

An Exploration into the Inducibility of Greater Reflectiveness and ‘Lucidity’ in Nocturnal Dream Reports

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The purpose of this study was to determine the availability of “lucid dreaming” to a sample comprised of individuals with a wide variety of previous dream work experience. Defined as the experience of becoming aware that one is dreaming during the dream itself, lucid dreaming has been regarded as a potentially therapeutic experience which if inducible in counseling clients and self— directed dream students, could serve as a valuable therapeutic and growth tool.

A sample of 161 voluntary subjects was obtained from the membership of the Association for Research and Enlightenment, in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The A.R.E. is an open—membership parapsychological research and educational association. The population was chosen because of their interest in dream work and human potential -- qualities that would arguably characterize a counseling client who would be ready for such in—depth dream work. Of the original subjects, 136 completed the study.

Two induction strategies were tested. The first strategy -- called Dream Reliving -- consisted of recalling and reliving in fantasy a past unpleasant dream experience. The subject then wrote down the new “dream,” and used it as a pre—sleep reverie for the duration of the induction period. The other strategy -- called Motivational Essay -- consisted of writing an essay titled, “Why I Want to Have Lucid Dreams.” A delayed—treatment control group was also employed. Pre—and post— data collection was included in the design.

The resultant dreams were rated on an original four—point scale to assess the level of lucidity, and an original scale designed to assess aspects of the constructive dreamer process, as defined by Rossi. The four aspects of dreamer process were: dreamer/dream content interaction, role changes, and constructive behavior, and critical self—reflectiveness.

Regardless of which induction strategy was used, full lucid dreams were reported by 22% of the subjects during their induction phase; and some degree of lucidity or pre—lucidity was reported by 112% of the subjects.

As for within—group changes over baseline measures, the dream reliving subjects achieved significant increases in their lucidity scores and non—significant increases in constructive dreamer process. In contrast, the motivational essay subjects achieved non-significant increases on the lucidity measures, and remained unchanged on the measures of dreamer process, the control subjects exhibited decreases in their scores

during the second week of baseline collection, possibly indicating a fatigue or frustration affect.

When the individual treatments and control conditions were compared in a between—groups analysis, the dream reliving and motivational essay groups significantly outperformed the control group on lucidity scores, the dream reliving group also achieved significantly higher levels of constructive dreamer process, indicating the superiority of the dream reliving technique as a strategy for inducing “dreamer development” as described by Rossi.

As for sex differences, females achieved significantly higher levels of constructive dreamer process during the induction phase. However, there were no sex differences evident in the lucidity measures.

1. Abstract of a paper based on dissertation study submitted for presentation at a symposium on lucid dreams during the annual meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Baltimore, April, 1984.

Original source: *Lucidity Letter Back Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 4, November, 1983, page 75.