

Research Report Template for CT Faculty Research Grants
Suzanne Gurland, "Perspective-Taking in Conflict Transformation"

A. Statement of research question and its importance

Interpersonal conflict is an inevitable part of human relationships. One way that people address conflict, and potentially transform it, is through perspective-taking – that is, viewing the situation from the point of view of the other, discerning the other's beliefs, preferences, and feelings. This study aimed to address two key parts of the link between perspective-taking and conflict transformation that remain under-studied. One is the question of "what matters" in perspective-taking. Is it the regularity with which interactants take each other's perspective, or perhaps the accuracy with which they do so? The other is the question of how each interactant's perspective-taking affects that of the other and affects the developing relationship between them. Knowing whether and how perspective-taking helps us use conflicts to build better relationships can move us closer to effective interventions for transforming conflict.

B. List of collaborators and partners

Xiaole Niu '25 – helped brainstorm and formulate the mild interpersonal conflict that study participants navigated; Carolyn Days '25.5, Alice Ganey '25, Sadie LeStage '25, and Emily Ribeiro '25 – completed PSYC0700 projects in which they contributed to data collection and also tested their own hypotheses using a subset of the available data

C. Summary of research findings

Thus far, we have collected 30 dyads' worth of data, which is roughly half of the target sample size. Therefore, meaningful findings cannot yet be reported. A preliminary look at the data thus far, however, suggests that perspective-taking accuracy, tendency/frequency, and confidence are strongly interrelated, but not linked to participants' assessments of the quality of their (brief, first-time, single-encounter) relationships with their partners. It should be noted that this preliminary overview does not yet take into account the interdependence between partners in dyads. Future analyses will take these interdependencies into account, and we will consider whether characteristics of the particular conflict we induced between participants might have influenced results.

D. Implications for study and practice of conflict transformation

It would be premature to speculate about implications until we collect more data and conduct analyses appropriate to the dyadic design of the study. I look forward to a time when the implications become clear.

E. List of publications, performances, media coverage, and other output

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The first (still tentative, preliminary) output I hope to produce from the study will be a presentation at the faculty forum in the fall. After another semester of data collection and coding, I'll be positioned to conduct more robust analyses that I intend to publish.