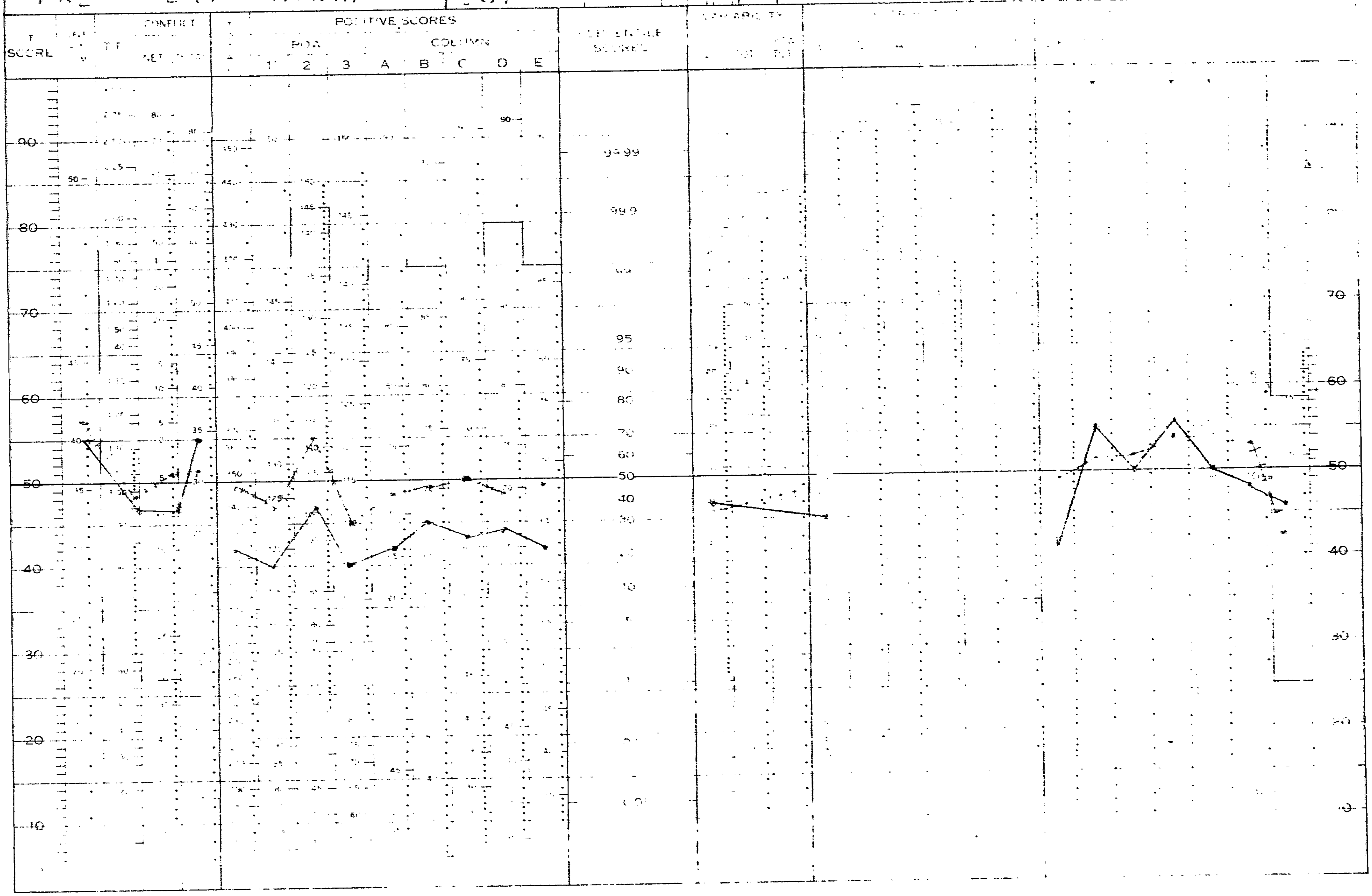


Tennessee Self Concept Scale

WILLIAM H. FITTS 1964

PROFILE SHEET 3

NAME PRE — EXPERIMENTAL POST



Tennessee Self Concept Scale

William H. Fitts PhD

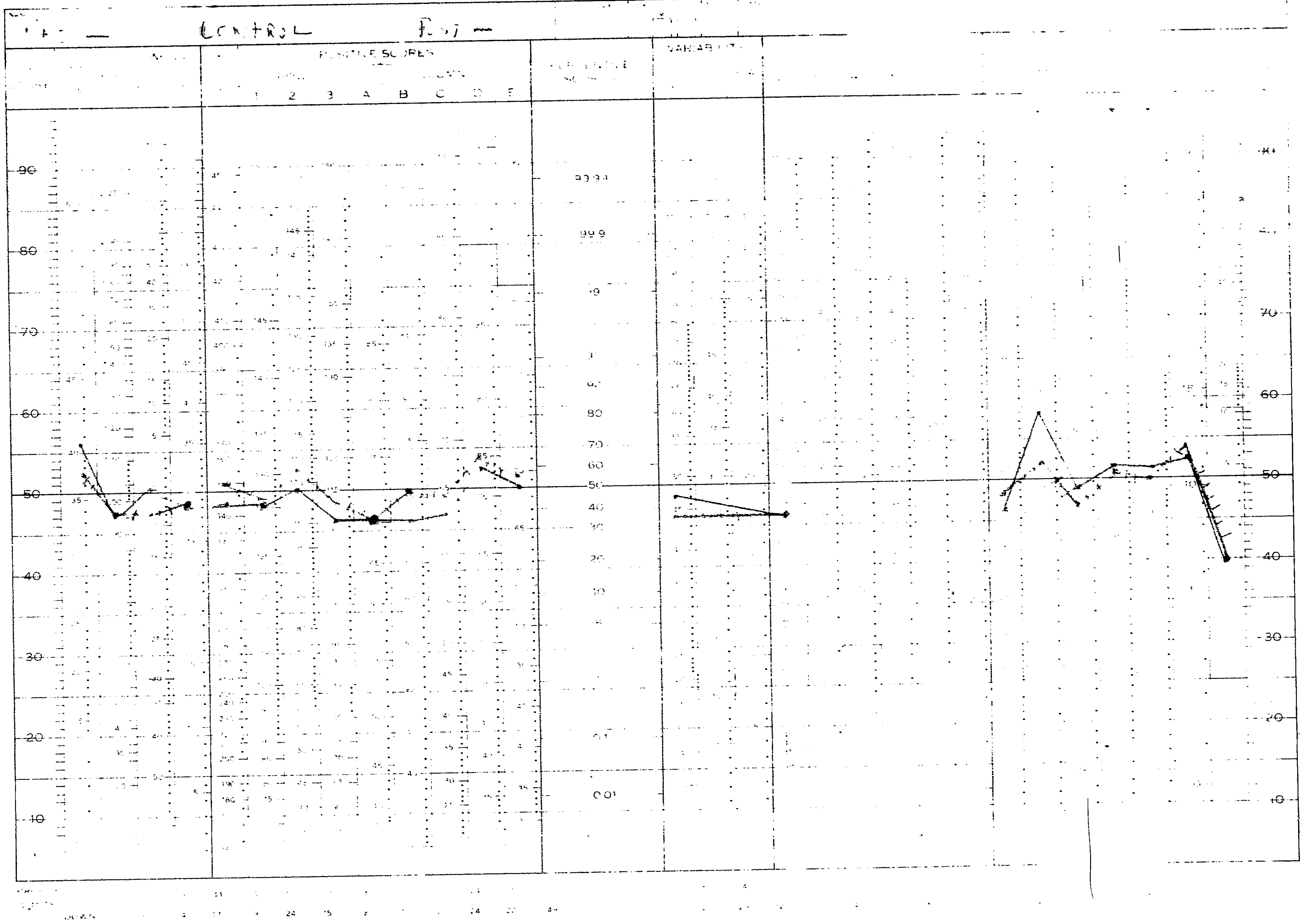


TABLE 1

MEAN TSCS T-SCORES FOR PRE-TESTING OF GROWTH GROUP MEMBERS AND CONTROLS

SCALE	GROWTH GROUP		CONTROL		t
	N= 30		N= 21		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Self-Criticism	55	4.4	56	13.0	
T/F	47	12.6	47	8.5	
Net Conflict	47	13.2	50	7.3	
Total Conflict	55	10.9	48	7.8	2.67**
Total Positive SC	42	13.2	48	9.5	1.89*
Identity	40	10.5	48	9.9	2.77***
Self-Satisfaction	47	10.1	50	9.0	
Behavior	40	14.1	46	9.9	1.79*
Physical Self	42	13.0	46	7.3	
Moral-Ethical Self	45	8.4	46	12.8	
Personal Self	43	10.5	47	9.2	
Family Self	44	11.5	53	11.9	2.69***
Social Self	42	11.1	50	8.8	2.88***
Total Variability	47	10.1	48	8.0	
Distribution Score	45	9.1	46	10.0	
Defensive Personality (DP)	42	8.3	46	8.3	1.69*
General Maladjustment (GM)	55	10.1	58	8.6	
Psychotic (Psy)	50	9.7	49	8.1	
Personality Disorder (PD)	56	8.4	52	12.0	
Neurotic (N)	55	13.5	52	8.1	
Personality Integration (PI)	48	10.2	53	8.8	1.87*
Number of Deviant Signs (NDS)	46	8.7	40	7.4	2.64**
Time	18	5.4	16	11.3	

*** $P < .01$

** $P < .05$

* $P < .10$

TABLE 2

MEAN TSCS T-SCORES FOR POST TESTING OF GROWTH GROUP MEMBERS AND CONTROLS

SCALE	GROWTH GROUP		CONTROL		t
	N= 30		N= 21		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Self-Criticism	57	8.0	52	10.8	1.80*
T/F	48	9.0	47	11.0	
Net Conflict	51	9.0	47	9.3	
Total Conflict	51	9.6	48	9.2	
Total Positive SC	49	11.2	51	8.7	
Identity	47	11.5	49	7.6	
Self-Satisfaction	55	10.6	53	9.8	
Behavior	45	11.4	48	10.1	
Physical Self	48	11.6	46	6.7	
Moral-Ethical Self	49	13.9	50	11.0	
Personal Self	50	10.3	49	9.1	
Family Self	48	13.5	54	10.1	1.81*
Social Self	49	11.0	52	7.5	
Total Variability	46	12.9	46	7.4	
Distribution Score	49	14.0	41	10.1	
Defensive Personality (DP)	49	9.3	48	6.9	
General Maladjustment (GM)	52	11.6	52	8.6	
Psychotic (Psy)	52	8.5	47	8.7	2.04**
Personality Disorder (PD)	54	9.0	51	8.3	
Neurotic (N)	54	10.5	50	7.2	
Personality Integration (PI)	53	9.3	54	8.0	
Number of Deviant Signs (NDS)	43	8.1	40	7.0	
Time	13	4.5	14	4.5	

*** P< .01
** P< .05
* P< .10

TABLE 3

MEAN TSCS T-SCORES FOR PRE AND POST GROWTH GROUP MEMBERS

SCALE	Pre		Post		t
	N= 30		N= 30		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Self-Criticism	55	4.4	57	8.0	
T/F	47	12.6	48	9.0	
Net Conflict	47	13.2	51	9.0	
Total Conflict	55	10.9	51	9.6	
Total Positive SC	42	13.2	49	11.2	2.22**
Identity	40	10.5	47	11.5	2.46**
Self-Satisfaction	47	10.1	55	10.6	3.07***
Behavior	40	14.1	45	11.4	
Physical Self	42	13.0	48	11.6	1.87*
Moral-Ethical Self	45	8.4	49	13.9	
Personal Self	43	10.5	50	10.3	2.60**
Family Self	44	11.5	48	13.5	
Social Self	42	11.1	49	11.0	2.46**
Total Variability	47	10.1	46	12.9	
Distribution Score	45	9.1	49	14.0	
Defensive Personality (DP)	42	8.3	49	9.3	3.07***
General Maladjustment (GM)	55	10.1	52	11.6	
Psychotic (Psy)	50	9.7	52	8.5	
Personality Disorder (PD)	56	8.4	54	9.0	
Neurotic (N)	55	13.5	54	10.5	
Personality Integration (PI)	48	10.2	53	9.3	1.97*
Number of Deviant Signs (NDS)	46	8.7	43	8.1	1.84*
Time	18	5.4	13	4.5	3.04***

*** $P < .01$
** $P < .05$
* $P < .10$

TABLE 4

MEAN TSCS T-SCORES FOR PRE AND POST TESTING FOR CONTROLS

SCALE	Pre		Post		t
	N= 21		N= 21		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Self-Criticism	56	13.0	52	10.8	
T/F	47	8.5	47	11.0	
Net Conflict	50	7.3	47	9.3	
Total Conflict	48	7.8	48	9.2	
Total Positive SC	48	9.5	51	8.7	
Identity	48	9.9	49	7.6	
Self-Satisfaction	50	9.0	53	9.8	
Behavior	46	9.9	48	10.1	
Physical Self	46	7.3	46	6.7	
Moral-Ethical Self	46	12.8	50	11.0	
Personal Self	47	9.2	49	9.1	
Family Self	53	11.9	54	10.1	
Social Self	50	8.8	52	7.5	
Total Variability	48	8.0	46	7.4	
Distribution Score	46	10.0	46	10.1	
Defensive Personality (DP)	46	8.3	48	6.9	
General Maladjustment (GM)	58	8.6	52	8.6	2.26**
Psychotic (psy)	49	8.1	47	8.7	
Personality Disorder (PD)	52	12.0	51	8.3	
Neurotic (N)	52	8.1	50	7.2	
Personality Integration (PI)	53	8.8	54	8.0	
Number of Deviant Signs (NDS)	40	7.4	40	7.0	
Time	16	11.3	14	4.5	

*** $P < .01$
** $P < .05$
* $P < .10$