SOCIAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION:
WHAT VISUALIZATION AND IMAGERY SHOW US ABOUT
PEOPLE RESOLVING COMMON SOCIAL CONFLICT

A Thesis submitted to Southern Utah University
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Master of Arts in Professional Communication

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Approval Page

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of Humanities and Social Science, have examined the thesis, project, or internship entitled:

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Presented by Shaun D Lindsay,
A candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in Professional Communication, and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Abstract

Social Conflict Resolution:
What Visualization and Imagery Show Us About
People Resolving Common Social Conflict

Shaun D Lindsay

Dr. Brian L. Heuett: Thesis Supervisor

Many times anxieties exist from communicating with another individual. Visualization has been used in many professional situations (ie. sports, music, the medical field) to help with performance or other positive gain. This study explores the possibility of a relationship between communication apprehension (CA) and individuals imagining themselves resolving a common social conflict. Results suggest that analysis provided significant evidence that the majority of participants with low CA tend to display a more positive image when imagining themselves resolving a conflict, whereas participants with higher levels of CA tend to display a more negative image in resolving conflict. Analysis of direction, trait, intensity, and space of the drawings are discussed further. Results and discussion are found in the body of the paper. Limitations and future research will be discussed.

Chapter I

Introduction

Adequate and continual communication is fundamental to the development, and preservation of society. The ability to communicate well has been associated with success, however a lack of communication can inhibit success (McCroskey, 1984; Richmond, 1984). Although effective communication is important, many times people are faced with anxiety when approached with the opportunity to communicate with others.

Anxiety is a state of heightened senses and awareness. Research shows that people have a physiological response to anxiety (Kelly, Brown, & Shaffer, 1970). When people experience anxiety they become attentive, scanning the environment for the source causing the anxiety and act to prevent the source from causing further anxiety (Neborsky, R., & Lewis, S., 2011). People experience anxiety everyday. James C. McCroskey argues that a person sets certain expectations about a specific behavior in communication. When these expectations are not met, or when they are inappropriate to the situation, new expectations need to be found. If "no appropriate expectation can be found then anxiety is produced" (McCroskey, 1984, p. 27).

Early civilizations experienced anxiety due to threats from severe weather conditions, wild animals, disease, and other overwhelming circumstances. A more modern occurrence where a large amount of anxiety was experienced in the United States, and around the world, was the early 1900's during the Great Depression as large financial loss, hunger, and even death was experienced. Anxiety can also arise from less catastrophic circumstances, such as the realization that one is alone in an unfamiliar environment.

Anxiety can affect people differently. During this state of anxiety and heightened awareness, people may behave appropriate to the situation, however some may try to eliminate the anxiety and act inappropriately (Bults, Beaujean, de Zwart, Kok, van Empelen, van

Steenbergen, & Voeten, 2011; Compton, Dainer-Best, Fineman, Freedman, Mutso & Rohwer, 2010; Neborsky, R., & Lewis, S. 2011). Although many societies, such as those in larger cities, are not affected by threats of wild animals, and widespread diseases as significantly as past generations, some research suggests that anxiety can cause intrapersonal, and social disturbances which can cause an individual to have much the same fears and worries (Bates, 1971; Bernstein & Allen, 1969; Braun & Reynolds, 1969; Sheen, 2008; Vevea, Pearson, Child & Semlak,2009). Just as anxiety from natural disasters is not subject to only one culture, social anxiety is also global in its reach, and can affect many different cultures (Chaleby, 1987; Hansford & Hattie, 1982; Heuett, Ayres, & Manvi,1999; Ishiyama, 1984; Karno et al., 1989).

Leary and Kowalski (1995) stated:

Feelings of discomfort in social encounters are so common that we typically don't even stop to ask ourselves the most basic question about them: What is so scary about certain social situations that people often feel uncomfortable when in them? We can easily understand why people are sometimes afraid of threats to their physical well-being…But why are we afraid of perfectly ordinary people in otherwise normal interactions? (p. 3)

Anxiety can be driven from many aspects during social interactions. These can include, but are not limited to, the number of people present in the environment (Latane & Harkins, 1976; Zimbardo, 1977), levels of self-awareness (Leary, 1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990), or seeking approval and acceptance from external sources (Berger, Levin, Jacobsen & Milham, 1977; Crowne & Marlowe, 1964; Friend & Gilbert, 1973; Watson & Friend, 1969).

One social activity that creates a great deal of anxiety for many people involves public speaking. While many researchers have addressed anxiety associated with activities such as speaking in public (Kelly, Brown, & Shaffer, 1970; Neborsky, R., & Lewis, S., 2011) some people identify public speaking as one of the activities they fear most (Wallechinsky, Wallace, &

Wallace, 1977; Powell, 2004). One comedic artist addressed the anxiety one feels when speaking

publicly by stating, "According to most studies, people's number-one fear is public speaking.

Number two is death. Death is number two! Now, this means to the average person, if you have

to go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy" (Seinfeld, 1993).

So, why does one feel this anxiety when speaking with others? Is it only present when

speaking to someone face-to-face? Is there more anxiety associated with the anticipation of

speaking, or the actual act of speaking with another person? While addressing these questions,

the following will be discussed in more detail: Communication apprehension – including trait

and state apprehension.

As public speaking, and other forms of communication, can cause a great deal of anxiety,

this paper will discuss the apprehensions one can feel while participating in communication. A

review of Communication Apprehension will be discussed as well as mediation and conflict

resolution. More specifically, this paper will look to see if there is a relationship between

Communication Apprehension and an individual resolving a conflict. The study of

Communication Apprehension has been addressed and researched in the area of public speaking,

however this will offer a new look into conflict resolution.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Communication Apprehension

Communication Apprehension (CA) is "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977a, 1978). Other publications revealed a slight modification to this original definition. Research regarding CA and public speaking has been studied under multiple terms including speech anxiety (Ayres & Hopf, 1993), audience anxiety (Daly & Buss, 1984) and speech fright (Leria, 1956). Though there are many avenues of research that seem to associate with the CA definition, CA will be the term most widely used through this study.

CA has been studied for decades, with many tools to test for variable levels of apprehension, however people still have high levels of anxiety when communicating. McCroskey (1970) introduced the construct and viewed CA as "a broadly based anxiety related to the oral communication." While McCroskey first addressed CA as an oral anxiety, Daly and Miller (1975) found that other forms of communication including writing and singing also held some level of anxiety. The latter was found to hold lower levels of correlation when compared with CA measures. While research progressed, expanding the definition of CA past that of oral communication, McCroskey stressed that research was originally conducted to look primarily at oral communication. (McCroskey, 1970, 1978, 1982).

Impact.

With a brief knowledge of CA, one might begin to wonder what affects CA has upon the communicator. Richmond (1984) addresses some of the impact an individual might experience from high CA opposed to those with lower CA. Some of these experiences include relationships, educational situations, and occupational settings.

For example, in dating situations those with low levels of CA were found to have "over twice as many dates in a given time period as do high communication apprehensives… In other words, the high apprehensive will find someone and 'hang on for dear life'" (Richmond, 1984, p. 146). It also appears that people with high CA tend to be much more loyal in a relationship, and feel much more impact in the loss of a relationship. Prisbell (1982) found a possible explanation for apprehensiveness in a relationship; those that exhibited high levels of social anxieties, such as high CA, felt less physically attractive opposed to those with lower levels. Clearly, this could have a substantial affect on any intimate, platonic, or other social relationship.

As social dating may bring anxiety to an individual, the commitment of marriage can manifest anxieties in an individual. Although there was not a pattern with those with low CA, Richmond (1984) found that high CA led to an early pursuit of marriage. In fact it was discovered that over half of all college graduates studied ranging from age 23 to 64 married within their first year after graduation. This complements the notion that when a high apprehensive finds a significant other, the goal is to 'hang on for dear life'.

Contrasting individuals with high CA, to those with low CA, Richmond (1984) states, "Low communication apprehensives find it easier to reestablish social relationships and not overly concerned that one may terminate – there will always be another (p. 148). In other words, it could be assumed that those with low CA are much less concerned with the idea of loosing a relationship and joining the dating scene as they can cope much better in social situations.

In the framework of education, there has been a large amount of research conducted to link CA and the classroom (Chory & McCroskey, 1999; Kearney & McCroskey, 1980; McCroskey, 1977b; McCroskey, 1980; McCroskey & Daly, 1976; McCroskey & Sheahan, 1978; Richmond, 1984) High CA can influence a student a great deal. Some examples include where a

student sits in a classroom, the amount and type of discussion they volunteer in a class setting or small group setting, and the class types in which they enroll.

Richmond (1984) found that, as most of the teacher's attention is directed to the front and center of a classroom, students with high CA levels tend to orient themselves toward the back and sides of the classroom. By doing so, they remove themselves from the focus of possible discussion. Research indicates that while sitting in a small group setting, "people with high CA will carefully avoid sitting in either of the end seats or the middle seats, while people with low CA will strive to obtain those seats" (Richmond, 1984, p. 152). By doing so, individuals with high CA have once again decreased the possibility that they will be noticed and thereby decrease the possibility of being drawn into discussion.

Similar to these findings, McCroskey and McVetta (1978) found that although there are many different formations students may sit in, the most common are traditional, horseshoe, and modular. Traditional involves students sitting in straight rows, from the front of the room to the back, while the teacher is in the front of the room. Horseshoe formation involves students seated as a horseshoe shape with the arch cresting at the back of the room. Modular seating is a formation that has groups of students sitting around tables, possibly 4-6 students to a table. In each of these formations there are different levels of communication demands for students. McCroskey and McVetta found that the majority of students prefer the traditional, less interactive seating for required classes. However students chose the horseshoe and modular seating arrangements for the elective classes. "Taken together these findings suggest that students are aware of both their own desired level of participation and the participation demands and opportunities of different classroom arrangements, and they desire arrangements compatible with their desire (or lack of desire) for participation" (McCroskey and McVetta, 1978, p. 110).

The impact to the occupational field, for someone with high CA, can be devastating. Though it would stand to reason that someone with high CA would attempt to avoid an occupation with high communication occurrences, it may not place the individual in the best financial situation.

Richmond (1984) found that those that have high CA tend to choose occupations that have low occurrences of communication with others; however these can also be the lower status, lower paying occupations. Individuals with lower levels of CA may obtain jobs with higher levels of communication occurrences. By contrast, these are often the higher paid, higher status occupations. It was also suggested that those with high CA have a lower job satisfaction, a lower rate of being advanced, and a higher rate of leaving the job or being dismissed. Although less communication may be acceptable in the mind of the individual with high CA, it seems inevitable that communication will occur in any given occupation.

Measurements.

Many treatments have been designed and implemented in an effort to intervene and reduce the negative impact of anxiety related to communication. Some of these coping treatments include systematic desensitization (Wolpe, 1958), skills training (Kelly, 1997) cognitive modification (Ellis, 1962) and visualization (Ayres & Hopf, 1985). These have all shown to be productive in decreasing the amounts of anxiety in individuals. As these coping treatments have important significance and have been shown to provide strength to many individuals with CA, a researcher should know the amount of anxiety a participant experiences. The following will expound briefly upon measurements that may be used to help examine levels of CA.

McCroskey (1984) suggests in early studies of CA, the focus was placed upon the generalized anxiety. This was often referred to as 'stage fright'. He explains there are three main

methods of measurement initially used in the field of communication to rate levels of

communication anxiety, (observer based, physiological arousal, and self report) which are still

practiced methods. Henning (1935) developed observer based research, Redding (1936)

incorporated the use of physiological arousal to measure communication anxiety, and Lomas

(1934) focused on self-report measures. Gilkinson (1942) also conducted research that included

self-report measures. He developed the Personal Report of Confidence as a Speaker (PRCS),

which would prove to lead the way to other developments. The PRCS was used as a

measurement of trait-like anxiety.

Much like the original PRCS, Paul (1966) developed a more precise, shorter version,

however both tests showed very good reliability. McCroskey (1970) developed the Personal

Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) to give a more precise measure. Unlike the true and

false versions produced earlier, the PRPSA incorporated a 34-item Likert-type scale. McCroskey

(1984) stated that, "It is essentially equivalent to, not superior to, the PRCS. It might be preferred

to the PRCS if the short form (17-item) is used when length of measurement is a problem" (p.

90).

After the development of initial measurements, McCroskey went on to develop other

tests that could be used as time, length, and specificity of measurement allowed. [These included

the PRCA 20-item (McCroskey, 1970), 10-item (McCroskey, 1978), 25-item (McCroskey,

1978), and the 24-item (McCroskey, 1982)]. These measurements produced substantial results

with regard to reliability. These measurements are focused on testing trait-like CA. This paper

will focus on trait CA, state CA, willingness to communicate, and self-perceived communication

competence.

Trait CA.

Buss (1984) proposed that there is an inherited component to shyness. Thus far, there is no known 'fact' that this is the case; however there seems to be a tendency toward an inheritance of these traits. Buss concludes, "There may be three inherited tendencies that predispose children to become shy: fearfulness, unsociability, and unattractiveness."

McCroskey (1984) states:

Throughout the social sciences only two major explanations of the differential traitlike behaviors of individuals hold sway: heredity and environment. Simply put, we can be born with it or we can learn it…Although most early writers discounted out of hand the notion of heredity as a cause of traitlike CA, recent writers have grudgingly acknowledged that there indeed may be a hereditary contribution. Although no one has yet argued that there is a "CA gene," the work of social biologists, particularly their research with twins, has provided compelling evidence that something other than environmentally based learning is having an impact on human behavior tendencies (p. 23).

Richmond (1980) addresses some of these findings. In a study of multiple adult twins, it was found that those that were identical twins, developing from the same egg being identical biologically, had more similar social traits shortly after birth. In comparison, the sets of fraternal twins, developing from separate eggs, had fewer social traits in common compared to the identical twins.

As the question of inherited traits opposed to completely environmental, learned behavior has continued for many years, research has provided at least some suggestion that there may be an inherited factor in the development of the anxieties one has toward communication.

Daly and Stafford (1984) state that as physical characteristics of an individual have an affect upon the apprehension levels, and physical characteristics also have a genetic base; therefore there may be a heredity role in the development of CA development. Although there could be a link between this heredity and CA, Daly and Stafford suggest that the heredity's affect toward CA is relatively small compared to other contributing factors. Some of these factors include personality differences, social perceptions one might have, and behavioral influences.

State CA.

State CA, also known as situational CA (McCroskey, 1984) involves much more of the communicator's environment. Buss (1980) gives credit to the following as major contributors of state CA: Novelty, formality, subordinate status, conspicuousness, unfamiliarity, dissimilarity, and degree of attention. As each of these communication elements are corrected, there should be a decrease in CA levels. For example, as someone decreases the feelings of unfamiliarity in a new environment through learning and understanding, the levels of apprehension that has been affected by the unfamiliarity should subside.

McCroskey (1984) reviews these seven contributors in greater detail. He contributes the feeling, or situation of being conspicuous may increase state CA more than any other factor. He states:

Probably nothing can increase CA more than being conspicuous in one's environment. Giving a public speech is a prime example of being conspicuous. So is standing up to make a comment in a meeting or classroom. Similarly, being the new person in a social setting or meeting a new person can make a person feel conspicuous. Generally, the more conspicuous people feel, the more CA they are likely to experience (p. 25).

Daly and Stafford (1984) suggest that development of State CA has a small component of genetic disposition, however they explain that the anxiety one feels during a communicative

interaction also derives from the reinforcement one receives, the skills that are, or are not, developed, and the modeling one may experience in developing their own strengths or aversions to communication.

The Situational Communication Apprehension Measure (SCAM; Richmond, 1978) was developed to measure the emotions one feels while communicating in a given context. For example, when someone is speaking with a supervisor they may feel such things as fear or confidence depending on the interaction that took place. This instrument consists of 20 items, which describe the feelings one had the last time they were in the given situation. The measurement can be used for any situation; therefore it is up to the researcher to decide the event to be studied. It is suggested the time that had passed between the event and the report during the research may affect the measurements validity.

Individuals Resolving Common Social Conflicts

At this point, an understanding of CA, including trait and state measurements, has been established; however individuals may be faced with multiple conflicts through the day, which may induce some CA. These can include family disputes, roommate disputes, or an argument as simplistic as whose turn it is to take out the garbage. These conflicts may not be so complicated as to warrant the skills of a trained mediator; however they may still be a hindrance to the flow of communication.

Sillars (1980) finds that there are major elements that are involved while resolving a conflict. "People choose conflict strategies based on attributions about the partner's intent to cooperate." He also suggests that people may have certain biases, based upon the attributions selected, which can prevent a more efficient resolve in a conflict (p. 182). DiPaola, Roloff, and Peters (2010) also states there are many factors that are involved in conflict; however the focus is more upon the intensity of the conflict in relationship to the perception of the individual in

conflict. Furthermore, "individuals who reported that they anticipated an encounter would become intense were more likely to report that it was emotionally upsetting, involved the exchange of personal attacks, and subsequently interfered with their daily activities" (Peters, 2010, p. 72).

In work settings, Myers and Larson (2005) suggest that many different types of conflict may be found in a larger, more involved conflict setting. Relational, also referred to as interpersonal (Eisenhardt, Kahwajy, & Bourgeois, 1997) or affective (Guetzkow & Gyr, 1954) conflict involves conflicts about the relationship of the conflict partners, rather than organization or job duties (Jehn, 1997). Relational conflicts can often be product of conflicts of rank or position. Process conflict can be present due to differing opinions of duties during the completion of a job rather than seeking a common goal. (Galanes, Adams, & Brilhart, 2003; Jehn, 1997). Task conflict, or substantive conflict (Guetzkow & Gyr, 1954), goes beyond that of process conflict and involves a disagreement of the entire job or project, not just disputes about portions of the job (Jehn, 1997).

It is argued that conflict in an organization, relationship, or individual can be productive in bringing action or a creative result to a problem. This conflict causing change can produce its own tension and conflict among people (Thomas, 1976; Vaughan, 1989; Waterman, 1987; Wheatley, 1992; Zaleznik, 1966). Many times great inventions or brilliant findings are produced after a great deal of conflict. Just as there was conflict in many of these great findings, producing change and growth, there are many conflicts that only cause tension and regret if not resolved.

As addressed above, there are many tools that can be employed to help with anxieties associated with resolving conflict. Some of these include systematic desensitization (wolpe, 1958), skills training (Kelly, 1997) cognitive modification (Ellis, 1962) and visualization (Ayres, & Heuett, 1997; Ayres, & Heuett, 1999; Ayres, & Heuett, 2000; Ayres, Hopf, & Ayres, 1997).

In seeking to determine the levels of CA one might experience while resolving a conflict, will be focusing on visualization and the use of imagery. To better understand this intervention, we need to briefly explore the foundations upon which it is developed.

During the last couple decades, visualization has become a tool of interest to help students cope with the anxieties experienced with CA. Visualization has been used to help athletes and other professionals such as musicians realize and improve their performance abilities. It has also been used in such things as coping with the immense pain experienced of patients with terminal illnesses (Achterberg & Lawlis, 1984). The foundation of visualization is found in the works of Roberto Assagioli (1973, 1976), who founded psychosynthesis. Ayres and Hopf (1985) suggest "given the success visualization has enjoyed in improving athletes' performances and its obvious relationship with one of the primary components of systematic desensitization, it seemed like a possible strategy public speaking teachers might be able to use to help non-anxious students" (p. 319). It is quite possible that this could translate over to the same use in conflict resolution and the impact it may have upon those seeking to resolve conflict. Visualization has become an important coping tool used to help students realize what fears they might have with communication and help cope with those fears. Visualization involves having students imagine themselves successfully accomplishing specific communication objectives" (Ayres & Hopf, 1987, p. 236).

Theories and studies involving imagined interaction suggest "communicators envision themselves or think about encounters with significant others before and after actual communicative episodes" (Zaqachi, Edwards, Honeycutt, 1992).

To this point, there seems to be only speculation tying CA to the resolution of conflict. As stated above, there is a good amount of research which suggests that there is little known

which provides a relationship between the mediator of conflict, whether voluntary or due to

request or assignment, and levels of CA.

In preparation of, and during, mediation and the resolution of a conflict the mediator must

anticipate aspects of the conflict that need to be resolved. Visualizing what may take place and

anticipating the outcome increase the effectiveness of the mediator. However, if during the

visualization process the mediator is hampered by anxiety or fear due to high levels of CA, the

productivity of mediation may become much less effective. This may hold true to any aspect of

resolving a conflict, not only subject to a formal mediation setting. There may be many

occasions an individual may need to facilitate in conflict resolution, however if they are victim to

high CA the individual may not be able to help resolve the conflict, or may increase the level of

conflict by attempting to become involved. Therefore it becomes very important to find out if

there are significant levels of CA in those resolving conflict so instruments might be developed

to help reduce the amounts of CA people feel while preparing and participating in conflict

resolution.

Research Question

RQ1: Do individuals envision themselves as positive or negative while resolving

conflict?

Hypothesis

H1: People with a high degree of CA will produce more negative drawings depicting

conflict resolution than people with low CA.

The hypothesis was grounded upon an extension of the work done by Heuett, Ayres, and

Manvi (1999) which indicates that imagery was successful in indicating different views among

high and low CA's when presented with a public speaking situation. It seems likely that this

effect may extend to a look at conflict resolution as well.

Chapter III

Method

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of undergraduate students at Southern Utah University during the fall semester 2011. It was decided to obtain 90-100 students in the sample size to give adequate data while allowing for a manageable amount of data as well. Participants were informed that their instructor would know of the participation only by signing a sheet for credit; however the instructor would see none of the data. Each student was given a verbal thank you.

Data Gathering

This study took place in an undergraduate introduction communication classes consisting of students with variation of age and major. This study employed a subscale of the PRCA (Levine & McCroskey, 1997), which was designed to measure trait-like CA. Students scoring one standard deviation above the mean were considered high CA. Students scoring one standard deviation below the mean were considered low CA. After completion of the test, students were asked to read a scenario in which they were presented with a conflict. Students were then asked to sketch how they imagined themselves resolving the conflict and provide a brief written explanation of what their drawing represented (See Appendix A).

Procedure

Students were asked to read and complete the informed consent page. Afterwards students were asked to complete the subscale test, the students were not made aware that the test was measuring trait-like CA. They then read a scenario, which depicted two students, new roommates of the participant, engaged in an argument regarding a controversial poster one roommate wanted to hang on the wall. At the conclusion of the scenario, the participant is asked

to resolve the conflict between these two parties. Each student was provided a blank 8.5 X 11

inch white piece of paper with directions to draw a picture of how they imagined themselves as

resolving the conflict (See Appendix A). Students were then asked to give a brief written

explanation of what their drawing represented (See Appendix A). The students were not asked to

provide their name, or other identifying characteristics, however there was a space provided in

the upper right corner of the paper with an identifying number. This was done to avoid any

biases and to avoid identifying certain student's drawings. The students were given a thank you,

and were given an opportunity to ask any questions regarding the research.

Instruments

The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) was chosen because of

the overwhelming evidence regarding its reliability and validity (McCroskey, 1997). The PRCA

was used in this study to select participants we were interested in mediating a conflict. The

reliability of the PRCA was .90 in this study using Cronbach's Alpha.

Coding Categories

Coding consisted of four primary characteristics, 1) direction, 2) trait, 3) intensity, 4)

space (Berelson, 1952). Each characteristic was coded as positive or negative. If there was no

presence in the drawing of a category, it was coded as negative. Direction consisted of the

overall positive or negative attitude of the drawing. The drawing produced either a positive or

negative attitude toward resolving a conflict. Trait consisted of the personality characteristics in

the drawings. These would be characteristics such as a smile or frown, someone giving a

'thumbs up', shaking knees, or frightened look. Intensity consisted of more of an emotional

element. This is somewhat similar to trait, however intensity expresses the amount of trait. For

example a trait may be a smile, but intensity may be sunlight shining on them to show warmth

from the smile. Space consists of other elements such as size of individuals in relation to the rest

of the drawing. This may consist of an individual drawn very small compared to a large

cityscape, or the spatial position in a room (ie. a lot of space between two people).

Coder Training

   To produce an accurate analysis, placing each drawing into positive and negative

categories, two coders were trained until coders agreed with each other at least 80% of the time.

Before the training process was started, 15 drawings were randomly removed from the sample to

assist in the training process, and to allow for a more accurate testing of the data. The researcher

and coders discussed the four categories (Berelson, 1952) in great detail to determine the

definitions and understanding for each category. Once a common understanding of the categories

were understood, the coders were given the drawings previously removed from the sample and

coded these drawings until the acceptable accuracy was obtained. This allowed the coders to

discuss any drawings which produced a disagreement between coders, and allowed coders to

come to an agreement without producing a practice effect, or other bias upon the remaining

drawings.

   Once there was evidence of significant agreement between coders, the remaining

drawings were coded to obtain available data for the research.

Chapter IV

Results

The data were analyzed using chi-square. The independent variable was High or Low CA. The dependent variables were the scores on direction, trait, intensity, and space (positive, neutral, negative) characteristics.

The chi-square value for the direction data indicated statistical significance x^2 (2, N=40) = 40.00, p <.01. Table 1 reveals that 31 of 40 high CA mediators' drawings were considered negative, while 22 of 40 low CA mediators' drawings were considered positive.

The following tables will report the findings of Berelson's categories.

Table 1

Direction

	Negative	Positive
High CA	31	9
Low CA	18	22

With regards to Intensity the chi-square x^2 (2, N=40) =5.86, p<.01 indicated some significance. Table 2, reveals that 31 of 40 high CA mediators' drawings revealed themselves more intense however, 25 of 40 low CA mediators revealed themselves being less intense.

Table 2

Intensity

	More intense	Less intense
High CA	31	9
Low CA	15	25

Furthermore, the chi-square with regards to space provided no significance x^2 (2, N=40) =3.50, p<.01. According to Table 3, 27 of 40 high CA mediators revealed themselves as negative with regards to space, whereas 27 of 40 low CA mediators revealed themselves as positive with regards to space.

Table 3

Space

	Negative	Positive
High CA	27	13
Low CA	13	27

Chapter V

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine whether high and low CA's envision themselves differently with regards to resolving conflict. Participants were given an opportunity to read a scenario and visualize themselves resolving a conflict (see Appendix A). The drawings were arranged into four primary characteristic categories; direction, trait, intensity, and space (Berelson, 1952). After each category was organized, the drawings were determined to be either positive or negative. The data was analyzed with a chi-square and was found to be significant. The majority of low CA participants had positive drawings, whereas those with high CA scores provided more negative drawings (see table 1).

As stated above, the drawings were characterized into four major categories. Each of these categories will be discussed further, and in relation to some samples of drawings (see Appendix A).

Drawings one through four (see Appendix A) illustrate four of the more notable drawings from the sample. As labeled, there are two that are found to be particularly positive, and two that are particularly negative. Drawings five and six (see Appendix A) represent examples of direction, or the overall positive or negative presence of the drawing. Berelson (1952) states direction involves "referring to the pro and con of a subject" (p. 150). Drawing five (see Appendix A) is produced by a low CA participant and provides a positive depiction of conflict resolution. The individual appears to be organized, smiling, and the main focus of the discussion. Drawing six (see Appendix A) on the other hand provides a high CA participant depicting a negative message. It seems those in conflict, and the mediator, all have frowns. The mediator is seen saying "you work it out". Each has very distinct characteristics, which show a positive or negative direction, as described above

In drawings seven and eight (see Appendix A), there are examples of trait differences. Berelson (1952) explains that trait "includes ordinary personal characteristics, certain psychological traits, and other ways of describing people (p. 155). Drawing seven was drawn by a low CA participant and indicates the parties in conflict; however the mediator has a positive demeanor, while holding a peace sign and a heart. The mediator appears to be smiling and have open arms while saying "lets work it out together" portraying a positive, productive attitude in this potentially aggressive situation. This also clearly displays who the mediator is, opposed to those in conflict. Drawing eight was drawn by a participant with a high CA and clearly indicates a complete avoidant personality toward the conflict. Narrative under the drawing reads "this is me hardly caring at all, in fact I really get annoyed when people bring their stupid problems to me" indicating negative personality traits.

Drawings nine and ten (see Appendix A) show examples of intensity. Intensity goes beyond that of just psychological personality traits and into "emotionalism" which helps in "gauging the relative intensity of which communication is made" (Berelson, 1952, p. 160). Drawing nine (see Appendix A), provided by a low CA participant, indicates the conflict after it has been resolved. The mediator is smiling and seems to be showing the finished agreement, while the parties which were in conflict are now smiling, and embracing one another in friendship or agreement. This drawing provides a very positive atmosphere and a positive resolve to the conflict. Drawing ten (see Appendix A), in contrast, was provided by a high CA participant and indicates a great deal of intensity with a strong negative element. The individuals in conflict have negative expressions on their faces, and also what looks like steam or animated frustration around their figures. The poster in the room appears to be a picture of flames, almost illustrating the fire that has built up between the conflicting parties. Under the drawing the

following appears, "I wouldn't get involved", however past that of just staying out of it, the

individual who is supposed to be attempting to resolve the situation is sleeping.

Drawings 11 and 12 (see Appendix A) depict the category of space. Berelson (1952)

suggests that space helps in the analyzing of communication by "allowing for somewhat more

precise distinctions than are possible with the item-unit" (p. 142). In drawing 11 (see Appendix

A), provided by a low CA participant, the conflicting parties are seen as sitting, while the

mediator is portrayed as standing and being at a taller, more authoritative position. The

illustration on the picture indicates the mediator giving direction as to the final conclusion.

Drawing 12 (see Appendix A) was provided by a high CA individual and indicates the mediator

running from the situation altogether.

An interesting result that came from this study was the lack significance of trait and

intensity found in the drawings. Although there was some significance in the intensity category,

the trait category was not found to be significant. There are many factors that may have produced

this result, for example the participants may not have had ample time to put more detail into the

drawings, or may have felt a need to rush to complete the drawing. It is also possible that there

may have been some lack of interest in drawing a picture, thereby completing the study only to

satisfy the assignment. Alternatively, it is possible that there may have been a drawing

apprehension affect which may have limited the performance of the participants. Further

investigation may be needed to understand this result in its entirety.

As stated previously, high levels of CA can have a great impact on a person's ability to

communicate with another individual. As a mediator, or someone seeking to resolve conflict,

high levels of CA could discourage the process of coming to a conclusion. Even if someone is

attempting to resolve a conflict, it could be much more effective if they don't hold attitudes as

depicted in some of the drawings. For example in drawing six, eight, and ten (see Appendix A)

there are comments such as, "you work it out", "this is me hardly caring at all" and, "I wouldn't get involved". In many of the negative drawings, there is an attitude of avoidance and discouragement, and the drawings rarely portray any progress toward resolving conflict; whereas in many of the positive drawings they often portray the conflict already resolved. Based on the results, a significant amount of high CA individuals have negative attitudes toward conflict resolution. We may conclude that many individuals with high CA also share these same attitudes and fears toward conflict resolution. This may mean that someone that has sought out a professional career in mediation and conflict resolution probably doesn't have high CA like someone who prefers a career in a less interactive environment. However, it is very possible that there are some levels of high CA present in individuals that are faced with common social conflicts, and could be much more effective in resolving a conflict if they had a way to reduce their level of CA.

Based on the research with regards to instruments used to reduce CA in individuals with public speaking for example, systematic desensitization (Wolpe, 1958), skills training (Kelly, 1997) cognitive modification (Ellis, 1962) and visualization (Ayres & Hopf, 1985), it appears these same instruments may be of use in helping individuals with high CA become more effective in solving conflict. However, a greater deal of empirical research will need to be investigated. There may also be some use in greater investigation into different demographic populations and comparing the results. For example it might be interesting to see if there are cultural differences, gender differences, or a difference in age that might account for being more effective in solving conflict.

Finally, it may be helpful and interesting to explore if there are professional mediators that experience high CA; those individuals who have a career in resolving conflict between other individuals. Are there mediators that exhibit some of the same negative apprehensions toward

conflict resolution as those in this study, thereby reducing the effectiveness they have in coming to a conclusion between the parties involved? For example, it may be interesting to see the attitudes held by mediators prior to, during, and after a mediation session. Would the attitudes be more negative or positive?

Limitations

A look into this study will reveal a number of limitations. First, there may be some question as to the accuracy of the drawings in relation to the actual image seen in the participant's minds. There may be some factors such as lack of skill, or knowledge to draw a more accurate depiction. Also, we don't know if there is a limitation to the drawings due to such things as a performance anxiety while drawing the pictures. There is some research to suggest that performance anxiety can be so great as to produce effects such as sweating, losing an ability to think clearly, or a complete avoidance all together. There were a few participants that had no drawing whatsoever on the page; this may have been the reason. More research may be needed to determine what degree other anxieties may have had on the participant's performance. Second, there may be some experimental bias when participants draw the pictures so as to modify the drawings to show a more positive or more negative view than what may be present in reality. Third, the scenario used in the study focuses on a roommate confrontation, and may not be broad enough to generalize to other aspects of conflict. For example, if the study provided a scenario that the participants were asked to visualize themselves resolving a conflict, instead of placing the participant in a particular setting to visualize, in this case a dorm room, there may be a different result. However this may require some further explanation as to the type of conflict the participant envisioned (ie. physical vs. verbal conflict). Fourth, the sample size used in this study may not be large enough to show a generalization to other aspects of conflict and to other cultural effects in CA. For example, some cultures may be prone to avoidance when conflict is

present. It is possible someone may handle conflict much different in a college setting opposed

being home with his or her family. Finally, there may have been insufficient time given to

participants, as trait and intensity (ie. detail placed in the drawings) proved to be less significant

in the results. It is possible that the detail excluded from many of the drawings may have been a

result of inadequate time to complete the drawings in full detail. Participants were informed that

their artistic abilities were not as important as was the attempt to try and depict themselves as

accurately as possible how they envisioned themselves resolving the conflict. This may have

been interpreted as not needing to place much emphasis on detail of the drawing. These

limitations should all be considered in the analysis of this study.

Future Research

This study is the first of many possible studies to be conducted. As this is the first look at

a relationship between CA and conflict resolution, in this respect, it is important to remember

that work in this area should not stop here, but can have a substantial benefit in many areas of

communication research. During the production of this paper, and the overall research process,

many future research questions and research opportunities came to mind; this includes conflict

resolution specifically, and other environments as well.

First, it may be interesting to look at anxieties which may affect the participants in this

study other than the limitations previously discussed. Does a high level of apprehension toward

drawing a picture, a performance anxiety, affect the participant's drawing and the accuracy of

how they envision themselves? We know that performance anxieties can be so great that they

can produce physical reactions such as sweating and going flush in the face, or even cause a

breakdown in communication all together (Powell, 2004). Research indicates that some students

may even choose to fail a course rather than speak in front of a group. There could also be the

possibility of predetermined concepts about conflict which have a greater affect upon the

participant, such as conflict being unresolvable? These might be tested best by producing a series of pre and post-tests to determine each affect.

Future research opportunities may also include a more in-depth look at state CA contributions. This may include the environment where an individual lives, or has experienced, and how that may affect their levels of CA and views of resolving conflict. What type of environments do participants come from? Does the difference in environment change the positive or negative views of conflict resolution? For example, it is possible that an individual whose environment involves domestic violence envision conflict resolution different than someone who hasn't experienced the same type of conflict. Would the individual envision themselves more negatively resolving a domestic conflict opposed to a non-domestic violent situation such as conflict at home opposed to a conflict at the grocery store? If the environment contributes to high levels of CA, it is possible that a tool could be produced to help compensate and reduce the levels of CA in that environment.

Another question that developed though this research consists of the process of preparing for and participating in conflict resolution. Are there increased levels of anxiety and apprehension due to the anticipation of conflict? How does one feel prior to, during, and after the conflict has been resolved? This would be interesting to investigate among professional mediators. It would be interesting to explore and see if there are different levels of CA before a mediation session in comparison to during or after a mediation session. If there are indications of CA in mediators, how could that affect the parties in conflict or the effectiveness of the mediation process? It might also be interesting to see if there are other contributing factors toward a mediator experiencing CA such as the fear of not being able to resolve a conflict and the consequences that may produce.

A final area of study that may prove to be beneficial to education in general is the level of CA students and teachers may experience in the classroom. As stated previously in the literature review, the choice of seating in the classroom may have a substantial indication as to the amount of involvement in classroom 'conflict' or participation a student is willing to contribute. For example, if there is a correlation between CA in conflict and students participation in the classroom, students who have high levels of CA when envisioning conflict may increase participation in the classroom if they feel less apprehension toward conflict.

As the results of this study indicate, there is a significant correlation between high levels of CA and a negative view of conflict resolution. It is possible that tools may be developed and implemented to decrease the levels of CA and help reduce the negative view toward conflict resolution. If this is possible, the implementation of a successful tools may help individuals in many aspects of life, which has already been shown to be successful in research regarding levels of CA and public speaking, As conflict potentially affects each of us during our lives, some much more dramatic than others, it can be beneficial to many occupations or disciplines to reduce the apprehension felt with respect to conflict. The findings of this study not only indicate that there is a relationship between levels of CA and negative or positive views of conflict, but also offers a new look into a branch of communication research which has not yet been explored.

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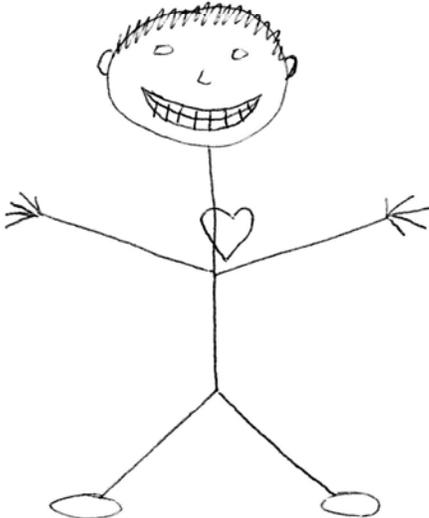
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Appendix A

Figure 1: Low CA (Positive)

With love & compasion

Figure 2: Low CA (Negative)
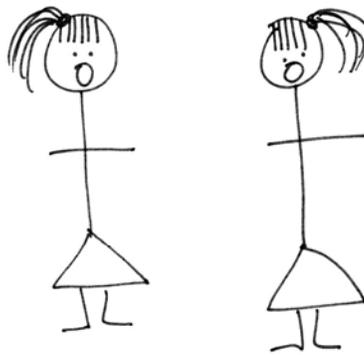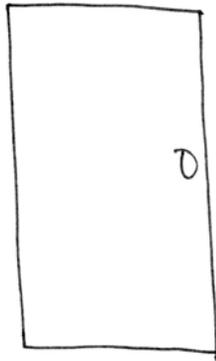
Close the door & let them work it out themselves

Figure 3: High CA (Positive)
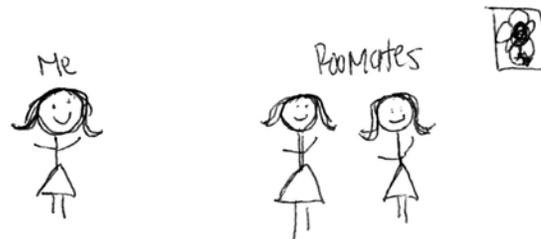
i would talk with my roomates and say that we need to express who we are here and hanging the poster may express who that roomate is.

Figure 4: High CA (Negative)
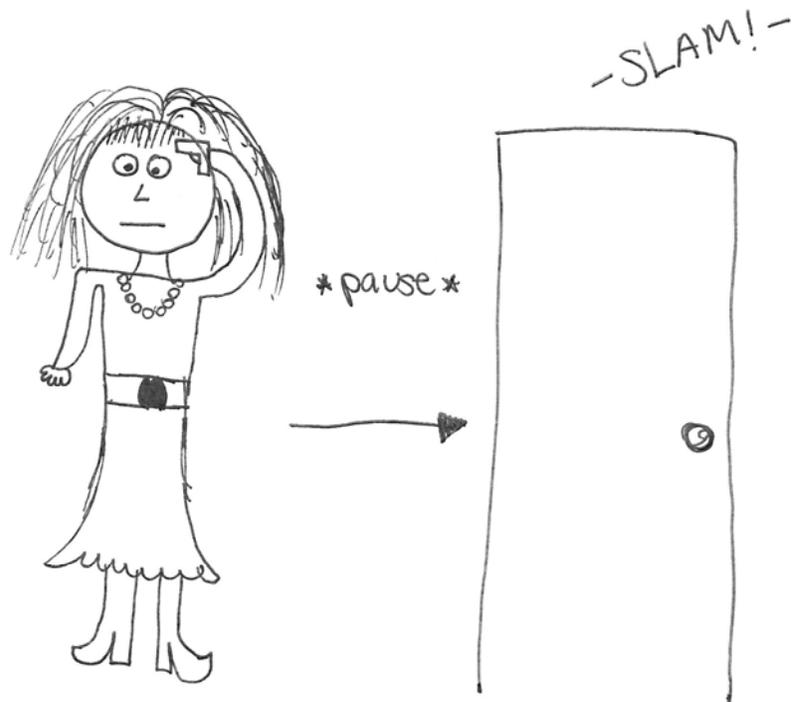
I would make a "ugh, shoot me now" face & gesture, pause and then walk back out the door. I wouldn't want my 1st day with new roommates to be dramatic over a poster. I would just stay away until the conflict was settled. I hate girls & petty drama. Grrrr.

Figure 5: Associated with direction (Positive)
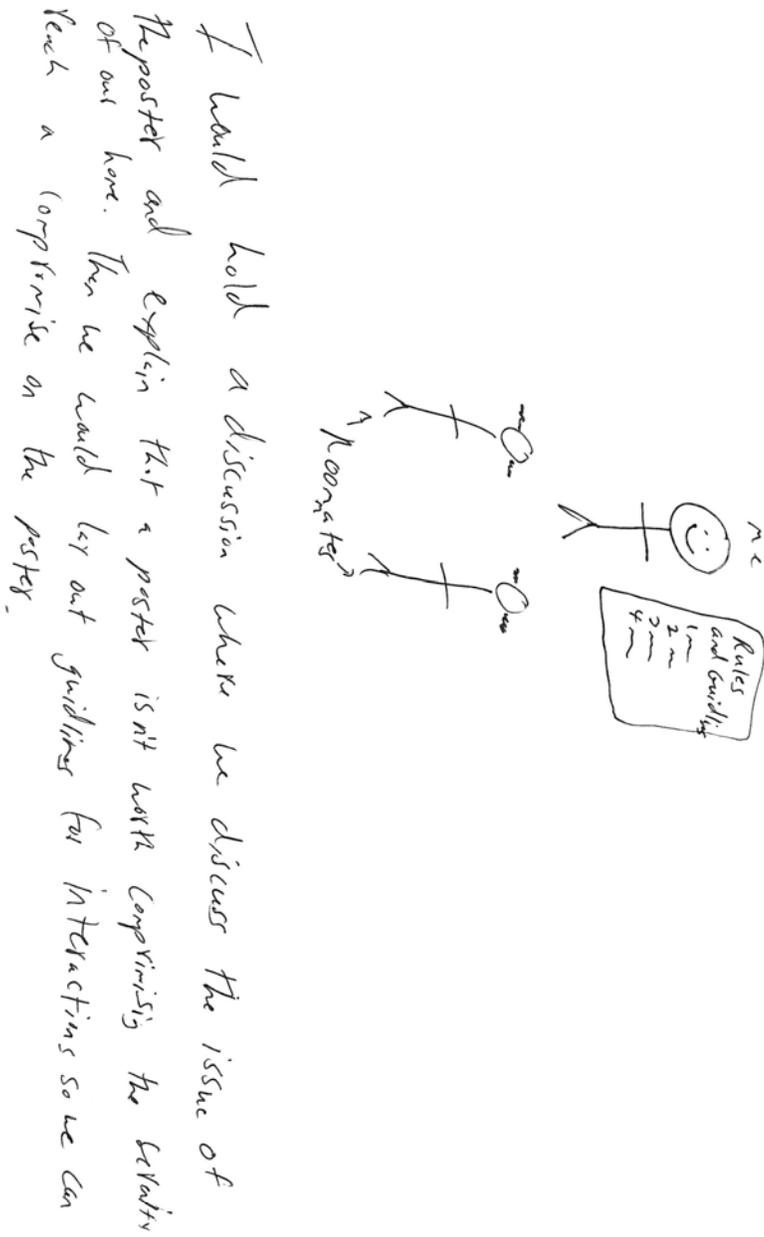
Figure 6: Associated with direction (Negative)
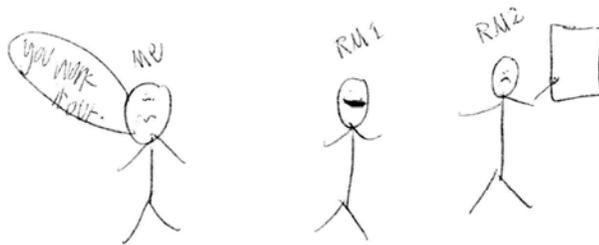
I Avoid conflict, and i Hate contention. so,
    I would Be quite nervous
Because i don't know these girls and
i dont want to offend either of them.
I would proBaBly Just say that its None of my business

The Arguement is Between the two of them

Figure 7: Associated with trait (Positive)
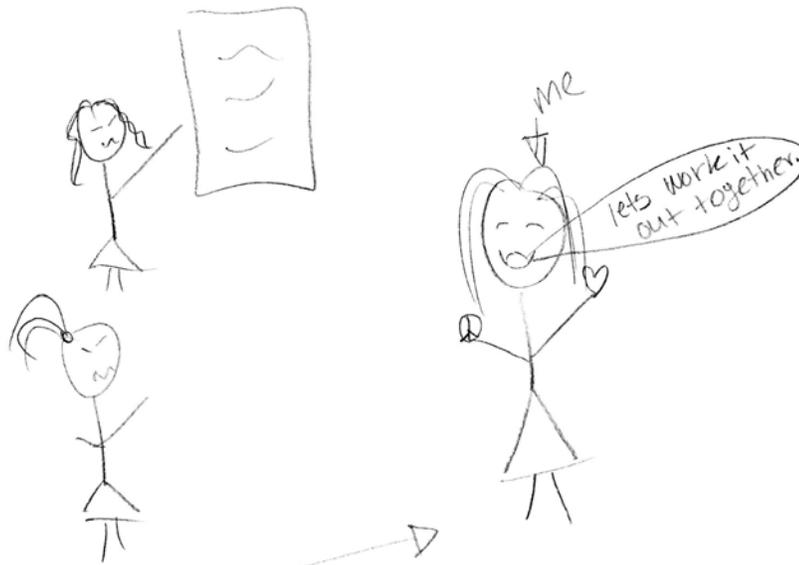
I take a deep breath & ask if we can work it out together. Then find a place 2 put the poster that everyone agrees with, like her room or a Hallway, ect. (Make a win, win Situation.) I'de try 2 be like Gondie ☺

Figure 8: Associated with trait (Negative)

This is me hardly caring at all, in fact I really get annoyed when people bring their stupid problems to me
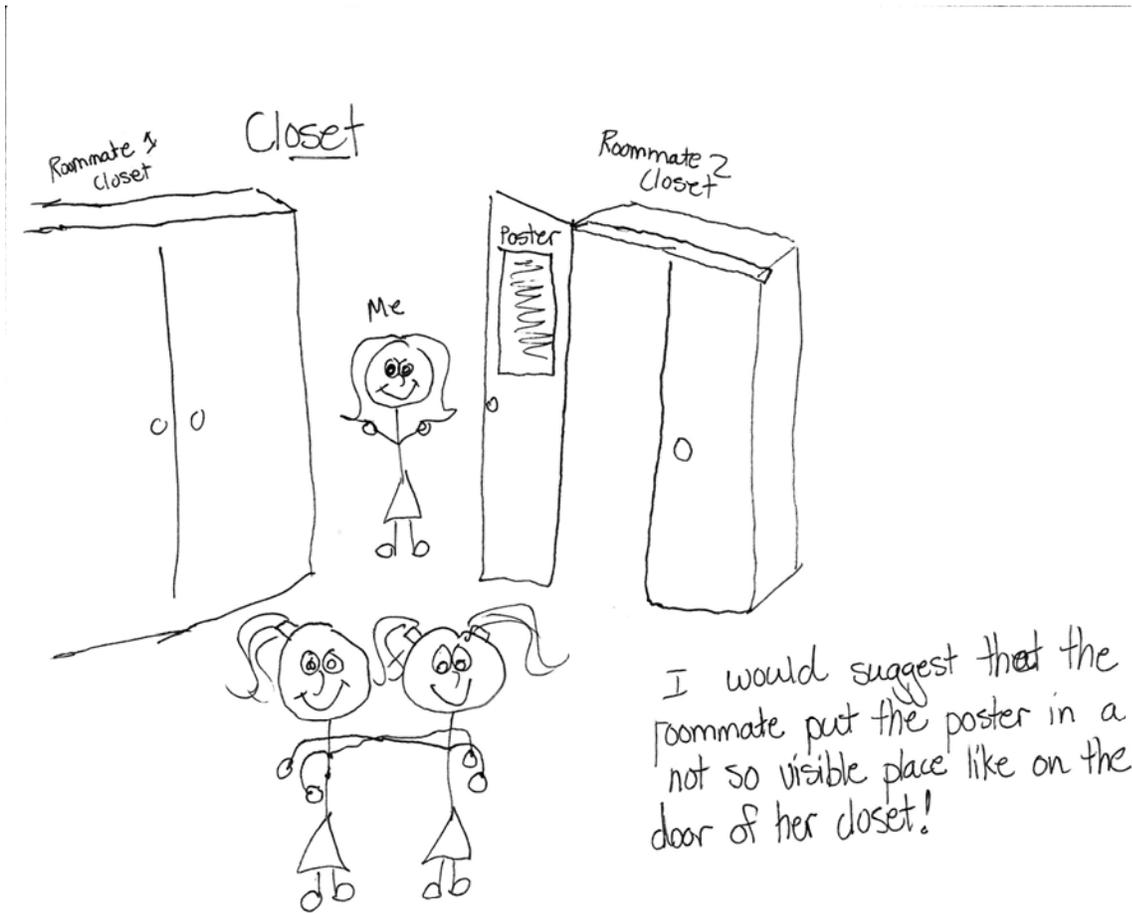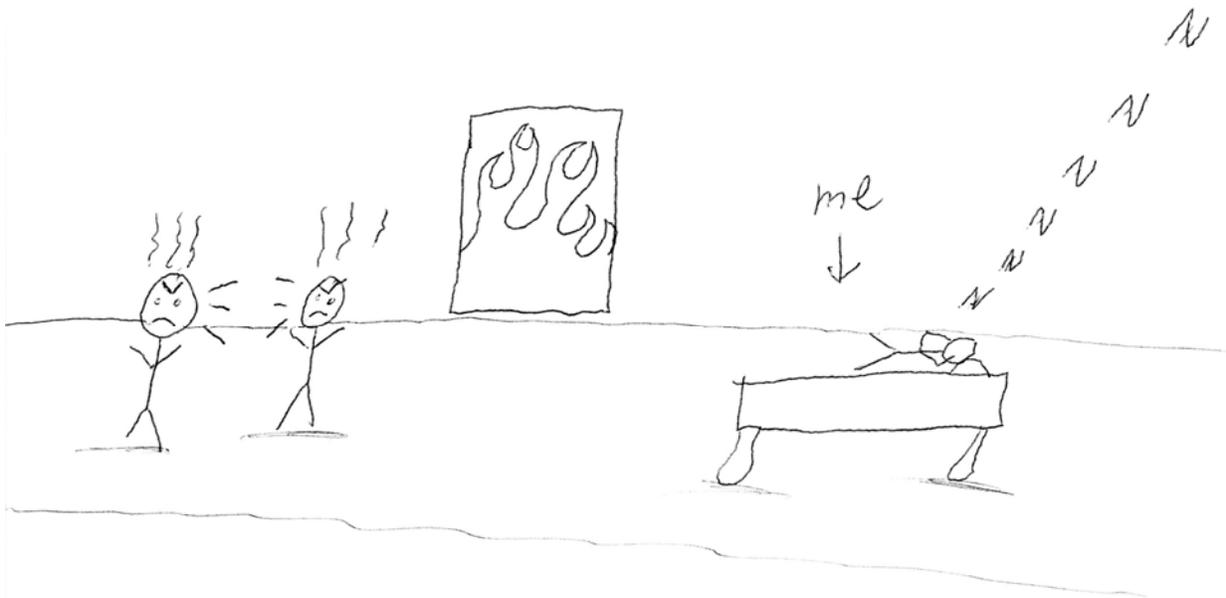
Figure 9: Associated with intensity (Positive)

Figure 10 Associated with intensity (Negative)

I wouldn't get involved.

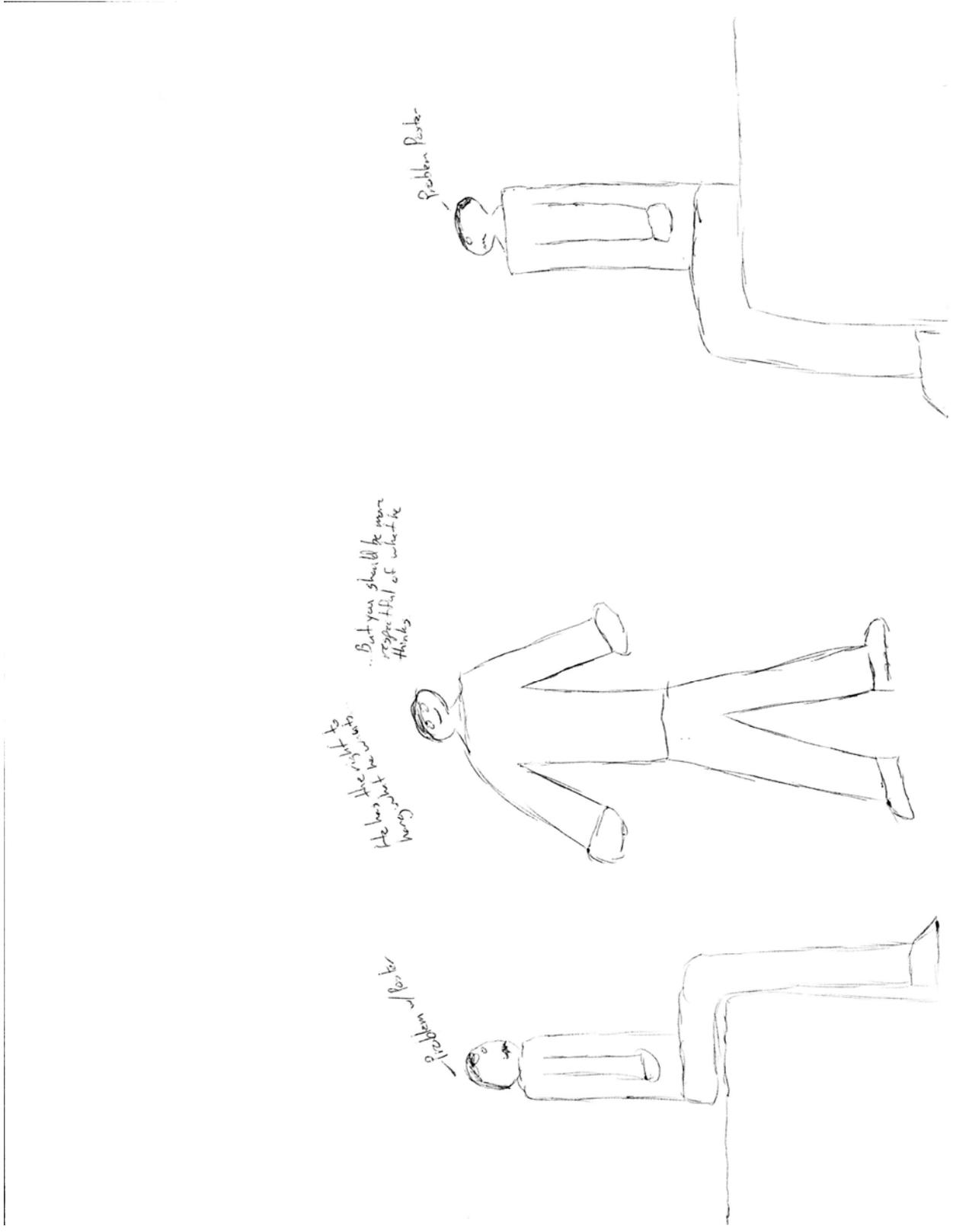**Figure 11: Associated with space (Positive)**

Figure 12: Associated with space (Negative)
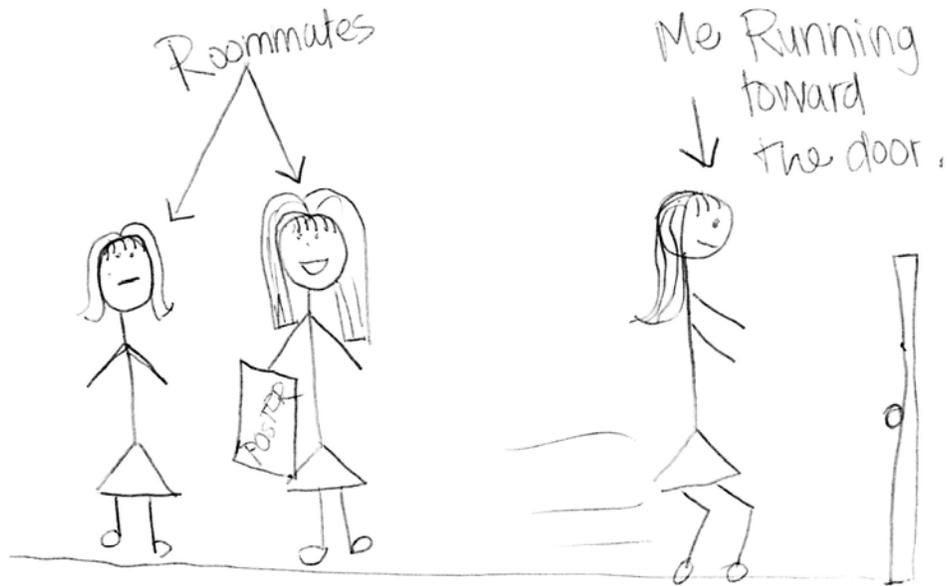

Roommates

Me Running toward the door.

For the most part — I don't like to get involved in conflict that doesn't involve me. I run in the other direction.

Appendix B

Instruction for drawings and conflict scenario

Demographics: Assigned #_____
Year in School: Freshman____   Sophomore____   Junior____ Senior____
Age: 18-20____ 21-23____ 24-25____   25 plus____
Gender: Female_____ Male_____
PRCA
Directions: This instrument is composed of five statements concerning feelings about resolving conflict. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are undecided, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree. Please just record your first impression. Thank you!
1.____My body does not feel very tense and rigid while resolving a conflict.
2.____My thoughts do not become confused and jumbled when I am resolving a conflict.
3.____I have no fear of resolving a conflict.
4.____I feel relaxed while resolving a conflict.
5.____I face the prospect of resolving a conflict with confidence.
_____Total

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Scenario:

The semester has just started. You have found the residential quarters you will be staying in for the next year. As you enter the front door, you hear two individuals speaking to one another. As you walk in the direction of the voices you realize that these are your roommates that have also just arrived. When you approach the room they are in, you hear one roommate express concern and disgust with a poster the other is trying to pin to the wall. In response to the first roommate, the second states that he/ she doesn't really care about others thoughts and will put the poster wherever he/she wants. When you enter the room you can see that both of your new roommates have a frustrated look on their faces. They both ask you to resolve the issue.

On the back of this paper please draw a picture that best represents how you imagine yourself resolving the conflict you read above. Do not worry so much about the quality of the drawing but how you envision yourself resolving the conflict in the situation. Below your drawing, write a brief description of the picture. After your description, you have finished participation in this research. Thank you!!!

Appendix C

IRB Approval

SUU SOUTHERN UTAH U N I V E R S I T Y

Institutional Review Board
Department of Psychology
351 W. University Blvd., GC 308
Cedar City, UT 84720

(435) 865-8569
Institutional Review Board
Psychology Department

To: Shaun Lindsay (PI)

Brian Heuett, Ph.D. (Supervisor)

From: Britton Mace, Chair of the University IRB

Date: August 29, 2011

RE: IRB consideration of the study: Social Conflict Resolution

Your proposal has been assessed, and it was decided that it met the criteria for an expedited review. I am pleased to inform you that your proposal has been approved. Please note the continuing review and expiration dates. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Please notify me immediately should any unexpected risks to the participants become evident. Best of luck with your study.

(To be filled in by the IRB)

Britton L. Mace   **August 29, 2011**

Full Approval   Date

PROTOCOL CONTINUING REVIEW DATE: August 29, 2012
IRB APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE: August 29, 2012

If data collection is not completed by the expiration date, the researcher must seek IRB approval for a continuation.