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ADULT BASIC EDUCATION IN CORRECTIONS:
TRAINING AND MODEL IMPLEMENTATION

by

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Prepared for
American Correctional Association Congress of Correction

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
August 23, 1972

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Summary

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A Systems Approach for Inmate Welfare

The jails, workhouses, penitentiaries and reformatories of this nation admit, control, and release an estimated 3 million individuals each year. This is roughly equivalent to the combined populations of Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, and Vermont. On any day during the year approximately 1.3 million individuals--more than the population of any one of 15 of the states in this nation--are under correctional authority. The American Bar Association (1971) has projected the 1975 average daily population in corrections at 1.8 million individuals. The charge to corrections is to control, support, and correct this very large segment of the nation's populace. This is far from an insignificant responsibility, especially when it is recognized that the offender population constitutes a culture unto itself--atypical in many critical dimensions from the free world society.

Corrections officials estimate that eighty-five percent of state prison inmates are school dropouts. Over one million individuals in penal institutions in the United States lack the educational and vocational skills for entering and maintaining gainful employment. The American Bar Association (1971) estimates the average educational achievement of offenders at fifth to sixth grade level. The men and women, boys and girls, making up the nation's prison population typically
manifest distorted value systems. Most inmates are insecure, exhibit little self-discipline, and have a low self-image. Forty percent of the offenders are without previous work experience. Jaworski (1970) implies the magnitude of the responsibility of corrections in his caution, "What we must never forget is that, barring few, every inmate of our prisons is due to mix and mingle again in society, sooner or later." The American Bar Association (1971) estimates that 96 percent of those incarcerated will walk the streets as free men after an average stay of only two years. In the face of a recidivism rate generally placed at about 80 percent, the question of inmate welfare is seen as a major social problem of the times.

The Problem of Inmate Welfare

The concept of inmate welfare must be defined in terms of the inmate, encompassing a time span extending from the moment of sentencing throughout the postrelease life of the individual. Providing for the welfare of these individuals means contributing to and supporting the healthy growth and development of each inmate. Each one must be able to grow and develop into a healthy person, capable of enjoying economic prosperity, able to contribute to social and civic betterment, and capable of achieving self-realization. The burden of responsibility is on corrections to provide for the welfare of the inmate. Corrections must create and implement a controlled environment which will direct the growth and development of inmates into mentally and physically healthy persons prepared to accept civic responsibilities, maintain productive social rela-
tionship, and maintain gainful employment.

Accomplishment of inmate welfare is a major challenge to corrections. This challenge can be met through a systems approach which supports a total institutional commitment to correcting and redirecting behaviors of offenders—including cognitive, psychomotor, and affective dimensions—so they can become capable of realizing individual wellbeing and contributing to the betterment of society.

The **Systems Approach**

The systems approach is a scientific process of analyzing, coordinating, relating, and combining elements of an organized, orderly whole to optimize accomplishment of a specified mission. The process involves (1) specification of the system parameters and delineation of the mission; (2) definition of goals and establishment of goal priorities; (3) implementation of the goals in behaviorally defined objectives; (4) determination of resources and constraints; (5) identification of alternative strategies for accomplishing the mission; (6) evaluation of alternatives in terms of consequences; (7) implementation of strategies which optimize system operation; (8) provision for measurement and evaluation with continuing feedback to insure quality control and direct system modification.

A systems approach is an operational concept. The process involves the analysis of existing systems and the creation of new systems. A system is an organization or structure of an orderly whole composed of a number of elements related in such a way that each element and the totality of all the parts work together to accomplish the mission of the organization.
or structure. Ryan (1969) identifies four essential characteristics of a system: wholeness, strength in relationships, mission orientation, and system-environment compatibility. The extent to which a system manifests these characteristics is an index of the efficiency and effectiveness of the system operation. Implementation of the systems approach demands application of systems principles and the use of systems techniques to optimize mission accomplishment.

**Basic System Techniques.** There are four basic system techniques: (1) analysis; (2) synthesis; (3) modeling; and (4) simulation.

1. **Analysis** is the process of identifying the parts which make up a whole; determining the relationships among the parts; separating the parts into discrete elements; and limiting so that parts do not lose identity.

2. **Synthesis** is the process of identifying parts which are essentially unrelated; relating these parts to each other; combining the related parts to form a new whole; and limiting when further combination is either not feasible or not desirable.

3. **Modeling** is the process of producing highly simplified but controllable versions of real life situations. A **model** is an analogy of the real world. Models can be conceptualized in different forms. A simplified version of the real world can be expressed as a mathematical equation, a physical device, a narrative, or a graphic analog. A **flowchart** is a graphic model.

In the models described in this paper, the LOGOS language of flowchart
modeling is used, Silvern (1969) published the specifications for LOGOS, a language for optimizing graphically ordered systems. LOGOS is a language which communicates the thought or concept embodied in a group of words or characters of another language. LOGOS is a graphic language. It does not rely solely upon alpha (a, b, c...) or numeric (1, 2, 3...) characters. It utilizes other shapes and symbols as well as alpha and numeric characters. LOGOS is a non-mathematical language. LOGOS is a language used in model-building. The thought expressed by a LOGOS flowchart is a conceptualization in the form of a graphic analog representing a real-life situation. A LOGOS flowchart is a flowchart model which is created by using the LOGOS language for flowchart modeling.

In a LOGOS flowchart a function is represented by a functional block, a descriptor, and a point numeric code. A function is shown in a rectangular function block [ ], identified by a descriptor of five words or less, and a point numeric code. The descriptor, whether in the flowchart or in the accompanying narrative is printed in uppercase letters (EXAMINE REAL LIFE ENVIRONMENT). The point numeric code which appears in the lower right hand corner of each function box identifies the function. Each major function is coded 1.0, 2.0, 3.0... n.0. The elements which combine to make up each major function are coded 1.1, 1.2, or 2.1, 2.2... n.n. Point numeric codes can be interpreted to indicate how many parts combine to make up a major function. The point numeric codes (1,1) and (1,2) express the concept that major function (1.0) is made up of two parts, (1.1) and (1.2). Signal paths describe the flow of actions, information, or objects between and among functions and specify functional
relationships among the elements of the system. The flow of actions, information, or objects always is in one direction only. A signal path consists of a tail, a solid straight line, and an arrowhead at one end of the line. Only one arrowhead is shown on any signal path. The symbol stands for feedback and indicates that output from one function feeds back along a signal path to an earlier function which it enters as input and upon which it exerts an effect. The symbol stands for feedforward, and indicates that output from one function feeds forward along a signal path to a later function which it enters as input and upon which it exerts an effect.

4. **Simulation** is a process for testing a model or for processing data through the model to see if it produces predictable results. Conceptualization of a model in and of itself will not guarantee high fidelity in the system design.

Silvern (1972) identifies two major purposes of simulation: (1) testing the model and debugging it until it has a high correspondence with reality; and (2) using the model as a problem-solving device. In testing the model, problems are input, processed and reprocessed until all elements and their relationships are identified and appear to be correct. At this point the model design is fixed. The model then can be used for simulation by taking typical problems and running it through the model. This should result in finding alternative solutions and the identification of a best possible solution. Using the graphic model, simulation can be accomplished with a computer or by verbal walkthrough of a model using a real life situation. When simulation is done as an overt
activity mentally performed by talking through a problem on a model, Silvern (1972) calls it narration simulation.

Process of Producing a Model. The process of producing a model is shown in Figure 1. Examination of Figure 1 reveals that a model is produced through application of analysis (1.0), synthesis (2.0) and simulation (3.0). Production of a model begins with the careful analysis of the real life environment (1.1). This is accomplished as a team effort of looking at the existing situation, identifying the elements or functions being implemented, and determining the relationships among these functions. Each element, then, is studied carefully to see who is involved, what is done, and where the function is implemented, and the extent to which it contributed to accomplishment of the mission. Analysis of the real life environment should point up needs, that is, discrepancies between what actually is and what would be the ideal. The existing system should be tested for efficiency of operation by determining the extent to which it can be said to display wholeness, strength in the relationships among the elements, mission orientation, and compatibility with the environment.

Synthesis takes place as a new whole is created in (2.0). The weaknesses in the existing system should point the way to creation of a new whole which would overcome these problems. Synthesis is essentially a process of innovating. A new whole is designed, with functions or elements identified, the relationships among the functions specified, and the contributions of each function to accomplishment of the mission determined.
When synthesis is complete a flowchart model is drawn to depict the system, showing all the elements and the interrelationships. This flowchart model then is tested through simulation (3.0) by verbally walking through the model (3.1) to see if there are bugs or design inadequacies. The model is evaluated in (3.2) and the malfunctions are corrected in (3.3). The feedback from (3.3) to (2.3) where the model was synthesized makes it possible to abandon the model completely if it is found to be too bad, and start over designing a new one. After the model is found to be as near perfect as possible, and satisfies design criteria, then it can be used in simulation for problem solving, leading to generation of delivery systems (3.2).

Process of Producing and Implementing a System. The production of a model is a major step toward achieving an efficiently operating system. The process of developing and implementing a system is shown in Figure 2. Examination of Figure 2 reveals that after the model is debugged and ready for use in problem solving (3.2), then the system can be fabricated or initiated (4.0). This is the point at which full scale operation of the system begins. The system is maintained in (5.0) which means it continues to operate. During this period of operation there is continuous feedback from (5.0) to (4.0) so that malfunctions detected in the operating system can be corrected. The (6.0) function, ELIMINATE SYSTEM, is provided so that when the system outlives the time for which it was designed or no longer is meeting the needs for which it was created it will either self-destruct or be eliminated. Systems are made for a finite time.
period, not forever. Systems are designed for specific environments to accomplish specified missions. When the system outlives its usefulness or when it becomes outmoded or outdated, it should be destroyed or eliminated.

**Basic Elements of a Corrections System**

Corrections is a system, the mission of which is to correct the offender so that the welfare of society and the wellbeing of the individual will be preserved and maintained. The extent to which corrections implements an efficiently functioning system is a moot question. Only when it can be shown that a correctional institution, in fact, is bringing about the kind of correction in the inmate population to make for social betterment and individual wellbeing can it be said that the system mission is being accomplished.

Accomplishment of the mission of corrections requires two basic elements: personnel training and model implementation. Both elements are essential. Either one by itself is not sufficient. Models must be synthesized to accomplish the mission of corrections and these models must be implemented. Personnel must be trained in model design and must be prepared to direct and support model implementation. It is not enough to have a model that could produce an efficient system to support and contribute to inmate welfare. There must be trained personnel at the institution or agency where the model is to be implemented, if the full potential of system operation is to be realized. It is not enough to have personnel trained in the use of systems techniques. There also
must be model design and implementation. Training and model implementation are two essential elements for an efficient corrections system.

Training must be provided on two levels. There is a need for national and regional training. This serves the extremely important purpose of bringing together individuals from different settings, with different experience backgrounds, different biases. From this kind of personnel mix, real innovation can be achieved. The individuals selected for the national and regional training programs can become the leaders for the training that must be provided at institution or agency level. Both kinds of training are needed. Either one, by itself, is not sufficient.

Model design and implementation are essential ingredients in the corrections system. A conceptual model and implementing delivery systems for individual institutions or agencies must be produced. The synthesis of the conceptual model is a prerequisite to design of delivery systems.

Accomplishing the mission of corrections requires a scientific approach in which training and model implementation are coordinated, related, and combined to optimize system operation. This systematic approach relating personnel training and model implementation is achieved in the Adult Basic Education in Corrections Program.
Adult Basic Education in Corrections System

The Adult Basic Education in Corrections Program is a system exemplifying an interdisciplinary, interdepartmental, interagency marshalling of forces to achieve inmate welfare in state and federal institutions. The primary funding agency of the program is the Division of Adult Education, U. S. Office of Education. Forty of the fifty states are participating in the program by supporting participants in training seminars and system implementation in correctional institutions. The U. S. Bureau of Prisons has invested a large sum to support seminar participants from the federal system and implement models designed by participants. The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration has contributed to support of participants in the training seminars. Substantive contributions to the program have been made by state directors and commissioners of corrections, headquarters staff of the U. S. Bureau of Prisons, wardens and superintendents from state and federal institutions. The continued commitment to the ABEC Program by wardens and superintendents across the nation through their involvement in and contribution to the seminars is moot testimony to document the concern of corrections administrators for the welfare of the inmate population, and their desire to meet the national mandate for continuing improvement in the total justice system.

In four-fifths of the states over the last three years the wardens and superintendents have demonstrated their concern by sending their staff members to the ABEC regional and national seminars, and by supporting implementation of models created by their corrections personnel in
the seminars. In over 100 of the state and federal institutions there are staff members who have received specialized training in systems design and evaluation, and there are models of delivery systems of adult basic education in some stage of implementation. This contribution to inmate welfare has come about because of the training and model design provided through the Adult Basic Education in Corrections Program, and the dedication of corrections administrators who have endorsed trainees and supported model implementation.

**Personnel Training**

The Adult Basic Education in Corrections Program has provided basic, advanced, and post-advanced specialized training in systems approach for planning and evaluating adult basic education in correctional settings. Since 1969, 285 individuals received basic training in the seminars. Sixty-seven persons received advanced training. Nine individuals completed 18 weeks and 3 individuals completed 20 weeks of basic, advanced, and post-advanced training. Fifty-two persons have been trained as instructors. Fourteen individuals have implemented the role of instructional team leader.

The participants in the training program have included prison administrators, business managers, personnel officers, correctional officers, prison industries personnel, librarians, classification and parole personnel, academic and vocational administrators and supervisors, and teaching personnel. For the most part institutions and agencies have supported interdepartmental teams of trainees. One of the most important
spinoffs from the Adult Basic Education in Corrections Program has been the interdepartmental communication and cooperation which developed through the seminar participation.

The basic training seminars implement three primary goals: (1) increase of participants' knowledge and understanding of corrections, adult basic education, and systems approach; (2) development and improvement of skills for using systems techniques in planning and evaluation of adult basic education systems in corrections; and (3) fostering attitudes and feelings about the importance of positive change in corrections through systematic planning and evaluation. In addition to the three primary goals implementing changes which will take place in the participants as a result of the seminar experience, each seminar promised product outcomes in the form of models for institutional delivery systems created by the participant teams under supervision and direction of the instructional staff.

The advanced training seminars implemented three primary goals: (1) increase of participants' knowledge and understanding of corrections, systems approach, and adult education; (2) increase in skill proficiency in using systems techniques for planning and evaluation and development of specialized skills for teaching adults in short term training sessions; and (3) enhancing attitudes and feelings about the importance of positive change in corrections through systematic planning and evaluation. The advanced training seminars resulted in the design of delivery system models for conducting short-term training seminars. In the basic training program participants gain the essential knowledge and develop minimal skills for
use of systems techniques in planning and evaluating education in corrections. In the advanced seminars participants increase their knowledge and improve their skills to a higher level of proficiency, and learn how to develop and implement systems for effective planning, instructing, and evaluating in short-term training seminars. The advanced seminars prepare participants for leadership roles as instructors or technical assistants beyond their institutional assignments.

The need for training in national and regional seminars continues to be an important aspect of the training element in the corrections system. This need will be met in 1973 through a series of regional seminars which will focus on training participants to use systems approach for design of career education models. The need for preservice and inservice training at institutional and agency level is one of the priorities in corrections today. The ABEC Program is contributing to institutional and agency training through the instructional teams and technical assistants prepared to conduct training seminars and workshops and the provision of instructional packets especially designed for preservice or inservice workshops in institution or agency settings.

Model Implementation

The function of model implementation is carried out through the production of a conceptual model which is implemented in delivery systems designed to fit the environment and meet the needs of individual correctional institutions. The Adult Basic Education Program has produced a conceptual model and 115 delivery systems. The conceptual or generalized
model is used in simulation to test the real life situations in correctional institutions and direct the design of delivery system models. The conceptual model elucidates the process of designing the delivery system which will turn out identifiable products. The products of the adult basic education in corrections delivery systems are the inmates characterized by the manifest behaviors—cognitive, psychomotor, affective—resulting from the environment and experiences provided by the system. The ultimate outcome from operation of the delivery system will be the accomplishment of inmate welfare.

The conceptual model of adult basic education in corrections resulted from a specifiable sequence of events. These events followed the general model for producing a model described in Figure 1. The first step was the study of the real life situation in corrections in the nation. This was accomplished through survey, interview, and site visits to collect information which was analyzed. The existing situation was compared to an ideal one, defined by a consensus of prison administrators and inmates. The discrepancies between what was and what was depicted as the ideal constituted assessed needs. The task then was to find a solution to meet the needs. This was accomplished in early 1970 when in each of two independently held 24-day seminars models were created. The two models were synthesized into what became the trial version of the conceptual model of adult basic education in corrections. In 1971 sixty-six simulations were made, using the conceptual model. These simulations or tests carried out under conditions made to resemble as nearly as possible
the real world resulted in the design of delivery systems for management of adult basic education in sixty-six institutions, and also in the debugging of the conceptual model (Ryan, 1972). In 1972 forty-nine simulations were made by teams in the regional seminars, resulting in the design of delivery systems for instructional programs in their correctional institutions. Feedback from the simulations and analysis of the delivery system designs pointed out malfunctions in the conceptual model and directed revisions needed to correct design errors. The conceptual model of adult basic education in corrections has been evaluated and debugged, and has been implemented in 115 delivery systems. The conceptual model can continue to be used in simulation for solving problems in system operation in correctional institutions. Continued implementation of the conceptual model will be realized through the continuing design of delivery systems for individual correctional institutions.

**Adult Basic Education in Corrections Model.** The conceptual model of adult basic education in corrections is comprised of seven major elements: **ANALYZE REAL LIFE ENVIRONMENT (1.0)**; **STATE PHILOSOPHY (2.0)**; **ASSESS NEEDS (3.0)**; **DEFINE SYSTEM GOALS, SUBGOALS, OBJECTIVES (4.0)**; **FORMULATE PLAN (5.0)**; **DEVELOP/IMPLEMENT/EVALUATE PROGRAM (6.0)**; and **EVALUATE SYSTEM (7.0)** (Ryan, T. A.; Clark, J. D.; Hatrak, R. S.; Hinders, D.; Keeney, J. C. V.; Oresic, J.; Orrell, J. B.; Sessions, A. B.; and Streed, J. L., 1972). A flowchart model showing the relationships among these seven functions is shown in Figure 3.
ANALYZE REAL LIFE ENVIRONMENT (1.0). The basis for sound program planning is a clear picture of the system capability. This system description including all the elements which are part of the system universe can be accomplished by analysis. This is the process of identifying the elements in the system, determining the way in which these elements are related, separating the elements into discrete parts, and setting the limits to establish the system boundaries. Analysis of the real life environment must include an identification and description of institutional setting and functions and of the offender population. The institutional setting establishes the environment in which the system will operate. The functions include securing and controlling the institution, administering and maintaining the institution, and treating and correcting the offenders. The results of the analysis provide the basis for defining the system parameters, that is, the requirements of the system, including time, budget, personnel, space, facilities, and learners.

ESTABLISH PHILOSOPHY (2.0). The philosophy of corrections, adult basic education, and the institution or agency are stated in (2.0). A philosophy is equated with belief systems, assumptive bases, presuppositions, and propositions which guide program decision-making. The philosophy presents beliefs about desirability of and responsibility for changes in the behaviors of the offenders. The statement of philosophy undergirds the subsequent selection of strategies to facilitate correction. The philosophy determines who does what at what point in time to achieve what purpose.
ASSESS NEEDS (3.0). In (1.0) the real world was analyzed and parameters of the system were defined. In (2.0) the ideal world was described. The discrepancies between the real and ideal constitute needs. The needs are assessed in (3.0) by comparing the real world (1.0) with the ideal (2.0), and determining the differences.

DEFINE GOALS, SUBGOALS, AND OBJECTIVES (4.0). Once needs are identified then the task is one of defining goals, subgoals, and objectives. Clarity in stating the goals and objectives is of paramount importance. Systems procedures generally have been defined in terms of two basic operations: stating goals to resolve identified problems, and organizing procedures to achieve the defined goals. A critical point in using systems techniques is reached when system mission, goals, subgoals, and objectives are defined. Every element or function within the system is evaluated in terms of one basic question: Does the element or function contribute substantially to achievement of system goals? A spectrum of objectives should be available to implement broadly stated goals.

Four goals of adult basic education in corrections have been defined: the achievement of self realization; the development of economic efficiency; the achievement of civic responsibility; the development of social relationship capabilities. These goals must be implemented in each situation in subgoals and objectives that reflect the needs of that institution. The subgoals and objectives defined in (4.0) are management or system subgoals and objectives. The management objectives will direct the system operation. They should be subjected to a quality test (Ryan, 1972). This is done as
each objective is given the SPAMO test, considering it against criteria of specificity, pertinence, attainability, measurability, and observability.

FORMULATE PLAN (5.0). The crux of systems technology lies in the design of plans. The plan formulated in (5.0) provides for the mission statement, identification of resources and constraints, description of alternatives for reaching the goals, evaluation of alternatives, and selection of a plan. Synthesis is employed in formulating plans. Synthesis is a process of identifying unrelated elements, establishing relationships among them, combining the elements to create a new whole, and establishing the limits. Synthesis is synonymous with innovation. The formulation of a plan is akin to innovating.

DEVELOP/IMPLEMENT/EVALUATE PROGRAM (6.0). In this subsystem the plan formulated in (5.0) is activated. This requires the continuing survey of research to feed into the program development and operation the empirical findings from learning psychology, social groups, and human growth and development. It is here that curriculum guides are developed, hardware and software are evaluated and selected, potential learners are screened and assigned to appropriate learning environments, and pre-and protests are administered to check on instructional strategies.

EVALUATE SYSTEM (7.0). Measurement of outcomes is a precondition to evaluation of plans formulated in (5.0) and validation of strategies implemented in (6.0). Measurement precedes evaluation, as data from measuring operations provide the basis for determining amount and direction of change. Evaluation is the process of determining the value of
performance. Two models of evaluation should be implemented: internal or self-evaluation and external or outside audit. Evaluation should be made on two time dimensions, immediate and long-term or followup. The results of evaluation feed back into the system and control system modifications. Through evaluation the effectiveness of the system is determined and accountability is achieved.

**Delivery System Implementation.** Implementation of the conceptual model is achieved in the design of delivery systems. In the flowchart model for producing a system (Figure 2) it can be seen that the creation of the conceptual model (2.0) and the simulation resulting in design of delivery systems (3.0) is only half way to meeting the challenge for improvement in corrections. The system fabrication or initiating the operation of the system still has to take place in (4.0), and the system must be maintained, that is, operated in (5.0). Putting the delivery systems into operation is no small order. Complete implementation of the conceptual model will be realized only when each of the delivery systems has been initiated and is in operation. To achieve this goal two ingredients are needed: a design for implementing delivery systems in correctional institutions; and corrections personnel to support the implementation plan. The corrections personnel are here. The task is to create the design for delivery system implementation.
Conclusion

The two essential elements for realizing the goal of inmate welfare are personnel training and model implementation. Training must be provided at national and regional level and in institutional and agency settings. The conceptual model of adult basic education in corrections has been designed, evaluated, and debugged. The model has been implemented successfully to produce 115 delivery systems. The challenge at hand is twofold: continuing use of the conceptual model to produce delivery systems; and the initiation and operation of the delivery systems in correctional institutions.
References


Figure 1. Model for producing a model
Figure 2. Model for Producing and Implementing a System
Figure 3. Conceptual model of Adult Basic Education in Corrections
The Adult Basic Education in Corrections model discussed in this paper is based on data developed as part of a project funded by Grants Nos. OEG 0-9-211006-4248 (323), OEG 0-70-3431 (323), and OEG 0-71-3530 (323) from the United States Office of Education, Division of Adult Education.