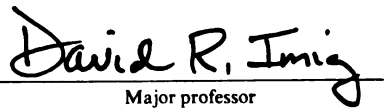This is to certify that the

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EVALUATING THE SHORT-TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PREPARE
2000 PREMARITAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM: AN EXPLORATORY
STUDY OF CHANGE IN PREMARITAL COUPLES

presented by

Joseph Milton Hoedel

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D.   degree in Family and Child Ecology

David R, Imig
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Date DECEMBER 6, 2001

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EVALUATIING THE SHORT-TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PREPARE
2000 PREMARITAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM: AN EXPLORATORY
STUDY OF CHANGE IN PREMARITAL COUPLES

By

Joseph Milton Hoedel

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of

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ABSTRACT

EVALUATIING THE SHORT-TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PREPARE
2000 PREMARITAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM: AN EXPLORATORY
STUDY OF CHANGE IN PREMARITAL COUPLES

By

Joseph Milton Hoedel

The authors of the PREPARE 2000 premarital enrichment program are the
first to combine a regimented premarital program with a premarital assessment
questionnaire (PAQ) and offer it as an integrated program. However, this six-
exercise program has never been empirically evaluated to determine the
effectiveness of the program. The purpose of this exploratory study was two-fold.
First, this study evaluated the short-term effectiveness of PREPARE 2000 by
measuring change in relational attributes of premarital couples who completed the
premarital enrichment program. Specifically, this study compared differences
between Time 1 and Time 2 scores for couple typology, positive couple agreement,
male and female individual scores and dyadic adjustment. Secondly, feedback from
couples and clergy participating in the study was collected.

To accomplish these objectives, a multi-method design emploring a
combination of quantitative and qualitative procedures was utilized. Clergy
members from Michigan who were certified to use the PREPARE 2000 program
were recruited. The sample consisted of couples who agreed to be married by one of
the clergy members. Utilizing a pre-post design, couples filled out the PREPARE
PAQ, completed the six-exercise PREPARE 2000 program with their clergy and

filled out the PREPARE PAQ for the second time. Changes in scores between Time 1 and Time 2 were compared.

Results indicated no statistically significant differences on any of the dependent variables and each null hypothesis was accepted. However, using more qualitative ideographic procedures, it was discovered that many couples categorically changed from one typology to another after completing the program. Over 50 percent of the conflicted, traditional and harmonious couples shifted to a higher typology, while 86 percent of the vitalized couples maintained their typology. Finally, feedback was collected from couples and clergy who participated in the study. Verbatim responses were coded for content analysis and compared with past literature and actual changes in couples. Implications and recommendations for theory, research and practice are discussed.

This Ph.D. is dedicated to my father. I wish you could have been here to witness the

improbable. I hope I have made you proud. Thanks for everything!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When a person attains the improbable, it is usually the result of a collaborative process between family, friends and mentors. In my case, this sentiment could not be more accurate. As a young high school sophomore with a solid 1.80 GPA, I never thought I would someday earn a Ph.D. That type of turnaround could not have been accomplished without a tremendous amount of encouragement, affirmation and wisdom from those around me. I want to thank those who helped make all of this possible.

To Jim Brandt, who believed in that skinny, high school sophomore and gave him the confidence to dream his dreams. To Paul Weikert, who was kind enough to give me a start in this field and guided me toward a career in marriage and family therapy. I will always value your tutelage and your friendship. To David Imig, who logged countless hours in his office with me, discussing theory, paradigms and the next great idea. Those are the moments I treasure most fondly when I think of my graduate career. I believe I learned more from those scribbles than I ever did from any book. Thanks for giving me a first-rate graduate student experience. To Norma Bobbitt, who always believed in me. Thank you for giving me my first genuine opportunity. Okinawa inspired me and enabled me to hold my head high. Over the past several years, many graduate students would ask me what program I was in. I proudly told them that I was earning my Ph.D. in Norma Bobbitt. To Bob Lee, who taught me more about therapy and theory than any person alive. I really wish I could have bottled up some of your lectures. By the

time I could fully appreciate your wisdom and humor, it was time for me to leave. I will always cherish the conference comradery and the Friday golf matches at Forrest Akers. I am still sorry about sleeping through the 7:45 a.m. tee-time ☺. Thank you one and all. I am a better man because of your guidance and friendship.

I can't forget those that I struggled with. In particular, I wanted to thank Stan Meloy, Laura Mohr and Bernadette Chlopan for being there through the thick and the thin. Everyone should be lucky enough to know friendships like these.

My family is very important to me. I am indebted to my Mother for all that she has done for me. I admire her integrity, work ethic and courage. The only way I can ever repay her for her love and guidance is to pass on those values and characteristics to my own children someday. I also want to thank my Grandmother for just being the strong woman that she is. I mean it when I tell her that she is the greatest woman to ever walk the face of the earth. You will never be forgotten. Also, my last Michigan family connection can not be forgotten or underestimated. Thank you Aunt Emilee for your bi-yearly visits and the hour-long phone calls. However, we both know that The Outback is far better than Mountain Jacks.

And just like any good acceptance speech at the Oscars, I have saved the best for last. My wife Sally is the most creative and talented woman that I know. You inspire me to be better tomorrow than I am today. I thank you for the yesterdays and I can't wait for the tomorrows. Thank you for your patience, persistence and editorial guidance. I sure can pick 'em. What a life this is going to be!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*"We believe that marriage is the most risky undertaking routinely taken
by the greatest number of people in our society."
(Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 1994)*

Introduction

The divorce rate in America has stabilized around 50 percent for the past several

decades (Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981; Boland & Follingstad, 1987; Gottman, 1991;

Giblin, 1994; Olson & Olson, 2000). To address this arguably high rate of divorce,

many family life educators and therapists believe it is best to take a proactive approach

and attempt to improve the relationships of those who are not yet married. Advocated

are premarital enrichment programs as a strategy for increasing future marital

satisfaction and decreasing divorce. Premarital testing can reasonably predict divorce,

and our society places a large amount of faith in them. However, is a brief program

efficacious for premarital couples to undertake? This study investigates the merits of a

major premarital enrichment program.

This premarital enrichment strategy for reducing divorce is complicated by two

factors. First, premarital couples seem unconcerned about the possibility of divorce.

Only six percent of a sample of couples surveyed agreed that they were not adequately

prepared for marriage. Conversely, well over 90 percent of the couples did not

anticipate any problems that they couldn't handle, and believed that their marriages

would be happy and long lasting (Williams, 1992). Olson (1996) refers to this phenomenon as approaching marriage with "rose colored glasses." Larson (1992) writes about individuals who have unrealistic expectations about marriage. The more unrealistic the couple's expectations, the more likely they will experience frustration, disillusionment and disappointment during marriage. The combined unrealistic and idealistic perceptions of many premarital couples render them unaware and unmotivated to help themselves succeed in the very institution they are not adequately prepared to face.

The second major obstacle is the lack of clarity researchers and practitioners possess in the area of premarital enrichment. For the most part, the field of premarital enrichment has been filled with atheoretical premarital programs, flawed methodology and research devoid of empirical findings (Bagarozzi & Bagarozzi, 1982). Clergy and practitioners are trying to improve marital satisfaction and decrease the divorce rate with premarital enrichment programs that researchers have not yet determined to be effective. Certainly, these are admirable efforts. However, if clergy, practitioners and premarital couples are going to devote their time and effort to these programs, it seems logical that they should be assured that the programs can make a meaningful difference.

Scope of the Problem

After reviewing the literature, it can be interpreted that recently a more scholarly approach has been used in the development and administration of premarital enrichment programs. This scholarly approach began in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Many researchers studied marriages that possessed high marital satisfaction, thereby identifying variables associated with healthy marriages (Larson & Holman, 1994).

Others built on this research by developing premarital assessment questionnaires (PAQ's) that were designed to incorporate these variables. Several PAQ's were then developed including FOCCUS, CDEM, RELATE, PREPARE, and PMIP (Larson et al., 1995). Studies were conducted to test the predictive ability of three of these premarital instruments. Williams & Jurich (1995) found that by using FOCCUS scores, they could identify 75 percent of the couples who would later develop distressed marriages. Using PREPARE scores, researchers could predict with about 80 percent accuracy which couples would divorce and which couples would still be happily married at three year follow-ups (Larsen and Olson, 1989; Fowers & Olson, 1986). After studying RELATE scores, it was found that couples who were happily married had scores one full standard deviation higher than those who were dissatisfied with their marriage (Holman, Larson & Harmer, 1994). Aided by the use of PAQ's, researchers and practitioners know what a divorce prone relationship looks like. The more important question has not been answered. Do the researchers and practitioners have the knowledge to improve a relationship prior to marriage?

In the past 70 years, many premarital enrichment programs have been developed to prepare couples for marriage (see chapter 2). Conversely, five PAQ's have been developed exclusively for working with premarital couples. Only Olson has combined a specific enrichment program with a PAQ and offered it as an integrated program. This program is called PREPARE 2000 (Olson, 1996).

The authors of FOCCUS have advocated using the PAQ as a source of feedback for couples planning to marry. The authors of RELATE allow couples to fill out the PAQ and obtain results on the internet. However, only the authors of PREPARE 2000

(Olson, 1996) have developed a recommended program to be followed by clergy and practitioners. It is a six-exercise program to be administered by a clergy member prior to marriage.

Statement of the Problem

This study will evaluate the short-term effectiveness of PREPARE 2000 by measuring change in relational attributes of premarital couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on the PREPARE 2000 model. Specifically, this study proposes to compare the differences between Time 1 and Time 2 scores for couple typology, positive couple agreement, male and female individual (PREPARE) scores, and dyadic adjustment after premarital couples complete a premarital program based on PREPARE 2000. Finally, both premarital couples and clergy will complete feedback questionnaires. The goal of this is to suggest improvements for the intervention piece of the premarital program with the intent of making it more effective.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a premarital enrichment program, PREPARE 2000. There are several reasons this particular premarital program was chosen for study. The first reason is the strong development of the PREPARE (PAQ). The PREPARE PAQ is predicated on established predictors of marital quality and hence contains 89 percent of those variables (Stahmann & Heibert, 1997). Further, studies indicate that data collected using the PREPARE PAQ can be used to predict with 80-85 percent accuracy which couples would divorce from those that would remain happily married (Larsen & Olson, 1989; Fowers & Olson, 1986). The second reason is the frequency of use. Concurrently, over 30,000 clergy/counselors

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are certified to administer the PREPARE PAQ and over 1,000,000 couples have filled out the PREPARE PAQ and submitted it for scoring (Olson & Olson, 2000).

The third reason is that the authors of PREPARE 2000 are the first to combine a specific enrichment program with a PAQ and offer it as an integrated program. The six-exercise program was initially offered in response to many clergy/counselors who did not know how to help the premarital couples they were working with. In effect, they were saying, "ok, I can predict what will happen to this couple based on the inventory, but how can I help?" However, since the authors of PREPARE have integrated the six-exercise program with the PAQ, no research has been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Significance of the Study

This research is important because the effectiveness of this premarital enrichment program, PREPARE 2000, is unclear. By studying the short-term effects of this premarital program based on a PAQ, this research will help the field understand if, and how much, these comprehensive programs help premarital couples prepare for marriage. This study is a natural progression within the field of premarital enrichment. Numerous studies have been conducted on the PREPARE PAQ (Fournier, 1979; Fowers & Olson, 1986; Larsen & Olson, 1989; Fowers & Olson, 1992). Psychometrics of the PAQ are strong, and it is proported to have high predictive validity. However, to date, no research has been done to assess the effectiveness of this six-exercise premarital enrichment program.

As the first integrated premarital enrichment program, it is assumed that many changes will be made in the upcoming years. This study will highlight the relational

areas that increase and decrease as a result of this premarital program. This study will also collect feedback from both clergy and premarital couples who participated in the study.

The results of this study are intended to help the authors and providers of PREPARE better understand the benefits and weaknesses of this premarital program. Authors of other PAQ's will hopefully benefit from the results of this study as they build the enrichment aspects of their premarital program. It is also assumed that clergy, counselors and family life educators who are providing these premarital programs have a vested interest in the effectiveness of the program they are providing. Likewise, premarital couples who are participating in these programs will be interested in whether or not these programs are indeed helping them achieve stronger marriages.

The purpose of this study is to influence the improvement of the premarital enrichment programs currently offered to premarital couples. It is important to understand if this program does what is intended to do; improve relational attributes and prepare couples for marriage. If it doesn't obtain the intended results, what type of feedback can the providers and receivers provide? This information is important because large numbers of the clergy in this country are currently providing premarital enrichment programs. Building better models or improving existing models is important to them as well as to the future engaged couples who might someday be participating in these programs.

Definitions of the Terms (Conceptual & Operational)

Independent Variable:

1) Premarital Enrichment Program
Conceptual Definition: A program that occurs before marriage that is intended to improve the likelihood of future marital success and marital satisfaction.

Operational Definition: The PREPARE 2000 program that consists of six feedback exercises and a workbook entitled *Building A Strong Marriage*. The program is intended to increase 1) couple typology, 2) PCA 3) male and female individual and 4) dyadic adjustment scores. These factors are correlated with future marital success and marital satisfaction.

Dependent Variables:

1) Level of Positive Couple Agreement (PCA) Scores
Conceptual Definition: The degree to which a couple agrees on an element in their relationship and identifies it in a positive light.

Operational Definition: Couple responses on the PREPARE Instrument that are identical or within one point of each other (4-4, 4-5, or 5-5), and they agree with positive items or disagree with negative items (Olson, 1996). These scores are figured for 17 of the 20 categories.

Method of Testing: Couples will take the PREPARE PAQ at Time 1 and again after completing the premarital program at Time 2. Differences between Time 1 and Time 2 PCA scores will be analyzed. These scores are part of the feedback process that is scored by researchers at Life Innovations, Inc. and sent back to the researcher/clinician.

2) Level of Couple Typology
Conceptual Definition: Different types of couples with different levels of relational skills and similarities on various relational issues.

Operational Definition: An ordinal scale that ranks couples; conflicted, traditional, harmonious, and vitalized according to couple health. Couples are placed into couple typologies based on their mean PCA scores. These couple typologies are highly correlated with various levels of future marital success and marital satisfaction.

Method of Testing: The level of couple typology is based on PCA scores from the PREPARE PAQ. This feedback will be ascertained at Time 1 and Time 2.

3) Level of Dyadic Adjustment
Conceptual Definition: The way each person assesses their level of happiness with their mate and relationship.

Operational Definition: The score for each individual on the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS).

Method of Testing: The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale will be administered at Time 1 and Time 2. Differences between the tests will be compared and analyzed.

Other Essential Definitions

Premarital Couple
Conceptual Definition: This is any couple that has decided to marry and has established a wedding date. These couples are not wavering about whether or not to get married and are not looking for "intensive therapy." These couples are simply looking to enhance their relationship.

Operational Definition: Any couple that is planning to get married by one of the clergy participating in the study between the dates of May 1999 and September 2000.

Vitalized Couple Typology: Couples who have the highest Positive Couple Agreement (PCA) scores across most of the areas. They tend to have the happiest marriages and are the least likely to divorce (Olson, 1996).

Harmonious Couple Typology: Couples who have rather high PCA scores in most areas except financial management and children and parenting. They tend to be generally happy and are at low risk for divorce (Olson, 1996).

Traditional Couple Typology: Couples who have lower PCA scores in the interpersonal areas (communication and conflict resolution), but higher scores in the more traditional external areas (children and parenting, family and friends, and spiritual beliefs). While a few of these couples divorce, many of them stay together and are unhappily married compared to the vitalized and harmonious types. Only a small percentage of these couples are happily married (Olson, 1996).

Conflicted Couple Typology: Couples who have low PCA scores across many of the content areas. They tend to be at the highest risk for divorce and they tend to be unhappily married (Olson, 1996).

Categorical Change: Couples who shift from one couple typology to another between Time 1 and Time 2.

Premarital Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) – A standardized instrument that is specifically designed and used to assess premarital couples.

Integrated Premarital Program – Any program that combines a PAQ with a standardized premarital program to help couples prepare for marriage.

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Theoretical Framework

A review of the theoretical and empirical literature indicates that marital outcome is based on many complex psychological, relational, developmental and societal factors. Many variables have been linked with future marital outcome; there is no one magic variable that can be used to predict marital outcome. Attempting to understand who will stay married and who will someday divorce is complicated business. In much the same way, many factors must be considered when strengthening relationships and preparing couples for marriage. One theoretical approach that is encompassing enough to recognize and deal with these complex factors is ecosystemic theory. Human ecological theory is general theory that can be used to study a wide range of problems related to families and their relationship with various environments (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993).

Bronfenbrenner's Human Ecological Theory

The ecosystemic framework proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes an individual's environment on multiple levels. This systemic view of the environment is coupled with a recognition that the individual is a system as well, and brings a complex array of characteristics to these environments. "The human organism is conceived as a functional whole, an integrated system in its own right in which various psychological processes-cognitive, affective, emotional, motivational and social-operate not in isolation, but in coordinated interaction with each other," (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, pg 4). This is a framework for looking at ways in which intrafamilial processes are influenced by extrafamilial conditions and environments. Each level is interconnected with the other.

1. Microsystem- the family unit itself, and the activities, roles and interpersonal relations of the primary participants in that setting.

2. Mesosystem - relationships between the family unit and other environments where development takes place.

3. Exosystem - influences from external environments where others outside the family unit participate and affect family members.

4. Macrosystem - the cultural milieu; the expectations held by society based on broader ideological values and norms of a culture which influence family members (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In 1986, Bronfenbrenner proposed a developmental concept termed chronosystem. This dimension recognizes that development within the person and within the environment occurs over time.

Kantor and Lehr's Ecological Model

Kantor and Lehr proposed that the family system is composed of "three sub-systems that interact with each other as well as with the world outside," (Kantor and Lehr, 1975, pg 23). The three components are the family-unit system, the interpersonal sub-system and the personal sub-system. They suggest that all family traffic takes place on a six-dimensional, social-space grid and can be analyzed as members attempt to gain access to targets. The three target dimensions are affect, power and meaning. The three access dimensions are time, space and energy. "Members of families gain access to targets of affect, power and meaning through the way in which they and their families regulate the media of space, time and energy," (pg 37). All of these relational dimensions are interconnected.

While Bronfenbrenner's model emphasizes the interdependent relationship between individual and environment, Kantor and Lehr's model focuses on the interconnectedness of the access and target dimensions in a relationship. Clearly, these theorists endorse the idea that marital outcome is the product of multiple variables on multiple levels. This echoes the battle cry of ecosystemic theory, "the sum of the parts is greater than the whole."

Ecological Framework For Understanding Premarital Assessment Questionnaires

One way to interpret the advances in premarital enrichment is through an ecosystemic lens. Human ecological theory provides an overarching theoretical scheme for organizing the findings of premarital predictors of marital outcome. This theory allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the mate selection process and increases the ability to predict probable outcomes of marriages. Relationships develop at a number of different levels, including the individual, couple and contextual levels (Larson & Holman, 1994).

Theoretical developments and methodological advances that began in the 1960s led to a different way of predicting marital success for the 80s and 90s (Larson & Holman, 1994). Wamboldt and Reiss (1989) were the first to organize the predictors of marital success into an ecological perspective. They divided the variables into three different levels; background factors, personality characteristics and interactional processes. This classification has been modified slightly several times. Stahmann and Hiebert (1997) use 1) background and contextual factors, 2) individual traits and 3) behavior and couple interactional processes.

Ecological Framework for Understanding PREPARE 2000

The feedback from the PREPARE PAQ has five categories: 1) background information, 2) personality issues, 3) intrapersonal issues, 4) interpersonal issues and 5) external issues. This evidence suggests that the authors of the PREPARE 2000 program understand that enriching the lives of premarital couples should consider multiple factors, addressing all five levels. For instance, the exercise that focuses on the couple and family map is intended to help the couple better understand the family of origin sub-scale, which is located in the external issues category, and the couple closeness sub-scale, located in the interpersonal issues category.

Using Ecological Theory As A Measuring Tool

The authors of PREPARE 2000 never claim that their PAQ or six-exercise premarital enrichment program is ecosystemic. It is the author of this study who is attempting to conceptualize this program and this study using an ecosystemic perspective. The reason for this is the similarities between the two ecological models and the PREPARE 2000 program. The authors of PREPARE conceptualize premarital relationships on a multivariate model. The PREPARE PAQ assesses 20 different relational sub-scales. The feedback from PREPARE is organized into five different categories; 1) background information, 2) personality issues, 3) intrapersonal issues, 4) interpersonal issues and 5) external issues. Much like Bronfenbrenner's and Kantor and Lehr's model, PREPARE focuses on different levels. At least, it can be argued that the authors of PREPARE take miro (ex. spirituality and sexuality sub-scales) and meso layers (family and friends sub-scale) into consideration. An argument can be made that looking at differences between family flexibility and couple flexibility allows the

couple to observe changes between the family of origin and the family of procreation, thereby addressing the chronosystem.

The primary dilemma, however, is the applicability of ecological theories to the premarital enrichment program. Clearly, the exercises address multiple aspects of a relationship. Most of the premarital enrichment programs cited in chapter two only attempt to improve a single variable e.g. communication or unrealistic expectations. However, the enrichment element of PREPARE appears to neglect exo- and macrofactors, and issues of couple development (chronosystem) are only superficially addressed. And even if the program attempts to enrich on multiple levels, the author is not convinced that the connection between the levels and categories are emphasized.

Use of A Theoretical Map

A theoretical map was created to demonstrate the relationship between Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, Stahmann & Hiebert's ecological model and the PREPARE 2000 program (see Figure 1-1).

A second figure (see Figure 1-2) illustrates the direct relationship each feedback session (on the right side of the page) has with the predictor variables found within the PREPARE PAQ (on the left side of the page). The predictors are assembled on multiple levels, the PREPARE PAQ assesses on multiple levels, and the PREPARE 2000 program attempts to enrich on multiple levels.

Figure 1-1
Theoretical Map

Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystemic Model (1979, 1986)	Ecological Model for Premarital Relationships Stahmann & Heibert (1997)	Ecological Model for PREPARE 2000 (Olson, 1996)
Micro-System		Background Information: 30 Questions
	Background & Contextual Factors	
Meso-System		Personality Issues: 4 sub-scales
	Individual Traits	
Exo-System		Intrapersonal Issues: 5 sub-scales
Macro-System	Behavior & Couple Interactional Processes	Interpersonal Issues: 7 sub-scales
Chrono-System		External Issues: 4 sub-scales
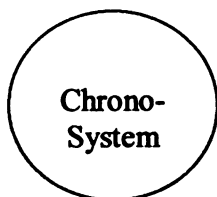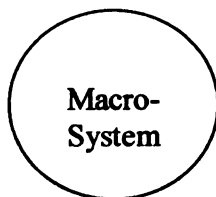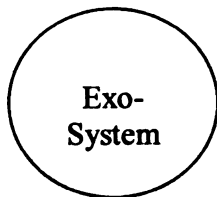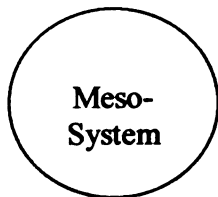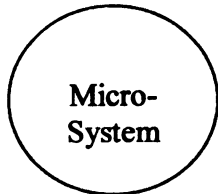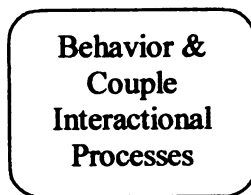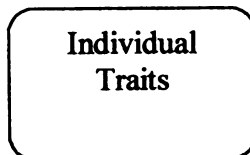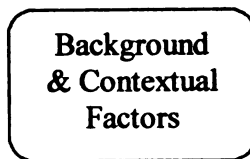
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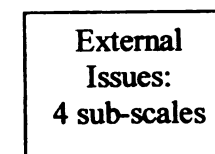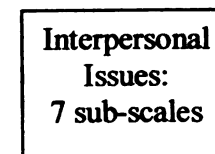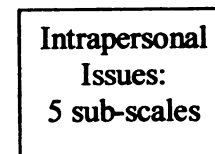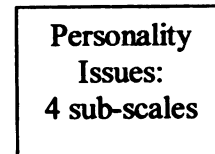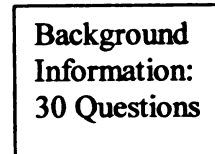
Figure 1-2
The Relationship Between Variables and
Six Exercises in PREPARE 2000

<u>Variables</u>

<u>Six Exercises</u>

1) **Background Issues**
   Background Issues

2) **Personality Issues**
   Assertiveness
   Self-confidence
   Avoidance
   Partner Dominance

3) **Intrapersonal Issues**
   Idealistic Distortion
   Personality Issues
   Spiritual Beliefs
   Leisure Activities
   Marriage Expectations

4) **Interpersonal Issues**
   Communication
   Conflict Resolution
   Children and Parenting
   Couple Closeness & Flexibility
   Role Relationship
   Sexual Relationship

5) **External Issues**
   Family Closeness & Flexibility
   Family & Friends
   Financial Management

#1: **Strength and Growth Areas**
     (2,3,4,5)

#2: **Creating A Wish List**
     (2)

#3: **Assertiveness and Active Listening**
     (4)

#4: **Couple and Family Map**
     (4,5)

#5: **Creating A Financial Budget**
     (5)

#6: **Creating Personal, Couple**
     and Family Goals
     (3,4,5)

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

This chapter addresses the literature on premarital enrichment. It is divided into five sections. The first section identifies a) the progression of premarital enrichment since its inception in 1924, b) the diversity of the premarital enrichment programs that have been developed and c) examines the inadequacies of these programs and the lack of viable research to prove their effectiveness. The second section a) identifies the change from the conglomeration of atheoretical premarital enrichment programs to a more scientific approach and b) examines the variables connected to healthy marriages. The third section focuses on a) the development of the PAQ's based on these variables, b) the psychometrics of these PAQ's, and c) the predictability of these PAQ's. The fourth section is a) a critical scrutiny of the enrichment pieces of the premarital enrichment programs and b) discusses the literature on these programs and the voids that exist. The fifth section addresses the limitations of the research. It a) offers recommendations for future study and b) provides the rationale for conducting this study.

Section 1: Progression of Premarital Enrichment

The idea of premarital enrichment is increasingly given notoriety and interest, particularly among groups concerned with the divorce rate in America. Different legislative bodies at the state and local levels are contemplating making premarital counseling mandatory before a couple can legally marry. Members of the clergy are instigating local proposals, such as the *Community Marriage Statement for Ottawa*

County (MI), whereby clergy as well as judges agree to marry couples only after they complete premarital counseling. With all of this recent attention, one might think that premarital enrichment is a novel idea. However, the premise of helping individuals and couples achieve a happy and long-lasting marriage before the occurrence of the wedding ceremony, evolved early in the 20th century.

"The first premarital intervention occurred in 1924 when Ernest Groves taught the first course in preparation for family life at Boston University, (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997, pg 5)." The first premarital educational program was developed at the Merrill-Palmer Institute in Detroit, Michigan in 1932 (Bagarozzi & Bagarozzi, 1982). Another early premarital program was developed at the Philadelphia Marriage Council in 1941. The goals of this standardized program focused on:

> a) Providing education and information about married life to couples contemplating marriage, and

> b) Helping prospective spouses resolve whatever interpersonal difficulties they were experiencing at the time (Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981).

In their book, *Premarital and Remarital Counseling*, Stahmann & Hiebert (1997) dissect the chronology of premarital enrichment into two categories: 1) before World War II and 2) after World War II. In the former group, the majority of these programs were constructed by counseling professionals and clergy. At that time period, divorce was seen as a deviation from the norm and could easily be blamed on individual pathology. Therefore, most of these programs focused on the mental health of the individuals getting married. The clergy were more interested in the marital obligations of each person and the sanctity of the marriage.

Post World War II: With the introduction of pastoral counseling and marriage and family counseling, the focus of these programs slowly began to shift from pathology to the interpersonal dynamics of a relationship. "It became clear that it really was possible to have an unhealthy marital relationship between two relatively healthy people," (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997, pg 10), which initiated the investigation of variables that often lead to longer and happier marriages. Still, in 1966, it was reported that members of the American Association of Marriage and Family Counselors performed very little formal premarital counseling. The clergy still performed most of the premarital counseling and were seen as screening agents able to assess the health of the couples who planned to marry (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997). Due to the lack of professionals involved in the premarital field, a minimal amount of research exists on the efficacy of these previous programs. Despite the lack of evidence of success for these programs, by the 70s and 80s, the expansion of premarital programs was well underway.

The most prevalent form of premarital programs endorsed a behaviorally based model stressing communication skills (Markman, Jamieson & Floyd, 1983; Gottman 1991; Ridley & Avery, 1981). Gottman identified four indicators of poor communication in married couples: 1) criticism, 2) contempt, 3) defensiveness and 4) stonewalling. Likewise, Markman discovered four destructive communication patterns prevalent in marriages: 1) escalation, 2) invalidation, 3) withdrawal and avoidance, and 4) negative interpretations. These investigators assert, "It's not how much you love each other that can best predict the future of your relationship, but rather how conflicts and disagreements are handled," (Markman, Stanley & Blumberg, 1994).

Theoretically then, the goal of these programs was to equip couples with the essential tools to effectively deal with the inevitable conflicts that arise during marriage. These skills include self-disclosure and empathy (Avery Ridley, Leslie & Hilholland, 1980); sharing expectations, clarifying statements, and "I" statements (Markman, 1979); negotiation, problem solving and decision making skills (Senediak, 1990). Stanley, Markman, and Blumberg (1994) developed the speaker-listener technique as a way to strengthen marriages. They hypothesized that couples who learn positive communication skills will be better equipped to handle future marital conflicts more effectively.

Vande Kamp (1985) specifically utilized a **psychodynamic, object relations** point of view which involved a seminar-based format focused on mate selection factors, presumably operating at the unconscious level. This particular program states that, "people have a remarkable skill in choosing mates who will meet their needs, although they may insist later they married the unexpected," (pg 162). The goal of this program was to identify the unconscious needs of each individual and recognize them in overt conscious ways.

A similar design produced by Muncy (1983) centered on **Erickson's Stages of Development**. He links the difficulty of individuals forming intimacy with a previous ability to form an identity. "A person whose sense of identity was not well formed will have high dependency needs," (pg 246). These high dependency needs may leave a person so afraid that he/she will not be able to establish intimacy or trust. The problem is that intimacy includes a certain vulnerability, which is highly threatening to a person

with a weak identity. The end result could be jealousy, control issues and insecurities in married relationships.

Other programs examined the **unrealistic expectations** of premarital couples. The research suggests that couples contemplating marriage hold idealistic and perhaps euphoric ideas about what married life entails. Larson (1992) said, "If individuals have unrealistic beliefs or expectations about mate selection, they are more likely to experience frustration, disillusionment, and disappointment in relationship development," (pg 243). One of the unrealistic expectations premarital couples held about marriage includes "the love is enough belief." Larson argues, simply because we are 1) profoundly attracted to somebody and 2) have passionate feelings of love for him/her, does not mean for a moment that we should marry them. "Falling in love is easy, making it last is the hard part," (pg 245). The goal of this program is to challenge these unrealistic beliefs and replace them with alternative beliefs that are compatible with enduring relationships.

Still other programs emphasized a **Bowenian**, multi-generational concept to prepare couples for marriage. Primarily, these programs examined each person's family system and its impact on the formation of their relationship. Wood & Stroup (1990) state, "It is erroneous to believe that 1+1=2. Although it appears that only two persons are marrying, in reality, each person's family is present in powerful and hidden ways, ready to exert its influence over values, rules, and assumptions at every opportunity," (pg 112). These programs utilized genograms to understand values, roles, beliefs and styles of parenting. They explored role models from each person's family of origin,

discussed how each person would like to see their marriage differ from that of their parents and how they expected to change their own marriage.

Section 2: New Movement to Logic and Empiricism

The majority of these programs have neither been empirically or longitudinally tested. The intervention program sometimes lacked logic and a theoretical perspective. To address these issues, a movement began in the 70s and 80s that continues to flourish in the 90s. This new generation of researchers and clinicians took logical steps within the field and used solid empirical research to document the progression of their findings. A generation of researchers built upon each other's research and study to validate the field of premarital enrichment. This movement began with researchers studying marriages that ended in divorce, as well as studying successful marriages with high levels of satisfaction. They identified the variables associated with each type of marital outcome. Then, these researchers built instruments/models to include and assess these variables experienced by premarital couples. These researchers attempted to predict the future marital status and/or marital satisfaction premarital couples would encounter. Some researchers developed premarital programs to decrease divorce and increase marital quality. The following pages summarize the logical and empirically based movement within the field of premarital enrichment (See figure 2-1).

In the latter part of this century, the field has discovered many predictors of marital success and marital satisfaction. To provide some continuity, these variables have been divided into three categories; 1) background and contextual factors, 2) individual traits and behavior and 3) couple interactional processes (Larson & Holman, 1994).

Contextual Factors: Age at marriage is consistently documented in the literature as having a major impact on marital status. **Age at marriage** was the best single predictor of divorce (Bumpass & Sweet, 1972). Teenage marriages are expected to end in divorce at a rate of twice that of those who marry in their mid twenties (Martin & Bumpass, 1989). Even when controlling for other intervening variables such as educational attainment, premarital pregnancy, religious affiliation, and parental marital stability, nothing significantly altered the correlation between age and marital status. However, there may be a bi-modal distribution between age and marital status. Individuals who marry early (before age 20) and late (after age 27) have higher rates of divorce than individuals who married in their early 20s (Booth & Edwards, 1985).

Other contextual variables, such as **education, income, socioeconomic status and occupation** have also been well documented. These variables are closely related because one usually depends on the other. For example, a person's income is based on the type of occupation, which is usually dependent upon a person's level of education and so on. The relationship between these variables and marital quality/status is quite linear; the higher the level of education, occupation, socioeconomic status and income, the lower the divorce rate (Martin & Bumpass, 1989). It was found that educated couples who never experienced unemployment were most likely to be married at a nine year follow-up (Bahr & Galligan, 1984). A few contradictions exist. For instance, women with graduate degrees may have higher separation rates than women with bachelor degrees (Houseknecht & Spanier, 1980).

Several research studies offer findings that differ on **race** as a predictor of marital status. Bahr & Galligan (1984) say race has been a poor predictor, while Whyte

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(1990) found that African Americans had significantly less stable marriages than Caucasians, even when controlling for other intervening variables. Regardless, this variable and the other contextual variables previously mentioned have little consequence for premarital programs. They are worth noting, but it is quite unlikely and sometimes even impossible to change these variables to increase the likelihood of staying married.

The same argument can be made about the **effect of no-fault divorce** on divorce statistics in this country. Many argue that no-fault divorce has eroded the norms of lifetime obligation to one another in matrimony (Whyte, 1990). This legislative decision might very well have major impacts upon marital longevity, but once again has little to do with the work of a premarital enrichment program.

Background Factors: A tremendous amount of research has been documented on the relationship between a person's family of origin and future marriage. In a review of the literature, Larson & Holman (1994) declare there is an undeniable relationship between **parental marital quality** and adult children's marital quality. McLanahan & Bumpass (1988) found that women who spend at least part of their life with a single parent are more likely to have their own marriages end in divorce. Parents' marital quality has also played a significant role. Women who divorced "early" were more likely to have come from tense, less close and unstable families than women who did not divorce (Kelly & Conley, 1987). Similarly, highly conflictual family environments predicted lower marital quality (Wamboldt & Reiss, 1989).

It has been argued that marital quality is not the only role that parents play in the future of subsequent marital status and satisfaction. Research continues to show

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evidence that support of the marriage from **parents, family and friends** enhance marital quality and stability. Additionally, as expected, parental opposition was correlated with future marital problems and probability of divorce (Whyte, 1990). Families can also put pressure on their children to marry. This pressure has been shown to have deleterious effects on these marriages. The greater the independence from such pressures in the decision to marry, the greater the subsequent marital quality (Larson & Holman, 1994). This might explain an interesting finding that enmeshed relationships between mother-son contributes to marital disruption (Kelly & Conley, 1987).

Individual Traits and Behavior: Various studies have focused on the importance of **mental health characteristics** of individuals who marry. Studies on self-esteem, depression and neuroticism have demonstrated a strong correlation with divorce and low marital quality. These findings are significant, but with the limitations of a premarital enrichment program, it is argued that little can be done to alter such factors without referring the person/couple to therapy. Other variables under the personality heading are more amenable to change. The **more conventional** (Whyte, 1990) and **less impulsive** (Kelly & Conley, 1987), the more stable the marriage. In a closely related study, a positive correlation was found between **unrealistic expectations** about marriage and subsequent levels of frustration and disappointment during marriage (Olson, 1992). The degree of **sociability** has also been found to be positively related to marital stability and quality (Larson, Holman, Klein, Busby, & Stahmann, 1992).

Couple Interactional Processes: This category of variables has been divided into three sub-categories of 1) homogamy, 2) interpersonal similarity and 3) interactional processes (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997).

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Homogamy: Research on homogamy has been scarce, but that which has been done provides some support for the five propositions that marital quality will be higher for couples who are similar in **race, socioeconomic status, religious orientation, intelligence and age** (Larson & Holman, 1994). The more homogamous the couple, the more similar they are in these important categories. The premise behind these findings is that the more people have in common, the less they will disagree and argue. Religious homogamy has been explored extensively. It has been concluded that the more similar in **religious orientation**, the greater the marital quality. However, one study concluded that homogamy was not important unless religious involvement was high. In other words, if a couple declared themselves Catholic, but did not go to church often, it did not affect the marriage. On the other hand, if a couple is heterogamous and attends a church regularly, it created greater levels of dissatisfaction in their marriage (Heaton, 1984).

Interpersonal Similarity: In much the same way, similarity of **attitudes, values** and **beliefs** were also related to marital stability and quality. The way in which people see the world influences how they arrange their lives. People who see the world differently may struggle over how to design and accomplish even the most menial of tasks. Thus, similarity on values, attitudes and beliefs increase marital quality. Couple consensus on a number of attitude and belief scales have been highly predictive of marital stability and marital quality in three year follow-ups (Fowers & Olson, 1986; Larsen & Olson, 1989). Similarities of gender roles also appear to have an effect on marital quality. Although egalitarian relationships appear to be more conducive to

building stronger marriages, the most important element is the similarity in attitudes about the roles in a marriage (Larson & Holman, 1994).

The interactional processes of the past and the present have been studied for years. The **length of courtship** has been cited in many studies. Overwhelmingly, the findings suggest the shorter the dating period, the higher the divorce rate (Kurdek, 1991). Researchers suggest that minimal dating periods do not allow couples to screen for compatibility. Paradoxically, **cohabitation** before marriage increases the divorce rate by as much as 50 percent compared to non-cohabitators (Larson & Holman, 1994). This variable does not serve as an additional screening device. Instead, it is reasoned that people who break the societal norm of living together will also be willing to break another societal norm making divorce easier. Another essential variable is **premarital pregnancy/childbirth**. Put simply, premarital childbearing increases the risk of divorce and decreases marital satisfaction, especially in the first few years of marriage. However, couples who get married before the birth of the child have much higher rates of marital success than those who wait until after the birth (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997).

Current Interactional Processes: **Communication skills** have been correlated with future marital satisfaction. Markman (1979) conducted the first longitudinal study to assess the effectiveness of premarital counseling. This study specifically highlighted a behavioral perspective of communication and problem solving skills. This study found that "the more positively the couples rated their interaction at Time 1, the more satisfied they were at Time 3," (Markman, Jamieson & Floyd, 1983). They believe this indicates that unrewarding communication precedes the development of relationship dissatisfaction. In this study, however, no correlation was found between Time 1

ratings and Time 2 satisfaction. The authors hypothesize that it may take time for the

unrewarding communication to effect the satisfaction of a relationship. Further, this

might also suggest that couples might be able to rely on other strengths in their

relationship for relatively short periods of time, but these strengths cannot overcome

destructive communication for extended periods of time.

Floyd & Markman (1983) indicate that "unrewarding communication precedes

the development of relational dissatisfaction," (pg. 746). Likewise, they found

distressed couples rate their communication more negatively and use more negative

verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Replicated studies in Germany (Markman & Hahlweg,

1993) produced similar results. In another study, premarital conflict predicted future

marital maladjustment for wives married two to three years (Kelly, Houston, & Cate,

1985).

Section 3: Instrumentation Development

Various instruments have been developed to include and assess the variables

correlated with marital success and satisfaction. Other instruments not designed for

premarital couples have been used in premarital programs, such as the MMPI and the

Taylor Johnson Inventory. Larson, et al. (1995) attempted to set a standard for

premarital instruments. The criteria for the instruments are as follows:

1) Be designed primarily or exclusively for assessing the premarital relationship.
2) Collect comprehensive data that are relevant to the counseling or educational
process.
3) Be easy to administer and widely applicable.
4) Be easy to interpret.
5) Be reliable and valid.

After establishing these criterion, Holman, Klein, Busby, Stahmann and

Peterson (1995) reviewed the instruments designed for, and used in, various premarital

programs. Of the many instruments that were reviewed, only five met their standards.

A brief summary of each instrument follows:

1) FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study)

This is a 156-item instrument published by the Archdiocese of Omaha, Nebraska. It assesses 78 percent of the established predictors of marital satisfaction. It is estimated to take 45 minutes to complete. It was designed to reflect the values of a "sacramental marriage" such as permanency, fidelity, openness to children, forgiveness, the roles of faith and unconditional love. FOCCUS can be administered to individual couples or to groups of couples. Studies on content, construct and predictive validity have been conducted. Internal consistency ranges from .86 to .98. Nothing on test-retest reliability has been done. Results can be hand or computer scored ($10).

2) CDEM (Cleveland Diocese Evaluation for Marriage)

This is a 275-item measure developed for use by Catholic clergy. The CDEM evaluates 10 areas related to marriage as understood by Catholic principles. It assesses 81 percent of the premarital factors that predict marital quality. It is estimated to take 45-60 minutes to complete. It may be used in premarital or marital counseling, but is not intended for teaching situations or group premarital counseling. The instructor's manual provides no information concerning reliability or validity. However, the author reported that the internal consistency reliabilities for the sub-scales range from .78 to .81. Nothing on test-retest has been done. Content validity studies were also conducted. Results are computer scored for $15.

3) RELATE (RELATionship Evaluation)

This is a 271-item instrument published by the Marriage Study Consortium at Bringham Young University. Until 1998, it was known as the PREP-M (PREParation for Marriage Questionnaire). It assesses 96 percent of the premarital factors that predict marital quality. The questionnaire can be used with a premarital couple or non-romantically involved couple. It is estimated to take 60-90 minutes to complete. It is also highly useful with groups or in a classroom environment. Studies on the content, construct and predictive validity have been conducted. Internal consistency reliabilities for five sub-scales range from .64 to .88. Nothing on test-retest has been done. The alpha for the total scores is .75. Results are computer scored for $8.

4) PREPARE (PREmarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation)

This is a 195-item instrument published by Life Innovations, Inc. PREPARE assesses 89 percent of the premarital factors that predict marital quality. A 28-page workbook, *Building a Strong Marriage*, designed for use in the feedback sessions, is also provided. It is estimated to take 45 minutes to complete. This inventory is the most studied of all the premarital assessment questionnaires. Studies on content, construct, concurrent and predictive validity have been conducted. Internal consistency reliabilities for the sub-scales range from .64 to .85. The test-retest reliability is .73. The instrument is intended for use with premarital couples. PREPARE-MC is available for use when either partner has children. Results are computer scored for $30.

5) PMIP (Premarital Inventory Profile)

This is a 170-item instrument published by Intercommunication Publishing in North Carolina. The PMIP measures 78 percent of the premarital factors related to later marital quality. It is estimated to take 30-45 minutes to complete. The partners are provided with a *couple's workbook* aimed at improving communication skills and discussing issues identified by the instrument. Internal consistency reliabilities for the sub-scales range from .64 to .79. Nothing on test-retest has been done. Evidence for construct validity is also reported. Results are computer scored for $14.

Table 2-1
Relationship Between Premarital Variables and Five PAQ's

	FOCCUS	CDEM	RELATE	PREPARE	PMIP
1) Background and Context					
Family of Origin					
Parental Divorce	X	X	X	X	X
Parental Mental Illness	0	0	X	0	0
Family Dysfunction	X	0	X	X	X
Parental/In-law Support	X	X	X	X	X
Sociocultural Factors					
Age at Marriage	X	X	X	X	X
Education	X	X	X	X	X
Income/Occupation	X	X	X	X	X
Social Class	X	X	X	X	0
Race	0	X	X	X	X
Current Contexts					
Support From Friends	X	0	X	X	0
Internal/External Pressures	X	X	X	X	X
2) Individual Traits					
Emotional Health	X	X	X	X	X
Interpersonal Skills	X	X	X	X	X
Conventionality	X	X	X	X	X
Physical Health	X	X	X	X	X
3) Couple Interactions					
Homogamy					
Similarity of race	0	X	X	X	X
Similarity of S.E.S.	X	X	X	X	X
Similarity of Religion	X	X	X	X	X
Similarity of Age	X	X	X	X	X
Similarity of Intelligence	0	X	X	0	0
Similarity of Absolute Status	0	0	0	0	0
Interpersonal Similarity					
Values, Attitudes, Interests, Roles	X	X	X	X	X
Interactional Processes					
Degree of Acquaintance	X	X	X	X	X
Cohabitation	0	0	X	X	0
Premarital Sex	X	X	X	0	X
Premarital Pregnancy/Childbirth	X	X	X	X	X
Communication Skills	X	X	X	X	X
Percent. of Factors Measured	**78%**	**81%**	**96%**	**89%**	**78%**

Source: Larson, et al. (1995) and Larson (1995)

Table 2-2
Psychometric Properties of Five PAQ's

Instrument	No. of Items	Time to Administer	Cost Per Couple	Validity	Reliability
FOCCUS	156	45-60	$10	Content Construct Predictive	Internal Consistency .86 - .98
CDEM	271	45-60	$15	Content Consistency	Internal .78-.81
RELATE	204	60-90	$8	Content Construct Predictive	Internal Consistency .70 or higher
PREPARE	195	30-45	$30	Content Construct Concurrent Predictive	Internal Consistency .73-.85 Test Retest .74 - .93
PMIP	140	30-45	$14	Construct	Internal Consistency .64-.79

Sources: Larson, et al. (1995) and Larson (1998)

To date, only three of the five instruments have been used in studies that address predictive validity. Although this is limited data, the research illustrates that practitioners have the potential ability to predict, with reasonable accuracy, what will happen to couples before they marry via the use of a PAQ. In some instances, the predictive ability is remarkable.

PREPARE: A three-year follow-up with 164 couples, who had taken the PREPARE PAQ during their engagement, was conducted. The couples were divided into three groups based on their marital status at a three-year follow-up: 1) happily married; 2) separated or divorced and 3) never married. Discriminate analyses of the data predicted each couple's marital status with 74-84 percent accuracy (Fowers & Olson, 1986). In 1989, Larsen and Olson produced similar results in a replicated study. In this longitudinal study, PREPARE predicted, with about 80 percent accuracy, couples who got divorced from those that were happily married.

FOCCUS: A four-year follow-up with 207 couples, who had taken the FOCCUS PAQ during their engagement, was conducted. FOCCUS scores were able to predict successfully in 67 to 74 percent of the cases the couples with high quality marriages versus those with poor quality marriages. A second finding suggests that FOCCUS scores could be used to identify 75 percent of the couples who would later develop distressed marriages. Finally, the classification rates were between 80 and 82 percent, which is very comparable to the predictive abilities of PREPARE. These differences were statistically significant in 12 out of the 13 sub-scales (Williams & Jurich, 1995).

RELATE: A 12-month follow-up with 85 couples, who had taken RELATE (at that time known as PREP-M) during their engagement, was conducted. In general, higher PREP-M scores were associated with higher subsequent marital satisfaction and marital stability scores. All but one scale (Wives' Home Environment) was in the hypothesized direction, and 59 percent of the scales were significant (p<.05). Not only were the differences statistically significant, but the married satisfied means were a full standard deviation above the means for the married dissatisfied and canceled/delayed groups. Looking at a gender component, the husbands' premarital scores had stronger correlations with marital satisfaction than wives' scores (r=.44) (r=.23) (Holman, Larson & Harmer, 1994).

In a 1996, researchers took the predictive validity of the PREPARE PAQ a step further by developing couple typologies. The following section is an overview of that study and the important implications it has for the field.

In a study that included 4,618 couples, Fowers and Olson (1992) identified four types of premarital couples based on PCA scores.

Vitalized	1,279 couples	28% of the sample
Harmonious	1,245 couples	27% of the sample
Traditional	1,053 couples	23% of the sample
Conflictual	1,037 couples	22% of the sample

The procedure used to categorize these couples was complex, but merits mentioning here. A national convenience sample of 5,030 couples, who completed the PREPARE Inventory before marriage, were included in the study. The typology was developed in three stages.

1) Using an exploratory sample, 412 couples were randomly selected to examine the structure of similarities. A hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis was used to explore the "natural" number of clusters. This was followed by a series of k-means cluster analysis with relocation to further assess the goodness of fit by setting the number of clusters at several levels above and below the number indicated by the original analysis.

2) The second stage involved randomly dividing the remaining sample into two groups. Using a hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis, 2,355 couples were placed into the cluster developed with the exploratory sample. The couples were compared across clusters on various demographic variables to assess relevant differences between the groups.

3) The third stage of the analysis used the remaining part of the sample, 2,263 couples, as a cross-validation sample. This procedure was used to maximize the distance between clusters. The cross-validation was constructed by assigning these couples within the established clusters. Goodness of fit was checked between the two large samples (Fowers & Olson, 1992).

In 1996 (Fowers, Montel & Olson), a sample of 328 premarital couples were followed for three years after marriage to see how couple type influenced marital stability and satisfaction. The following is a visual summary of that study.

Table 2-3
Relationship Between Couple Typology and Marital Outcome

	Vitalized	Harmonious	Traditional	Conflicted	Total
Happily Married	38 60%	30 46%	17 34%	10 17%	95
Less Happily Married	15 23%	19 29%	25 50%	18 30%	77
Separated/ Divorced	11 17%	16 25%	8 16%	32 53%	67
Total	64 100%	65 100%	50 100%	60 100%	239

The findings demonstrate that having a certain couple style influences the marital status and level of marital satisfaction at a three-year follow-up. It is cautioned that the data cannot be interpreted as a predictive measure at three years. This is because the sampling methods do not reflect actual rates of marital outcome. With that

in mind, the following results were uncovered in this study (Fowers, Montel & Olson, 1996).

Canceled Marriage Category

- Conflicted couples were the most likely to have canceled their marriage plans, followed by traditional, harmonious and vitalized couples.
- Conflicted couples were 1.62 times as likely to cancel their marriages as traditional couples and 1.75 times as likely as harmonious couples.
- Forty percent of the couples who canceled their marriages were of the conflicted type.

Separated/Divorced Category

- Couples who had separated or divorced at follow-up were 4.0 times as likely to be conflicted as traditional, 2.0 times as likely to be conflicted as harmonious couples and 2.91 times as likely to be conflicted as vitalized.
- Traditional couples were the least likely to be in this category, with a lower likelihood than harmonious and vitalized.
- Harmonious couples were twice as likely to have separated or divorced as traditional couples.

Happily Married (Satisfied) Category

- Vitalized couples had the highest level of marital satisfaction, followed by harmonious, traditional and conflicted couples.

Unhappily Married (Dissatisfied) Category

- Traditional couples were 1.47 items as likely to be in this category.
- Conflicted couples were 1.80 times as likely to be dissatisfied as opposed to being in the married/satisfied category.
- Although traditional couples were the least likely to divorce, their satisfaction with the dyadic aspects of their relationship was relatively low both before and after marriage.

Many findings came out of this study (Fowers, Montel, & Olson, 1996), but maybe the most important finding is that couples at risk for divorce and unsatisfactory marriages can be identified prior to marriage. PREPARE and other PAQ's have demonstrated their ability to predict marital outcomes with reasonable accuracy. Indeed, according to the research cited in this chapter, PAQ's are theoretical in nature, have sound psychometrics and demonstrate high degrees of predictability based on scores from the PAQ's.

The literature on these PAQ's is thorough. However, has the field improved on its ability to help couples prepare for marriage? Can these programs improve the relationships of the premarital couples, prepare them for marriage, and ultimately decrease divorce rates? The next section of this paper addresses this question by examining the intervention piece of these premarital enrichment programs.

Section 4: Efficacy of Premarital Enrichment Programs

Some family authorities have been pessimistic about the benefits of premarital programs. For example, Bagarozzi & Bagarozzi performed a literature review in 1982 and discerned that, "no empirical data exist to support the notion that premarital programs reduce the incidence of divorce or separation for those couples who participate...due to flawed follow up procedures," (pg 27). Another author agreed with those sentiments stating, "Although the concept of preparation for marriage is a good one, the current value of these programs is limited," (Senediak, 1990). Finally, Edwin Friedman, a prominent researcher in this area recently declared, "Premarital counseling is an absolute waste of time. There is no way that anybody can say anything to any couple before they get married that's really going to have an effect," (Keynote address to the annual meeting, AAMFT, 1996). This author believes blanket statements such as this, either negatively or positively stated, can be harmful to the field. All premarital programs are not created equal and should not be regarded as such.

Indeed, several programs have produced positive results. Ridley & Bain (1983) demonstrated that couples who participated in a premarital program targeted at increasing communication skills, made significant increases on all dependent variables (empathy, warmth, genuineness, and expression of feelings) as compared to couples in

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the control group. In a pilot study conducted in 1984, it was discovered that irrational

beliefs could be decreased and rewarding statements could increase between pre and

post-test (Bagarozzi, Bagarozzi, Anderson & Pollane, 1984).

One study found a roller coaster type response. Couples increased significantly

on all measures at immediate post-test. However, marital adjustment returned to pre-

test levels within a 5-month follow up. Couples who go through Olson's PREPARE

program (study conducted 17 years before the six exercise program was developed)

report more marital satisfaction, less negative and more positive communication and

lower levels of physical aggression (Fournier, Olson & Druckman, 1983). Finally, in a

meta-analysis of 85 studies, it was suggested that the average person who participated in

enrichment was better off following intervention than 67 percent of those who did not

(Giblin, Sprenkle & Sheehan, 1985). In one large-scale study, Markman found that

only 12 percent of couples who had taken PREP had broken up, separated or divorced

after five years, in contrast to 36 percent of couples who had not taken it (Markman &

Hahlweg, 1993).

Additionally, Giblin found particularly high increases in the areas of

communications skills and constructive problem-solving techniques for premarital

couples who participated in a premarital program. However, he forewarned

practitioners that participants generally underwent initial negative changes before

subsequent improvement occurred (Giblin, Sprenkle & Sheehan, 1985).

Section 5: Limitations of Research

There are some obvious limitations in the outcome research for the intervention

piece of premarital enrichment programs. As identified previously, there is a paucity of

longitudinal studies in the literature. Follow-up studies of one year or less are of limited value in determining the success of premarital counseling simply because the majority of divorces in this country take place after the first year of marriage. Random assignment and control groups were almost non-existent, making it difficult to determine effects of the treatment. Additionally, many of the programs were not guided by sound theoretical reasoning. Particularly absent was evidence of family process and/or family development theory (Pinsof & Wynne, 1995). Finally, the premarital programs associated with the PAQ's have not been empirically or longitudinally tested.

Section 6: Future Direction of Research

It appears that some researchers in this field have had success in predicting marital satisfaction and/or marital success from PAQ. Researchers and practitioners should then turn their efforts towards the scholarly testing of those programs that are designed to help couples improve the variables associated with higher levels of marital success/satisfaction. Of the programs associated with the PAQ's, the PREPARE program seems to be a prime candidate for this stage of testing due to its recent changes. With the latest revision of PREPARE, PREPARE 2000 (Olson, 1996), a six-exercise premarital program has been developed, and a workbook entitled *Building A Strong Marriage* accompanies the program. Over 30,000 clergy/counselors have participated in a one day workshop to use PREPARE 2000. This means that thousands of couples will take the PREPARE PAQ and complete the premarital program based on PREPARE 2000. The field should benefit from knowing how effective this program is and how others like it are at improving variables associated with marital success/satisfaction.

Currently, Markman's PREP, which focuses exclusively on building communication skills, has the longest longitudinal study in existence. However, this study only reports a 12 percent difference in divorce rates between experimental and control groups, which is not statistically significant (Markman & Hahlweg, 1993). The PREPARE 2000 program is more comprehensive in that it attempts to improve many factors associated with future marital success/satisfaction. Thus, this study is designed to compare the differences between Time 1 and Time 2 scores for couple typology, dyadic adjustment and positive couple agreement after premarital couples completed a premarital program based on PREPARE 2000.

Conclusion

The latter part of this chapter has summarized the progression of PREPARE. The PAQ was predicated on established predictors of marital success and marital satisfaction. The PAQ includes 89 percent of the predictor variables and it was subjected to a battery of psychometric tests to validate the instrument. One of those studies focused on predictive validity. The instrument demonstrates 80-85% accuracy in predicting future marital success and marital satisfaction. Finally, a six-exercise premarital enrichment program was developed to help couples prepare for marriage, and hopefully, increase future marital success and marital satisfaction. This is where a gap exists in the research.

The next step in the progression of this model is to empirically test the premarital enrichment program. Based on findings from that research, there is a need to assess the effectiveness of the model and possibly make appropriate changes to improve the model. Figure 2-2 addresses this development and demonstrates the contribution of

this study. The following chapters will discuss the specifics of this study. Chapter 3 will discuss the research questions posed and the methodology. Chapter 4 will discuss the findings of those research questions. Chapter 5 will be a discussion of the findings and implications for further research.

Figure 2-1
Progression of the Premarital Enrichment Field

```
┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Identify predictors │                    │ Make constructive   │
│ of marital          │                    │ changes that improve│
│ success &           │                    │ the programs.       │
│ marital satisfaction.│                    │                     │
└─────────────────────┘                    └─────────────────────┘
          │                                           ▲
          │                                           │
          ▼                                           │
┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Develop instruments │                    │ Test the premarital │
│ that include the    │                    │ Programs empirically│
│ variables of M.S. & │                    │ and longitudinally. │
│ M.S.                │                    │                     │
└─────────────────────┘                    └─────────────────────┘
          │                                           ▲
          │                                           │
          ▼                                           │
┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Based on premarital │                    │ Create premarital   │
│ instruments, predict│───────────────────▶│ programs that prepare│
│ M.S. & M.S.         │                    │ couples for marriage.│
└─────────────────────┘                    └─────────────────────┘
```

41
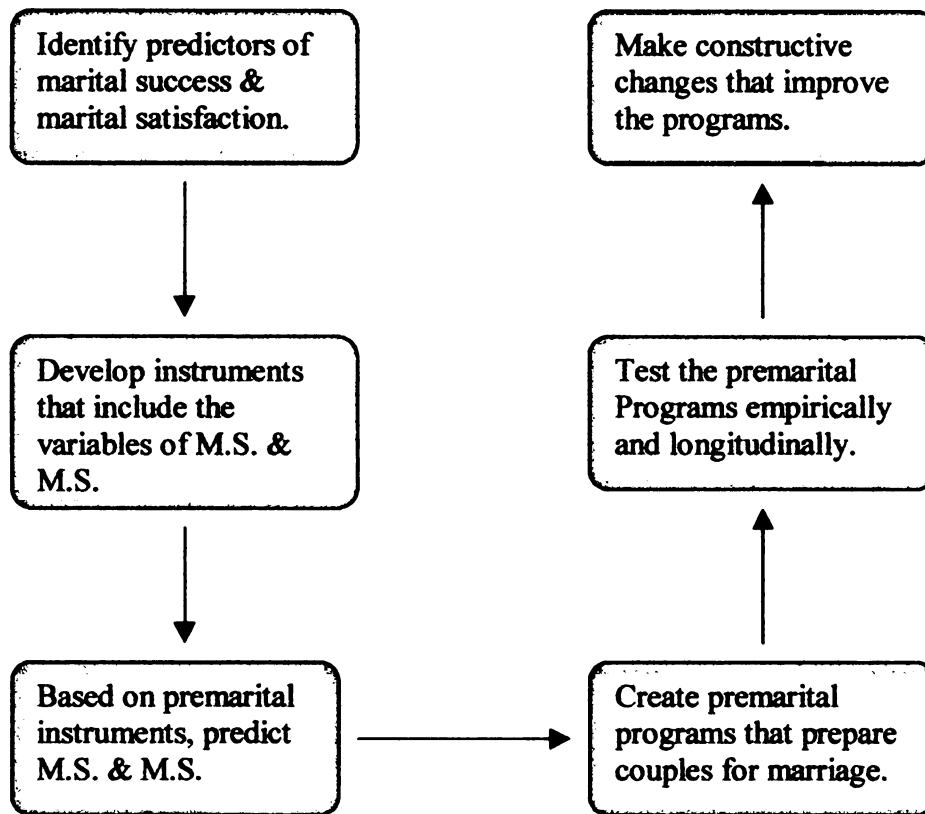
Figure 2-2
Progression of PREPARE 2000

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┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Researchers identify │                    │ Provide constructive │
│ predictors of marital│                    │ feedback to improve  │
│ success & marital    │                    │ PREPARE 2000         │
│ satisfaction.        │                    │ program.             │
└──────────┬──────────┘                    └──────────▲──────────┘
           │                                           │
           ▼                                           │
┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────┐
│ PREPARE Instrument   │                    │ Empirically assess the│
│ is developed (1979) as a│                 │ PREPARE 2000         │
│ guide for working with│                   │ premarital enrichment │
│ premarital couples.  │                    │ program.             │
└──────────┬──────────┘                    └──────────▲──────────┘
           │                                           │
           ▼                                           │
┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────┐
│ PREPARE Instrument   │                    │ A premarital enrichment│
│ demonstrates 80–90%  │                    │ program is devised   │
│ accuracy in predicting│                   │ to help clergy work with│
│ M.S. & M.S. (1989).  │                    │ couples (1996).      │
└──────────┬──────────┘                    └──────────▲──────────┘
           │                                           │
           ▼                                           │
┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│ PREPARE Instrument   │      │ Couple typologies are│
│ is revised.  Includes│─────▶│ created to rank order │
│ 89% of predictors of │      │ couples according to │
│ M.S. & M.S. (1996).  │      │ couple health (1996).│
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
```

**Inside dotted line indicates contribution of this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Given that the effectiveness of PREPARE 2000 as a premarital enrichment program has never been formally assessed in the field, it seems reasonable to categorize this investigation as an exploratory field study. Exploratory studies, according to Kerlinger (1964) have three purposes: a) the identification of significant variables, b) the discovery of relationships among variables, c) and to lay the groundwork for the systematic and rigorous test of hypotheses. It is in the latter two areas that the focus of this study is oriented.

In order to assess the short-term effectiveness of PREPARE 2000 and to accomplish the first objective of determining statistically significant differences for all dependent variables, it was decided to utilize a pre-post test design. Based on Cohen's formula (Cohen, 1960), a sample size of 348 is needed to establish significance at the .05 level. The initial sample (Time 1) will be targeted to include 70 couples. However, since this is a field study that will utilize ministers to administer the program, and unpaid premarital couples as subjects, a large attrition rate is anticipated. Given the possibility that the Time 2 sample size could be in the 30-40 couple range, it was decided to utilize a multi-method exploratory approach to analyze the couple change scores. A paired-means t-test will be used to assess statistical significance of change for 1) PCA, 2) individual male, 3) individual female and 4) dyadic adjustment scores. In assessing for statistically significant change in couple typology, a cross tabulation, with

expected frequencies estimated under the log-linear model of independence, will be used.

To identify categorical change in couple typology, the second research objective, the following procedures will be used. Assuming that the effect of PREPARE 2000 will not be monolithically unidirectional, it was reasoned that couples could be aggregated by direction of typology movement (increase, maintain, decrease) for comparative analysis. Once aggregated, each group will be counted to determine the number in each group. Those that shifted in typology (increased and decreased) are operationally defined as having categorical change.

The third objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between couple typology movement and the 15 sub-scales of PREPARE. To better understand this relationship, groups will be established based on the level of couple typology movement (increase vs. decrease) in each of the 15 PREPARE sub-scales for PCA, individual male and female (PREPARE) scores. This procedure may allow the researcher to better understand what sub-scales of the relationship are affected by the PREPARE 2000 program.

The fourth objective is to investigate the relationship of antecedent variables with changes in couple typology. These 59 variables will be considered in an effort to better understand why some couples increased in typology and others decreased in typology.

The fifth and final objective is to gather feedback from clergy and couples who participated in this premarital enrichment program. A content analysis of the feedback will serve as the method of analysis.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the short-term effectiveness of PREPARE 2000 by measuring change in relational attributes of premarital couples who completed a premarital enrichment program based on the PREPARE 2000 model. Specifically, this study will compare the differences between Time 1 and Time 2 outcome measures for couple typology, PCA scores, male and female individual (PREPARE) scores, and male and female dyadic adjustment scores after premarital couples completed a six-exercise premarital program. Premarital couples and clergy who participated in the study provided program feedback. The goal of collecting additional comments is to suggest design and structural changes for the PREPARE 2000 premarital program. The following is a review of the five research objectives for this study.

Research Objective #1: To test for statistically significant changes among all dependent variables between Time 1 and Time 2.

Research Objective #2: To identify categorical change in couple typology.

Research Objective #3: To investigate the relationship between couple typology and changes in 15 sub-scales of PREPARE.

Research Objective #4: To investigate the relationship of antecedent variables with changes in couple typology.

Research Objective #5: To obtain feedback from couples and clergy.

Figure 3-1
Operational Map

Empirically Assess — **And Constructively Improve**

Time 1 → Time 2

- Couple Typology → Significant Change
- Couple PCA Scores → Significant Change
- M & F Individual Scores → Significant Change
- M & F Dyadic Adjustment → Significant Change
- Couple Typology → Categorical Change

PREPARE 2000 Premarital Enrichment Program

Clergy → Answer open-Ended qualitative Questionnaire ← Couples
↓
Improve PREPARE 2000 Premarital Program

46
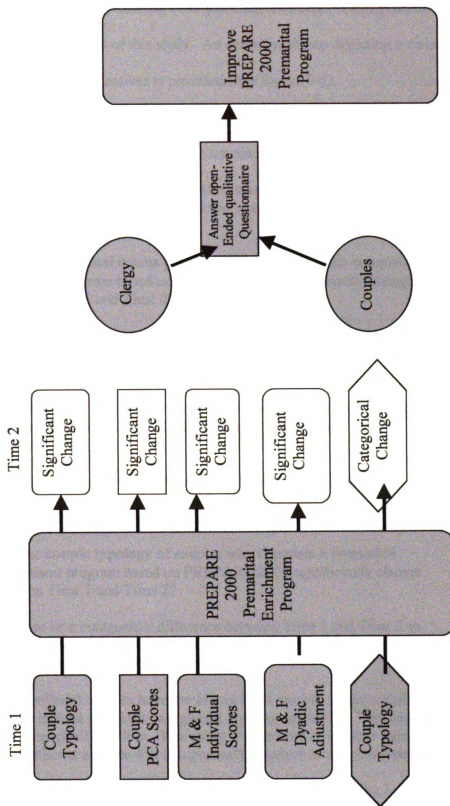
A multi-method approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative procedures, is used to complete the objectives of this study. An operational map depicting a visual representation of the research objectives is provided (See Figure 3-1).

Research Questions

Derived from the five research objectives are nine research questions.

1) Will the **PCA scores** of couples who complete a premarital program based on PREPARE 2000 *significantly* change between Time 1 to Time 2?

2) Will the **individual scores (PREPARE) for males** who complete a premarital program based on PREPARE 2000 *significantly* change between Time 1 and Time 2?

3) Will the **individual scores (PREPARE) for females** who complete a premarital program based on PREPARE 2000 *significantly* change between Time 1 and Time 2?

4) Will the **dyadic adjustment** scores of males who complete a premarital program based on PREPARE 2000 *significantly* change between Time 1 and Time 2?

5) Will the **dyadic adjustment** scores of females who complete a premarital program based on PREPARE 2000 *significantly* change between Time 1 and Time 2?

6) Will the **couple typology** of couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 significantly change between Time 1 and Time 2?

7) Will there be a *categorical* difference between Time 1 and Time 2 in **couple typology** for couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000?

    A. Conflicted couples have the lowest PCA scores. These couples have the highest possibility of upward typology mobility. They can not categorically decline. This study is interested in whether these conflicted couples will *categorically* improve to a higher typology.

    B. Traditional couples have low PCA scores. These couples have the potential to improve or decline categorically. This study is interested

in whether these traditional couples will *categorically* improve or decline to a different typology.

C. Harmonious couples have high PCA scores. These couples have the potential to improve or decline categorically. This study is interested in whether these couples will *categorically* improve or decline to a different typology.

D. Vitalized couples have the highest PCA scores. These couples can not improve categorically, they can only decrease their typology. This study is interested in whether these couples stay the same or *categorically* decline to a lower typology.

An additional objective of this study focuses on enhancing the effectiveness of the six-exercise premarital enrichment program based on the PREPARE 2000 model. In order to do this, clergy/counselors are asked about their reflections regarding the program. Likewise, couples who participate in the program are asked about their reflections regarding the program (see Appendix E). These questions are ultimately intended to make constructive changes and improve the PREPARE 2000 program.

8) What feedback will the couples provide as a potential means of improving PREPARE 2000?

9) What feedback will the clergy provide as a potential means of improving PREPARE 2000?

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will show no difference on **PCA scores** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ha1: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will have *significantly* increased **PCA scores** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ho2: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will show no differences on **individual male (PREPARE) scores** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ha2: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will have *significantly* increased **individual male (PREPARE) scores** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ho3: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will show no differences on **individual female (PREPARE) scores** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ha3: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will have *significantly* increased **individual female (PREPARE) scores** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ho4: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will show no differences on male **dyadic adjustment** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ha4: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will have significantly increased male **dyadic adjustment** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ho5: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will show no differences on female **dyadic adjustment** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ha5: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will have significantly increased female **dyadic adjustment** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ho6: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will show no difference on **couple typology** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Ha6: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will *significantly* increase on **couple typology** between Time 1 and Time 2.

Research Design

The proposed study was exploratory in nature. To test the dependent variables, a field study was used to explore differences in Time 1 and Time 2 test scores among premarital couples who completed a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000. The independent treatment variable was the six-exercise premarital enrichment program. Dependent variables were the differences between premarital

couples' Time 1 and Time 2 test scores for couple typology, PCA, individual male and female (PREPARE), and the male and female dyadic adjustment scores. A cohort study was established to determine differences between Time 1 and Time 2 test scores. The unit of analysis was the couple for couple typology and PCA. The unit of analysis was the individual for individual male scores, individual female scores, and male and female dyadic adjustment.

Clergy from Michigan were recruited to provide the premarital programs to the subjects. Eligibility for subject participation in either group related to two criteria: 1) couples must be married by one of the clergy members who agreed to participate in the study, and 2) couples had to have a wedding date set between May 1999 and October 2000.

Twenty-one clergy members initially agreed to be a part of the study. Couples completed the PREPARE PAQ and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale at Time 1. They completed a six-exercise premarital enrichment program based on the PREPARE 2000 model. The couples completed their participation in the study by filling out the PREPARE PAQ, the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale and questionnaires to gain feedback about their perceptions of the premarital program. Likewise, the clergy filled out similar questionnaires regarding their experience after providing the premarital program. This researcher also administered the program to two couples. One completed the study while the other decided not to marry.

Instrumentation

PREPARE

To measure the dependent variables, two instruments were utilized. The PREPARE Instrument was used to measure couple typology, PCA, individual male and individual female scores. PREPARE is a 195-item inventory designed to identify strengths and weaknesses in 20 content areas. Each couple's scores are calculated by computer and organized in the PREPARE Counselor's Report. This report reflects the exact responses couples gave on their PREPARE questionnaire and then identifies their relative strengths and weaknesses within each of the 20 sub-scales as a: (1) relationship strength, (2) possible relationship strength, (3) possible growth area or (4) a growth area.

An individual score for each spouse is generated for each sub-scale. A positive couple agreement (PCA) score is computed for each sub-scale. The PCA score is a measure of the couple's consensus for each relationship area. This creates three separate scores: 1) individual male, 2) individual female and 3) PCA. Each of these scores has a possible range of 0 to 100 (worst to best).

Couple typology is a categorical variable based on the PCA scores. Couples are ranked according to four types of marriages. (1) *Conflicted* couples are, "low on many of the internal aspects of their relationship, such as personality issues, communication, conflict resolution and sexuality." (2) *Traditional* couples are, "dissatisfied with their sexual relationship and with the way they communicate, but they have strong satisfactory relationships with the extended family and friends." (3) *Harmonious* couples are, "highly satisfied with each other, and with the expression of affection and

sexual life in their marriage." (4) *Vitalized couples* are characterized by a, "high level of satisfaction with most every dimension of their relationship," (Olson, 1996).

Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS)

The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) was used to measure male and female dyadic adjustment. The RDAS was originally developed to assess both married and cohabitating couples (Spanier, 1976). The original version (DAS) contained over 200 items, which were pared down to 32 items. The scale was revised again in 1995 because of validity problems in two of the four sub-scales (Busby, Christensen, Crane & Larson, 1995). The questions were cut down once again to 14 questions. Tests of construct validity, criterion validity (81 percent) and internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha - .90) were higher than the original DAS.

The dyadic adjustment variable, measured by the RDAS, was treated as a continuous variable with scores ranging from 0-69. Scores at Time 1 and Time 2 were measured and analyzed for differences.

Six-Exercise PREPARE 2000 Premarital Enrichment Program

In 1996, the authors of PREPARE developed a six-exercise format as an enrichment strategy for working with premarital couples. The following is the format of those six exercises.

Feedback Exercise #1 - <u>Sharing Strength and Growth Areas</u>

Initially, each individual is provided a worksheet entitled *Sharing Strength and Growth Areas.* They include marriage expectations, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual expectations, children and parenting, family and friends, relationship roles and spiritual beliefs. The sub-scales that are excluded from the worksheet are couple and family closeness, couple and family flexibility, and couple and family map.

Suggestions to Clergy

- Have the couple tear out and complete the "Couple Communication Exercise I" found on page 7 and 9 of the *Building A Strong Marriage* workbook. Ask them to read through the list of areas. Have them independently identify three relationship strengths and three growth areas they believe exist in their relationship.

- Invite each partner to share what he/she believes the strengths are in his or her relationship. The clergy/counselor should interject results found in the inventory as partners take turns sharing their perceptions of strengths. Also explore the similarities and differences in the partners' perceptions concerning these strengths.

- The same procedure is followed for discussing the growth areas in the relationship. If problems arise during this discussion, it may be appropriate to help the couple focus on ways of resolving their differences.

Feedback Exercise #2 - <u>Creating A Wish List</u>
The goal is to increase the assertiveness skills and active listening skills of each person.

Suggestions to Clergy
- Counselor should describe assertiveness and active listening skills. Additionally, counselor should explain the negative cycle of partner dominance and avoidance, as well as the positive cycle of assertiveness and self-confidence.

- Counselor should ask both partners to describe their levels of efficiency at being assertive and using active listening skills with each other.
    - Ask if each agrees with the partner's assessment.
    - Share each partner's level of assertiveness, avoidance, self-confidence and partner dominance from the computer report.
    - Discuss items and scores from the communication area (page 8 of the report) with the couple.

- The clergy/counselor should direct the individuals to each make a "wish list" consisting of three things they would like their partner to do more or less often (page 8 & 10 from the *Building a Strong Marriage* workbook). Again, this list is completed privately and without discussing the contents.

- When completed, the partners take turns disclosing the items on their "wish list." During the discussion, the counselor focuses on "assertiveness" and "active listening skills."

- Have one partner share one wish; ask the other partner to repeat back what he/she heard the partner say. The focus should not be on whether or not the person can complete the wish, but rather on the ability of the listener to understand and paraphrase. The partner completes the dialogue by verifying whether the listener was correct.

- Counselor provides feedback and coaching on their assertiveness and active listening skills.

Feedback Exercise #3 - Assertiveness and Active Listening Skills

Suggestions to Clergy
The PREPARE 2000 endorses a 10-step procedure for teaching and subsequently using conflict resolution. An exercise entitled, "Ten Steps for Resolving Couple Conflict" is located on page 13 of the workbook. This exercise takes them through this process step by step. For the third session, the counselor guides them through this process.

After the couple has completed the process in the presence of the counselor and discussed their comfort level, the couple is asked to perform it on their own in the course of the next week.
The following is a summary of the 10-step exercise.
  1) Set a time and place for discussion.
  2) Define the problem or issue of disagreement.
  3) How do each of you contribute to the problem?
  4) List past attempts to resolve the issues that were not successful.
  5) Brainstorm and list all possible solutions.
  6) Discuss and evaluate these possible solutions.
  7) Agree on one solution to try.
  8) Agree on how each individual will work toward this solution.
  9) Setup another meeting. Discuss your progress.
  10) Reward each other, as you each contribute toward the solution.

Feedback Exercise #4 - Overview of Couple and Family Map

Suggestions for Clergy
The counselor should play a more prominent role in this session. He/she uses results from the computer report (page 13-15) to obtain the necessary information for this exercise. Once the counselor has these elements in hand, psycho-education becomes the focus of the session.

- Counselor defines couple and family closeness and balancing separateness versus togetherness.
- Counselor defines couple and family flexibility and balancing stability versus change.
- Counselor describes the 25 possible types of couples and families categorized as three more general types:
  - Balanced types (9 types)
  - Mid-range types (12 types)
  - Unbalanced types (4 types)
- Counselor provides a brief overview of the "Couple and Family Map" and his/her personal experience using the map with other couples. During this

portion, the counselor shows each person how he/she perceived their family-of-origin in terms of closeness and flexibility (page 15).

- Counselor should facilitate a discussion of similarities and differences on the Couple and Family Map:
  - A) Ask each person and their partner to react to the description of each family-of-origin.
  - B) Discuss the similarities and differences in your description of your relationship.
  - C) Discuss your description of how your couple relationship relates to your family-of origin.
  - D) Discuss the similarities and differences in your families-of-origin.
  - E) Discuss what you want to bring from your family-of-origin into your marriage.
  - F) Discuss what you don't want to bring from your family-of-origin into your marriage.

Feedback Exercise #5 - Creating A Financial Budget

Suggestions for Clergy
In the workbook, a budget worksheet is provided (page 20-21). It allows a couple to figure income and expenses. The exercise also allows the couple to list both short- and long-term financial goals. Unlike the previous exercises, this one is completed together. After this is completed, the counselor facilitates a discussion surrounding this exercise.

- Couple discusses what they learned from working on the budget worksheet.
- Couple discusses their financial plans individually, and as a couple.
- Counselor reviews financial management section (page 9 from computer report) with the couple focusing on strengths and growth areas.

Feedback Exercise #6 - Creating Personal, Couple and Family Goals

Suggestions for Clergy
On page 22 and 23 of the workbook, there is an exercise that is focused around creating goals. Each person fills out his or her personal, couple and family goals separately. Following this exercise, the counselor facilitates a discussion surrounding the exercise.

- Partners take turns sharing their three personal goals, three couple goals and three family goals.
- Counselor focuses on the similarities and differences between the goals and summarizes the discussion.
- Counselor also gives feedback on the assertiveness and active listening skills of each person.

An attachment in the final exercise is designed to help the couple achieve goals by using the *CHANGE Model*. Each partner should select one couple goal to work on while using the *CHANGE Model*. This model is an active method of helping couples

take the necessary steps to achieve goals. The six steps in the CHANGE Model are illustrated below.

Commit yourself to a specific goal
Habits - break old and start new
Action - take one step at a time
Never give up - lapses may occur
Goal oriented - focus on the positive
Evaluate and reward yourself

Sampling Procedures

The sample was obtained through a convenience quota sampling method. The sampling frame consisted of premarital couples who were getting married by a clergy member who was certified to use the PREPARE 2000 premarital enrichment program, between the months of May 1999 and October 2000. To obtain this sample, clergy within the state of Michigan, who were certified to use the PREPARE 2000 premarital enrichment program, were recruited. The researcher received lists of trained clergy who were certified to use PREPARE from Life Innovations, Inc. The researcher contacted these people by phone and recruited them to take part in the study (see Appendix A). Using these recruitment strategies, 21 clergy agreed to conduct the PREPARE 2000 program and research. Large portions of these clergy were from two counties in west Michigan. They were targeted because of their recent commitment to a *Community Marriage Statement* (see Appendix I), whereby these clergy agreed to only marry couples after they completed a premarital enrichment program. These clergy represent churches from several different Christian denominations.

The sample came directly from the rosters of couples that these clergy were scheduled to marry during the course of this study (May 1999 through October 2000).

Thus, a convenience quota sampling method was utilized to obtain this sample. Each couple gave their informed consent before partaking in the study (see Appendix C).

Description of Population

A variety of background information was gathered about the premarital couples who completed the study. This information was gathered by obtaining the results of the PREPARE PAQ. The first 30 questions of the PREPARE PAQ asked a variety of questions that target the couple's background information. Each question was included in the inventory because each correlates with future marital success and satisfaction. The following is a list of the background information for the couples in the study.

Demographic Composition: There were 31 couples who completed the requirements of the study. Of those, 61 percent of the males and 58 percent of the females were between the ages of 20 and 30. Only three men (9 percent) and five women (16 percent) in the study were under 20 years of age. Eighty-four percent of the males, and 87 percent of the females self-reported to be Caucasian. There was only one African American female, and one Asian American male in the sample. There were two Hispanic Americans and two individuals who self-reported being "mixed." Forty-five percent of the males and 48 percent of the women earned an income between $10,000 and $29,999 per year. Only 6 individuals made more than $50,000, while nine people earned less than $10,000. Eighty-two percent of the individuals were employed full-time. Two women reported that they were unemployed. Only two individuals in the study did not complete high school. Fifteen of the males and 14 of the females at least graduated from a four-year college.

Forty-five percent of the males and 48 percent of the females listed their religious affiliation as Protestant. There were eight Catholic individuals and one Jewish male. Thirty-eight percent of the females and 35.5 percent of the males listed their religious affiliation in the "other" category. This was the first marriage for 74 percent of the males and 61 percent of the females.

Table 3-1
Demographic Composition of Sample

Male age	<20	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	>40	Total
n	3	11	8	2	4	3	31
%	9.7%	35.5%	25.8%	6.5%	12.9%	9.7%	100%

Female age	<20	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	>40	Total
n	5	12	6	3	4	1	31
%	16.1%	38.7%	19.4%	9.7%	12.9%	3.2%	100%

Male ethnicity	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Mixed	Other	Total
n	1	26	1	1	2	31
%	3.2%	83.9%	3.2%	3.2%	6.5%	100%

Female ethnicity	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Mixed	Other	Total
n	1	27	1	1	1	31
%	3.2%	87.1%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	100%

Male income	<10K	10K – 29K	30K – 49K	50K – 75K	Total
n	4	14	8	4	30
%	12.9%	45.2%	25.8%	12.9%	100%

Female income	<10K	10K – 29K	30K – 49K	50K – 75K	Total
n	5	15	9	2	31
%	16.1%	48.4%	29.1%	6.5%	100%

Male employment	Full-Time	Part-time	Unemployed	Total
n	26	5	0	31
%	83.9%	16.1%	0%	100%

Female employment	Full-Time	Part-time	Unemployed	Total
n	25	3	2	30
%	80.6%	9.7%	6.5%	100%

Male education	Some H.S.	H.S.	College	Graduate	Total
n	2	14	9	6	31
%	6.5%	45.1%	29.0%	19.4%	100%

Female education	Some H.S.	H.S.	College	Graduate	Total
n	0	17	8	6	31
%	0%	54.9%	25.8%	19.4%	100%

Table 3-1 *(cont'd)*

Male religion	Catholic	Jewish	Protestant	Other	Total
n	4	1	14	11	30
%	12.9%	3.2%	45.2%	35.5%	100%

Female religion	Catholic	Jewish	Protestant	Other	Total
n	4	0	15	12	31
%	12.9%	0%	48.4%	38.7%	100%

Male marital status	Never married	Previously married	Total
n	23	8	31
%	74.2%	25.8%	100%

Female marital status	Never married	Previously married	Total
n	19	12	31
%	61.3%	38.7%	100%

Couple Composition: The median amount of time couples say they knew each other prior to marriage was 1-2 years (39 percent). Sixteen percent of the couples knew each other for less than one year. Forty-two percent of the couples were between three and six months away from marriage at Time 1. Thirty-nine percent were less than two months from marriage, while only three couples were more than a year away from their wedding date. There was one female out of 31 who reported to be pregnant at the time. Over the course of their relationship, 32 percent of the females reported that she and her partner had broken up at least once. In the sample, only one female reported any abuse in their relationship, while no male reported any abuse by his current partner. Only 23 percent of the couples were living together. Forty-eight percent of the males and 36 percent of the females were living alone, while 23 percent of the males and 29 percent of the females were living with their parents.

Table 3-2
Couple Composition of Sample

Years known partner	<1	1-2	3-4	>5	Total
n	5	12	9	5	31
%	16.1%	38.7%	29.0%	16.1%	100%

Months until marriage	0-2	3-6	7-12	>13	Total
n	12	13	3	3	31
%	38.7%	41.9%	9.7%	9.7%	100%

Currently pregnant	No	Yes	Total
n	30	1	31
%	96.8%	3.2%	100%

Ever broken up	No	Yes	Total
n	21	10	31
%	67.7%	32.3%	100%

Male abused by partner	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Total
n	31	0	0	0	31
%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Female abused by partner	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Total
n	30	1	0	0	31
%	96.8%	3.2%	0%	0%	100%

Male residence	Alone	Partner	Others	Parents	Total
n	15	7	2	7	31
%	48.4%	22.6%	6.5%	22.6%	100%

Female residence	Alone	Partner	Others	Parents	Total
n	11	7	4	9	31
%	35.5%	22.6%	12.9%	29.0%	100%

Family of Origin Composition: Sixty-one percent of the couple's parents in this study are still married. Forty percent of the participants reported at least some abuse between their parents. Twenty-nine percent of the participants also reported that they were abused by one of their parents. Ninety-two percent of the subjects felt their parents either positively or very positively supported their plans to marry.

Table 3-3
Family of Origin Composition of Sample

Male parent marital status	Married	Separated	Widowed	Divorced	Total
n	18	1	3	9	31
%	58.1%	3.2%	9.7%	29.1%	100%

Female parent marital status	Married	Separated	Widowed	Divorced	Total
n	20	0	5	5	30
%	64.5%	0%	16.2%	16.2%	100%

Male, abuse between parents	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Total
n	20	4	4	3	31
%	64.5%	12.9%	12.9%	9.7%	100%

Female, abuse between parents	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Total
n	17	4	8	2	31
%	54.8%	12.9%	25.8%	6.4%	100%

Male, abuse by parents	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Total
n	21	5	4	1	31
%	67.7%	16.1%	12.9%	3.2%	100%

Female, abuse by parents	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Total
n	23	1	4	3	31
%	74.2%	3.2%	12.9%	9.7%	100%

Male parental support	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very positive	Total
n	0	3	11	17	31
%	0%	9.7%	35.5%	54.8%	100%

Female parental support	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very positive	Total
n	0	2	12	17	31
%	0%	6.5%	38.7%	54.8%	100%

Data Collection

Data collection began in May of 1999 and was completed in September of 2000. At the clergy's pace, couples were given the PREPARE PAQ and the RDAS at Time 1. The clergy member would then send the PREPARE PAQ to Life Innovations Inc. to be scored. The RDAS was sent to this researcher to be scored. After receiving the PREPARE scores, the clergy conducted the PREPARE 2000 program. Upon completing the program, the clergy would once again administer the PREPARE PAQ and the RDAS. The clergy followed the same protocol with the instrument scoring procedures in Time 2 as they did for Time 1. At Time 2, the couples and the clergy were asked to complete a qualitative questionnaire. Subsequently, the clergy then forwarded all materials to this researcher for analysis. The researcher obtained the PREPARE scores directly from Life Innovations, Inc.

Data Analysis

A multi-method design emploring a combination of quantitative and qualitative procedures was used to address the research questions in this study.

Research Objective #1: To test for statistically significant change among all dependent variables between Time 1 and Time 2

A paired-means *t*-test was used to investigate the differences in mean scores for five of the six dependent variables. This *t*-test was used to identify:

1) Differences in PCA scores between Time 1 and Time 2.
2) Differences in individual male scores between Time 1 and Time 2.
3) Differences in individual female scores between Time 1 and Time 2.
4) Differences in male dyadic adjustment scores between Time 1 and Time 2.
5) Differences in female dyadic adjustment scores between Time 1 and Time 2.

A 5 x 5 cross tabulation, with expected frequencies estimated under the log-linear model of independence, was used to assess statistical significant differences in couple typology between Time 1 and Time 2.

Research Objective #2: To identify categorical change in couple typology

To address categorical change in couple typology, it was mapped on a macro-level and a micro-level. On a macro-level, couple typology was identified for all couples at Time 1 and again at Time 2. Couples that shifted in typology were defined as having categorical movement. Numbers for couples that increased, maintained and decreased in typology will be counted and tallied. On a micro-level, couples were separated at Time 1 by couple typology, creating four different groups (conflicted, traditional, harmonious and vitalized). Categorical change was assessed by following the couples in each of the four groups. A macro- and micro-figure was produced to demonstrate the amount of categorical change among the couples in the four typologies.

Research Objective #3: To investigate the relationship between couple typology and changes in 15 sub-scales of PREPARE

Couples were aggregated based on direction of movement (increase in typology vs. decrease in typology) for comparative analysis. This comparative analysis of couples by groups was conducted by examining the 15 sub-scales that comprise the PREPARE PAQ. These 15 sub-scales were rank-ordered and placed in a table for easy reference. This table also serves as a useful tool to cross reference couple movement (increase vs. decrease) with PCA, individual male and female scores.

Research Objective #4: To investigate the relationship of antecedent variables with changes in couple typology

Fifty-nine variables were at the disposal of this researcher for investigation. Cross tabs were used to investigate the median differences between couples that increased and

couples that decreased. Median was used because it is the best measurement of central tendency for ordinal variables. A table was created to assign the level of impact (major, substantial, moderate, minimal and none) for each variable based on the median difference. These variables were then rank-ordered according to level of impact.

Research Objective #5: To obtain feedback from couples and clergy

Feedback was gathered from clergy and couples who participated in this study. Upon completion of the program, clergy and couples completed questionnaires consisting of four questions. Couples were asked these four questions:

1) In order of importance, what three things did you like **best** about the premarital enrichment program?

2) In order of importance, what are the three things that you liked **least** about the premarital enrichment program?

3) In order of importance, what three **suggestions** would you make to improve the premarital enrichment program?

4) In order of importance, what parts of the premarital enrichment program do you think will have the **biggest impact on your marriage**?

The clergy members were asked the same four questions, with the following small change in the last question.

4) In order of importance, what parts of the premarital enrichment program do you think *made the biggest impact with the couple you worked with*?

A content analysis of the feedback was conducted. This is a five-step process: 1) list all the responses verbatim, 2) color-code the responses by theme, 3) create categories by theme, 4) report categories and 5) rank-order the categories by frequency of content (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A table is provided below to demonstrate how the dependent variables will be analyzed over the course of this study (See Table 3-4).

Table 3-4
Dependent Variable Table

Dependent Variable	Type of Variable	Range of Variable	Instrument	Methodology
Couple Typology	Ordinal	2-5	PREPARE	1. Cross-tabs with log-linear model 2. Mapping and Charting
Couple PCA	Interval	0-100	PREPARE	Paired Means *t*
Individual Male & Female Scores	Interval	0-100	PREPARE	Paired Means *t*
Male & Female Dyadic Adjustment	Interval	0-69	RDAS	Paired Means *t*
Feedback			Questionnaire	Content Analysis

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The goal of this research was two-fold. The first goal was to evaluate the short-term effectiveness of the six-exercise premarital enrichment program based on the PREPARE model. To achieve this, a multi-method design was used to explore differences in six dependent variables; 1) positive couple agreement, 2) individual male, 3) individual female, 4) male dyadic adjustment, 5) female dyadic adjustment and 6) couple typology. The second goal was to collect feedback on the six-exercise program from the premarital couples and the clergy who participated in the study.

Statistical Analysis

Research Objective #1: To test for statistically significant change among all dependent variables between Time 1 and Time 2

1) Positive Couple Agreement: A paired means *t*-test was used to compare mean scores between Time 1 and Time 2 for positive couple agreement. PCA scores were figured for 1) 15 different sub-scales and 2) overall mean scores. These scores come directly from the PREPARE PAQ. The possible range of scores varies from 0-100 (worst to best). Results for the 15 different sub-scales are displayed in the following table (4-1).

Table 4-1

Paired Samples t-test for PCA scores

Variable	T1	T2	t	p
N=31				
Marriage expectations				
M	36.45	42.58	-1.36	.184
SD	21.99	27.44		
Personality issues				
M	55.81	54.19	.298	.768
SD	29.86	29.64		
Communication				
M	68.71	68.06	.138	.891
SD	29.41	31.88		
Conflict resolution				
M	50.65	53.87	-.736	.468
SD	28.04	25.91		
Financial management				
M	43.23	50.00	-1.360	.184
SD	27.37	29.66		
Leisure activities				
M	63.55	70.65	-1.23	.227
SD	22.14	22.65		
Sexual expectations				
M	60.00	67.10	-1.74	.092
SD	18.80	18.65		
Children & parenting				
M	61.61	67.10	-1.52	.140
SD	18.64	26.10		
Family & friends				
M	75.48	74.19	.271	.789
SD	17.48	21.26		
Role relationship				
M	70.32	68.71	.445	.660
SD	16.22	19.62		
Spiritual beliefs				
M	70.98	74.84	-.786	.438
SD	28.33	28.62		
Couple closeness				
M	85.81	88.06	-.508	.615
SD	15.23	16.21		
Couple flexibility				
M	70.65	69.67	.142	.888
SD	22.35	27.51		
Family closeness				
M	67.42	54.84	1.759	.089
SD	25.69	30.32		
Family flexibility				
M	43.23	51.94	-1.578	.125
SD	23.86	26.26		
Overall mean PCA				
M	61.59	63.72	-2.13	.537
SD	13.95	16.09		

The mean scores for nine of the 15 sub-scales increased, while six decreased. The six sub-scales that decreased were personality issues (-1.61), communication (-.65), family and friends (-1.29), role relationship (-1.61), couple flexibility (-.97) and family closeness (-12.58). The scores for three sub-scales increased less than five points; couple closeness (2.26), conflict resolution (3.23) and spiritual beliefs (3.87). The scores for six sub-scales increased more than five points. These sub-scales were children and parenting (5.48), marriage expectations (6.13), financial management (6.77), leisure activities (7.09), sexual expectations (7.09) and family flexibility (8.71). The sub-scales that had the biggest difference between Time 1 and Time 2 were family closeness (-12.58) and family flexibility (8.71). Ironically, these are the only two sub-scales where movement would not be anticipated. This is because these questions ask the participants to assess their family of origin on closeness and flexibility. All other sub-scales deal with couple issues and are thought to be capable of change.

Overall PCA mean scores were also analyzed. To obtain these overall mean scores, the 15 sub-scales were summed and divided by 15. The mean scores at Time 1 were 61.59 and at Time 2 were 63.72, with a mean difference of 2.12.

There were no significant differences in the sub-scales or for overall mean PCA scores between Time 1 and Time 2 since none of the p-values (.089 was the closest) were greater than .05. In the absence of statistical significance, Ho1 was accepted.

Ho1: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on the PREPARE 2000 model will show no significant differences on PCA scores between Time 1 and Time 2 positive couple agreement scores. <ACCEPTED>

2) Individual Male Scores: A paired means *t*-test was used to compare mean scores between Time 1 and Time 2 for individual male scores. Individual male scores were figured for 1) 15 different sub-scales and 2) overall mean scores. These scores come directly from the PREPARE Instrument. The possible range of scores varies from 0-100 (worst to best). Results for the 15 different sub-scales are displayed in the following table (4-2).

Table 4-2
Paired Samples t-test for Individual Male Scores

Variable	T1	T2	t	p
N=31				
Marriage expectation				
M	41.00	51.67	-2.066	.048*
SD	31.40	30.78		
Personality issues				
M	47.65	48.42	-.171	..865
SD	25.27	24.90		
Communication				
M	64.77	63.94	.217	.830
SD	24.92	25.62		
Conflict resolution				
M	48.03	49.26	-.301	.766
SD	27.30	26.40		
Financial management				
M	57.35	61.61	-1.267	.215
SD	-25.43	25.49		
Leisure activities				
M	60.29	68.84	-1.632	.113
SD	21.17	22.55		
Sexual expectations				
M	49.97	55.58	-1.030	.311
SD	23.02	21.54		
Children & parenting				
M	64.42	50.29	-1.174	.250
SD	23.72	27.95		
Family & friends				
M	50.29	52.16	-. 345	.733
SD	21.22	23.64		
Role relationship				
M	61.13	61.97	-. 275	.785
SD	16.93	17.29		
Spiritual beliefs				
M	62.55	68.13	-1.247	. 222
SD	16.93	17.29		
Couple closeness				
M	67.42	69.52	-. 593	. 558
SD	12.70	12.99		
Couple flexibility				
M	64.90	71.13	-2.208	. 035*
SD	12.69	13.30		
Family closeness				
M	56.84	57.23	-.140	.889
SD	10.79	15.98		
Family flexibility				
M	59.10	63.23	-1.377	.179
SD	11.07	17.07		
Overall mean individual male score				
M	54.41	58.30	-1.627	.114
SD	10.31	12.93		

*p < .05

The mean scores for 14 of the 15 sub-scales increased, while one decreased. The scale that decreased was communication (.84). The scores for six sub-scales increased by five or more points. These sub-scales were sexual expectations (5.61), spiritual beliefs (5.58), children and parenting (6.09), couple flexibility (6.22) and marriage expectations (10.68). The latter two sub-scales (couple flexibility (.035) and marriage expectations (.048)) were statistically significant to the .05 level.

3) Individual Female Scores: A paired means t-test was used to compare mean scores between Time 1 and Time 2 for individual female scores. These scores are listed by sub-scale on the counselor's feedback form. Results for the 15 different sub-scales are displayed in the following table (4-3).

Table 4-3
Paired Samples t-test for Individual Female Scores

Variable	T1	T2	t	p
N=31				
Marriage expectation				
M	48.81	59.45	-2.066	.048*
SD	30.30	29.09		
Personality issues				
M	48.52	46.74	-.171	.865
SD	24.04	24.97		
Communication				
M	68.68	64.94	.217	.830
SD	24.62	24.84		
Conflict resolution				
M	52.74	53.39	-.301	.766
SD	25.96	24.84		
Financial management				
M	53.55	59.84	-1.267	.215
SD	25.96	24.84		
Leisure activities				
M	73.52	71.52	-1.632	.113
SD	19.79	21.44		
Sexual expectations				
M	56.45	60.55	-1.030	.311
SD	20.81	18.95		
Children & parenting				
M	57.71	65.48	-1.174	.250
SD	25.60	20.79		
Family & friends				
M	63.16	62.29	.345	.733
SD	20.86	19.85		
Role relationship				
M	61.52	58.55	-.275	.785
SD	19.23	16.68		
Spiritual beliefs				
M	66.42	71.26	-1.247	.222
SD	24.48	23.05		
Couple closeness				
M	72.77	72.81	-.593	.558
SD	13,48	11.09		
Couple flexibility				
M	64.39	66.74	-2.208	.035*
SD	12.43	14.14		
Family closeness				
M	56.61	53.06	-.140	.889
SD	17.45	18.48		
Family flexibility				
M	58.55	57.42	-1.377	.179
SD	16.87	18.93		
Overall mean individual female score				
M	58.22	59.71	-.664	.512
SD	11.21	9.86		

*p < .05

The mean scores for nine of the 15 sub-scales increased, while six decreased. The six sub-scales that decreased were personality issues (-1.77), communication (-3.74), leisure activities (-2.00), family and friends (-.87), role relationships (2.97) and family closeness (-3.55). The scores for three sub-scales increased more than five points. These sub-scales were marriage expectations (10.65), children and parenting (7.77), and financial management (6.29). The only sub-scale that had a significant difference to the .05 level was marriage expectations (.033).

Individual male and individual female overall mean scores were also analyzed. To obtain these overall mean scores, the scores from the 15 categories were summed and divided by 15. The overall mean scores for males at Time 1 and Time 2 were 54.41 and 58.39. The mean scores for females were 58.22 and 59.71. The level of significance for overall mean individual male was (.114) and individual female was (.512).

There were no significant differences in the overall mean scores for males or females since none of the p-values were greater than .05. When analyzing the data by sub-scales, only two of the male sub-scales and two of the female sub-scales were significant. This evidence suggests that Ho 3 and Ho 4 should be accepted given that five percent of the sub-scales would be significantly different just based on chance. In the absence of statistical significance, Ho2 and Ho3 were accepted.

Ho2: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will show no significant differences on **individual male (PREPARE) scores** between Time 1 and Time 2. <ACCEPTED>

Ho3: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000 will show no *significant differences on* **individual female (PREPARE) scores** between Time 1 and Time 2. <ACCEPTED>

4) Dyadic Adjustment: In an effort to determine if mean scores for dyadic adjustment differed between Time 1 and Time 2, a paired-means *t*-test was utilized. The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale measured dyadic adjustment scores. The range of answers could range from 0-69 (worst to best). Results are shown in the following table (4-4).

Table 4-4
Paired Means t-test for Dyadic Adjustment Scores

Variable	T1	T2	t	p
N=31				
Male dyadic adjustment				
M	54.52	54.92	-.622	.540
SD	6.01	5.25		
Female dyadic adjustment				
M	54.42	54.25	.246	.808
SD	5.66	5.64		

*p<.05

Results of this test show minimal movement between Time 1 and Time 2 for males and females. The scores for males increased slightly and the female scores decreased slightly after completing the premarital enrichment program. Male mean scores changed from 54.52 to 54.92. Female mean scores changed from 54.42 to 54.25.

There were no significant differences in dyadic adjustment scores since p= .540 for males and p = .808 for females. In the absence of statistical significance, Ho4 and Ho5 were accepted.

Ha4: Males who complete a premarital enrichment program based on the PREPARE 2000 model will show no significant differences on dyadic adjustment scores between Time 1 and Time 2. <ACCEPTED>

Ha5: Females who complete a premarital enrichment program based on the PREPARE 2000 model will show no significant differences on dyadic adjustment between Time 1 and Time 2. <ACCEPTED>

5) Couple Typology: Quantitative procedures were used to analyze statistical differences in means between Time 1 and Time 2. Specifically, 1) overall means were compared, 2) a log-linear 5x5 classification model with expected frequencies estimated under a log-linear model of independence was applied and 3) a chi-square was performed to look at significant deviations from the independence model. The range of this ordinal variable was 2-5 (conflicted =2, traditional =3, harmonious =4, vitalized = 5). Results are shown in the following table (4-5).

Results from comparing means: The mean at Time 1 was 3.94 and at Time 2 was 4.10. This means the scores increased slightly (.16), with the mean changing from just below harmonious to just above harmonious, producing no statistically significant change.

Results from the log-linear independence model:

The log-linear independence model calculates adjusted residuals for each cell. A high positive residual indicated that couples moved into a particular cell more frequently than expected based on the independence model. Larger negative residuals indicated that fewer couples than expected moved into this cell.

Table 4-5

5x5 Cross-Tabulation for Couple Typology with Expected Frequencies Estimated Under the Log-linear Model of Independence

N=31

Couple type	2	3	4	5	Total
Conflicted					
Count	1	1	0	1	3
Expected count	.4	.7	.2	1.7	3
Std. residual	1.0	.4	-.4	-.6	
Adjusted residual	1.1	.5	-.5	-.9	
Traditional					
Count	2	3	2	3	10
Expected count	1.3	2.3	.6	5.8	10
Std. residual	.6	.5	1.7	-1.2	
Adjusted residual	.8	.7	2.1	-2.2	
Harmonious					
Count	1	1	0	2	4
Expected count	.5	.9	.3	2.3	4
Std. residual	.7	.1	-.5	-.2	
Adjusted residual	.8	.1	-.6	-.4	
Vitalized					
Count	0	2	0	12	14
Expected count	1.8	3.2	.9	8.1	14
Std. residual	-1.3	-.7	-1.0	1.4	
Adjusted residual	-1.9	-1.0	-1.3	2.8	
Total at Time 2					
Count	4	7	2	18	31
Expected count	4	7	2	18	31

Level of significance for Pearson Chi-square = .201

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Results from the Pearson Chi-square: The .201 level of significance indicates that there were no significant deviations from the independence model. The results of these three analyses suggest that nothing statistically significant occurred between Time 1 and Time 2 for couple typology. In the absence of statistical significance, Ho6 was accepted.

> Ho6: Couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on the PREPARE 2000 model will show no significant differences on couple typology between Time 1 and Time 2. <ACCEPTED>

Research Objective #2: To identify categorical change in couple typology

Couple Typology: A major focus of this study was to investigate change in couple typology. Thus, in addition to conducting quantitative statistics to analyze statistical significance, a more qualitative approach using non-empirical, ideographic procedures was used to enrich the understanding of the change dynamics related to this variable. Several steps led to further exploration of changes and shifts among and between couples as they participated in the PREPARE 2000 premarital enrichment program.

Step 1: A pie chart was created to investigate the macro-movements of typologies for the full sample. Figure 4-1 examines the macro-movement of typologies from Time 1 to Time 2.

Initially, there were 14 vitalized couples at Time 1. At Time 2 there were 18 vitalized couples. The harmonious group shifted from four to two. The traditional group shifted from 10 to seven. Finally, the conflicted group started with three conflicted couples and ended up with four at Time 2 (see Figure 4-1). From this figure, it was evident that movement was happening, but it was not possible to discern the movement of each couple.

Step 2: To better understand movement of individual couples from one typology to another, a second step was used to separate each couple by typology at Time 1 and follow their progress to the end of the program. Figure 4-2 separates the couple by typology at Time 1 and illustrates the movement of this variable for each couple (see Figure 4-2).

Figure 4-1: Macro-Movement of Couple Typology

Time 1

Conflicted (3)

Harmonious (4)

Vitalized (14)

Traditional (10)

Time 2

Conflicted (4)

Harmonious (2)

Traditional (7)

Vitalized (18)
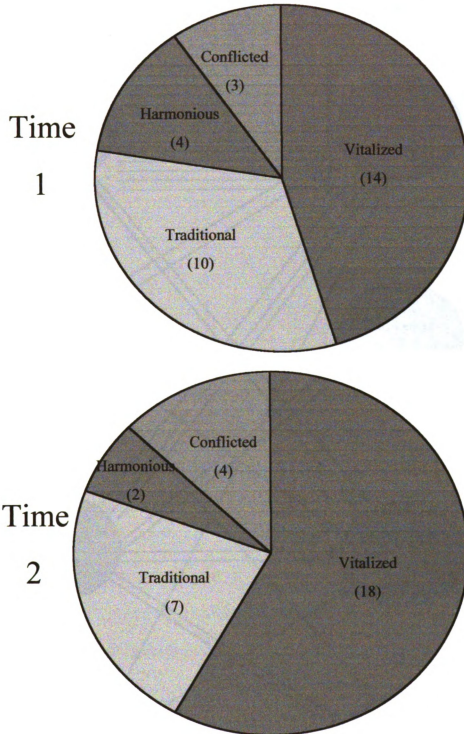
Figure 4-2
Micro-Movement of Couple Typology from Time 1 to Time 2
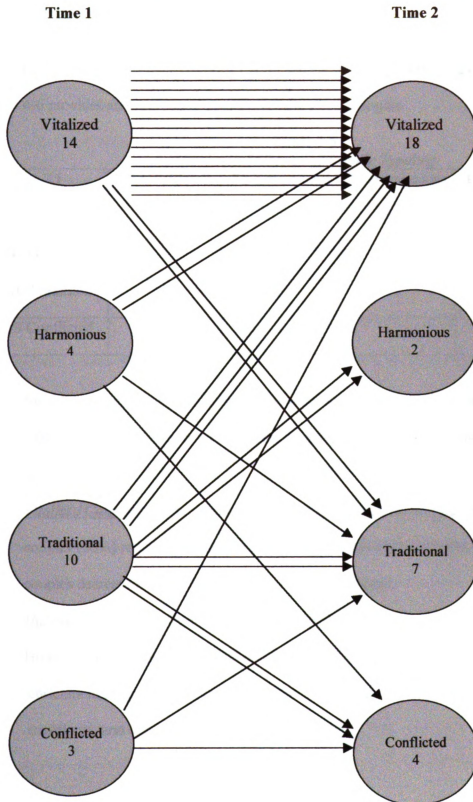
Findings from Figures 4-1 and 4-2:

1. The arrows demonstrate a substantial amount of categorical change was occurring, despite the lack of statistical significance. Nine couples increased in typology (29%), 16 retained their typology (51%) and six decreased in typology (19%). Table 4-6 provides another way to present the shifts in typologies.

Table 4-6
Categorical Change of Couple Typology

T1	T2 Conflicted	T2 Traditional	T2 Harmonious	T2 Vitalized
14 Vitalized		2		12
4 Harmonious	1	1		2
10 Traditional	2	3	2	3
3 Conflicted	1	1		1

2. More categorical change occurred in the lower three typologies than the vitalized typology. The following is a breakdown of change between Time 1 and Time 2 for each typology.

Vitalized Couples: Fourteen couples were initially classified as vitalized. Twelve couples (86%) remained in the vitalized category and only two (14%) of those couples decreased in typology, both moving to traditional.

Harmonious Couples: Four couples were initially classified as harmonious. However, none of them remained in that typology after completing the premarital enrichment program. Two increased to vitalized (50%), one decreased to traditional, and one decreased to conflicted (25%).

Traditional Couples: Ten couples were initially classified as traditional. Two (20%) decreased to conflicted, three (30%) remained in the same category at Time 2, two (20%) increased to harmonious and three (30%) increased to vitalized.

Conflicted Couples: Three couples were initially classified as conflicted. One (33%) remained in the conflicted category, one (33%) increased to traditional, and one (33%) increased to vitalized.

Decision Rule For Answering Research Objective #2

A numerical decision rule was established by this researcher to answer the question, "Will there be a *categorical* change between Time 1 and Time 2 in couple typology for couples who complete a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000?" Specifically this study was interested in the categorical changes that occurred for each typology. A decision rule of 25 percent change was originally thought to be fair because no premarital enrichment program had been proven to positively benefit more than 25 percent of their sample (Russo, 1997). However, after consultation, this researcher established a more rigorous decision rule of 50 percent. This was chosen for two reasons: 1) due to a small sample size (n=31) change would be more susceptible to chance and 2) no control group was available to compare results.

This study was interested in clarifying whether *conflicted* couples would shift to a higher typology. Sixty-six percent of these couples did improve. Since 66 percent is higher than the 50 percent decision rule, it is concluded that conflicted couples can shift to a higher typology. This study was interested in whether *traditional* couples would shift to a higher typology. Fifty percent of these couples did improve. Since 50 percent is equal to the decision rule, it is concluded that traditional couples can shift to a higher

typology. This study was interested in whether *harmonious* couples would shift to a higher typology. Fifty percent of these couples did improve. Since 50 percent is equal to the decision rule, it is concluded that harmonious couples can shift to a higher typology. This study was interested in whether *vitalized* couples would maintain their typology. Eighty-six percent of these couples maintained their typology. Since 86 percent is higher than the 50 percent decision rule, it is concluded that vitalized couples can maintain their typology.

From these results, it is apparent that categorical change was occurring for the couples in three of the four typologies. This runs contrary to the "no statistically significant" conclusion reported earlier using strictly quantitative measures. Perhaps, since the categorical changes lacked a specific direction, this might explain the absence of statistical significance between the means at Time 1 and Time 2. Because of these inconsistencies, a few questions arose:

1. Some couples increased in typology between Time 1 and Time 2, while others decreased in typology. How would these two groups compare when analyzing change in the 15 categories of PREPARE?

2. Was there some way to explain why some couples increased and some couples decreased in typology?

Research Objective #3: To investigate the relationship between couple typology and changes in 15 sub-scales of PREPARE

Step 1: To answer the first question, couples were aggregated based on direction of movement (increases in typology vs. decrease in typology) and analyzed ideographically, on a *couple-by-couple basis*. Tables that report the PCA, individual male and individual female scores of the nine couple who increased and the six couples who decreased in typology can be found in Appendix F. Line graphs were also created to graphically display this data (see Figures 4-3, 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 4-7 and 4-8).

Figure 4-3
PCA Scores of Couples Who Increased in Typology
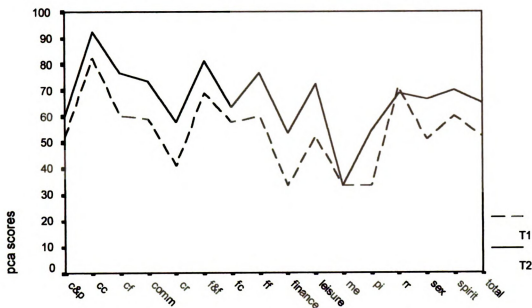
PREPARE variables

Figure 4-4
PCA Scores of Couples Who Decreased in Typology
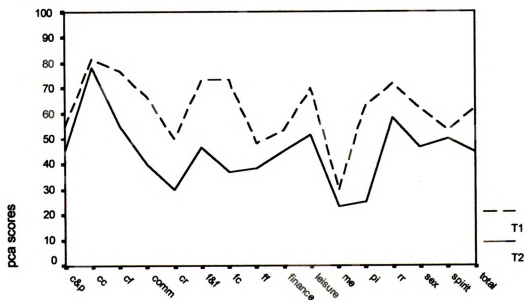
PREPARE variables

Figure 4-5
Individual Male Scores for Couples that Increased In Typology

PREPARE variables
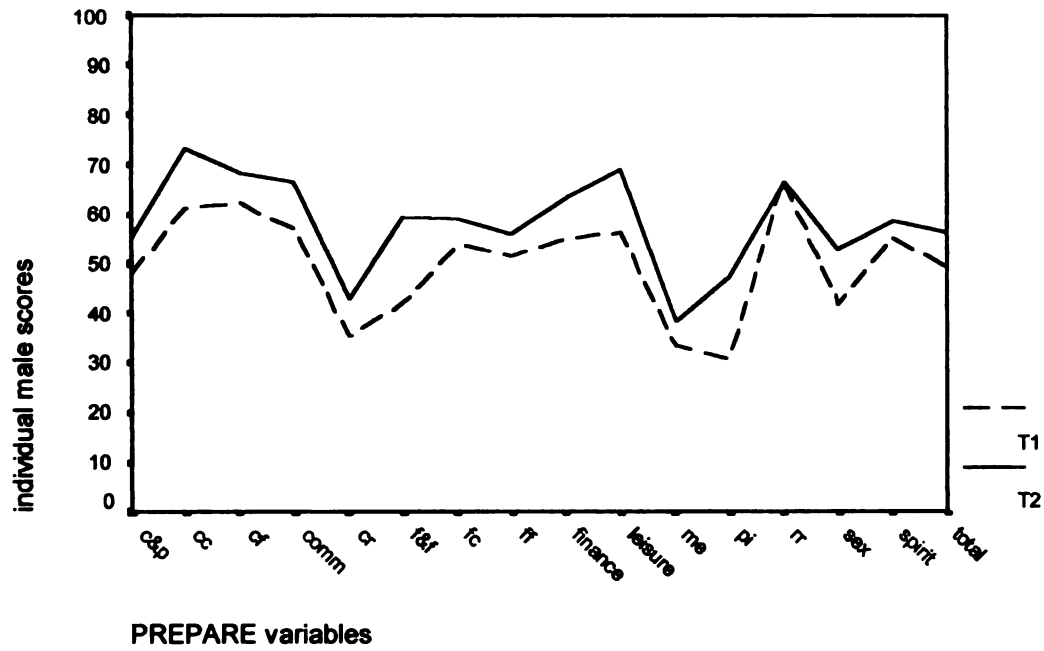
Figure 4-6
Individual Male Scores of Couples Who Decreased in Typology

PREPARE variables
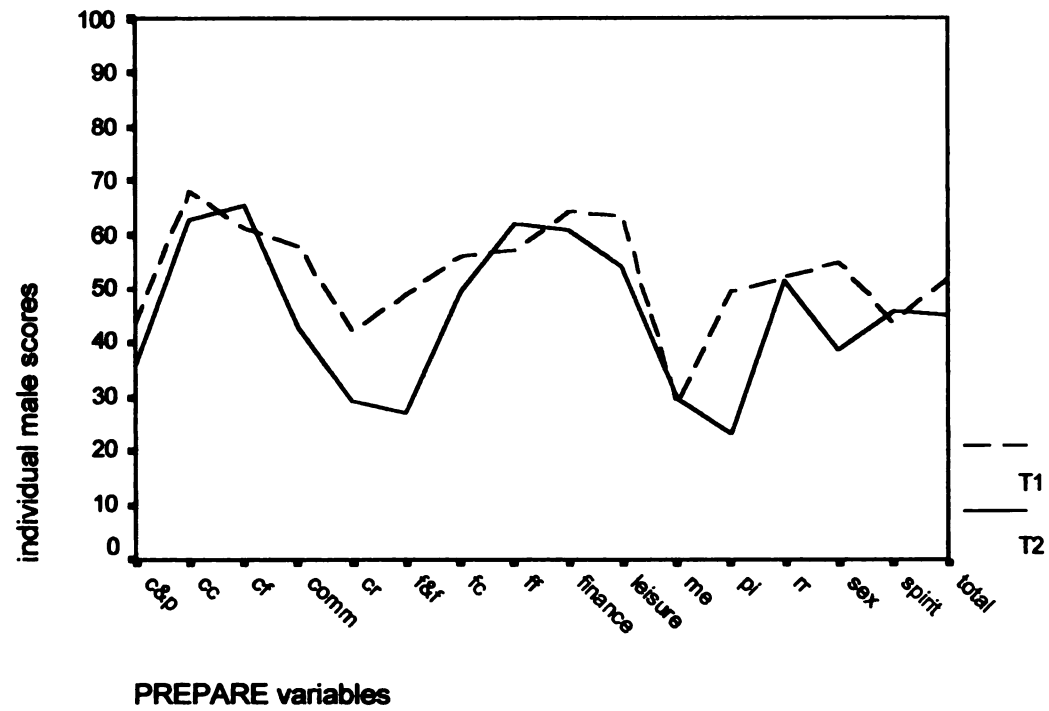
Figure 4-7
Individual Female Scores of Couples Who Increased in Typology
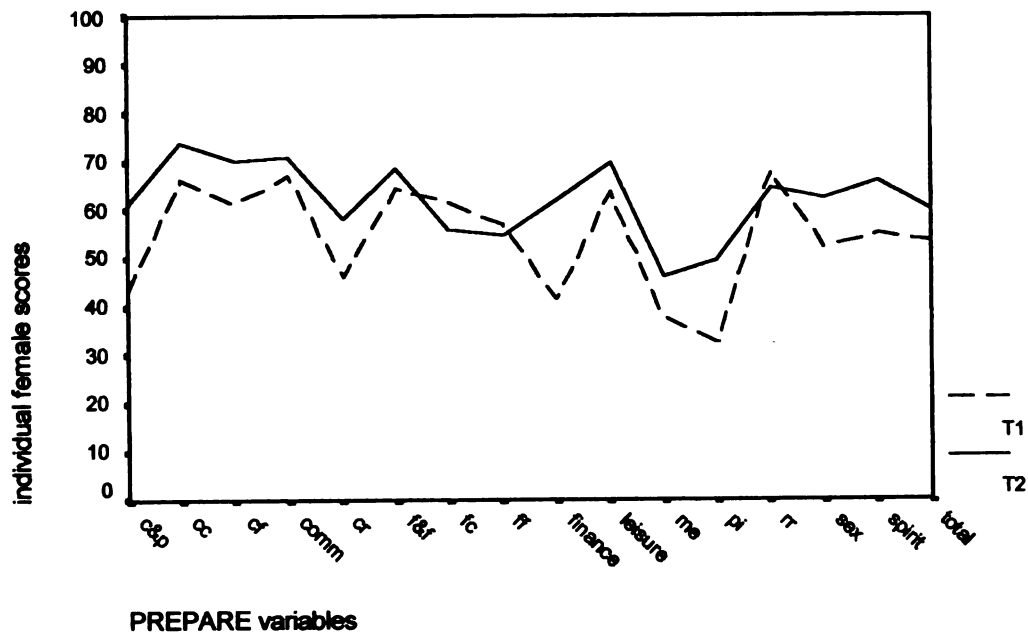
Figure 4-8
Individual Female Scores of Couples Who Decreased in Typology
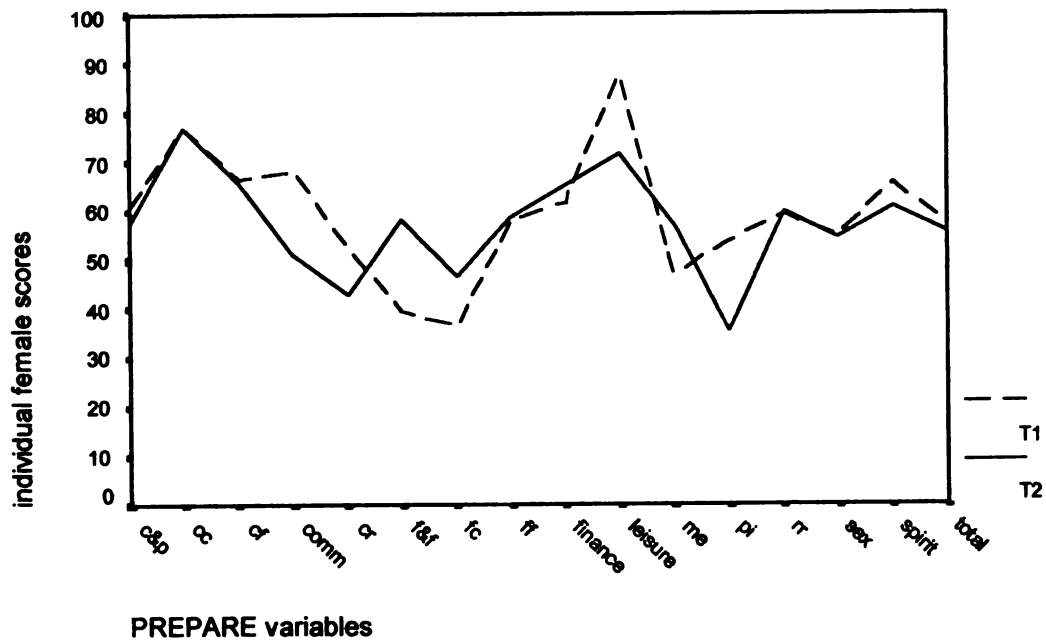
Findings from Figures 4-3 – 4-8:

The six figures in the preceding pages allowed the researcher to analyze the couples individually. Of the nine couples who increased, no couple increased on every sub-scale. Of the six couples who decreased in couple typology, only couple six did not increase on any sub-scale. No male or female decreased on every sub-scale. Thus, it can be said that the premarital enrichment program did not positively or negatively change individual and couples scores on all aspects of their relationship.

Step 2: The final step was to rank-order the mean differences for each sub-scale and compare the couples that increased and decreased in couple typology on the following variables: PCA, individual male and individual female scores. Two tables were created for easier comparisons (see Table 4-7 and 4-8).

Table 4-7
A Rank Order of the Mean Differences
For Couples that Increased in Couple Typology

Variables	Difference of PCA Means	Difference of Male Means	Difference of Female Means
Personality Issues	21.1	16.33	17.00
Leisure Activities	20	12.89	6.22
Family Flexibility	20	4.22	-2.11
Financial Management	20	8.44	20.33
Couple Flexibility	16.7	6.22	7.78
Conflict Resolution	16.6	7.67	11.89
Sexual Relationship	15.6	11.33	9.89
Communication	14.4	9.56	3.89
Family & Friends	12.2	17.22	4.22
Spiritual Beliefs	10	3.22	11.11
Couple Closeness	10	12.11	7.67
Children and Parenting	7.8	7.44	17.78
Family Closeness	5.6	5.00	-3.22
Marriage Expectations	0	4.89	8.22
Role Relationship	-2.2	-0.44	-3.11
External Issues	14.06	8.50	5.12
Interpersonal Issues	13.15	7.70	7.97
Intrapersonal Issues	12.76	10.00	8.71
Total	**12.5**	**7.6**	**6.4**

Table 4-8
A Rank Order of the Mean Differences
For Couples that Decreased in Couple Typology

Variables	Difference of PCA Means	Difference of Male Means	Difference of Female Means
Personality Issues	-38.33	-26.33	-18.50
Family Closeness	-36.67	-6.50	-7.67
Communication	-26.67	-15.17	-16.83
Family & Friends	-26.67	-19.83	-1.00
Couple Flexibility	-21.67	4.17	-0.83
Conflict Resolution	-20.00	-13.00	-9.50
Leisure Activities	-18.33	-9.33	-15.50
Sexual Relationship	-15.00	-8.00	-0.50
Role Relationship	-13.33	-0.50	.33
Children and Parenting	-10.00	-8.00	-3.33
Family Flexibility	-10.00	5.50	0.67
Financial Management	-8.33	-3.50	3.50
Marriage Expectations	-6.67	0.83	11.00
Couple Closeness	-3.33	8.83	0.00
Spiritual Beliefs	-3.33	2.00	-4.50
External Issues	-19.78	-6.15	-1.32
Intrapersonal Issues	-16.67	-8.7	-7.07
Interpersonal Issues	-15.71	-4.52	-4.47
Total	**-17.22**	**-6.43**	**-2.10**

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Findings From Across-case Matrix for Couples That Increased (Table 4-7):

A. Only one sub-scale (personality issues) increased by over 10 points on PCA (21.1), male (16.33) and female (17.00) scores.

B. Seven sub-scales (leisure activities, financial management, couple flexibility, conflict resolution, sexual relationship, couple closeness, and children and parenting) increased by over five points on PCA, male and female scores.

C. Only one sub-scale (role relationship) decreased in mean scores for PCA (-2.2), male (-0.44) and female (-3.11).

D. All three ecological categories increased on PCA, male and female scores.

E. PCA means (12.5) increased almost twice as much as male (7.6) and female (6.4) means.

F. Scores for sub-scales do not increase or decrease in unison. For instance, PCA for family flexibility increased 20 points, but only increased 4.22 points for males and decreased by –2.11 points for females. The mean of PCA for children and parenting increased by 7.8. The male mean increased similarly (7.44) while the mean for females increased by 17.78.

Findings from across-case Matrix for Couples that Decreased (Table 4-8):

A. Two sub-scales (personality issues and communication) decreased by over 10 points on PCA (-38.33) (-26.67), male (-26.33) (-15.17) and female (-18.50) (-16.83) scores.

B. Three sub-scales (family closeness, conflict resolution and leisure activities) decreased by over 5 points on PCA, male and female scores.

C. No sub-scales increased on PCA, male and female scores.

D. All three ecological categories decreased on PCA, male and female scores.

E. PCA scores (-17.22) decreased almost three times more than male scores (-6.43) and eight times more than females scores (-2.10).

F. Sub-scales did not increase or decrease in unison. For instance, PCA for couple flexibility decreased by –21.67 points. However, scores for females only decreased by –0.67 and increased for males by 4.17 points.

7. Other Important Findings

A. For couples that increased in couple typology, 13 out of the 15 PCA sub-scales increased. Marriage expectations did not change and role relationship decreased. For couples that decreased in couple typology, all 15 of the PCA sub-scales decreased.

B. For couples that increased in couple typology, only one of the 15 male sub-scales decreased (role relationship) in mean scores. For couples that decreased in couple typology, 4 out of 15 sub-scales increased (couple flexibility, family flexibility, marriage expectations and couple closeness).

C. For couples that increased in couple typology, only 3 out of 15 female sub-scales decreased (role relationship, family closeness and flexibility) in mean scores. For couples that decreased in couple typology, four out of 15 categories increased (role relationship, family flexibility, financial management, and marriage expectations).

D. When analyzing the ecological categories (interpersonal, intrapersonal and external issues), none of these categories changed more significantly than the other. The program did not seem to dramatically change one ecological category more than any other.

Research Objective #4: To investigate the relationship of antecedent variables with changes in couple typology

Step 1: In an effort to better understand the impact of antecedent variables on couple typology movement, cross tabs were produced. Fifty-nine cross tabs were completed.

Step 2: After these cross-tabs were completed, table 4-10 was created. The first column is a listing of all the antecedent variables available to the researcher in this study. The second column provides the difference of median values between Time 1 and Time 2 for the nine couples that increased (I) in typology and the six couples that decreased (D) in typology. Medians were used because they are the best measure of central tendency for ordinal variables. Based on median differences, antecedent variables were rank-ordered from biggest difference to smallest. The third column is the meaning of the median values for each demographic variable. For instance, for female income, "less income = increase in typology" means that women with less income in the sample tended to increase more in typology between Time 1 and Time 2 than females with more income. The final column provides the median difference between the couples that increased and decreased in typology. There is an ordinal value attached to the median difference in that box. The meanings for these values can be found in the following table (see Table 4-9).

Table 4-9

Determining Level of Change for Antecedent Variables

Difference Between Couples that Increased and Decreased	Type of Impact
Median Difference of 2.00	Major Impact
Median Difference of 1.50	Substantial Impact
Median Difference of 1.00	Moderate Impact
Median Difference of .50	Minimal Impact
No Median Difference	No Impact

There are 59 demographic variables. Forty-eight of these variables were obtained through the counselor feedback report via PREPARE. The other 11 variables were obtained via the questionnaire that the males and females filled out after completing the program.

Table 4-10

The Influence of Antecedent Variables on Typology Movement

Variables	Median Values	Meaning	Impact of variable
Female income	I: 2.00	Less income =	2.00
	D: 4.00	increase in typology	Major Impact
Male income	I: 2.00	Less income =	2.00
	D: 4.00	increase in typology	Major Impact
Male parent marital status	I: 3.00	Less parent divorce =	2.00
	D: 1.00	increase in typology	Major Impact
Female parent marital status	I: 1.00	Less parent divorce =	1.50
	D: 2.50	increase in typology	Substantial Impact
Male, program make a difference in marriage	I: 4.50	M. program will make	1.50
	D: 3.00	difference = increase in typology	Substantial Impact
Years known partner	I: 2.00	Known partner longer	1.00
	D: 3.00	= increase in typology	Moderate Impact
Female education	I: 2.00	More education =	1.00
	D: 3.00	increase in typology	Moderate Impact
Male employment	I: 1.00	More employment =	1.00
	D: 2.00	increase in typology	Moderate Impact
Male birth order	I: 2.00	Later birth position =	1.00
	D: 1.00	increase in typology	Moderate Impact
Male parental support	I: 5.00	More parent support =	1.00
	D: 4.00	increase in typology	Moderate Impact
Female abuse between parents	I: 1.00	Less female parent	1.00
	D: 2.00	abuse = increase	Moderate Impact
Female happy with life	I: 4.00	Less happy with life =	1.00
	D: 5.00	increase in typology	Moderate Impact
Male, glad you participated	I: 5.00	More male gladness =	1.00
	D: 4.00	increase in typology	Moderate Impact
M. program made a difference in rel	I: 4.00	M. program made diff	1.00
	D: 3.00	= increase in typology	Moderate Impact
Male age	I: 2.00	Younger males =	.50
	D: 2.50	increase in typology	Minimal Impact
Male education	I: 2.50	Less education =	.50
	D: 3.00	increase in typology	Minimal Impact
Female birth order	I: 2.00	Later birth position =	.50
	D: 1.50	increase in typology	Minimal Impact
Male abused by anyone	I: 1.00	Less abuse by anyone	.50
	D: 1.50	= increase in typology	Minimal Impact
Female abused by anyone	I: 1.00	Less abuse by anyone	.50
	D: 1.50	= increase in typology	Minimal Impact

Table 4-10 (*cont'd*).

Male happy with life	I: 4.00 D: 4.50	Less happy with life = increase in typology	.50 Minimal Impact
F. program made a diff. in rel	I: 4.50 D: 4.00	F. program made diff = increase in tyology	.50 Minimal Impact
Female, program make a difference in marriage	I: 4.50 D: 4.00	F. program make a diff = increase in typology	.50 Minimal Impact
Female age	I: 2.00 D: 2.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Months till marriage	I: 2.00 D: 2.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Male marital status	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Female marital status	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Pregnancy status of woman	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Male # of children desired	I: 2.00 D: 2.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Female # of children desired	I: 2.00 D: 2.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Female parental support	I: 5.00 D: 5.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Male friend's support	I: 4.00 D: 4.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Female friend's support	I: 5.00 D: 5.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Couple ever broken up	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Male parent alcohol abuse	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Female parent alcohol abuse	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Male self alcohol abuse	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Female self alcohol abuse	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Male fiancé alcohol abuse	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Female fiancé alcohol abuse	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Male abuse between parents	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact

Table 4-10 (cont'd).

Male abused by parents	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Female abused by parents	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Male abused by partner	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No difference	0 No Impact
Female abused by partner	I: 1.00 D: 1.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Male, excited for program	I: 4.00 D: 4.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Female, excited for program	I: 4.00 D: 4.00	No differences	0 No Impact
M. confident in program	I: 4.00 D: 4.00	No differences	0 No Impact
F. confident. in program	I: 4.00 D: 4.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Female, glad you participated	I: 5.00 D: 5.00	No differences	0 No Impact
Male occupation	Nominal Variable	Good Variance	No impact
Female occupation	Nominal Variable	Good Variance	No impact
Male religion	Nominal Variable	Mostly Protestants and others	Not enough variance
Female religion	Nominal Variable	Mostly Protestants and others	Not enough variance
Male ethnicity	Nominal Variable	26 out of 30 are Caucasian	Not enough variance
Female ethnicity	Nominal Variable	27 out of 30 are Caucasian	Not enough variance
Male living arrangement	Nominal Variable	Good variance	No impact
Female living arrangement	Nominal Variable	Good variance	No impact

Findings from Table 4-10:

A. Twenty-two of the fifty-nine demographic variables had at least a .50 median
   difference between couples that increased and couples that decreased in couple
   typology.

B. Twelve of those twenty-two demographic variables were male variables. Nine were
   female variables and one was a couple variable.

C. Of the twenty-five variables, seven variables were on that list for both males and
   females (income, parent marital status, think program made a difference in
   relationship, think program will make a difference in your marriage, education, birth
   order, abuse by anyone).

D. The two variables that had the largest median differences were male and female
   income. The variables that had the second largest median differences were male
   and female parent marital status.

E. Five of the 11 variables from the questionnaire sheet had a median difference of at
   least .50. All of these questions asked the participants to reflect on the program
   after the program was completed. Of the questions that asked participants about
   their views prior to participating in the program, no median difference was found.

Research Objective #5: To obtain feedback from couples and clergy

There were 31 couples who participated in this study and 11 clergy members. Twenty-three males and females filled out the questionnaire upon completion of the premarital program. Six clergy members filled out similar questionnaires.

Step 1: There were four questions on the questionnaires. All responses from the questions were written down verbatim (see Appendix G & H for these responses).

Step 2: The next step was to create codes for the responses. The following figure displays the codes that were created (see Figure 4-9).

Figure 4-9
The Codes for Feedback from Premarital Couples & Clergy

1. Paperwork Associated with Premarital Program
    A. Inventory (invent)
    B. Counselor Feedback Forms (forms)
    C. Workbook (wbook)
        1. Strength & Growth Issues (s & g)
        2. Family and Couple Map (map)
        3. Personal, Couple, and Family Goals (goals)

2. Content of Premarital Program
    A. Idealistic Distortion (I.D.)
    B. Personality Issues (P.I.)
    C. Spiritual Beliefs (sprit)
    D. Leisure Activities (leis)
    E. Marriage Expectations (M.E.)
    F. Communication (comm)
    G. Conflict Resolution (con)
    H. Children and Parenting (C & P)
    I. Couple Closeness (C.C.)
    J. Couple Flexibility (C.F.)
    K. Role Relationship (R.R.)
    L. Sexual Relationship (Sex)
    M. Family Closeness and Flexibility (f.o.o.)
    N. Family Flexibility (F.F.)
    O. Financial Management (fin)
    P. Family and Friends (F & F)

3. Atmosphere of Premarital Program
    A. Support (supp)
    B. Normalizing (norm)
    C. Breadth and Depth (b & d)
    D. Atmosphere (atmos)

5. Protocol of Premarital Program
    A. Sessions (sess)
    B. Timing (time)
    C. Homework (h.w.)
    D. Format (form)
    E. Additional Training (train)
    F. Additional Resources (res)

6. Comments About Pastor (past)

7. Comments that Would Not Be There Except For The Research (res)

8. Comments that Address Components Received Outside PREPARE (outside)

9. Comments that Could Apply to Any Premarital Program (gen)

Step 3: The next step was to code all the responses. The codes were exhaustive and mutually exclusive. This process was done for both couple and clergy responses.

Step 4: The next step was to break the coded responses down by question. Since there were four questions, four within-case matrices were created. A table was created for 1) what the participants liked **best** about the program; 2) what participants liked **least** about the program; 3) the **suggestions** participants had for improving the program; and finally, one was created for 4) what participants thought made the **biggest impact** on their marriage. Those four tables now follow (see Tables 4-11, 4-12, 4-13 and 4-44).

Table 4-11
What Three Things Did You Like best About the Premarital Program?

Couple Feedback				Clergy Feedback		
Ranking	Feedback Area	# of Responses		Ranking	Feedback Area	# of Responses
1.	General Comments	18		1.	Counselor Feedback Form	7
2.	Financial Management	15		2.	Communication	6
3.	Communication	14		3.	Inventory	2
4.	Strength and Growth Areas	12		4.	F & C Map	1
5.	Conflict Resolution	10		5.	P, C & F Goals	1
6.	Idealistic Distortion	9		6.	Breadth and Depth	1
7.	Comments About Pastor	8				
8.	Inventory	7				
9.	Couple Flexibility	7				
10.	Counselor Feedback Forms	6				
11.	Non-Prepare Comments	6				
12.	P, C, & F Goals	4				
13.	Marriage Expectations	3				
14.	Atmosphere	3				
15.	Couple Closeness	2				
16.	Family of Origin	2				
17.	Workbook	1				
18.	Spiritual Beliefs	1				
19.	Supportive Environment	1				
20.	Normalizing	1				

Table 4-12
What Three Things Did You Like least About the Premarital Program?

Couple Feedback				Clergy Feedback		
Ranking	Feedback Area	# of Responses		Ranking	Feedback Area	# of Responses
1.	Inventory	14		1.	Conflict Resolution	2
2.	Timing	7		2.	Financial Management	2
3.	Research Comments	7		3.	Counselor Feedback Form	1
4.	Sessions	4		4.	Breadth and Depth	1
5.	Atmosphere	3		5.	Additional Training	1
6.	Breadth and Depth	3				
7.	Financial Management	2				
8.	Homework	2				
9.	Comments About Pastor	2				
10.	Conflict Resolution	2				
11.	Non-Prepare Comments	2				
12.	Strength and Growth Areas	1				
13.	Spiritual Beliefs	1				
14.	Family of Origin	1				
15.	Additional Resources	1				

Table 4-13
What Three Suggestions Would You Make
to Improve the Premarital Enrichment program?

Couple Feedback				Clergy Feedback		
Ranking	Feedback Area	# of Responses		Ranking	Feedback Area	# of Responses
1.	Sessions	7		1.	F & C Map	1
2.	Timing	6		2.	Marriage Expectations	1
3.	Inventory	5		3.	Personality Issues	1
4.	Breadth and Depth	4		4.	Sexual Relationship	1
5.	Spiritual Beliefs	4		5.	Spiritual Beliefs	1
6.	Counselor Feedback Forms	3				
7.	Homework	3				
8.	Family of Origin	2				
9.	Financial Management	2				
10.	Atmosphere	2				
11.	Format	2				
12.	Research Comments	2				
13.	Workbook	1				
14.	Communi-cation	1				
15.	Family and Friends	1				
16.	Supportive Environment	1				
17.	Additional Resources	1				
18.	Comments About Pastor	1				

Table 4-14
*What Parts of the Program Do You Think Will
Have the **Biggest Impact** on Your Marriage?*

Couple Feedback				Clergy Feedback		
Ranking	Feedback Area	# of Responses		Ranking	Feedback Area	# of Responses
1.	Financial Management	13		1.	Strength and Growth Areas	2
2.	Communi-cation	12		2.	Communication	2
3.	Conflict Resolution	11		3.	Financial Management	1
4.	Strength and Growth Areas	7		4.	Timing	1
5.	Marriage Expectations	6		5.	Additional Resources	1
6.	Non-Prepare Comments	5				
7.	Counselor Feedback Forms	3				
8.	P, C, & F Goals	3				
9.	General Comments	3				
10.	Leisure Activities	2				
11.	Normalizing	2				
12.	Homework	2				
13.	Workbook	1				
14.	Idealistic Distortion	1				
15.	Couple Flexibility	1				
16.	Supportive Environment	1				
17.	Comments About Pastor	1				

Step 5: An across-case categorical matrix (see Table 4-15) was created to combine the forms of feedback into a cohesive chart. This chart allows the researcher to easily identify the total number of responses for each category. It also allows the researcher to see the breakdown of the responses by question (best, least, suggestion, impact). Finally, a total comments category was created to tally the total responses from all participants.

Table 4-15: *A Categorical Analysis of the Feedback From Clergy and Couples*

Feedback Areas	Couple Feedback		Clergy Feedback		Total Feedback	
Inventory (28)	B: 7	L: 14	B: 2	L:	B: 9	L: 14
	S: 5	I:	S:	I:	S: 5	I:
Counselor (20) Feedback Forms	B: 6	L:	B: 7	L: 1	B: 13	L: 1
	S: 3	I: 3	S:	I:	S: 3	I: 3
Workbook (3)	B: 1	L:	B:	L:	B: 1	L:
	S: 1	I: 1	S:	I:	S: 1	I: 1
S & G Areas (22)	B: 12	L: 1	B:	L:	B: 12	L: 1
	S:	I: 7	S:	I: 2	S:	I: 9
F & C Map (2)	B:	L:	B: 1	L:	B: 1	L:
	S:	I:	S: 1	I:	S: 1	I:
P, C, & F Goals (8)	B: 4	L:	B: 1	L:	B: 5	L:
	S:	I: 3	S:	I:	S:	I: 3
Idealistic Distortion (10)	B: 9	L:	B:	L:	B: 9	L:
	S:	I: 1	S:	I:	S:	I: 1
Personality Issues (1)	B:	L:	B:	L:	B:	L:
	S:	I:	S: 1	I:	S: 1	I:
Spiritual Beliefs (7)	B: 1	L: 1	B:	L:	B: 1	L: 1
	S: 4	I:	S: 1	I:	S: 5	I:
Leisure Activities (2)	B:	L:	B:	L:	B:	L:
	S:	I: 2	S:	I:	S:	I: 2
Marriage (10) Expectations	B: 3	L:	B:	L:	B: 3	L:
	S:	I: 6	S: 1	I:	S: 1	I: 6
Communication (35)	B: 14	L:	B: 6	L:	B: 20	L:
	S: 1	I: 12	S:	I: 2	S: 1	I: 14
Conflict (25) Resolution	B: 10	L: 2	B:	L: 2	B: 10	L: 4
	S:	I: 11	S:	I:	S:	I: 11
Children and Parenting (0)	B:	L:	B:	L:	B:	L:
	S:	I:	S:	I:	S:	I:
Couple (2) Closeness	B: 2	L:	B:	L:	B: 2	L:
	S:	I:	S:	I:	S:	I:
Couple (8) Flexibility	B: 7	L:	B:	L:	B: 7	L:
	S:	I: 1	S:	I:	S:	I: 1
Role (0) Relationship	B:	L:	B:	L:	B:	L:
	S:	I:	S:	I:	S:	I:
Sexual (1) Relationship	B:	L:	B:	L:	B:	L:
	S:	I:	S: 1	I:	S: 1	I:
Family of Origin (5)	B: 2	L: 1	B:	L:	B: 2	L: 1
	S: 2	I:	S:	I:	S: 2	I:
Financial (35) Management	B: 15	L: 2	B:	L: 2	B: 15	L: 4
	S: 2	I: 13	S:	I: 1	S: 2	I: 14

Category						
Family and Friends (1)	B:	L:	B:	L:	B:	L:
	S: 1	I:	S:	I:	S: 1	I:
Supportive (3) Environment	B: 1	L:	B:	L:	B: 1	L:
	S: 1	I: 1	S:	I:	S: 1	I: 1
Normalizing (3)	B: 1	L:	B:	L:	B: 1	L:
	S:	I: 2	S:	I:	S:	I: 2
Breadth and Depth (9)	B:	L: 3	B: 1	L: 1	B: 1	L: 4
	S: 4	I:	S:	I:	S: 4	I:
Atmosphere (8)	B: 3	L: 3	B:	L:	B: 3	L: 3
	S: 2	I:	S:	I:	S: 2	I:
Sessions (11)	B:	L: 4	B:	L:	B:	L: 4
	S: 7	I:	S:	I:	S: 7	I:
Timing (14)	B:	L: 7	B:	L:	B:	L: 7
	S: 6	I:	S:	I: 1	S: 6	I: 1
Homework (7)	B:	L: 2	B:	L:	B:	L: 2
	S: 3	I: 2	S:	I:	S: 3	I: 2
Format (2)	B:	L:	B:	L:	B:	L:
	S: 2	I:	S:	I:	S: 2	I:
Additional (1) Training	B:	L:	B:	L: 1	B:	L: 1
	S:	I:	S:	I:	S:	I:
Additional (3) Resources	B:	L: 1	B:	L:	B:	L: 1
	S: 1	I:	S:	I: 1	S: 1	I: 1
Comments about Pastor (12)	B: 8	L: 2	B:	L:	B: 8	L: 2
	S: 1	I: 1	S:	I:	S: 1	I: 1
Research (9) Comments	B:	L: 7	B:	L:	B:	L: 7
	S: 2	I:	S:	I:	S: 2	I:
Non-PREPARE Comments (13)	B: 6	L: 2	B:	L:	B: 6	L: 2
	S:	I: 5	S:	I:	S:	I: 5
General (21) Comments	B: 18	L:	B:	L:	B: 18	L:
	S:	I: 3	S:	I:	S:	I: 3
Total	**B: 130**	**L: 52**	**B: 18**	**L: 7**	**B: 148**	**L: 59**
	S: 48	**I: 74**	**S: 5**	**I: 7**	**S: 53**	**I: 81**

B = Answers to the question, "In order of importance, what three things did you like **best** about the premarital enrichment program?"

L = Answers to the question, "In order of importance, what are the three things that you liked **least** about the premarital enrichment program?"

S = Answers to the question, "In order of importance, what three **suggestions** would you make to improve the premarital enrichment program?"

I = Answers to the question, "In order of importance, what parts of the premarital enrichment program do you think will have the biggest **impact** on your marriage?"

Findings from Table 4-15:

A. There were 341 total comments. Of those, 148 (43%) were positive, 59 (17%) were negative, 53 (16%) were suggestions and 81 (24%) were in the improved relationship category.

B. There were 304 comments from the premarital couples who completed the premarital enrichment program. Of those, 130 (43%) were positive, 52 (17%) were negative, 48 (16%) were suggestions and 74 (2%) were in the improved relationship category.

C. There were 37 comments from the clergy who provided the premarital enrichment program. Of those, 18 (49%) were positive, 7 (19%) were negative, 5 (13%) were suggestions and 7 (19%) were in the improved relationship category.

D. Of the aspects of the PREPARE premarital program that participants liked best, financial management, communication, and strength and growth areas had the most comments from couples. Counselor feedback forms, communication and the inventory ranked the highest from clergy members.

E. Of the aspects of the PREPARE premarital program that participants liked least, the inventory, timing of the program and amount of sessions had the most comments from couples. Conflict resolution and financial management are the only aspects that received at least two comments.

F. Of the aspects of the PREPARE premarital program that participants had suggestions for improvement, amount of sessions, timing of sessions and inventory had the most comments from couples. No single aspects had more than one comment from the clergy.

G. Of the aspects of the of the PREPARE premarital enrichment program that participants thought had the greatest impact on their relationship, financial management, communication and conflict resolution had the most comments from couples. Only strengths and growth areas and communication had multiple responses from clergy.

H. Of the 16 sub-scales in PREPARE, seven had two or less comments about them from the participants (children and parenting, role relationship, personality issues, sexual relationship, family and friends, couple closeness and leisure activities).

Summary

This chapter has included the research findings for each of the research objectives posed in chapter 3. To summarize, each null hypothesis was accepted because no statistical significance differences were found on the dependent variables between Time 1 and Time 2. However, using more qualitative ideographic procedures, many couples categorically changed from one typology to another after completing the program. Over 50 percent of the conflicted, traditional and harmonious couples shifted to a higher typology, while 86 percent of the vitalized couples maintained their typology (see Figure 4-2). Due to the inconsistencies in these findings several procedures were conducted to better understand the changes that occurred in this study.

To better understand the relationship between changes in couple typology and changes in PCA, individual male and individual female scores, groups were aggregated and compared. Results can be found in Figures 4-3 – 4-8. In an effort to understand why some couples increased and other decreased in typology, demographic variables were cross-tabulated with couple typology. Results indicate that five variables were

concluded to have a substantial or major impact on changes in couple typology (female and male income, male and female parental marital status and whether or not the male thought the program will make a difference in the marriage (see Table 4-10). Finally, feedback was collected from couples and clergy who participated in the study. Verbatim responses were coded for content analysis and placed into across-case and within-case matrices (see Tables 4-11 - 4-15). The next chapter presents the overall summary of the study, discussion and conclusions followed by implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Premarital enrichment programs have flourished in the last 50 years. Numerous programs with divergent theoretical frameworks have been created and administered to premarital couples. Several PAQ's have also been created and used for assessment purposes for premarital couples. PREPARE 2000 is the first to combine a PAQ with a premarital enrichment program, thereby offering an integrated program to premarital couples. The authors of PREPARE 2000 began offering this integrated program in 1997. Since the introduction of PREPARE 2000, no piece of research has been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of this program. Because over 30,000 clergy members are providing these services and over 1,000,000 premarital couples have participated in this program, it was reasoned that research on the effectiveness of this program was warranted.

The intention of this study was to assess the short-term effectiveness of the PREPARE 2000 premarital enrichment program. This was broken down into five research objectives: 1) to test for statistical significant change among all dependent variables; 2) to identify categorical change in couple typology; 3) to investigate the relationship between couple typology and changes in the 15 sub-scales of the PREPARE PAQ; 4) to investigate the relationship of antecedent variables with changes in couple typology and 5) to collect feedback from couples and clergy regarding their personal experience with the premarital enrichment program. A discussion of the results in this study follows.

Discussion

Research Objective #1: To test for statistically significant change among all dependent variables between Time 1 and Time 2

Paired mean *t*-tests were conducted to investigate statistical significance between Time 1 and Time 2 for: 1) PCA, 2) individual male, 3) individual female, 4) male dyadic adjustment and 5) female dyadic adjustment. Results from the *t*-tests concluded no significant differences for any of the variables. A 5x5 cross-tabulation with expected frequencies estimated under the log-linear model of independence and a chi-square concluded no significant differences in couple typology. Further, *t*-tests were conducted on 15 of the 20 sub-scales of PREPARE for male, female and PCA scores. Only male couple flexibility, male marriage expectations, female couple flexibility and female marriage expectations increased enough to result in statistically significant change at the .05 level.

Results from this study suggest that couples did not significantly increase on any of the dependent variables between Time 1 and Time 2. There are several possible reasons for this non-significant change. First, the program may not be effective enough to produce significant changes in the participants as reflected in the dependent variables. Second, it might not be possible to produce significant change in a short-term program. Couples met with the clergy member between 3-6 times. The amount of time usually spans 4-6 weeks. It might not be possible to produce statistically significant change in critical relationship areas in the span of a month. Third, the sample size of this study was small. Only 31 couples completed the requirements of this study. Thus, changes in the dependent variables needed to be larger in order to produce significant changes. In addition, the standard deviations were quite large; meaning that some

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couples substantially changed while others did not change at all. Finally, over 80

percent of the couples in the sample were within six months of marriage when they

initiated the premarital enrichment process (see Table 3-2). Accordingly, the related

literature can be interpreted to suggest that premarital programs administered within six

months of marriage do not find couples particularly motivated to change (Silliman &

Schumm, 1989). Their rose-colored glasses (Olson, 1996) seemingly skews relational

perception in such a way to protect themselves from addressing anything meaningful

enough to produce significant changes.

Research Objective #2: To identify categorical change in couple typology

Of particular interest for this study was the question of whether or not couples in

this study would categorically change from one typology to another (vitalized,

harmonious, traditional, conflicted) from Time 1 to Time 2. Previous research suggests

that couple typology is highly correlated with future marital outcome (Fowers, Montel

& Olson, 1996). In this study it was of particular interest to understand if couples could

improve enough to produce a change in couple typology.

Upon completion of the premarital program, analysis of PCA scores indicated

that nine couples increased their typology, 16 retained their typology and six decreased

in typology. Twenty-five out of 31 retained or positively shifted their typology (81

percent). This means 19 percent of the sample decreased from one typology to another.

Since a control group was not used, it is not possible to conclude that the

premarital program caused shifts in couple typology. However, several important

pieces of information were attained from assessing change in couple typology. First, it

is possible for couples to shift in couple typology. This means that couple typology is

amenable to change, even over the limited time span of six weeks. Twenty-nine percent of the sample increased, while 19 percent decreased in typology (see Table 4-6). Contrary to the lack of significant differences via the quantitative procedures, results using a more qualitative approach revealed that change was occurring for this variable. It is suspected that the categorical changes in both directions cancelled out the significant differences, creating a small aggregate change (mean at Time 1 was 3.94; mean at Time 2 was 4.10).

Second, the premarital program has more positive benefits than negative benefits associated with it. Twenty-one out of thirty-one couples had desirable outcomes (68 percent). Specifically, 12 out of 14 vitalized couples retained their typology and nine out 17 couples that could categorically improve, did so.

Third, only two vitalized couples decreased in typology after completing the program. This is positive because it would be alarming if couples in the healthiest typology shifted to a lower typology after participating in this program. Couples from the lower typologies (harmonious, traditional and conflicted) are also capable of change. Results from this study suggest that over 50 percent of the non-vitalized couples increased in typology after completing this program.

The findings from the above stated research are important due to the related research conducted by Fowers, Montel & Olson (1996). These authors suggest that couple typology is highly related to subsequent marital outcome. For example, at 3-year follow-up, only 17% of vitalized couples were divorced as compared to 53% of the conflicted couples. Following the same pattern, 60% of vitalized, 46% of harmonious, 34% of traditional and 17% of conflicted couples reported being happily married after

three years of marriage. Due to these findings, it can be argued that one goal of the PREPARE 2000 program should be to shift couples to a higher typology. Subsequently, two critical findings of this study were that over half of the non-vitalized couples shifted to a higher typology and that most vitalized couple retained their typology. This should give clergy and counselors some confidence that the PREPARE 2000 program has more positive than negative benefits associated with it. At best, shifting couples to a higher typology might decrease the divorce rate. At worst, it demonstrates that couples are improving their relational skills and becoming more perceptually aligned on several content areas.

Due to the small sample size, it is not possible to say that any of these typologies have a higher likelihood to increase in typology. Future studies might focus on whether or not couples from the conflicted category benefit more from the program than the other typologies. It is also not known if these changes will be sustained into their marriage. This latter point is critical and future studies should investigate the long-term effects of this program on marital outcome.

Research Objective #3: To investigate the relationship between couple typology and changes in 15 sub-scales of PREPARE

Results from this section suggest that couples have divergent responses to the premarital program. This may seem like a simplistic idea, but it is one that warrants mentioning. No one couple responded in the same way. Men do not respond alike, and neither do women. This makes it hard to predict the outcome for a particular couple or to stereotype the different typologies.

When comparing the couples that increased in typology with the couples that decreased in typology, several findings are worthy of discussion. First, couples that

increased, increased on 14 out of 15 PCA sub-scales. Couples that decreased, decreased on all 15 PCA sub-scales. It can be said that when the program works, it really works. When the program does not work, it really does not work.

The author of this premarital program recently published a book that rank orders the areas of a relationship that discriminate happily married couples from unhappily married couples based on results from ENRICH (Olson & Olson, 2000). In rank-order, the top 10 areas are: 1) communication, 2) couple flexibility, 3) couple closeness, 4) personality issues, 5) conflict resolution, 6) sexual relationship, 7) leisure activities, 8) family and friends, 9) financial management and 10) spiritual beliefs.

The results from this study suggest that couples do not increase in the areas that are critical to a happy marriage. Couples that increased in typology, increased the most on personality issues, leisure activities, family flexibility and financial management. Couples that decreased, did not increase on any sub-scale. However, they decreased the most on personality issues, family closeness, communication, family and friends, couple flexibility and conflict resolution. Perhaps this means that the exercises in the premarital program should be oriented toward the content areas associated with subsequent positive marital outcome. Specifically, for individuals in this sample, the sub-scale communication decreased on PCA (-.65), male (-.83) and female (-3.74) scores. If communication is the number one sub-scale that discriminates happily married couples from unhappily married couples (Olson & Olson, 2000), perhaps the couple exercises dealing with communication and conflict resolution are not producing the intended results. Finally, if financial management ranks so low, maybe a whole

exercise should not be devoted to financial management. Instead, a session might be added to focus on couple closeness and couple flexibility.

Two other findings are worthy of discussion. The ecological categories, as created by Stahmann and Hiebert (1997) increased or decreased (pending) roughly the same. This means that the premarital program is not just affecting one or two categories. The program appears to affect external issues as much as it affects intrapersonal and interpersonal issues.

Finally, results from this section demonstrate that the premarital program dramatically affects the personality issues sub-scale. For couples that increased, personality issues increased 21.1 points for PCA, 16.32 points for males and 17.00 points for females. For couples that decreased, personality issues decreased -38.33 points, -26.33 points for males and -18.50 points for females. It is the only sub-scale to have such a dramatic and consistent change in score. In the context of the PREPARE PAQ, personality is described as having four main constructs: (1) jealousy, (2) control, (3) temper and (4) responsibility (Olson, 1996). The specific questions relating to personality are as follows:

7) There are times when I feel jealous because of my partner's behavior.
17) Sometimes I am concerned about my partner's temper.
32) I am sometimes concerned that my partner appears to be unhappy and withdrawn.
47) My partner has some personal habits that bother me.
62) I wish my partner were more reliable and followed through on more things.
77) I am sometimes upset or embarrassed with my partner's behavior.
92) Sometimes my partner is too stubborn.
106) I wish my partner were less critical or negative about some topics.
119) Sometimes I have difficulty dealing with my partner's moodiness.
133) Sometimes my partner seems to be too controlling.

It is difficult to objectively identify why personality plays such a substantial role in the change process and strongly correlates with change in typology. None-the-less, individuals seem to have a heightened awareness of their partner's personality (as defined by Olson, 1996) after participating in the program, albeit positive or negative characteristics. For instance, if one person in the relationship is jealous and controlling, perhaps the partner is better able to identify those characteristics.

Research Objective #4: To investigate the relationship of antecedent variables with changes in couple typology

If some couples increased in typology and others decreased in typology, it was questioned whether or not it might be possible to determine which couples might be better or worse candidates for the program. Subsequently, if program leaders (i.e. clergy in this study) could identify those couples that would decrease in typology as a consequence of participating in this program, the program leader might consider advising couples not to participate in this particular program. These couples could possibly do something more constructive to prepare for marriage.

To understand how certain variables might influence change scores in a premarital program, it is suggested to return to established literature. Research has documented certain variables that correlate with future marital outcome. For instance, more education and higher income (Martin & Bumpass, 1989), less parental divorce (McLenahan & Bumpass, 1988), longer courtship periods (Kurdek, 1991) and better communication skills (Kelly, Houston, & Cate, 1985) are predictive of positive marital outcome. From the purposes of this research, this author hypothesized that couples with antecedent variables correlating with poor marital outcome would improve the most after completing the premarital program, because they have more room to improve.

Results indicate that five variables from this study have a substantial or major impact on changes in couple typology. These variables are female and male income, male and female parental marital status and whether or not the male believes the program will make a difference in their future relationship. In other words, individuals who increased in typology had a mean income of $10,000-$29,000, whereas individuals who decreased in typology had a mean income of $50,000 to $75,000. Likewise, individuals with more parental divorce and men who believe the program will positively affect their marriage had a higher likelihood of increasing in typology between Time 1 and Time 2. These findings were consistent with the previously stated hypothesis. However, many of the variables hypothesized to have an impact on programmatic outcome had minimal or no impact (see Table 4-5).

The qualitative questionnaire that couples filled out after completing the program asked two questions about their initial attitudes before participating in the program. These questions were designed to assess their excitement and confidence level in the program before participating. Neither one of these questions had any impact on program outcome.

Three additional questions referenced the couple's experiences after completing the program. These three questions were asked of males and females, thereby creating six variables. Of these six variables, five of these variables had an impact on program outcome. The first two questions were: "Do you think this program made a difference?" and "Do you believe this program will improve your future relationship?" For males, these questions produced moderate (mean difference of 1.00) and substantial impact (mean difference of 1.50) on programmatic outcome. For females, the same

questions produced minimal impact (mean difference of .50). Another question assessed the individual's level of happiness after participating in the program. For males, this produced a moderate impact and for females it produced no impact (0.00). Thus, it can be said that there is a correlation between an increase in typology and how individuals perceive their experience after completing the program. This is particularly true for males.

The assessment of the information derived from this research objective is both discouraging and encouraging. First, it is discouraging because the results indicate it is not possible to distinguish between couples who will increase in typology and couples who will decrease by assessing attitudes and demographic variables beforehand. A clear profile of a person who will be a better or worse candidate for this program could not be identified using the antecedent variables in this study. Of course, if the results from this study were to be taken literally, it would be recommended that individuals who come from intact families and earn large incomes, should not partake in this premarital enrichment program. However, due to the small sample size and the exploratory nature of this study, it would be inappropriate to make such inferences.

The information from this research objective is encouraging because it appears that couples, who believe they gained something substantial from the program, actually benefited from the program. This is particularly true for males (see Table 4-5). One possible way to interpret this information is to say that it is critical to get males invested in the process from the beginning. Males that do not invest into the program may actually keep the couple from increasing to a higher typology.

Research Objective #5: To obtain feedback from couples and clergy

The PREPARE PAQ has been revised several times since its inception in 1979. However, the premarital program that accompanies it has not undergone a change since it was created in 1996. It was thought that gaining feedback from the premarital couples and clergy might be valuable to the authors for future refinement of the program.

The results from the feedback revealed that 43 percent of the responses were positive, 17 percent were negative, 16 percent were suggestions and 24 percent were in the improved relationship category. Both clergy and couples had more positive than negative statements by a two-to-one margin. Perhaps this is because of the positive experiences they had with the program, or perhaps it is because it is difficult for people to disclose critical feedback.

Couples had more positive statements about specific content areas. These areas included financial management, communication and idealistic distortion. Some of the responses to the question, "What three things did you like best about the premarital enrichment program," were, 1) "The financial planning education," 2) "Allowed us to openly express our ideas without problems," and 3) "Talking about things you don't realize will change." Clergy were more prone to praise the materials they used while working with couples such as the counselor feedback forms and the inventory. Some of their responses included, 1) "The tools for quick survey of strength and growth areas," 2) "I have the support of an authority," and 3) "Practice sessions of assertiveness/active listening and conflict resolution."

Couples were more critical of the materials and the protocol of the program. Some responses to the question, "What three things did you like least about the premarital enrichment program," included, 1) "The wording on questions were confusing at times," 2) "It was too long. One weekend would be better than 5 weeks," and 3) "Time frame; it was too much too close to the wedding." Clergy had very few negative comments. The only categories to receive two comments were conflict resolution and financial management. Some responses included, 1) "The conflict resolution steps are too lengthy," and 2) "The financial section is too brief. More materials are needed."

Couples and clergy provided suggestions to improve the premarital program. Once again, couples focused on the materials and the protocol. Typical responses to the question, "What three suggestions would you make to improve the premarital enrichment program," included, 1) "Results from the survey may cause unnecessary concerns for some couples. To avoid that I suggest beginning and ending the session with an emphasis on positive points about relationship." 2) "Call more attention to notebook and how to follow along in it," and 3) "Spend more time on each topic." Unfortunately, clergy only provided five suggestions. No category received multiple responses on this question. None-the-less, some specific suggestions included, 1) "Increase the detail of the spiritual category for couples who are born-again Christians," 2) "More tools to deal with sexual issues," and 3) "Evaluations on marriage expectations."

Perhaps the most important question was the one that dealt with the parts of the program that will make the biggest impact on the upcoming marriage. Couples once

again focused on the content areas: financial management, communication and conflict resolution. Some responses to the question, "What parts of the premarital enrichment program do you think will have the biggest impact on your marriage," included, 1) "Information given to help us through our problems will make a big difference," and 2) "The financial inventory/planning portion." Couples also seemed to benefit from the first session focusing on a discussion of couples' strength and growth areas. Comments included, 3) "The counseling we received after identifying the weak areas," and 4) "The discussion of results of the survey – seeing where we differed and having tools and education to plan for addressing our differences (growth areas) and celebrating our strengths." Only two categories had multiple responses for clergy: strength and growth areas and communication.

There are two other issues worthy of discussion. First, couples report that they benefited the most from the content categories of financial management, communication and conflict resolution. However, mean differences on these sub-scales do not portray an influence (see Table 4-36). Financial management has a mean difference of 6.77, communication has a mean difference of -0.65 and conflict resolution has a difference of 3.22. In this case the quantitative results do not match the qualitative feedback from the couples. Perhaps the type of impact that the couples are talking about does not translate to a paper/pencil PAQ. Conversely, perhaps the participants perceptually over-estimated the impact of various elements (e.g. financial matters, communication, etc.) of the program.

Finally, the most important contribution of this section might be the lack of comments directed toward several sub-scales. Of the 16 sub-scales in PREPARE, seven

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received two or less comments about them. These sub-scales were children and parenting, role relationship, personality issues, sexual relationship, family and friends, couple closeness and leisure activities. Perhaps the premarital program could benefit from improving these facets of the program. This is especially pertinent because, according to Olson & Olson (2000), some of these sub-scales distinguish happily married couples from unhappily married couples.

Implications for Researchers

One strength of this study was the use of a multi-method approach. The combined use of quantitative and qualitative methodologies resulted in a more complete understanding of the influence of PREPARE 2000 on change in couple relationships as assessed using the PAQ. Either method used alone would have resulted in very different conclusions. Quantitative analysis only revealed that the program was not effective enough to make statistically significant changes on the dependent variables. However, qualitative analysis revealed a tremendous amount of couple typology movement was happening. Without the multi-method approach, half of the story would have been lost.

The final component of the study, a content analysis of the qualitative questionnaire, revealed altogether different insights from the participants in this study. However, much more research needs to be conducted in this area. An entire study could be dedicated to attaining feedback from clergy who provide these programs and from the premarital couples who participate in the program. The open-ended questions provided enough freedom for participants to speak their mind. This author believes that

specific questions about the content areas should be included in future studies. This would attain more specifics and fewer generalities.

Finally, a few apects of the RDAS should be mentioned. The RDAS was a nice compliment to the study because it served as an external assessment instrument. It helped guard against "teaching to the test" and a monolithic way of assessing change among couples. Consistent with the change scores on the PREPARE PAQ, limited differences were discovered between Time 1 and Time 2 on this particular instrument. Participants slightly improved for overall PCA (2.13), male (3.89) and female (1.49) scores on the PREPARE PAQ, while male (.4) and female (-.17) dyadic adjustment scores changed slightly on the RDAS.

If future studies are to be undertaken, another external assessment instrument should be considered for comparison. Despite the consistency in findings between the two measures, it is questioned if the RDAS is too simplistic in scope. The instrument only contains 14 questions and the total range of scores is 0-69. Perhaps a more comprehensive external assessment instrument should be considered for future studies.

Implications for The PREPARE 2000 Program

The sample was small, no comparison group was used and long-term follow up procedures were not used in this study. However, two points are clear. Aggregately, couples did not significantly increase on any dependent variable or on almost any sub-scale. Conversely, categorical change among couple typology occurred for 48 percent of the sample (15 out of 31 couples). It is clearly possible for couples to increase and decrease in typology.

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The mixed results between the quantitative and qualitative procedures demonstrate that the premarital program has not reached its full potential. Several suggestions are offered to the authors of PREPARE. For the purposes of this study, the PREPARE 2000 program has been viewed through an ecosystemic lens. To make the integrated program more ecosystemic, the program could be more explicitly inter-related. Currently, the program focuses on one area at a time. Some literature could be implemented to help couples understand how one area is related to many others. For instance, if a couple has idealistic distortion of their relationship, unrealistic expectations might be set. Once married, these unrealistic expectations could affect couple flexibility. If couple flexibility is strained, individuals might not necessarily want to be close to one another, thus altering levels of couple closeness.

The PREPARE PAQ assesses the relationship on 20 different sub-scales or areas of content. However, the six exercises constituting the premarital program explicitly focus on the content in primarily seven sub-scales, (communication, conflict resolution, financial management, couple flexibility, couple closeness, family flexibility and family closeness). That leaves 13 areas to be discussed in the first exercise (strength and growth areas). If certain areas are not discussed at that point, they probably will not be discussed again during the program.

One suggestion is to add more exercises. This is complicated by research that clearly states that couples will not devote more than six sessions to a program prior to marriage (Silliman & Schumm, 1989). Another suggestion is to decrease the focus on financial matters because this sub-scale ranks second to last when discriminating between happily and unhappily married couples three years into marriage (Olson &

Olson, 2000). If financial matters ranks so low and minimal change occurred on this variable for the individuals in this study, the authors should consider whether an entire exercise should be devoted to this topic area. Finally, a follow-up program in the first year of marriage could be designed to focus on some of these critical relationship areas, particularly for couples that score in the conflicted typology.

Implications for Clergy/Counselors/Family Life Educators

The findings from this research illustrate that the individual who provides the program does not determine positive or negative outcomes for the couple. Clergy members who provided the program to multiple couples had divergent results. Couples respond differently to the program and to the person who is delivering it.

Most couples seemed to have benefited from participating in the program. The program can be improved, but providers should feel a certain degree of comfort knowing that the majority of couples will at least maintain scores on the sub-scales, if not improve. Unfortunately, at this time, it is not possible to identify or predict whom will benefit/not benefit from the program. One implication of this study does suggest that a goal should be to solicit men from the beginning and talk to them about the benefits of this program. Men who do not think the program is making an impact on their relationship, do not respond as positively to the program.

If the authors of PREPARE 2000 do not improve the program, it is this researcher's assumption that adding one's own interventions or unique contributions to the sessions could be beneficial. The program is far from perfect. Modifications to communication and conflict resolution areas might significantly benefit couples.

Here are several suggestions for the providers of this premarital program. 1) Providers should try to deliver the program in a much more systemic way. Couples might benefit from seeing the inter-relatedness of the different relationship areas. They are not isolated areas in a relationship; rather a common thread connects them all. A change in one area can create a change in another area. 2) Trained providers should also pay particular attention to personality issues. The research from this study presents a strong case that it may be the make or break issue for the couple. This means issues of jealousy, control, temper and responsibility appear to be critical. Additional time should be allocated to focusing on the personality issues from the counselor feedback report (page 8). 3) If time permits, as a regular part of the premarital process, providers should have couples fill out the PREPARE PAQ after completing the program. This might show couples where they improved and other areas that still need their continued attention. This researcher does not work for Life Innovations, Inc. and will not receive any proceeds from a second scoring. This is just a simple way to track the progress of a couple before marriage. Finally, for those couples who decrease in typology or remain conflicted, continued support in the form of marital counseling might be beneficial for the future success of their relationship.

Limitations of PREPARE and Other Premarital Programs

Research clearly demonstrates that no "one" variable can make or break a relationship. Thus, multiple variables need to be assessed and treated when preparing couples for marriage. If Bronfenbrenner's model (1979; 1986) is used as a measuring stick for PREPARE 2000, it can be argued that PREPARE has some gaps to fill if the intent is to improve all aspects of a couple's relationship.

Almost exclusively, the 20 sub-scales focus on the micro-level of the couple relationship with a little emphasis on the meso-level. Exo-, macro- and chrono- levels are almost entirely neglected. Furthermore, little effort appears to be placed on discussing the interdependence of the sub-scales or administering the program in an ecosystemic manner. Maybe these shortcomings play a role in the lack of couple movement on the dependent variables.

At the same time, it is hard to be critical of a program that typically has a four- to six-session window of opportunity. How many topics can the program cover? How many different levels should the program focus on? These are difficult questions, but it can be stated with reasonable confidence, that this and other premarital programs are not truly ecosystemic in nature. Premarital programs will have to deal with more developmental and societal issues before they can make claims of being holistic and comprehensive.

This leads to an interesting discussion as to whether premarital programs should be attempting to improve many relational attributes on several levels or focusing on one single variable. Many of the programs cited in chapter 2 focused on helping couples understand or improve on one specific variable. For instance, Wood & Stroup (1990) developed a program to better understand each person's family of origin, while Markman (1979) stressed a particular form of communication skills. If the results from this exploratory study are replicated in other studies, it might indicate that given the time constraints and the amount of sessions allowable, focusing all efforts on one variable might be more effective than dividing efforts to address multiple levels of a

relationship. It just might be an impossible task to intervene on multiple levels of a relationship and achieve sustained and systemic change.

Limitations of Study

This study has several limitations. The most significant limitation is the sample size. Only 31 couples met the requirements of this study. More than 70 couples initially agreed to participate in this study over the course of two years, but attrition rates for clergy and couples significantly decreased the sample size of the study. Because of this small sample size, the sample is not representative and the study should not be generalized to the larger population.

This study was limited by the lack of a control group. Without a control group, it is impossible to control for maturation, history, initiation effects, testing, spontaneous remission or other extraneous variables (Saccuzzo, 1984). A control group was initially planned for this study, but after three couples were placed in the control group, not only did the couples drop out of the study, but so did the three clergy members. The control group was formally dropped from the study after these episodes. This researcher discovered that clergy members are extremely busy people tending to the needs of large congregations.

Another complication is inevitable and the importance of it should not be neglected. The assessment and the enrichment are provided at the peak time for idealistic distortion and cognitive dissonance (Larson, 1992). Eighty percent of the sample was within six months of marriage at Time 1. This means that most of these couples have invested a great deal of money in rings, dresses, halls and photographers. Furthermore, most of these couples were "mandated" to take the premarital program by

their ministers as a precursor for getting married. This combination means that many of these couples might not be receptive to the "learning process" and are more invested in putting their best foot forward. One can not be too certain about any of the data collected from participants with such "rose-colored glasses" (Olson, 1996).

Finally, there are some limitations to the type of data collected. The primary objective of this study was to determine if the six-exercises of the PREPARE 2000 program could categorically shift couples in typology. Unfortunately, couple typology is a categorical variable with only four values. Limited room for change was possible. To complicate things, almost half of the sample (14 out of 31) scored in the highest category (vitalized) at Time 1. This means that very little upward movement could occur with this particular sample.

Due to the limitations of this study, it was decided early on that this study should be exploratory in nature. This is the first time the enrichment elements of the PREPARE 2000 program have been assessed. The primary purpose was to set a foundation for future studies in the area.

Recommendations for Future Study

The premise of combining premarital programs with PAQ's is relatively new. The authors of PREPARE 2000 are the first to create such an integrated program. Future studies need to be completed that focus on evaluating and improving the PREPARE 2000 premarital program. Development of other similar integrated programs is needed. It is the opinion of this researcher that the field does not need new premarital programs or new premarital assessment questionnaires. The field really needs to integrate the two parts of the equation and create integrated holistic models.

The use of a multi-method approach using both quantitative and qualitative procedures appear to be warranted. To study integrated programs, comprehensive analyses should be the choice of study. Likewise, control groups should be used to isolate the treatment of the premarital programs. Ideally, the leading programs in the field should be longitudinally tested against one another. For instance, couples participating in PREPARE 2000, FOCCUS or RELATE could be compared to couples that received no enrichment at all.

Finally, there must be ways to reach out to conflicted couples. The research clearly demonstrates that these couples have the highest probability of low marital satisfaction and divorce. To deliver the premarital program and then forget about them is a mistake for the couple and society. These couples need more specialized intervention that follows them throughout their marriage.

Appendix A

Recruitment Letter

Reason for This Letter: I am a Ph.D. student in Marriage & Family Therapy at Michigan State University. The proposed study is my dissertation. I have begun working with the "Building Healthy Families" group in Ottawa County as they have expressed interest in this project. Now, I am looking for clergy/counselors who are certified to use PREPARE 2000 and are planning to use it with couples to be a part of this study. To successfully complete the study, I need data from 60-80 couples. **This is a landmark study**. If the field of premarital enrichment is going to progress, we need to know if the programs we are using are effective. PREPARE is used more than any other and there is no existing research to tell us if it works in any way. This study will not only identify immediate effects, but the project will also be set up longitudinally so we can track these couples for up to 20 years. David Olson will drop the scoring fee from $30 to $10 for any clergy/counselor who participates in the study. If you are interested in partaking in this study, please contact me:

Joe Hoedel
(504) 734-6556
hoedeljo@msu.edu
5802 Cedar Creek Drive
Apt. 307
River Ridge, LA 70123

Title of Project: The Effectiveness of PREPARE 2000 on Premarital Couples: Can a Premarital Program Based on PREPARE 2000 Improve Factors Associated with Marital Success and Relational Satisfaction?

Importance of the Study: Over 1 million couples have used the PREPARE instrument and over 30,000 clergy/counselors are certified to administer it. PREPARE is the most often used premarital inventory in America. The instrument has been extensively tested and boasts excellent validity and reliability. In fact, the instrument has demonstrated 80-85 percent accuracy in predicting future marital success and satisfaction. The instrument is truly remarkable. **However, nobody has ever tested the 6 session premarital enrichment program that accompanies the PREPARE 2000 package. This means we don't know if the enrichment element of the program does anything at all to help couples.** We hope that it is, but we need to determine what and how much the inventory is helping. If the goal is to help couples improve their relationships and build long-term successful marriages, we need to know what does and does not work.

Purpose of the Study: In plain language, the purpose of this study is to see if the 6-session program works. Can the program increase factors associated with future marital success and satisfaction? We know from previous research that we can predict the outcome of a marriage based on couple typology: **vitalized, harmonious, traditional and conflicted.** The prediction rates are on the next sheet.

Happily Married	38 60%	30 46%	17 34%	10 17%	**95**
Less Happily Married	15 23%	19 29%	25 50%	18 30%	77
Separated/ Divorces	11 17%	16 25%	8 16%	32 53%	67
Total	64 100%	65 100%	50 100%	60 100%	**239**

Based on this research, it would seem logical that we would want couples to be in the vitalized typology. Unfortunately, this does not match reality. The next best goal should be to increase the couple typology in order to give them a better chance of achieving a successful marriage.

Therefore, this study is interested in the movement of a couple from on couple typology to another. For example, if a couple rated **conflictual** before going through the program, can they improve their typology to traditional? Likewise, can a **traditional** couple improve to a harmonious couple or a **harmonious** couple improve to a **vitalized** couple? This study is laid out below.
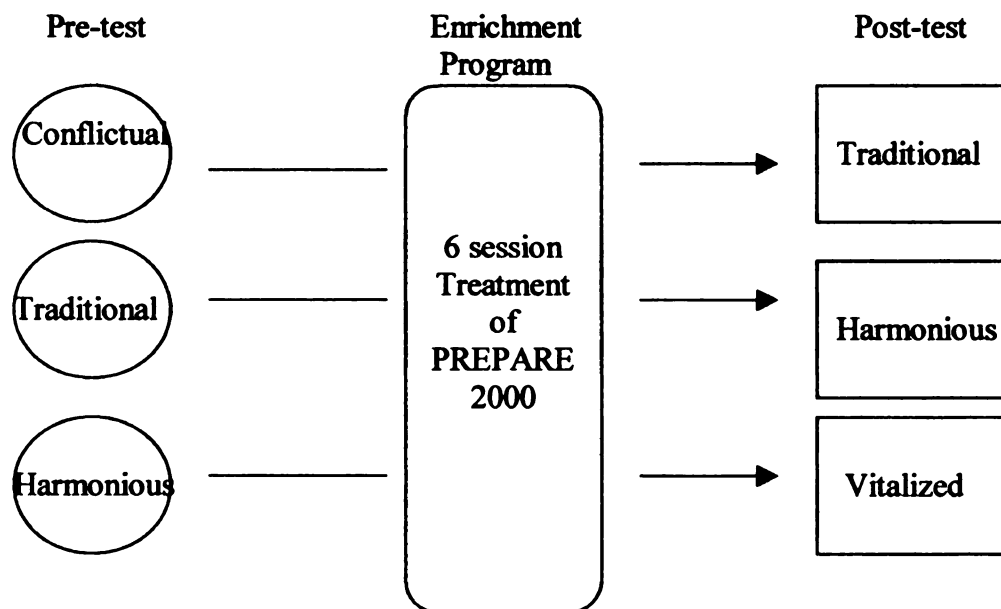
Appendix B

Instructions for Clergy

<u>This sheet is established to help clergy as they work with couples for the duration of this study.</u>

(Any additional questions should be directed to Joe Hoedel (517) 646-7357)

Step 1: Have all couples that you will be marrying before January 1, 2000 complete the following Inventories as soon as possible:
A) PREPARE Inventory
B) Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) (14 questions)

Step 2: Send the completed RDAS Inventories to:
Joe Hoedel
220 Devonshire
Dimondale, MI 48821 (a self addressed envelope will be provided)

Step 3: Send the completed PREPARE Inventories to:
Life Innovations Inc.
<u>**C/O Sharlene Fye**</u>
P.O. Box 190
Minneapolis, MN 55440-0190
Include a note that says, **"the inventories are part of Joe Hoedel's study"** and only include a check for $10 (not the usual $30). They will send me the results. I will immediately record the results in a data file and forward the materials to you.

Step 4: Based on date of marriage and flexibility of clergy/couple, couples will either 1) begin the feedback sessions right away (experimental group) or 2) wait eight weeks before starting the feedback sessions (control group). The purpose of this is to show that the improvements of the couples are due to the effects of the premarital program and not other factors. Without a control group, this study would have limited credibility.

Step 5: Conduct feedback sessions with couple (except those in the control group). For the sake of research, please stick closely to the protocol that you were trained on. If you feel couples need more sessions, please administer the post-test materials before doing so.

Step 6: On the last night or an agreed upon date shortly after the last session (based on your own time constraints and convenience) administer:
A) PREPARE Inventory
B) Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Step 7: In an effort to improve the PREPARE 2000 premarital program, I have developed a short questionnaire based on their and your experience of working with the program.

        A) Have couple fill out <u>Questionnaire for Couple</u> (one for each)

        B) Clergy fill out the <u>Questionnaire for Clergy</u> (only do it once, not once for each couple).

Step 8: Send completed questionnaires and RDAS to Joe Hoedel

Step 9: Send completed PREPARE Inventories to Life Innovations Inc. Do not send any money. Just simply add a note that says **"this is a part of Joe Hoedel's study and these inventories are post-tests."** The results will be forwarded to me. These results will not be forwarded to you unless you specifically request them for your records.

Appendix C

Consent Forms

Consent Form for Clergy

This study is interested in the benefits of premarital couples going through a premarital enrichment program based on PREPARE 2000. Over 500,000 couples have participated in this program and over 3,000 clergy/counselors are certified to use PREPARE 2000. However, research on the effectiveness of this program is lacking. We do not know how much it helps couples improve their relationship. Further, we do not know if participating in this program can decrease the likelihood of divorce or improve future marital satisfaction. We hope that it does, but we can not make such claims without pertinent research.

As part of your agreement to marry couples, you will be administering the PREPARE Instrument and then leading them in the six-session premarital program. This study does not ask you to alter this procedure. We are asking you to administer this program in the very same way that you have been trained by Life Innovations, Inc. However, in order to test the effectiveness of the PREPARE 2000 program, we are asking you to do a few other things. 1) Administer the PREPARE Instrument to the couple again once they have completed the six-session program. 2) Administer the Dyadic Adjustment Scale along with the PREPARE Instrument both before and after the couple has completed the program. 3) We are interested in what you and the couple thought of the premarital program. To get this feedback, we will ask you to fill out a one page questionnaire as well as administer a similar questionnaire to the couple upon completion of the program. With this feedback, we intend to improve the premarital program.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this study without penalty. Further, once you volunteer to be in the study, you can refuse to administer any questions or to discontinue your involvement at any time. Please understand that all materials you fill out will remain strictly confidential and your name and the names of the couple will be removed from any documents and replaced with a research number.

Participation in this study will not result in any additional costs. The usual cost of scoring the PREPARE inventory is $30. The authors of that instrument agreed to reduce the scoring fee to $10. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale has no cost for scoring. No known adverse effects of filling out the additional forms have been reported or are anticipated.

If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact either:
Joe Hoedel, M.A., (504) 734-5456, or David Imig, Ph.D., (517) 353-3998

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by signing below:

_____
Clergy Member

Consent Form for Couples

This study is interested in the benefits of premarital couples going through a premarital enrichment program. The clergy member who is marrying you is also going to lead you through a group of exercises before you get married. These exercises will take place in a series of six sessions prior to your marriage. All exercises are geared toward improving your relationship and increasing your chances of future marital success. The issues you will be discussing include relationship strengths and growth areas, communication and conflict resolution, family of origin issues, financial matters, and developing future individual, couple and family goals.

As per an agreement between you and your clergy member, you will be participating in a premarital enrichment program. The name of the program is PREPARE 2000. This means you will fill out the PREPARE inventory and then participate in the six session program.

Your minister/priest has been trained to use this premarital enrichment program. Thousands of couples have participated in this program. However, research on the effectiveness of the program is lacking. We do not know how much it helps couples improve their relationship. In order to test this, we will be asking you to fill our a few extra forms. First off, you will fill out the PREPARE inventory after you have completed the program. Secondly, you will also fill out an additional instrument called the Dyadic Adjustment Scale before and after the program. Finally, we are interested in what you thought of the premarital program. To get this feedback, we will ask you to fill out a one page questionnaire. We estimate that it will take 45 minutes to complete the PREPARE inventory, five minutes to complete the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and 15 minutes to complete the one page questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this study without penalty. Further, once you volunteer to be in the study, you can refuse to answer any questions or to discontinue your involvement at any time. Please understand that all materials you fill out will remain strictly confidential and your name(s) will be removed from any documents and replaced with a research number.

Participation in this study will not result in any additional costs. The usual cost of scoring the PREPARE inventory is $30. The authors of that instrument agreed to reduce the scoring fee to $10. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale has no cost for scoring. No known adverse effects of filling out the additional forms have been reported or are anticipated.

If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact either:
Joe Hoedel, M.A., (504) 734-5456, or David Imig, Ph.D., (517) 353-3998
You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by signing below:

_____   _____
Female   Male

Appendix D

Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS)

Circle Gender: Male   Female   Couple Research #_____

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

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occ-sionally Agree	Fre-quently Agree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Religious matters	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. Demonstration of affection	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. Making major decisions	____	____	____	____	____	____
4. Sex relations	____	____	____	____	____	____
5. Conventionally (Correct or proper behvaior)	____	____	____	____	____	____
6. Career decisions	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All the Time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occas-ionally	Rarely	Never
7. How often do you discuss/consider divorce, separation or terminating your relationship?	____	____	____	____	____	____
8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	____	____	____	____	____	____
9. Do you ever regret your decision to marry?	____	____	____	____	____	____
10.How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves?"	____	____	____	____	____	____

	Every Day	Almost Every day	Occas-ionally	Rarely	Never
11.Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?	____	____	____	____	____

	Never	Less than Once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
12. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Work together on a project	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Calmly discuss something	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Appendix E

Questionnaires Filled Out by Couples and Clergy

Clergy Name: _____

I.D. #: _____

Questionnaire for Clergy/Counselor

This questionnaire is to allow people who administer the PREPARE 2000 premarital enrichment program to reflect on their experiences with using it. Through this feedback you provide, we hope to improve the program and make it more effective for future couples who participate. Please be as specific and as comprehensive as you can. We thank you in advance for this participation.

Training

When did you go through your first PREPARE training program to get certified?

_____

How many certifiable trainings have you been through regarding PREPARE?

_____

Did any of your trainings discuss the <u>PREPARE 2000</u> feedback sessions developed in 1996?

     A. Yes   B. No

Experience with PREPARE 2000 Premarital Enrichment Program

How long have you been using the PREPARE 2000 premarital enrichment program?

      _____ years   _____ months

Approximately how many couples have you used the PREPARE 2000 premarital enrichment program with?   _____

Not counting the administering of the PREPARE Instrument, how many session do you normally spend with each couple? _____ How long each session? _____

Do you pretty much stick to the premarital program laid out by Olson or do you change the program to fit your style (delete some facets and add others)?

     A. Yes   B. No

While partaking in the study, did you pretty much stick to the premarital program laid out by Olson or did you change the program to fit your style (delete some facets and add others)?

     A. Yes   B. No

1) In order of importance (most to least), what are the three things that you like **best** about the premarital enrichment program of PREPARE 2000?

2) In order of importance, what are the three things that you like **least** about the premarital enrichment program of PREPARE 2000?

3) In order of importance, what three suggestions would you make to **improve** the premarital enrichment program of PREPARE 2000?

4) In order of importance, what parts of the premarital enrichment program do you think make **the biggest impact** with the couples you work with?

Please Circle Your Gender   M   F   Couple Research #_____

Questionnaire for Couples Who Completed PREPARE 2000 Premarital Program
This questionnaire is to allow couples who completed the PREPARE 2000 premarital
enrichment program to reflect on their experiences with using it. Through the feedback
you provide, we hope to improve the program and make it more effective for future
couples who go through the program. Please be as specific and as complete as possible.
Please do not gear your comments toward taking the instrument, i.e. filling the
forms out twice… Rather, we are interested in your comments surrounding the actual
premarital counseling.

1) Before beginning the premarital program, how much were you looking forward to
    participating in this premarital program?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Neutral		Enthusiastic

2) Before beginning the premarital program, how much did you think this would make a
difference in your current and future relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
No difference		No opinion		Big Difference

3) Now that you have completed the program, how glad are you that you went through
the program?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Neutral		Very glad

4) Now that you have completed the program, how much do you think this program
made a difference in your current relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Enough to make it worthwhile		Big difference

5) Now that you have completed the program, how much do you think this program will
improve your future relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Enough to make it worthwhile		Big difference

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1) In order of importance (most to least), what are 3 things that you liked **best** about the premarital enrichment program?

2) In order of importance, what are the 3 things that you liked **least** about the premarital enrichment program?

3) In order of importance, what 3 **suggestions** would you make to **improve** the premarital enrichment program?

4) In order of importance, what parts of the premarital enrichment program do you think will have the **biggest impact** on your marriage?

Appendix F

Six Tables that Compare Couples That Increase Decrease
On a Couple by Couples Basis

Table A-1

PCA Scores for Couples Who Increased in Typology

Ecological Variables	Cpl 40	Cpl 24	Cpl 8	Cpl 10	Cpl 12	Cpl 1	Cpl 2	Cpl 196	Cpl 37	Mean
Intrapersonal Issues	30.5	10	67.5	47.5	60	37.5	42.5	55	52.5	44.8
	30	90	57.5	67.5	67.5	57.5	47.5	62.5	37.5	57.5
Personality Issues	30	10	50	50	50	40	0	40	30	33.3
	10	90	50	80	60	70	30	50	50	54.4
Spiritual Beliefs	60	10	80	60	80	50	40	90	70	60
	50	100	80	50	90	90	30	90	50	70
Leisure Activities	20	20	60	60	70	40	70	60	70	52.2
	60	100	60	90	90	50	60	90	50	72.2
Marriage Expectations	10	0	80	20	40	20	60	30	40	33.3
	0	70	40	50	30	20	70	20	0	33.3
Interpersonal Issues	62.9	25.7	65.7	75.7	74.3	67.1	57.1	55.7	51.4	59.5
	62.9	85.7	70	60	72.9	75.7	62.9	78.6	68.6	70.8
Communication	50	10	50	100	80	70	30	60	80	58.9
	50	90	100	70	70	60	40	80	100	73.3
Conflict Resolution	40	0	80	70	50	60	20	40	10	41.1
	50	80	90	60	70	50	30	60	30	57.8
Children and Parenting	50	30	30	40	80	50	80	50	60	52.2
	40	80	10	40	90	70	90	80	40	60
Couple Closeness	90	40	80	90	90	90	90	100	70	82.2
	90	100	80	90	90	100	80	100	100	92.2
Couple Flexibility	90	10	60	80	90	60	70	30	50	60
	80	100	70	60	90	100	30	80	80	76.7
Role Relationship	60	70	90	80	70	90	70	40	70	71.1
	80	70	70	50	50	80	90	70	60	68.9
Sexual Relationship	60	20	70	70	60	50	40	70	20	51.1
	50	80	70	50	50	70	80	80	70	66.7
External Issues	67.5	22.5	60	52.5	52.5	67.5	45	37.5	22.5	47.5
	60	92.5	67.5	65	40	77.5	52.5	70	32.5	61.9
Family Closeness	70	30	60	80	90	100	60	30	0	57.8
	80	100	70	50	0	100	80	80	10	63.3
Family Flexibility	60	30	40	30	10	20	40	20	20	60
	30	70	70	60	40	80	40	60	0	76.7
Financial Management	80	0	50	10	30	80	20	20	10	33.3
	70	100	60	50	30	50	10	70	40	53.3
Family & Friends	60	30	90	90	80	70	60	80	60	68.9
	60	100	70	100	90	80	80	70	80	81.1
Total Time 1	55.3	20.7	64.7	62	64.7	59.3	50	50.7	44	52.4
Total Time 2	53.3	88.7	66	63.3	62.7	71.3	56	72	50.7	64.9

Table A-2
PCA Scores for Couples Who Decreased in Typology

Ecological Variables	Cpl 6	Cpl 7	Cpl 9	Cpl 11	Cpl 104	Cpl 38	Mean
Intrapersonal Issues	45	82.5	65	60	50	22.5	54.2
	5	32.5	47.5	42.5	50	47.5	37.5
Personality Issues	70	90	90	90	10	30	63.3
	20	20	40	30	0	40	25
Spiritual Beliefs	0	100	60	40	90	30	53.3
	0	20	50	90	100	40	50
Leisure Activities	80	90	90	90	60	10	70
	0	50	80	30	80	70	51.6
Marriage Expectations	30	50	20	20	40	20	30
	0	40	20	20	20	40	23.3
Interpersonal Issues	70	72.9	72.9	72.9	50	58.6	66.2
	8.6	60	54.3	72.9	41.4	64.3	50.3
Communication	60	80	80	90	20	70	66.7
	10	70	30	60	0	70	40
Conflict Resolution	70	60	20	80	20	50	50
	10	20	40	60	20	30	30
Children and Parenting	30	50	60	60	60	70	55
	10	40	30	90	40	60	45
Couple Closeness	100	90	90	80	80	50	81.7
	20	100	90	90	70	100	78.3
Couple Flexibility	90	80	100	80	50	60	76.7
	0	90	60	60	40	80	55
Role Relationship	70	80	90	50	60	80	71.7
	10	50	70	80	60	80	58.3
Sexual Relationship	70	70	70	70	60	30	61.7
	10	50	60	70	60	30	46.7
External Issues	70	52.5	87.5	60	42.5	60	62.1
	5	25	40	80	40	60	41.7
Family Closeness	90	80	100	80	30	60	73.3
	0	20	40	90	30	40	36.7
Family Flexibility	50	20	80	40	50	50	48.3
	0	20	20	70	30	90	38.3
Financial Management	50	20	70	70	40	70	53.3
	0	10	60	80	60	60	45
Family & Friends	90	90	100	50	50	60	73.3
	20	50	40	80	40	50	46.7
Total Pre-Test	**63.3**	**70**	**74.7**	**66**	**48**	**49.3**	**61.9**
Total Post-Test	**7.3**	**43.3**	**48.7**	**66.7**	**43.3**	**58.7**	**44.7**

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Table A-3

Individual Male Scores for Couples Who Increased in Typology

Ecological Variables	Cpl 40	Cpl 24	Cpl 8	Cpl 10	Cpl 12	Cpl 1	Cpl 2	Cpl 196	Cpl 37	Mean
Intrapersonal Issues	37.2	25	58.8	51	59.6	45.8	45.2	57.6	44	47.1
	31.6	85.8	57.2	74.2	61.2	55.6	50.6	52.2	45.6	57.1
Personality Issues	33	10	46	66	54	10	10	39	11	31
	10	80	54	80	56	62	18	39	27	47.3
Spirituality	48	10	59	59	83	80	25	87	48	55.4
	10	91	58	47	95	72	48	73	34	58.7
Leisure Activities	34	34	64	39	47	55	66	91	77	56.3
	72	98	70	88	64	15	72	79	65	69.2
Marriage Expectations	10	10	87	30	45	10	87	10	14	33.7
	10	72	30	68	37	37	69	14	10	38.6
Interpersonal Issues	61.6	21.4	57.9	56	62.3	60.7	52.6	66.7	39.3	53.2
	45.1	76.3	67.1	55.3	66.6	61.9	62.6	57	55.9	60.9
Communication	67	21	56	87	79	41	11	83	66	56.8
	49	79	87	76	73	39	50	62	82	66.3
Conflict Resolution	42	10	70	49	36	26	14	61	10	35.3
	31	82	81	46	49	25	37	26	10	43
Children and Parenting	48	10	26	10	83	69	91	48	47	48
	10	83	25	24	88	77	91	56	45	55.4
Couple Closeness	70	23	68	68	64	71	62	81	43	61.1
	62	81	78	81	64	83	61	75	74	73.2
Couple Flexibility	72	36	60	68	71	80	73	60	40	62.2
	53	79	62	82	75	83	69	60	53	68.4
Role Relationship	79	40	59	61	84	78	71	71	59	66.9
	59	50	59	60	79	90	75	71	55	66.4
Sexual Relationship	53	10	66	49	19	60	46	63	10	41.8
	52	80	78	18	38	36	55	49	72	53.1
External Issues	60.5	42	53.3	46.5	66	58.5	31.8	57.3	41.5	50.8
	53	80.8	64.8	67.5	58.5	63.6	44.3	60	42.3	59.4
Family Closeness	64	52	48	50	62	62	37	62	48	53.9
	65	77	58	52	52	62	63	64	37	58.9
Family Flexibility	61	57	42	40	52	42	58	62	50	51.6
	46	71	76	76	60	52	40	60	22	55.9
Financial Management	86	44	77	44	75	87	20	24	38	55
	76	91	61	69	62	73	29	56	54	63.4
Family & Friends	31	15	46	52	71	43	12	81	30	42.3
	25	84	64	73	60	68	45	60	56	59.4
Total Pre-Test	**53.7**	**27.8**	**53.2**	**48.8**	**58.7**	**55.5**	**45.1**	**59.5**	**41.3**	**49.3**
Total Post-Test	**42.9**	**73.5**	**60.4**	**59.5**	**62.9**	**55.5**	**54.3**	**53.3**	**49.3**	**56.3**

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Table A-4

Individual Male Scores For Couples Who Decreased in Typology

Ecological Variables	Cpl 6	Cpl 7	Cpl 9	Cpl 11	Cpl 104	Cpl 38	Total
Intrapersonal Issues	52.5	75.2	56	52	49.8	20.6	51.1
	26	49.4	44.6	66.2	48.2	39.2	45.6
Personality Issues	75	66	68	64	10	14	49.5
	21	11	34	42	10	21	23.2
Spiritual Beliefs	10	89	29	34	89	13	44
	17	24	43	88	87	17	46
Leisure Activities	78	79	63	78	72	10	63.3
	10	25	64	96	72	57	54
Marriage Expectations	10	82	37	10	24	10	28.8
	30	37	30	10	18	53	29.7
Interpersonal Issues	47.7	63.1	51.8	56	38.3	49.7	51.1
	21.4	41.8	42.3	81.2	31.9	60.9	46.6
Communication	81	61	69	78	10	49	58
	14	63	37	83	10	50	42.8
Conflict Resolution	81	49	10	71	26	17	42.3
	21	17	37	80	11	10	29.3
Children and Parenting	14	56	38	14	63	76	43.5
	10	15	15	81	15	78	35.7
Couple Closeness	85	73	71	71	57	52	68.2
	37	68	64	87	48	72	62.7
Couple Flexibility	77	62	68	60	38	62	61.2
	36	78	62	87	49	80	65.3
Role Relationship	56	61	60	36	17	82	52
	22	40	59	70	36	82	51.5
Sexual Relationship	72	80	47	62	57	10	54.7
	10	12	22	81	54	54	38.8
External Issues	58.5	56.3	60.5	54.3	55.8	54.3	56.6
	38.5	25.3	54.3	86.8	53.5	52	51.7
Family Closeness	50	58	62	60	57	50	56.2
	28	48	62	90	44	26	49.7
Family Flexibility	58	56	56	58	58	56	57
	42	32	61	87	76	77	62.5
Financial Management	49	39	55	75	88	80	64.3
	34	20	56	91	84	80	60.8
Family & Friends	77	72	69	24	20	31	48.8
	10	1	38	79	10	25	27.2
Total Pre-Test	**57.9**	**58.6**	**50.8**	**52.5**	**46.3**	**43.8**	**51.7**
Total Post-Test	**24.6**	**35.4**	**44.1**	**73.2**	**42.4**	**51.7**	**45.2**

Individual Female Scores For Couples Who Increased in Typology

Ecological Variables	Cpl 40	Cpl 24	Cpl 8	Cpl 10	Cpl 12	Cpl 1	Cpl 2	Cpl 196	Cpl 37	Mean
Intrapersonal Issues	65.4	23.3	64.8	54.4	59.2	53.4	53.4	48.4	62.6	53.9
	44.4	87.2	52.8	68.8	55.8	68.8	42.8	58.8	59.8	59.9
Personality Issues	24	10	25	33	29	52	37	28	54	32.4
	37	86	24	49	45	72	18	54	60	49.4
Spiritual Beliefs	64	17	70	38	83	42	16	88	77	55
	34	91	54	69	87	91	10	86	73	66.1
Leisure Activities	57	10	84	98	79	55	71	47	71	63.5
	49	98	39	96	79	88	57	70	52	69.8
Marriage Expectations	10	18	99	30	45	30	60	10	37	37.7
	14	78	86	61	18	10	91	10	45	45.9
Interpersonal Issues	60.7	23.7	48.1	81.4	52	72.3	72.3	58.3	58.4	58.6
	62.1	81.1	57.6	61.3	56.4	79.4	53.3	67.4	73.3	65.8
Communication	75	10	43	87	67	85	84	66	86	67
	58	85	87	66	55	82	38	81	86	70.9
Conflict Resolution	35	10	63	87	49	69	47	26	30	46.2
	40	82	72	53	50	80	10	65	71	58.1
Children and Parenting	47	10	15	31	48	24	83	62	69	43.2
	67	78	10	62	72	61	90	62	47	61
Couple Closeness	77	23	62	77	68	90	78	77	44	66.2
	61	87	62	66	81	85	64	79	80	73.9
Couple Flexibility	74	31	56	73	60	94	68	54	40	61.1
	79	83	62	75	78	79	32	60	82	70
Role Relationship	59	50	79	74	50	84	78	45	90	67.7
	58	70	61	59	40	88	71	56	78	64.6
Sexual Relationship	58	32	19	82	22	60	68	78	50	52.1
	72	83	49	48	19	81	68	69	69	62
External Issues	68.5	65	68.5	57.5	50.8	67.5	63.5	54	27.5	58.1
	60.8	75.8	53.3	69.5	48.8	74.5	63.8	58.3	37	60.2
Family Closeness	64	88	66	64	38	75	87	52	18	61.3
	61	58	64	58	18	79	85	62	18	55.9
Family Flexibility	76	76	60	81	54	28	58	60	18	56.8
	44	71	58	61	58	52	75	58	15	54.7
Financial Management	91	10	62	10	44	91	28	28	10	41.6
	74	92	71	79	51	81	10	55	44	61.9
Family & Friends	43	10	86	75	67	77	81	76	65	64.4
	64	86	20	80	68	86	85	58	71	68.7
Total Pre-Test	58	26.4	52.9	61.6	50	65.3	64.2	51.6	52.1	53.6
Total Post-Test	55.6	76	50.7	61.6	54.3	70.3	52.6	58.6	60	60

Table A-6

Individual Female Scores For Couples Who Decreased in Typology

Ecological Variables	Cpl 6	Cpl 7	Cpl 9	Cpl 11	Cpl 104	Cpl 38	Mean
Intrapersonal Issues	60	78.6	71	51.8	57.4	64	63.8
	56.2	55.2	58.8	35.6	57.4	71.6	55.8
Personality Issues	66	61	76	55	10	55	53.8
	50	44	33	14	10	61	35.3
Spiritual Beliefs	24	87	68	48	89	77	65.5
	24	38	69	69	97	69	61
Leisure Activities	88	94	97	79	83	83	87.3
	79	88	96	10	66	92	71.8
Marriage Expectations	61	95	19	17	45	45	47
	76	45	37	24	76	82	56.7
Interpersonal Issues	53.1	67.1	80.6	60.7	47	67.7	62.7
	58.3	58.9	50.6	57.9	46.4	78	58.4
Communication	61	84	78	77	21	88	68.2
	55	85	30	42	10	86	51.3
Conflict Resolution	42	67	75	49	10	72	52.5
	50	31	53	36	10	78	43
Children and Parenting	19	56	82	56	76	76	60.8
	32	40	39	81	65	88	57.5
Couple Closeness	75	75	85	73	79	75	77
	71	93	71	68	80	79	77
Couple Flexibility	68	60	81	62	56	71	66.3
	80	75	54	62	37	85	65.5
Role Relationship	50	71	84	59	31	61	59.3
	56	50	59	59	45	89	59.7
Sexual Relationship	57	57	79	49	56	31	54.8
	64	38	48	57	78	41	54.3
External Issues	63.5	44.5	78.8	55	17.3	71.3	55.1
	60.5	48.3	44.5	70.5	45.3	74.5	57.3
Family Closeness	68	38	75	62	24	60	36.3
	64	27	37	71	34	48	46.8
Family Flexibility	58	39	69	58	55	69	58
	80	58	28	61	40	85	58.7
Financial Management	61	28	87	76	39	79	61.7
	45	24	83	90	62	87	65.2
Family & Friends	67	73	84	24	31	77	39.6
	53	84	30	60	45	78	58.3
Total Pre-Test	**52.4**	**60.7**	**71.9**	**53.3**	**43**	**64.2**	**57.6**
Total Post-Test	**58.2**	**53.4**	**48.9**	**51.4**	**50**	**70.8**	**55.5**

Appendix G

Couples Responses Verbatim

Qualitative Feedback from Couples

A) *In order of importance (most to least), what are the three things that you like **best** about the premarital enrichment program of PREPARE 2000?*

M1's) -It made our relationship better.
-Talking to the pastor
-We talked more often.
-The financial advice
-Program on budgeting and finances
-Organization of relationship issues
-Conflict resolution
-Brought issues to the table that had not been discussed
-The materials
-Spiritual guidance
-Discovering things about my bride-to-be
-Finding our differences
-It opened our eyes to things that we really didn't discuss.
-Discussing important issues
-Sitting down and talking things out
-Being able to have both of us open up and talk about certain issues
-I really like the information given
-Made me think about things and talk about things that I normally would not
-The discussions with the pastor about normalcy
-Learning about myself
-Helped me understand my wife better
-Learning new ways to deal with problems
-The method of taking care of problems

M2's) -It pointed out our strengths and weaknesses.
-Sharing our feelings
-We spent more time together.
-Pastor Ben
-Comparative percentages of male/female
-Marital/compatibility inventory
-Financial planning
-Hearing that other couples had similar problems
-The recommended reading
-Awareness of divorce/typical problematic areas
-Feedback discussions with priest
-Discussing our differences
-It forced us to open up and share our feelings.
-Strategies for working through tough times

-Taking a different look at our love
-Creating a road map for the future
-I liked the person giving the program, very friendly
-It made us talk about important issues outside of counseling
-Talking about the inventory results
-Learning about and understanding my partner
-Helped bring us closer together
-Finding out new things about my partner
-Talking about things you don't realize will change

M3's) -It pointed out where I was on the family scale.
-Spending time with my future wife
-The communication
-Items to be concerned about
-The exchange of ideas
-The financial advice
-The topics for discussion
-Suggestions for maintaining a long, healthy and prosperous marriage
-The questionnaire made me explore my feelings.
-Having a third person there to lead as we talked about our differences
-It affirmed our belief that we have a good foundation for marriage.
-Learning more about each other
-Taking another look at finances
-I really enjoyed the atmosphere of the program.
-Allowed us to openly express our ideas without problems
-The discussion of money
-Thinking and planning for the future
-Helped us to find time to spend together
-Learning new ways to deal with Sarah's dad

F1's) -The communication skills that I learned with my partner
-Learning new ways to think about my mate
-We talked more often.
-The materials
-Financial meeting
-Deeper levels of discussion
-Relaxed atmosphere
-The discussion about conflict resolution
-The prepare survey and discussion one-to-one regarding results and
  planning for the future
-The prepare test and seeing the results
-Discussing differences/similarities of answers of major aspects of
  relationship/future
-It pointed out areas to work on.

F2's) -Discussion of issues with the pastor
-Learning new ideas on how to settle our problems
-We spent more time with each other.
-The tests
-Prepare tests and results
-Objective inventory of compatibility
-Financial planning
-Financial advisement
-The tools and education for each area which help us as a couple to plan
  together and to understand our individual perceptions/ideas.
-The budgeting/financial advise
-Homework – working on some of the strengthening exercises
-It opened up new things about my partner.
-It encouraged conversation.
-Looking a t good ways to handle conflict resolution
-Working on a budget
-Active listening
-Learning compromise
-Discussing all aspects of marriage – good and bad.
-Inventory
-Made me stop and think about some things that I didn't before.
-Helped us really think about certain issues
-Learning new things
-Goals

F3's) -Exercises
-I enjoyed the environment and the teacher.
-The teacher
-The financial advise
-Testimony on videotapes (Especially last session)
-Prepare questionnaire and discussion

-The financial planning education
-Watching the video to learn suggestions from other married couples
-It brought up to surface many issues we have not discussed yet. Therefore,
  we talked about those things.
-It pointed out areas of marriage that I might have been unfamiliar with.
-It helped us to see the strengths and possible weaknesses in our
  relationship.
-Finding out our strengths and weaknesses
-Learning where we need to grow as a couple
-Gave us a better understanding of why and how we are
-Talking with pastor about the results of the inventory
-Got us involved in

looking at who we are and what kind of people we are
and how we fit together
-Mentally, it helped us understand each other's views better.
-Opening up to each other
-Budget

B) *In order of importance, what are the three things that you like least about the premarital enrichment program of PREPARE 2000?*

M1's) -There was too much reading.
-Too many of the same questions were asked
-It was too long. One weekend would be better than 5 weeks
-Doing it outside of class
-Marriage myths
-It was a very negative program. I received a long list of pitfalls, can't do's
and consequences.
-The questionnaire was at times redundant.
-Driving to Midland to attend the meetings
-Hard to answer scantron questions
-Finding times to get together
-Did not talk about spiritual things at all
-The discussion of money
-Short time span to meet
-The tests
-The wording on the questions

M2's) -There were too many tests.
-Too unoffensive
-The lack of personal expert evaluation
-The questionnaire was sometimes vague.
-We didn't always dig deeply into things.
-Rushed through material
-Taking the premarital test
-Figuring out my spots in my life that I need to work on.
-All of the meetings

M3's) -There were no snacks during sessions.
-The lack of time to review the material.
-The questionnaire was long.
-Too short
-The family tree

F1's) -Time frame; it was too much too close to the wedding.

-There were too many tests.
    -The test was too long.
    -Not being able to take the test results home
    -More time should be given to couples for evaluation of their test results.
    -It was very repetitive.
    -Having to give yes or no answers to ambiguous questions
    -Hard at times to discuss personal disagreements
    -Budget planning
    -Some questions were tough to answer yes or no.
    -Disagreeing
    -Too time consuming

F2's)   -Be more specific on questions
    -Only skimmed over certain subjects like raising family, finances,e tc.
    -Number of times we came
    -It's too much like school

F3's)   -The test
    -The wording on questions was confusing at times.

C) In order of importance, what three suggestions would you make to improve the premarital enrichment program of PREPARE 2000?

M1's)   -Make the questions clearer
    -Don't repeat the questions
    -Be more to the point
    -Have a counselor review the answers with couples for both times
     completing.
    -More class time for questionnaire results
    -Having real couples share their marital experiences
    -A new instructor with a positive view on marriage
    -More concise questionnaire
    -Make the program more intensive/more in depth
    -Maybe make it longer and more in depth
    -Spend more time on each topic
    -More counseling time
    -Have the people give more ideas/situations and then talk about them
    -Have teachers like ours – Pastor Metcalf
    -Less tests

M2's)   -Make the questions easier to understand
    -Have a weekend seminar – too much downtime with current format.
    -Complete questionnaire during class instead

-More class time (hands on) for financial planning
  -Have snacks and juice available
  -Have more homework assignments
  -Stress the importance of communication over and over
  -Attack more problems the couple might have
  -Talk about more spiritual things
  - Less visits

M3's) -Have snacks available
  -More time for interaction
  -Ability to ask for clarification on some questions while taking the test
  -Give direction for next step in financial planning – continued ed.
  -The results from the survey may cause unnecessary grief – possible way to
    avoid that.
  -Make the couple feel more at home
  -Reassure the couple that no matter what happens, this is just going to help
    them down the road.
  -Shorter classes

F1's) -Stretch out the program more and have it not so close to the ceremony
  -Have the teacher go over the entire test with the couples.
  -Don't repeat the questions.
  -Possibly make it longer
  -Call more attention to notebook and how to follow along in it.
  -More time and attention given to financial matters.
  -Results from survey may cause unnecessary concerns for some couples.
    To avoid that I suggest beginning and ending the session with an
    emphasis on positive points about relationship.
  -Change the family life questions to include adult family life. I think that is
    as important as understanding the way we were raised.
  -Not to have so many questions on children
  -Maybe get couples together to talk to married couples.
  -Perhaps spend more time with couples
  -Go more in depth
  -Make it more in depth
  -Provide a list of books for couples to help them with problems after the
    program – topics like money, family, etc.
  -Shorter test
  -It should be said that you can have a good relationship without the
    involvement of the church.

F2's) -More stress on the biblical basis of the program
  -Tie the bible and specific verses into class more

-Maybe to touch base on what place in-laws should have in your new
  married life.
-Would like to hear more about what works in a marriage
-Having a chance to go through test questions together with counselor
-Work more on family of origin
-Need to set more time for discussion
-Longer sessions, less times

F3's) -Require at least one session where couples are paired with "mature" or
          older long married couples to discuss some of the challenges of marriage.
        -Ideas to open up discussions on areas that might be problem areas.

**D) In order of importance, what parts of the premarital enrichment program do
you think will have the biggest impact on your marriage?**

M1's) -The counseling we received after identifying the weak areas.
          -The goal setting portion
          -We will talk more and spend more time together.
          -The financial section
          -Gave me confidence in my relationship because of high scores in
           communication, conflict resolution and spiritual beliefs
          -The budgeting information
          -Financial management
          -It has prepared me for the unexpected.
          -Practical applications of communication, commitment and flexibility
          -Learning each others growth areas
          -How to better communicate about differences
          -The way it opened our eyes to financial and family planning matters.
          -Conflict resolution
          -Finances
          -Conflict resolution
          -Worksheets
          -Information given to help us through our problems will make a big
           difference.
          -It will help us talk and communicate better.
          -The reinforcement that certain things are normal.
          -I learned a lot about myself and I thought of a few things I could change
           too.
          -Leisure time
          -Talking to the minister about new ways to deal with things

M2's) -The financial portion
-The homework assignment
-The communication skills
-Understanding that our weaknesses, martial expectations and sexual
expectations are not problems, just areas we must pay special attention to.
-Learning each others strength areas
-Not to walk away when I have a difference with my partner
-The way it made me realize that we need to work to maintain a good
marriage.
-Active listening
-Communication
-Recreational interests

M3's) -Watching middle issues like financial management
-Not to be quiet of say nothing when my partner and I have a difference

F1's) -Communication skills
-Helping us work through our disagreements
-We will talk more.
-The videos
-The things that I learned about my relationship through the Prepare test
-The financial advice
-The financial inventory/planning portion
-Realization of the weaknesses in our relationship, i.e. conflict resolution,
communication
-The discussion of results of the survey – seeing where we differed and
having tools and education to plan for addressing our differences (growth
areas) and celebrating our strengths.
-The advice/input from the video about how to understand each other when
there is a conflict.
-Communication skills
-I think that we may be able to recognize certain areas that might cause small
issues in our future together.
-Talking about our expectations
-Having a plan for resolving conflict and understanding what works best
-Resolving conflict
-Communication steps
-Active listening
-The discussion we had with our pastor about marriage and divorce. I was
able to forgive myself and embrace my wonderful new relationship.
-The way Pastor Metcalf talked to us and made us feel comfortable and
welcome- it made a big difference.
-The test that showed our weaknesses will help us with working on those

areas.
-The discussions we had and the things I learned.
-Help figure out our goals and budget for those goals

F2's) -Having the materials to refer to
-The homework assignment
-The communications skills and conflict styles
-Financial portion
-Ability to build bridges
-Expectations
-Finding out what we want more/less/same of from each other
-The suggestion of sharing goals for the future and acting on them
-Active listening
-Conflict resolution
-Knowing that most people face the same things in life and that if you work
  together, you can get through it.
-We can figure out common goals to work towards.

F3's)

-The stress on religion and Christ in a centered marriage
-Budgeting properly
-Understanding the ways my partner feels about me and my weaknesses
-Handling finances   .
-Better understanding of why and who we are

Appendix H

Clergy Responses Verbatim

Qualitative Feedback from Clergy

C) *In order of importance (most to least), what are the three things that you like best about the premarital enrichment program of PREPARE 2000?*

1's) -It forces couples to work on communication skills.
-It is systematic and thorough.
-The tools for communication
-Practice sessions on assertiveness/active listening and conflict resolution
-Gives an orderly way to address matters
-Couple communication exercises

2's) -It puts a big emphasis on skills.
-It identifies strengths and growth areas (otherwise they would think that everything is fine).
-The tools for quick survey of strengths and growth areas
-Ability to zero in on a couple's strengths and work areas
-Helps me to deal with what's real to them
-Couple and family map

3's) -It reveals their relationship style and dynamics.
-It is reasonably objective.
-The goal setting materials
-It's reputation for face validity, statistical validity, and readability helped me to introduce it with confidence and exuberance.
-I have the support of an authority.
-Conflict resolution exercise

D) *In order of importance, what are the three things that you like least about the premarital enrichment program of PREPARE 2000?*

1's) -It doesn't touch on unresolved anger issues coming from childhood situations.
-The financial section is too brief. More materials are needed.
-I would encourage more questions related to financial goals.
-I wish there was advanced training offered in counseling with Prepare/Enrich.

2's) -The problem solving/conflict resolution section is too simplistic.
-The conflict resolution steps are too lengthy.

3's) -Assertiveness needs clarification so not to be confused with "neediness" or other less mature motivations.

*C) In order of importance, what three suggestions would you make to **improve** the premarital enrichment program of PREPARE 2000?*

1's) -Increase the detail of the spiritual category for couples who are born-again Christians.
-Personality relating style – questions/survey.
-I have used a genogram with couples. Maybe something like this could be added.

2's) -Evaluations on marriage expectations

3's) -More tools to deal with sexual issues

*E) In order of importance, what parts of the premarital enrichment program do you think make the **biggest impact** with the couples you work with?*

1's) -The identification of strength and growth areas
-Practical skills training – listening and conflict resolution
-Helps to perceive/accept what really is and gives more honesty to dealing with these things.
-Communication
-Communication exercises

2's) -Finances
-Time in counseling to talk to each other
-Conflict resolution

3's) -Re-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses
-Resources for continued growth

Appendix I

Ottawa County Community Marriage Statement

Ottawa County Community Marriage Statement

Preamble

As a community we recognize that our entire society benefits profoundly from families founded on healthy, stable marriages. Healthy marriages are understood to be those based upon a deep respect and love between partners, consistently engaged in and expressed through a committed relationship.

We believe in the importance of the family. Children who have been nurtured in healthy families have more resources available to them to develop the values of kindness, compassion, respect, commitment and self-discipline. Children raised in such environments are more likely to establish healthy marriages and families of their own. With these resources our children are at lower risk of delinquency, substance abuse, truancy, dropout, teenage pregnancy, domestic violence and are less likely to be afflicted by poverty.

The objective is to empower couples to form healthy, lifelong marriages with the resulting benefits to the family and the community at large. We propose the adoption of this community marriage statement – an agreed upon set of guidelines for premarital preparation and community support for marriage.

The Statement

The community will encourage engaged couples to allow sufficient time before their marriage to engage in an intentional process of marital preparation designed to enhance relationship skills, foster mutual respect and address domestic violence issues. Such preparation is to include the use of a premarital inventory and guided counseling. Couples benefit from marriage preparation by gaining a greater understanding of themselves and their partner. Couples who engage in marital preparation will enter marriage with the knowledge that there are supportive and skilled helpers in our community. The hope is that marital preparation will increase the possibility that couples will seek successful and timely intervention in the time of crisis.

Recommendations

We invite and challenge all member of our community to mutually support and encourage the building of healthy families. We hope to heighten our capacity as an entire community to support and strengthen couples and families through these proposed action steps:

- Promote fidelity in marriage and responsible human relationships that respect personal boundaries.
- Support the development of curricular or extra-curricular offerings through the area school systems in "Marriage and the Family."
- Encourage clergy, health care professionals, counselors and judicial leaders to promote enrichment opportunities for marriages and families and to support intervention services for families in distress.
- Encourage congregations and their staff to train married couples to serve as mentors to those who are engaged, newlywed or experiencing distress.
- Encourage churches and civic organizations to cooperate by sharing resources in creating a positive climate in which all marriages and families are helped to succeed.
- Urge each of us to examine within our vocations, ways in which current pollicies and practices may unwittingly undermine marriage formation and stability.
- Urge each of us to implement changes in our network of relationships that will effectively support healthy marriages and families.

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