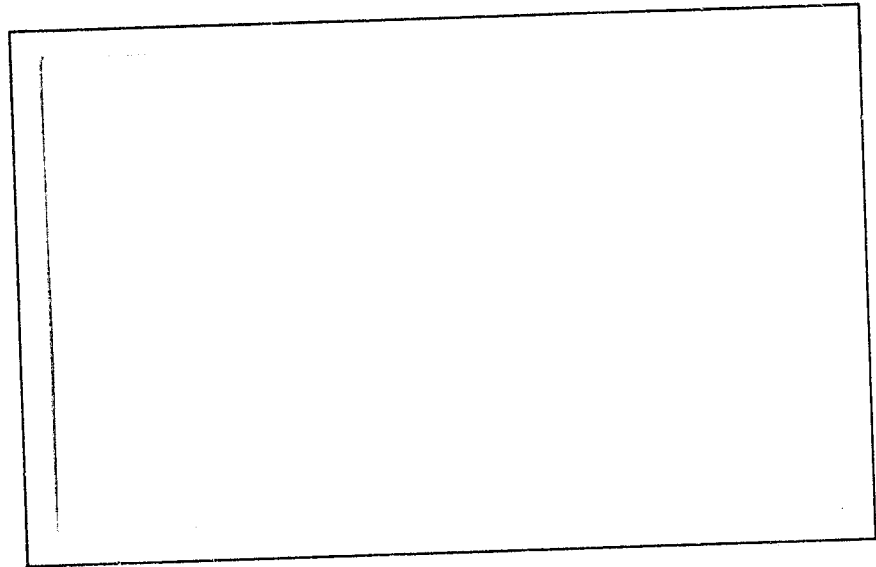
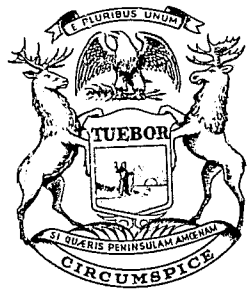


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# Program Bureau Report



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Michigan  
Department of Corrections

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS:

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION  
AND GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Report Number 3

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Program Bureau  
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is: 1) to describe the processes and objectives of placement of residents into school programs and classrooms, 2) to discuss the history and implementation of instructional systems currently used in the educational programs; 3) to identify problems which seem to impede more effective operation of educational programs offered within the Michigan Department of Corrections.

The academic programs examined and described this year are the Adult Basic Education (ABE), the Pre-General Educational Development (Pre-GED) and the GED. Because the Pre-GED and GED programs are frequently combined, they are examined together as the GED program. These academic programs were selected for study because they serve the largest number of clients and are administered at more than one correctional facility.

Method

Sources of Information for the Evaluation

The information for the evaluation was gathered from the following sources:

1. Instructors in each of the six programs were interviewed for information on classroom procedures and instructional systems used in their classrooms.

2. School administrators, principals and school counselors were interviewed for information on record systems and the process of school program placement.
3. Central Office educational coordinating staff were interviewed for information on program planning, development, goals, and objectives.
4. Pertinent Departmental policy directives were examined to determine what educational programs are supposed to accomplish.
5. The standards on educational processes found in Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, sponsored by American Corrections Association (ACA Manual), were consulted for their educational guidelines.

Information was obtained from the sources listed above as 1, 2, and 3 through the use of open-ended interviews. Each interview lasted approximately two hours. This approach was employed because of the exploratory and documentary nature of the study. The open-ended interviews allowed the researchers to explore the unique features of individual facilities and programs as well as features common to the system. In reporting the results of this examination, an attempt has been made to keep separate the typical and the idiosyncratic. The present study concentrates on the typical; the information specific to individual facilities will be presented in a later report.

#### Content and Organization of Introduction and Report

The introduction identifies the instructional approach used in the academic programs, and its background, the problems or educational needs which led to adoption of the present instructional approach; a description of the instructional approach and its applicability and objectives for Corrections; requisites for effective implementation of educational programs; and the development of the instructional system.

A definition of the academic programs follows the introduction of the report. The present processes and procedures of placement into school programs and classroom are described. Problems and the impact of problems which impede those processes are presented. Finally, some recommendations for each problem area are suggested.

#### Impetus for Change

The instructional approach used in the academic programs is Competency-Based Instruction (CBI). The reason for its development within the Department can be traced to both the local needs of the Department of Corrections and the national educational climate.

#### The Correctional Environment

The adoption of the CBI approach was partially a response to the negative impact of resident transfers within Corrections. When residents transferred from one facility to another, their educational programs were interrupted and frequently concluded. When residents did not complete educational programs, they left without the academic and voca-

tional skills they needed for meaningful integration into society. It was also costly when funds were appropriated for educational programs and residents did not complete those programs. Often residents did not complete programs because educational programs across facilities did not allow open enrollment. When residents transferred, they could not readily be accommodated into educational programs.

Another impediment encountered which discouraged clients from completing programs when they transferred was differences in educational programs. Educational programs were autonomous: though all facilities might have a GED program, the goals and procedures of the program could vary considerably by facility. For this reason, it was difficult for residents to continue their educational programs at different facilities at the time of transfer.

In addition to the disruption caused by transfers, there were other inadequacies in the educational approaches within Corrections, leading to the development of a new educational approach. Before 1975, the instructional approach in educational programs was very similar to that of a traditional high school classroom. The homogeneity of all students was assumed. Students began the educational program together, proceeded at the same rate, and completed the course at the same time. The approach treats the class as a unit. The main disadvantage of this approach is that it fails to account for individual differences which includes educational backgrounds, levels, and needs of students.

Furthermore, many residents entering educational programs experienced failure in schools which have used this traditional approach. For these

students, many of whom have dropped out of school, traditional education was not an attractive option. For them, school represented failure and not success.

#### Educational Diversity - Local and National

The educational programs in Corrections did not respond to the individual differences and needs of residents. Residents entering educational programs had a variety of educational needs, backgrounds, interests, and performance levels.

But the student population in Corrections was not the only population characterized by educational diversity. In the 60's and 70's, educators in schools throughout the nation confronted the fact that different educational needs were not met in the traditional educational programs. The recognition induced educators to develop a new instructional approach which would respond to the educational differences of students. Competency-based instruction was one such approach.

#### Competency-Based Instruction

Competency-based education is individualized and allows for different rates of learning styles, lifestyles, interests, and backgrounds of students. The first step in the process of establishing a competency-based instructional program is deciding the goal for the educational program. This is often referred to as the final outcome of a program. It can be certification for a GED, a certificate in welding, or reading proficiency at a 6.0 grade level. The second step of the process is the development of performance objectives which specify what must be known

performance objectives which specify what must be known and in what progression. Finally, the instructional approach which best teaches the mastery of the objectives is determined.

Competency-based instruction usually functions in the following manner. Students entering an educational program with a competency-based focus are administered a pre-test which includes what must be known to master the objectives and achieve the goal. The pre-test informs the instructor about the competencies of students and determines what skills must be learned. A course map or plan describes what will be learned and in what sequence. It outlines the steps of the process. Though the plan is individually prescribed and differs for each student, the criteria and objectives for the educational programs remain constant. When the course map has been developed, the students work independently on the instructional material. A record of personal progress maintained by both instructor and student indicates what steps or modules have been mastered and what steps are yet necessary for achievement of the goal. When all lessons have been completed, a post-test is administered. This test measures what objectives have been mastered and whether the goal has been reached. If the objectives are not mastered with a certain level of proficiency, students work on the material until they can master it.

#### Features of the Competency-Based Instruction Model

Instructional materials, resources, and guidance are provided by the instructor in a competency-based instructional system. But the approach

is characterized by independence on the part of the students. They manage their learning experience by working at their own pace and learn the instructional material they need to achieve their goals. One of the important aspects of the competency-based model of education is its potential for being positive. It is based on students' progress and achievements and not their failures. They are not compared to other students; neither must they compete with them. Judgments are not made about the present level of students.

Robert F. Mager, one leading proponent of competency-based instruction, developed a model for this approach to education. It is recognized nationally and also attracted the attention of local educators. In the 70's, there was a pervasive attitude among educational staff within Corrections that Mager's educational model would be appropriate for educational programs within the Department. As a result, the CBI program was based on Mager's model of education which indicates the principal features of a competency-based instruction program.

#### The Applicability of CBI for Educational Programs in Corrections

It is understandable why the competency-based approach to education appealed to program planners and educational staff within Corrections. Theoretically, it is more appropriate than traditional approaches for several reasons.

1. Its format is conducive to individualized instruction, thereby accounting for diverse educational backgrounds, interests, and needs of residents. If used properly, it can provide residents an opportunity to succeed.

2. Its step-by-step learning process has its roots in industry and is very easily adaptable for vocational education.
3. It allows open enrollment so residents who transfer can be accommodated into educational programs at new facility placements.
4. Adopting one primary educational delivery system with a uniform goal and coterminous objectives for an educational program allows for continuous enrollment for residents who transfer so they can continue and complete their educational programs regardless of facility placement.

#### Objectives of the Department

Because of its appropriateness for residents, it was anticipated that use of the competency-based format in educational programs would meet a two-fold objective of the Department of Corrections. This dual objective was the reduction of the attrition rate in classrooms and the completion of educational programs by residents.

Departmental policy directives and procedures establish some of the educational goals for educational programs. One of the directives specifies the use of competency-based instruction for all educational programs. Educational policies which further specify objectives of educational programs are in the process of development.

Existing standards for educational programs also list some of the important qualities for competency-based educational programs in correctional settings. (ACA Manual). Some of the characteristics of an educational

program is that it "be continuous, individualized, enable residents to proceed at their own pace, give students feedback on their progress, meet the needs of the inmate population, allow flexible scheduling, and have measurable performance objectives."

#### Requisites and Importance of Effective Implementation

The extent to which departmental goals can be met through educational programs and their instructional approaches is dependent on how effectively those educational programs and instructional systems are implemented. If programs are not implemented effectively, it is difficult to ascertain their true value.

Several factors were examined to indicate how effectively the competency-based approach was implemented in the educational programs. The following requisites, though not exhaustive, were identified as important components for the successful operation of the instructional educational system. They should have occurred if the program is to operate as it was planned.

1. All the required resources for the instructional system should be adequately developed and available to the users.
2. Staff training for all of the participants is necessary. It should include demonstrations of the operation of the educational system; establish provisions for staff meetings so initial problems, impediments, and effectiveness of the system can be discussed and allow for follow-up meetings for the purpose of updating, revising, and

improving the system. Staff training should also include making attempts to convince the staff of the program's merits.

3. The diagnostic instrument should be compatible with the instructional material. A competency-based format of education requires the use of competency-based testing instruments. This is important for two reasons. Competency-based tests determine residents' educational needs. Once an assessment of residents' needs is conducted, the competency-based instructional system can meet those needs. Secondly, an adequate classroom needs assessment allows residents to be matched to appropriate educational programs at the time of transfer.
4. An effective system for transferring records which convey information about educational achievements and needs for residents must exist. This is important so that when residents transfer, they can continue their educational programs with a minimum of needs assessment activities and disruption.
5. One instructional approach operates across facilities with uniformity and standardization of educational programs.

The educational programs and the development of their instructional systems are described in terms of the requisites for effective implementation.

ADAPTATION OF CBI WITHIN THE MICHIGAN  
CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

Chronology

In 1975, an associate of Robert F. Mager, David Cram, contacted by the educational staff of Corrections, led a two-day workshop for educational staff on the topic of writing performance objectives. This workshop was attended by many staff members, not all of whom were receptive to the ideas of Mager or education based on performance objectives.

Cram was invited a second time for the purpose of introducing Mager's model of competency-based instruction. A smaller group of teachers and administrators within Corrections attended this workshop. At this workshop, the concepts of competency-based instruction were introduced and practice modules (lessons) in the competency-based format were written. The decision to adopt Mager's approach for educational programs in Corrections was made following this workshop upon the recommendation of those who had attended.

Shortly after the workshop, teaching staff in Corrections were offered a slightly modified version of this workshop by Corrections educational administration staff. One week was spent training staff to write modules and another week was spent developing instructional curriculum materials in Mager's competency-based format.



### Development of the Curriculum

Curriculum committees for each educational program were formed for the purpose of developing the CBI program. In addition to an education administrator, the committees consisted of teachers, some of whom had volunteered to participate while others were recommended by their school principals. Not all teachers participated in the development of the instructional system because some thought participation was voluntary and refused to participate, while others reported that they were not informed of meetings held for the purpose of developing curricula. In academic programs, school principals chaired the committees developing academic curricula, while the Central Office Vocational Coordinator chaired for vocational educational programs.

### Existing Curricula

Some limited research was conducted by the committees to determine what instructional curricula were already available prior to the development of CBI. Some of these resources or portions of them were considered adequate and usable in conjunction with CBI since this approach did not exclude the use of other resources. In fact, some of the resources were used in their entirety with only minor adaptations for the competency-based format.

Other resources which were on hand at that time were found to be inadequate or incompatible with the new approach. For example, some were deficient according to both educational coordinating staff and teachers because they were not pertinent for the adult student. Others did not

use the competency-based format which would allow open and continuous enrollment while responding to individual educational needs of residents. Also, it became clear that the instructional system had to be acceptable to the teachers who would be using that system. In this regard, teachers, who believed they knew the educational needs of the residents and had to make the decisions on how to meet those needs in the classrooms, wanted a role in the development of the curriculum. Central Office educational coordinating staff also believed that teachers should have the responsibility of developing the curriculum; program development by teachers also had support of the Michigan Educational Association, who specifically proposed that program development should be conducted on a local level.

For these reasons, then, the curriculum which was in effect at that time was abandoned for a new curriculum which was to be compatible with the CBI approach and would be developed by teachers.

Once the curriculum committees had been established, individual teachers on the committee either volunteered for or were issued an assignment by the chairperson of the committee. These assignments were based on the staff member's expertise and knowledge of particular subject matter. The assignment consisted of writing instructional material in the competency-based "modular" format for meeting one performance objective. This material was then reviewed by the full committee for revision and editing purposes.

The typical CBI module includes the following elements:

1. A title.
2. Statement of the performance objective.
3. A sample of competency-based test items.
4. A narrative describing what is to be learned.
5. List of additional resources.

Though the institutional elements of CBI are delineated for each module, the system was not designed to be a comprehensive, automated, self-teaching, programmed learning system. Methodology for teaching is neither prescribed nor integrated in modules. Therefore, skillful teaching and presentation of the modules is the sine qua non of a successful CBI system. Obviously this means that a variety of approaches could be used by teachers to help students master modules.

#### List of Additional Resources and Aids used in Implementing the System

The curriculum committee often took the responsibility of compiling a list of additional resources which are to be used with each module. They are the textbooks, tools, or machinery required for mastery of each module. These resources are as much a part of each module as the other elements included in the module.

The particular resources were chosen primarily because they were already available in educational programs.

Once the resources had been listed, they were considered required for use in the classrooms. Other "recommended" resources could be used in addition to these which were required. However, these had to be approved by the school principal for use on a trial basis.

The CBI instructional approach was implemented Department-wide on December 1, 1977 in all educational programs except Adult Basic Education which uses an instructional package produced commercially by Education Developmental Laboratory (EDL).

Some revisions in the modules have been made since the CBI model was implemented. However, in the interest of preserving a uniform model, revisions remain the responsibility of curriculum committees rather than individual teachers or principals.

While uniformity across facilities was one factor which prompted adoption of the CBI model, some variation did occur in the way the model was implemented and operated at each facility. Such variations will be addressed, in part, as they bear upon the academic programs which have been selected for examination in this report.

## SCHOOL PROGRAM PLACEMENT - THE PROCESS

Shortly after residents arrive at their facility placement, they go through the process of program classification. At this time, some assessment of residents' needs occurs, and an assignment is issued based on those needs. One of these assignments may be school. If so, which school program is assigned is usually decided on the basis of yet another needs assessment which occurs at the school. Residents generally report to the school principal or a school counselor for this assessment which is called school program placement. Since the placement process differs across facilities, the "typical" process is described. Two activities, testing and interviewing of the residents, frequently occur. Testing takes place first.

### Testing

Residents are administered a test by the principal or school counselor for the purpose of estimating grade level for general placement into the ABE, GED, or vocational educational program. This is accomplished by administering a standardized norm-referenced test, despite the fact that use of these tests has been strongly discouraged by the Director of Education. Some of the tests given are the Oral Reading Inventory, the EDL placement test, Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), and, most frequently, the California Achievement Test (CAT). Sometimes the locator of the CAT is administered to determine which level of the CAT should be administered.

At the time of school program placement, test results are not used to provide diagnostic information on residents' skill deficiencies and competencies; neither is instruction prescribed on the basis of the tests administered at this time.

The Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), administered in R&GC, yields a general grade level, but according to educational staff, the SAT scores are not consistently available at the time of program placement, and when they are available, their reliability is questionable; so the CAT is the standardized test usually offered.

### Placement Interview

After the residents are tested, they are interviewed by the school principal or a school counselor. This interview occurs both to obtain information from the residents and to offer residents information. The type of information elicited from residents includes (1) their academic background, (2) the residents' interests and future ambitions, especially vocational interests, and (3) achievement at previous facility placements.

A dialog ensues which frequently entails the following aspects.

1. The program assignment is issued, and residents are encouraged to accept their assignment. Some discussion of the test scores, which indicate academic level at which the student is likely to be placed, occurs at this time.
2. Expectations for residents are established. This includes discussion of information about their schedules, classes, and appointments.
3. Future educational goals for residents are established by the interviewer and residents.

4. The possibilities and realities awaiting residents in the community following release are explored.

According to educational administration, the personal contact with the resident, because of its potential to motivate and establish rapport with residents, is the most important reason for this interview.

#### Problems Related to Needs Assessment for Placement Into School Programs

The process of needs assessment occurs in both R&GC and at the time of program classification. Both the R&GC recommendations and program classification decisions for residents were made based on information derived from testing and interviewing.

In R&GC residents are given the SAT to determine educational need and are interviewed so their interests for programs can be determined. At the time of program classification, residents are interviewed for purposes of determining their interests for educational programs. Both sessions of testing and interviewing occur at points in the process prior to placement into school programs.

According to principals, the second, seemingly redundant, needs assessment at the time of program placement into school is necessary. The main reason for this is that changes in both R&GC recommendation and program classification decisions must be made at this stage. Changes must be made for several reasons:

1. Information on the needs assessment of residents from R&GC, which includes R&GC recommendations and SAT scores (Transcase Form) and

is contained in institutional files of residents, is not systematically available. School principals report that by the time the files with the relevant information arrive through the mail, residents have already been placed in school. It is not systematically sent when residents are transferred between facilities.

2. When R&GC recommendations and SAT scores are available (Transcase Form) prior to program placement, they are frequently not taken seriously by educational staff for the following reason:

- A. The circumstances under which the SAT is given and R&GC recommendations are made are less than ideal if not altogether traumatic for residents who have recently been admitted. The validity and reliability of the SAT test results are therefore suspect, and the recommendations for residents made in R&GC are of dubious value. According to staff, such circumstances may cause residents to agree to recommendations which they later find unacceptable.

- B. Most educational staff members in addition to criticisms of the conditions which prevail when the SAT is administered, are critical of the SAT as a standardized indicator of grade level. They question its reliability even though, as was later discovered, the CAT and SAT do not differ radically in their results.

- C. The resident's SAT scores and R&GC recommendations may be out-of-date if it was some time ago that residents were admitted to R&GC.

3. Previous classification decisions involving educational programs may not be appropriate for residents for the following reasons:

- A. The program assignment may not be available at the facility where the resident has been placed.
- B. The program was assigned merely because an opening existed, perhaps with little or no regard to residents' needs or interests.
- C. The program may have since been completed.
- D. Residents may no longer want the educational program assigned at the time of program classification.

4. Academic information about residents' past program involvement and achievements at other facility placements usually does not accompany the resident when a transfer occurs, and hence, is often unavailable. However, even when this information is available, it is often ignored. The main reason for this is the claim made by educational staff that the same educational programs operate differently across facilities. They have come to this conclusion because of discrepancies found between residents' current academic levels and those indicated by other facilities. (This is discussed more extensively under Records Systems.)

Educational administration report that there is a need for accurate academic information at the time of needs assessment for school placement, but the information that is available is often not considered useful.

#### Impact of the Problems

When academic information is not available or is incorrect at the time of transfer, each facility school takes the responsibility for conducting its own needs assessment prior to school placement. This of course, results in the repetition of a time-consuming process for staff and residents which is frequently unnecessary and, thus, in any case, constitutes an inefficient use of resources.

## DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The academic programs examined in this report were selected on the basis of the relatively large numbers of clients they serve. These programs may be described in terms of their characteristics which include course objectives and goal, the target group to be served, the resources and curricula used, and other information which further defines the programs. The programs, which consist of two main types, are described first.

### Academic Programs

#### Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Adult Basic Education is the academic program recommended for residents with a reading level below 6.0 as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) which is administered to residents at the time they enter R&GC. Though basic education includes instruction in reading, math and communication skills, the terminal objective of this program is competency in reading at a 6.0 level. This is an important objective because the ability to read at the 6.0 level, or beyond, is a prerequisite for entering other educational and vocational programs offered within the Department.

Reading at a 6.0 level requires knowledge and reinforcement of many basic skills. Adults who read below the 6.0 level typically have a wide range of skill deficiencies. Developing instructional material to remedy those skill deficiencies is difficult to accomplish and involves time-consuming research. The curriculum constructed must be both

comprehensive and detailed in content for instruction in a wide range of skills. For this reason, teachers did not develop an instructional system for the ABE program. A commercial instructional system developed by Education Development Laboratories (EDL) had been used satisfactorily in ABE educational programs in some facilities for several years. This system was considered adequate for meeting students' needs in ABE programs principally for the following reasons:

1) It has a competency-based format which allows for open, continuous enrollment while accounting for individual needs of students, 2) It is also considered comprehensive, 3) Not only does it teach the necessary basic reading skills, but it is also a "self-contained" system - that is, the system includes the instructional curriculum as well as the teaching methodology; the resources of the system include work books and audio/visual teaching machines. For these reasons, then, EDL was purchased and implemented in ABE programs system-wide.

These positive features of EDL should not be construed to mean that the ABE student can function with complete independence in the classroom. The instructor continues to be very necessary to the learning process in ABE programs, primarily because students who are learning the basic reading skills require constant reinforcement in those skills. The lower the level of the reader, the more reinforcement becomes necessary. Because of the way EDL is constructed, some of this reinforcement is provided by the instructional system.

### Construction of the EDL Curriculum

EDL consists of seven levels (RA through FA) which are roughly equivalent to grade levels 0 to 6.0. Within each level, there is a sequence of approximately 30 cycles. Each cycle contains four to five lessons which provide instruction for the same skills but use different approaches. Thus the cycles provide, by variety of presentation and repetition, the reinforcement in the skill so necessary for retention.

### Operation of EDL - Starting Point and Criterion of Completion

A few different methods are used by instructors to determine the appropriate level for students beginning EDL. An EDL test which determines placement for students in levels RA through CA is available. Since EDL does not yet have a test to determine placement in levels DA through FA the California Achievement Test (CAT) is frequently administered to determine a grade level which corresponds to a DA - FA level. Instructors also determine levels by having students work on a certain level, and if it is too difficult or frustrating, students are moved back to a level they can master.

Once the level has been determined, students work on each lesson in a cycle until it is mastered with at least 70 percent accuracy or completed to the teacher's satisfaction. When all lessons of the cycle have thus been mastered, the student begins the next cycle and progresses until all cycles in the level are mastered. S/he would then proceed to the next level until completion.

Presently there are two criteria used to determine completion of ABE programs. Though the EDL instructional system is not based on grade

level, mastery of the FA level, which is roughly equivalent to a 6.0 reading level, is frequently used to determine completion of the ABE program. In addition, it is common for some teachers to use a 6.0 grade level on the CAT for determining completion of the ABE program. Residents completing the ABE program are not usually issued a certificate indicating completion.

A reading committee of ABE teachers who use EDL are in the process of developing a competency-based test which will determine a student's competencies in EDL, levels DA through FA. This test may soon be the established criterion for placement in the ABE educational program and entry into the GED program. Until this instrument is developed, teachers will likely administer a test, the CAT or other standardized tests, to determine placement and completion of ABE. But current educational policy which specifies attainment of a grade level, is currently being revised to indicate that completion of the FA level is the criterion of ABE completion. Perhaps when this policy is implemented, standardized tests will no longer be administered in ABE classrooms.

### General Educational Development (GED)

Because the pre-GED and GED programs are not separate, distinct educational programs in many facilities, GED is described as one educational program.

Students who are eligible for the program must read at a 6.0 grade level. The target group for GED are all those students who have tested levels of 6.0 and higher in reading, math, and social studies. The primary goal and criterion of completion for the program is the acquisition of the GED

certificate. The focus of this program is on preparing students to successfully take the GED test. Such preparation includes study of many subjects such as Reading, English, Math, and Social Studies. The system and resources which provide instruction for the GED, is CBI, the competency-based model of education developed by teachers within corrections.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMS

### Needs Assessment at the Classroom Level

#### Initial Placement

After program placement, residents report to their classrooms where another needs assessment is conducted. The teacher is responsible for the classroom needs assessment, and this usually consists of testing residents.

At the time of program placement, residents are tested to determine approximate grade level so they can be placed in the appropriate educational program. Once placed, residents are tested at the time they arrive at ABE and GED classrooms for the purpose of acquiring two kinds of information: grade level, and competencies and skills of residents.

Residents are tested so that teachers can identify grade levels with more specificity. The tests administered for this purpose are standardized norm-referenced tests. The norm-referenced test commonly administered in academic programs is the CAT. Teachers who administer the CAT or another norm-referenced test for placement of residents do so for mainly two reasons.

1. The model for educational programs is based on grade level according to existing policy. Since academic programs have been defined in terms of grade ranges, teachers administer norm-referenced tests to determine grade levels for those students entering their classrooms.



2. Another reason for administering a norm-referenced test, notably the CAT, is the claim that the reliability and validity of the SAT scores from R&GC are questionable due to the conditions of administration (this claim was also used to justify administration of the CAT at the time of school program placement). In addition, scores from R&GC may be outdated. Scores obtained from other facilities are also distrusted.

Teachers also test residents entering their classrooms for the purpose of identifying their particular skill deficiencies and competencies. Even though both may be used, competency-based, rather than norm-referenced, tests are used to accomplish this because their results can be used to prescribe the instruction necessary for each student to master the skills in which s/he is found deficient.

In the ABE program, competency-based tests administered are those provided by the EDL instructional system. However, as was mentioned previously, EDL does not provide testing of levels DA through FA; thus, a committee of teachers in the Corrections' ABE program is developing an instrument based on the EDL instructional system, levels DA through FA, which will accomplish this.

In the GED program, the competency-based tests of the CBI instructional system are used to determine the instructional needs and competencies of students.

Teachers report that they need both a standardized test score as well as competency-based test scores, for the most precise indication of where students should be placed in their classrooms.

#### Other Testing in Academic Programs

In addition to testing conducted to determine initial placement, the administration of both competency-based and norm-referenced tests continues while residents are enrolled in academic programs.

Competency-based tests are administered to indicate educational needs of residents and the instruction necessary to fulfill those needs. Monitoring the students' progress in the curriculum and making adjustments in it is the primary reason for their administration.

Standardized testing also continues after residents are enrolled. One of the reasons for its administration is to monitor the progress of students' grade levels. Teachers report that residents request standardized testing because of the positive reinforcement which occurs with advancements in grade levels. (Results from competency-based tests which inform residents what skills they have mastered are apparently less meaningful to them.) At some facilities standardized testing is conducted every six to eight weeks and at the time of program completion for the purpose of measuring these advancements.

In GED programs another norm-referenced test, the pre-GED or GED half test, is administered to indicate students' readiness for taking the GED test.

Much of the standardized testing occurs in response to demands of the system, i.e., testing following facility transfers, which prompts teachers to produce evidence of student achievement with a grade level. These demands explain why more reliance is placed on standardized tests scores than on those of CBI tests which indicate competency attainment, or progress made in the curriculum. Information about competencies seems to be as meaningless outside the classrooms as it is to residents within who want to know grade levels.

It is reasonable to assume that as long as grade level is considered the criteria for advancement, teachers will be apprehensive without standardized test scores. (Attempts made in ABE, to equate the levels in the EDL curriculum with grade levels are another illustration of the importance of grade level.) In addition, as long as such importance is attached to grade level, it is understandable why teachers lack the confidence that their curriculum represents what students should be learning. The fact that a competency-based educational model is operative while norm-referenced scores are still obtained, shows a more general lack of confidence in the current educational model.

#### Problems Related to Current Testing Practices

Regardless of what educational model is used in classrooms, residents are tested frequently. The frequency of administering standardized tests came to the attention of Central Office educational coordinating staff who have prohibited use of the CAT in educational programs. Their opposition to its use stems from the following claims about standardized testing practices:

1. Tests are administered frequently. The result is that students learn to take the tests instead of the skills they need to learn. This practice

also reduces the reliability and validity of the results.

2. Administering norm-referenced tests is unnecessary in a competency-based model of education because those tests are based on population norms and not performance criteria.
3. Standardized tests are culturally biased and also are child-oriented. This lessens their appropriateness for adult students in Corrections.
4. Conditions for administering tests vary across facilities. This lack of standardization explains differences in test scores across facilities. Also, educational staff members who are administering standardized tests are not necessarily qualified to do so. School psychologists who are usually trained to administer tests are not the only staff members who administer them.
5. Standardized test scores do not indicate grade level with great accuracy. The testing error could vary over three grade levels. Yet they are used to "place" students instead of diagnose their educational needs. (Interpretation of the diagnostic information from standardized tests involves time-consuming analysis.)
6. Testing, which is conducted because residents demand it or teachers want to do it are not, in themselves, adequate reasons for administering standardized tests. They should not be used for motivating students.
7. Present testing practices were criticized most severely because they are administered at the expense of other activities. According to Central Office educational coordinating staff, residents who are often apprehen-

sive about the prospect of attending school, are frequently ordered to appear at testing when they arrive at the school, before any educational staff have talked with residents or established rapport with them. This further alienates residents who have likely "failed" in traditional schools. Testing is also conducted at the expense of class time and teaching/learning activities. When some students are being tested, school is frequently closed for others who are not taking the test.

These claims made by Central Office educational coordinating staff demonstrate some of the more negative aspects associated with testing residents. They should be considered seriously.

Other concerns related to testing practices were raised by psychological services staff in 1976. At that time, an analysis of departmental testing was conducted by the testing coordinator. According to the analysis: (1) teachers or teacher aides administered testing at their facilities, (2) testing was conducted frequently and various tests were used, though the CAT scores were used extensively, and (3) testing practices varied widely. One of the recommendations which followed this analysis suggested eliminating the duplication of testing and conducting a correlational analysis of instruments to determine the extent of inter-test agreement.

In January, 1978 a correlation of two tests, the CAT and SAT was produced by staff at the Muskegon Correctional Facility. (One of the reasons for the study was to "support their budgetary requests.") At that time, MCF staff were visited by psychological services staff and the testing coordinator to investigate the educational test scoring discrepancy that MCF staff indi-

cated was occurring between the R&GC SAT, and CAT results. However, of the sample of residents who had been administered both tests, some residents had R&GC scores as much as five years old, while other residents had transferred from R&GC to other facilities where they could have been exposed to educational programs prior to Muskegon. A more valid sample would have included resident with both recent CAT and R&GC SAT scores who had not been exposed to educational programs elsewhere.

In spite of the questionable sampling procedures, the MCF analysis produced a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between the two tests of .87, which indicates that reliability between the two test results is high. Thus, the R&GC scores may not be as unreliable as has been suggested.

#### Impact of the Testing

Educational staff across facilities acknowledge that residents are tested too frequently. But they continue to test residents while they are in academic programs because they do not trust tests acquired from the R&GC or those from other facilities. Each time residents transfer to different facilities they are tested, frequently with the same test.

The fact that educational staff are familiar with the procedure and testing practices at their facilities, does not mean that tests are administered "better" at their facilities. Test scores for the same residents which differ across facilities may indicate that standardized testing is conducted inappropriately at those facilities.

When testing is conducted frequently and inappropriately, precision and accuracy of test scores may actually diminish because the reliability and

validity are reduced. It is also not clear how repeated testing, a time-consuming activity for residents and students, helps students achieve.

Some of these issues and others were raised as a result of the MCF testing study. A psychological services staff member who attended the meeting with MCF staff over the testing issue, explored some of the following implications of testing at individual facilities:

The implications of continuing under the present program are that the Department can expect an increase in cost in the area of personnel and materials as the various other institutions attempt to implement their own testing programs.

As our conference progressed at Muskegon it became clearly obvious to me that the nature of the conflict was really not a difference in scores on the Stanford Achievement Test vs the California Achievement Test. This was particularly obvious in light of the Correlation Coefficient that Muskegon produced. What does seem to be at the heart of the issue is attempts on the part of other institutions to become more autonomous in their testing program. What presently exists because of the autonomy strivings of the other institutions is an incredible amount of duplicate testing and an unnecessary waste of State funds. In addition, we have the contributing factor of attempts on individual teachers' parts to develop their own independent program. If we continue under that present program, we can expect numerous other attempts at justifying their desire to develop their own autonomous testing program. From a cost factor viewpoint, as well as an accountability viewpoint, this seems to be the least attractive approach to testing on a state-wide basis.

If costliness and lack of test standardization are the results of autonomous testing programs at facilities, these programs may have a negative impact on residents and the Department's budget.

#### Recommendations - Testing

1. A standardized test score which indicates grade levels, the SAT, is already available from the R&GC. All residents in R&GC should be tested. Unless it is outdated, (administered more than a year ago) it should be available at the time of transfer and considered seriously as the instrument for determining grade and reading level.
2. It should continue to be administered at the R&GC, where conditions for administering tests, are in the process of being standardized and improved.
3. The American Psychological Association has established standards for administering educational and psychological tests which specify the necessary conditions for testing and qualifications for test administrators.  
  
Compliance with these standards should be observed, where possible, by those who have the responsibility for administering standardized tests within Corrections. In addition, testing should be conducted by those with demonstrated training in psychological or educational test administration.
4. There is no reason to assume that the CAT, the norm-referenced test used extensively at the facilities, is superior to the SAT. (See discussion of correlational analysis.) In fact, Alan C. Purves in his critical review of the CAT (The Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook: Tests and Reviews, Vol. 1) reports the neglect of certain aspects of language which limit the CAT's capacity to test achievement.

The instructions to the CAT warn the user to exercise caution when using CAT grade equivalency scores for placement purposes. Furthermore, it should not be necessary to administer norm-referenced tests in competency-based educational programs. Testing at facilities with the exception of the Pre-GED test should be discontinued, since the SAT score which yields grade level, is available. The classroom tests which should be administered are competency-based and diagnostic tests.

Relevant educational models and policies should be altered to reflect the requirements of the instructional system. If entry into programs is based on criteria and not grade levels, that should be specified in existing standards, policies, and procedures. Procedures should also specify what academic testing should and should not occur and when interviewing residents is appropriate.

5. More coordination at some facilities between the process of program classification and school program placement is necessary so that needs assessment activities for residents are not duplicated, and residents are placed in the appropriate school programs. Cassidy Lake Technical School, for example, has combined the two processes successfully. At certain other facilities, program classification presently occurs without the presence of school staff representatives.

(Though most principals are reluctant to alter decisions made in program classification, some do because of "errors" made. Perhaps one way this could be avoided is by having school staff attend program classification.)

#### Interviewing and Testing at the Placement - The Advantage of Both

While it is not likely that classrooms offer the standardized conditions necessary for administration of standardized tests, educational staff may find it necessary to know grade levels of residents entering educational programs. The SAT score which can indicate approximate grade level and reading levels should be available.

Central Office educational coordinating staff have proposed an alternative to current testing practices to educational staff at facility schools. The alternative suggested is an informal interview with the resident. If SAT scores are not available, or if they are not trusted, residents' approximate reading levels can be determined at the time of interviewing. This can be accomplished by having residents read a few paragraphs while the principal or instructor makes a judgment about approximate reading level based on residents' reactions to the material. Educational coordinating staff believe that a "good" teacher should be able to make this judgment. The interview would be a more "humanistic" approach on the part of the educator to the learner than testing. It might also be structured in such a manner as to offer residents some "badly needed counseling."

The value of an interview is that it may be the vehicle for establishing rapport with the students and ascertaining their interests. However, sound judgments about students' levels cannot be accurately based on interviews with residents alone. In addition, there is no evidence for assuming that interviewing residents is a more "humanistic" practice than current testing for determining placement into appropriate programs. In fact, the SAT administered under rigorous conditions is more humanistic and likely to

yield more precision and lead to a more objective needs assessment than an unstructured interview. Since each of these methods can yield valuable information, perhaps both the interview and the SAT score if testing has not already occurred in the recent past, e.g., within one year of placement, might be coupled to arrive at the "better" placement decision.

## TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE CURRICULUM

### CBI

#### Dissatisfaction

Problems associated with resources and program development contribute to overall dissatisfaction with the CBI curriculum. But, some teachers who are dissatisfied have expectations of the system that it was never designed to fulfill. While some criticisms are legitimate, other criticisms may be indicative of inadequate understanding of the system or how it should be used and, hence, may be unfounded. Some of the criticisms teachers have of the CBI system are the following:

1. CBI does not indicate or pinpoint skill deficiencies or weaknesses of residents. (Staff members were about equally divided on this issue.)
2. CBI inhibits the creativity of the teacher.
3. Working on CBI modules removes students from the teacher.
4. CBI is weak in usage of audio-visual media.
5. Some of the terminology and language of CBI is too difficult for the students. (This may be a legitimate criticism but requires an evaluation of the material which determines reading levels of the CBI.)
6. Students do not retain the CBI material they learn. CBI is not sufficient, but must be used in conjunction with other materials.

7. CBI is a more effective system for the self-motivated student; few of the students in Corrections are.
8. It is not comprehensive in content. Many teachers expected it to be similar to EDL which is comprehensive in content.

Central Office educational coordinating staff believe that some of the dissatisfaction and problem staff have with the CBI system stem from misconceptions teachers have of individualized and adult-oriented education. There is some evidence for this position.

For teachers who were accustomed to using a traditional high school curriculum, an individualized and adult-oriented curriculum represents a radical change in teaching approaches and methodology. Certain activities which are more common in a traditional approach like lecturing and norm-referenced testing become unnecessary in an individualized, adult-oriented curriculum. Some nostalgia for the traditional approach used in high schools was apparent among teachers.

Another position held by Central Office educational coordinating staff is that teachers at newer facility educational programs who have not changed their educational programs but used the CBI system initially, are more receptive to that system. While it was noted that educational staff at a particular facility frequently held similar views of the CBI system, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the system appears to depend more on the individual teacher and not the facility, or age of the school program.

#### Limitations of the Development Process

Educational staff indicated that some of the problems with the system and misunderstanding were largely attributable to two limitations of the development process:

##### Length of Time Spent on Development

Committee members met with each other for varying amounts of time, some as little as a week, for developing the CBI modules. This amount of time was not sufficient for writing and developing the modules and inadequate for revising and editing the prepared material. Staff members felt that they were not afforded the time it takes to develop an adequate instructional system.

##### Lack of Professional Expertise

Additional professional expertise in the area of curriculum development was felt to be necessary. While the teachers who developed the program are confident of their teaching abilities, they were more skeptical of their abilities to develop and write curriculum. Though teaching staff are favorable to the concept of staff participation in program development, their dissatisfaction with the development process stems from the fact that it lacked structure in the form of direction, guidance, and leadership. In the absence of outside departmental professional expertise, staff felt that Central Office educational coordinating staff should have taken a more active role in directing staff through the development process. (This specific problem is a symptom of a more general

problem related to the way "direction" from educational coordinating staff is perceived by teaching staff. This direction, though present, is frequently viewed as a series of mandates and orders issued without rationale or documentation.)

According to educational administration, curriculum consultants were not hired to assist in the development of the curriculum because it would have been too costly. However, after observing how the program developed and what problems ensued, it was agreed that it might have been a wise decision and less costly in the long run to have hired them initially.

#### Satisfaction

Even though teachers felt that program development for operating CBI was inadequate, many staff members are satisfied with the CBI instructional system. The following terms and statements used to describe the CBI system were characteristic of teachers who are satisfied with it.

1. It is a good outline, guide, structure, framework, skeleton, which organizes the instructional material. A criterion in the form of performance objectives is provided with the CBI system.
2. Because CBI is a guide, it allows teachers flexibility in the classroom.
3. The CBI pre-tests identify the skills students must learn.
4. It enables residents to attain their educational goals and prepares them for college.
5. The concept and philosophy of individualized learning, the modular approach to teaching, and self-paced learning are effective.

In addition to these comments, it became apparent that teachers who are satisfied with the CBI system share some of the following ideas about that system.

1. CBI is superior to other learning instructional systems which were available at the time of CBI development.
2. The CBI system is an improvement over previous learning approaches and curricula used in the classrooms of Corrections.



3. They view a primary educational delivery system as a positive step in the direction of establishing educational guidelines and allowing residents to transfer.
4. Participation by teachers in the curriculum development process is viewed as essential.
5. CBI can be used advantageously, and is not viewed as an imposition or obstruction.
6. They do not expect that using the CBI system will alter their role as active facilitator in the learning process to one of detached, passive observer. They report that students require their assistance and a multiplicity of approaches and materials not necessarily specified in the framework which is CBI. Regardless of the instructional system, they expect to be active teachers.
7. Most importantly, they do not compare the system to EDL and find CBI lacking in an unfavorable way, or expect CBI to provide the comprehensive instructional curriculum which is characteristic of EDL. Rather, they expect and find it to be comprehensive in development of the educational performance objectives which must be met to attain the goal of the program whether that goal be a GED certificate, certification in welding, or a license in small engine repair. This distinction is crucial to a full knowledge and appreciation of the CBI instructional system. Many of the criticisms directed at CBI reveal that some teachers have failed to make this distinction.

#### Recommendations - CBI Resources

Further development of the CBI curriculum, modules and resource lists, is necessary.

1. If CBI modules are weak, not sufficiently developed, ambiguous, confusing, or contain errors, revisions should be made. These revisions should be made officially with the approval of the curriculum committee for each educational program.

Changes and updates made in the resource list should be documented, evaluated, and submitted to the curriculum committee.

2. CBI modules and the required resources specified for an educational program should be available to all staff using CBI.

## EDL

ABE teachers across facilities are favorably disposed toward this instructional system. The following comments indicate satisfaction with the system.

1. It is a comprehensive system which has good coverage of the full scale of skills to be learned.
2. It is adult-oriented.
3. Repetition and sequential learning is provided.
4. It accommodates many learning styles due to the different approaches to the lessons.
5. It encourages independence on the part of the learner with the use of the instructional machines.

Though ABE teachers find the EDL system more satisfactory than other similar instructional systems, some criticisms of the system are made.

The lowest level of EDL, RA, which is the beginning of instruction for non-readers and teaches basic skills, has half as many lessons as the other levels and is considered weak by ABE teachers. Non-readers require more resources and reinforcement in basic skills than students at "higher" levels who function more independently. As a result of this weakness, ABE teachers use additional resources to supplement EDL at the RA level. A related criticism directed at EDL is its weakness in phonics. Perhaps weaknesses at the lowest level are not unique to the EDL system. ABE teachers report that

illiterate students must be tutored regardless of the instructional system used.

The system is also considered weak in evaluative information which informs the instructor whether students have mastered the material. This particular weakness has induced ABE Corrections teachers to construct a test for the DA through FA level, a task which requires expertise in statistics and item analysis, as well as time which could be spent in the classroom teaching.

EDL is also considered insufficient instruction for specific learning difficulties i.e., perception problems; perhaps one instructional system cannot be expected to meet all types of learning needs.

Other criticisms of EDL are minor and must be seen as disadvantages of using any self-contained instructional system which uses audio-visual aids. For example, the use of machines reduces teacher interaction with students; also machines break down and require monitoring and supervision.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### EDL Resources

The EDL company should be responsive to the clients who are using its instructional system.

1. Attempts should be made to persuade EDL representatives to improve the RA level which is the foundation of the instructional system and is presently weak. If this is not possible, other resources, stronger in beginning levels, should be developed perhaps by teachers, to compensate for EDL's weaknesses.
2. EDL should be prevailed upon to construct an instrument which tests levels DA through FA.

## RECORDS SYSTEM/TRANSFER OF INFORMATION

One of the advantages and goals of offering one educational instructional system across facilities is that when residents transfer they can make a smooth transition to educational programs and continue those programs with a minimum of disruption. For this to occur, it is necessary for educational staff at receiving facilities to know the academic levels, completions, and achievements of residents when they arrive, so they can be placed in appropriate school programs. This information is contained in the academic records of residents.

In addition, educational staff must know about the decisions based on residents' needs made in R&GC and program assignments based on decisions made at the time of program classification. This type of information is found in the institutional files of residents.

### Institutional Records

Institutional records contain documentation of R&GC recommendations, test scores, both SAT and GATB, and educational background of residents. This is the information which is used in conjunction with resident interest by program classification directors to make program assignments for residents. The classification decisions are often included in this file.

Institutional records are available at a resident's facility placement where they are kept in the records office. Policy specifies that record office files must accompany residents who transfer, and since program

classification directors should have access to these files to make appropriate decisions about programs for residents, they should be consistently available at residents' facility placements. Though the institutional files do transfer with residents, they are often not consulted by educational staff for several reasons. Their location in the records office rather than at the school is one reason. Another is the potential they have for biasing the educational staff, or influencing them to form an opinion of students' capacities prior to entry in the classroom appropriate as this may be if the records have validity. Most educational staff members simply do not consider examination of the institutional files necessary, in part because of their skepticism about needs assessment conducted in R&GC.

#### Academic Records

One important feature of the CBI system as a competency-based model, is that it allows both instructors and students to focus on the achievements rather than the failures of students. When the instructional system is functioning well, progress sheets which indicate the route taken toward goal attainment are kept by the instructor and students, so students know in a visual, explicit way what they have accomplished and in what sequence their learning will proceed. Instructors who were interviewed keep progress sheets, and many residents also keep a record of their progress. As a result, instructors should know the levels of EDL, what CBI modules have been taken, the test scores, and other educational achievements of residents.

This progress should be indicated not only so that residents and instructors will know what has been accomplished by residents, but when

residents transfer to another facility, school staff at the receiving facility will immediately know at what point the students should continue their educational programs. This should make repetitive and lengthy needs assessment unnecessary.

Unfortunately, specific educational information about residents' starting and completion points in the curriculum is not consistently recorded. Some teachers do maintain this information in their teacher files, but often it is not comprehensive, nor is it located in a central place where it is accessible.

Information about educational progress of residents should also be contained in their academic records. These records are kept at the school. But when residents transfer, these records do not consistently follow residents, though this information should be most useful to school staff at the receiving facility.

#### Problems - Record Transfer

Policy which specifies transfer of academic records has not been functional for two years. Instead, principals have agreed to call each other for relevant educational information about residents because the mail is so slow that the relevant information has not arrived by the time that residents are prepared to start school.

When these records are not transferred, current educational status of residents cannot be determined. If the educational program is to work as planned, it is necessary for this information to transfer with residents.

Educational staff who were interviewed neither receive educational information nor do they send it to other facilities when residents transfer.

According to the educational staff, residents transfer from the programs so quickly that there is not enough time to prepare and transfer relevant educational information so information is usually not transferred. When educational information is transferred it is frequently not considered seriously at the receiving facility school program for several reasons.

1. School staff distrust the teaching and testing procedures used at other facilities' schools (see Testing).
2. Leafing through pages of files for information is tedious and time-consuming.
3. The information may not arrive in time to be useful. Records move slowly by mail, and by the time they arrive, residents have been placed in school programs.

For these reasons, the information which is received is frequently not acceptable. If these problems could be eliminated, the staff insist that the information both in institutional and academic records could be useful for placing residents into school programs. Although some of the problems with the information may be associated with the limitations of a manual non-computerized records system, others are a result of the inadequate information recorded on educational progress of residents.

#### The Promise of PAR (Program Assignment Reporting)

Some of the problems of a manual record system could be remedied by using an automated information system. Such a system would make it possible to enter and retrieve educational information on residents instantly, make the wait for such information unnecessary when residents are transferred suddenly, and make the present need for transferring institutional and academic records less urgent because the information could be provided quickly on an automated system. It would also save educational staff time spent searching through records. PAR was the automated system designed to replace the manual system.

#### Development and Current Status of PAR in Educational Programs

PAR staff held several meetings with educational staff to determine what educational information should be available through PAR. Educational staff specified the information necessary for placing residents into appropriate programs, much of which is presently in the institutional and academic files.

After the necessary information was determined, a form was developed to indicate the relevant information for the purpose of entering it on PAR. This PAR form is currently completed by both principals and instructors for each resident entering and terminating educational programs and also each time residents make changes in educational programs. These forms indicate residents' specific educational levels. This includes current CBI modules and levels in the EDL program. Residents should also have a copy of this form before they transfer because their progress in the

educational program is indicated on the form. Staff report that residents often transfer too quickly to get the copy.

This seems to be the extent of the development of the system as it is perceived by the educational staff. PAR is not on-line and computer terminals have not yet been placed in facilities as of this writing. Consequently, though staff continue to provide information for the system, they are not able to retrieve the information through the automated system.

Completing PAR forms is very time-consuming for staff. As a result of the time spent doing the paperwork, and the lack of retrieval capability, educational staff have become increasingly disenchanted with PAR. Though the disappointment in the system is wide-spread, some educational staff still see the potentialities of an automated system. Even though the system is not operational, they have suggested that some changes be made for the PAR system as it currently exists to make it more acceptable. These include expansion of current information and additional capacities. Some of the other features suggested include:

1. The CBI coding specifies the CBI level for residents but not the sequence or the route the resident has taken. This information should be added to PAR.
2. More commentary indicating interests, problems, and goals of residents. Examples of this are physical impairments of residents, history of absenteeism, and reasons for certain decisions (like dropping an educational program).

3. The generation of evaluative information which would provide data about the successfulness of educational programs, i.e., knowing what residents achieved in which programs.

4. The generation of management information.

The additional information may improve the present system. However, all the information that could be generated will only be useful if two conditions are met: Staff at receiving facilities must consider the information received from other facilities seriously, and the information entered must be accurate.

#### Impact of Problems

How efficiently information is transferred has important implications for how effective any instructional system can be. Until educational information is accurate and is transferred between facility schools in a timely fashion, residents cannot make a smooth transition to different school programs should transfer occur.

### Recommendations - Record System and Transfer of Information

Specific information on what is accomplished in academic programs should be recorded in the academic records of students. That includes actual EDL levels and cycles, and CBI modules started and completed. In addition, academic information and other information which may be pertinent to decisions on program and classroom assignment should be transferred along with the resident, or otherwise, in a timely fashion which will ensure its availability for use at the receiving facility.

### PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The processes of program development of instructional systems and staff training in their use are important because they have a direct impact on how effectively programs are operated. The program development process for the ABE program was considerably different than that of the other educational programs.

#### ABE

The competency-based instructional system, used in the Adult Basic Education program was developed by Educational Developmental Laboratories (EDL), and Corrections teachers in ABE programs did not have a part in its development. Purchase of the EDL system for the ABE program includes all the resources of the system which are provided to ABE teachers by EDL.

According to ABE teachers, the EDL resources are available and effective.

#### Resource Development of CBI

The other educational programs use the CBI instructional system which was developed by Corrections teachers. The resources developed for the system include all CBI modules and resource lists of textbooks, tools, equipment, and machinery specified by the curriculum committees for each educational program.

Educational staff using the system were critical of the program development and staff training process. Problems associated with the

system's resources, both the CBI modules and resource list, are the focus of their criticism.

#### CBI Modules

##### Availability

All users of a learning instructional system should have access to the resources of that system. Not all teachers using CBI were provided the CBI modules which were first developed. Some claimed that incomplete packages were delivered. When this occurred, modules were copied if an original copy was available. When modules are missing, it is inconvenient to staff who cannot teach students the skills designated in the program and it is costly to a facility. While availability of materials improved since their introduction, it was reported to be a problem by teachers.

##### Quality of the CBI Modules

The quality of the initial CBI modules, especially for the GED programs, was considered poor by the teaching staff who used them. Some staff members found existing material preferable to material they could develop and copied them for CBI which gives rise to potential charges of plagiarism and avoidance of paying publishing fees. CBI modules also contained errors and were poorly edited.

These problems made it necessary for curriculum committees to make major revisions in the modules. After the revisions were made, the materials were found more acceptable to the users. However, numerous complaints about the modules in their present form were

expressed by educational staff. Some of the following criticisms were made:

1. In some areas of a course, CBI modules are weak or deficient.
2. Some modules are not sufficiently developed for meeting a particular educational objective, or more modules should be developed to meet certain objectives.
3. There are inaccuracies and errors in the modules.
4. Some modules are written in a confusing or ambiguous manner.
5. Modular sequence of the course map is not clearly delineated and as a result is not followed.

##### List of Resources for CBI

For the CBI system a list of resources was developed by the curriculum committees for each educational program. Some of the resources were considered essential for the operation of the educational program while others, also important, were only recommended. The particular resource lists were chosen because they were necessary, effective, and already available in some facility schools. The required resources specified are as much a part of the curriculum as the CBI modules.

##### Availability of the Resources

Resources specified on the list are not available to all staff members. Some resources have been ordered but not received by staff members. Other resources were not ordered reportedly because of limitations in the budget.



Since teachers claim that a competency-based format requires that they have access to many resources to meet the diverse needs of residents, they are "resourceful" at borrowing textbooks and materials from the community and surrounding schools for use in addition to the resources which are available.

Though some teachers indicate that it is permissible for them to use materials other than those specified on the resource list, others are not certain of this issue.

#### Authorization of Resources

Only the resources on the established list may be ordered and purchased for classroom use. According to educational administrative staff, the purchase of resources is limited to control cost. This was necessary because, in the past, resources were ordered, found unacceptable, and not used.

If a teacher wishes to use a new resource, it can be ordered for use on a trial basis, if it is approved by the school principal. If it is effective for the teacher, it can be approved by the CBI curriculum committee as an official resource for the curriculum. Staff members across facilities did not know of this authorization procedure for obtaining new resources.

#### Effectiveness of the Resources

Resources are considered effective by teaching staff members when (1) Residents can read them, (2) Complete information can be

obtained from them, (3) The resource is clearly written, (4) It offers variety from usual classroom activities, (5) It is current, and (6) It is relevant.

Staff in GED programs were not very critical of the available resources, but indicated that some of the less preferable resources should no longer be used because they are outdated.

#### Response to the Problems With the CBI Resources

When CBI modules are weak, deficient, or not available at all, teaching staff respond by adapting and adding CBI modules to make the system more useful or complete. When errors or inaccuracies are found in the materials, steps are taken to correct or modify the material to make it appropriate. Some CBI modules which are presently considered unacceptable are not used.

Unfortunately, when adaptations and additions are made, or modules are used selectively, changes are often made by individual teachers. The result of making revisions which are not shared with other staff members or made official by approval of the curriculum committee, is that though one primary educational delivery system is intended, different versions of the curriculum are operative.

Other variations in the curriculum occur when teachers do not have access to the same list of resources or use resources not specified in the curriculum.

These differences in the CBI system keep it from being uniform across facilities.

### Impact of the Resource Problems

Individual applications of instructional systems are not a problem per se. Some procedures may be very effective for individual facilities and teachers. In fact, the CBI system, because it is more guide than comprehensive instructional curriculum, provides for individual flexibility.

Differences in operating programs are not limited to instructional systems or curriculum. Other differences were apparent in all educational programs across facilities. Allusions to some of them have already been made. Others include the following:

#### 1. Grade Ranges of the Program

##### EXAMPLES:

- A. In some facility schools, ABE students included those from 0 to 6.0 levels. Other facility schools split this groups into two sections of lower and higher ABE class.
- B. In GED programs, a similar procedure operated. Some facility schools have "pre-GED" students separated from GED while others combine them in one classroom.

#### 2. Use of Teacher Aides

Some educational programs use civilian teacher aides exclusively, while others use resident aides. Others use both a resident and a civilian aide. The assignments and functions of the aides also

differ by teacher. Some teachers assign aides to work with groups, other tutor individuals, or work exclusively on paperwork.

#### 3. Length of Time to Complete Programs

##### EXAMPLE:

GED programs at some facilities take more time to complete than others. Students entering such a program can expect to spend more time in the program than others entering a more "accelerated" program. This is largely due to the fact that though residents proceed at their own rate in competency-based instruction, some teachers apply their own or group pressure to increase learning rates.

#### 4. Length of Time Spent in the Classroom Per Day

In some classrooms, residents spend three consecutive hours in class while others spend 45 minutes to an hour in a class.

#### 5. Levels of Proficiency for Mastery of the Material

Some teachers indicate students have mastered material if they master as little as 70% of it; others require students to master a larger percentage of the material.

Many teachers value this flexibility, but when the flexibility and lack of uniformity allow the educational programs to vary to the extent that residents are prevented from making a smooth transition to educational programs when they transfer, an important goal established by the Department of Corrections can no longer be met.

According to teachers, other facility's schools do not use the CBI system in similar ways or, in some cases, at all. Teachers report that residents do not recognize the CBI though they were in programs which supposedly operated the system. Other residents have not learned modules which previous facilities indicated they had successfully completed or are not at the level in the course specified by the last facility school. This tends to be true of all academic programs.

Differences in the curriculum across educational programs, both ABE and GED, make it difficult for residents to continue their educational programs at the time of transfer. The different operating procedures across facility programs are also used to justify needs assessment activities which delay entry into educational programs each time residents transfer.

#### STAFF TRAINING

The staff training process for use of instructional systems was the responsibility of Central Office educational coordinating staff. In addition to the staff training offered in Competency-Based Instruction, ABE teachers benefit from staff training which is offered with the purchase of the EDL system. This is conducted by representatives from EDL. Because this training by EDL is offered on an ongoing basis, it is perhaps less necessary to offer departmental, in-service staff training for use of the system. But staff in ABE programs share the views of staff members in other educational programs who find staff training processes inadequate.

Training in the use of the CBI system which was described previously (see Adaptation of CBI Within the Michigan Correctional System) was limited and several persistent problems indicate that more extensive training is necessary.

#### Lack of Articulation of Policy

Training for writing the CBI modules or demonstrations showing how the curriculum should be used was not as comprehensive as it could have been, and there is widespread confusion about how the instructional system (CBI) is to be used. The lack of clarity and absence of guidelines leaves staff free to interpret the procedures of the instructional system themselves.

Some of the issues which require articulation are the following:

1. Authorization of resources and use of the resource list. Staff are confused about how to order resources, what can be used in addition to the resource list, and what can be purchased.

2. The place of group instruction in an individualized instructional system.

The use of an individualized instructional system does not preclude the use of groups when instructing students. But, some staff members use group instruction while others think it is incompatible with individualized instruction.

3. The course map and sequence of the modules.

If there is a correct way to use the course map and a proper sequence for administering the modules of CBI this should be specified. Presently, teachers are selective in their use of the course map and do not always follow a modular sequence.

4. The starting point in the CBI curriculum.

Presently some instructors have students in the educational program taking the entire course from beginning to end regardless of their competencies; others administer a pre-test to determine students' competencies and assign students to work on those objectives they have not yet mastered. Perhaps this is due to the variations in program operation across facilities; it does keep students who transfer from starting at the point they left off at the previous facility.

5. The purpose and function of testing in competency-based instruction. School staff continue to administer norm-referenced tests to students in competency-based educational programs.

The result of this confusion is that CBI is adapted differently by individual staff members. The different operating procedures keep the instructional system from being uniform to the extent that it allows residents to continue their educational programs when they transfer.

#### Selective Staff Training

Staff training in the use of CBI was not extended to all facilities or all staff members who use the system. The facilities whose educational staff were trained are Cassidy Lake, MTU, MR, SPSM facilities and, at a later time, Marquette. However, even some staff members at facilities where training had occurred did not participate in staff training because they thought participation was voluntary, or they were not informed when it was offered. There is some evidence that staff who attended the training understand and support the system more than those who did not participate. Some of the resistance to the CBI system can be attributed to the fact that staff training did not encompass all staff members.

#### Lack of Inter-Facility Curriculum Development

Staff members who teach in the same educational programs in different facilities and use the same curriculum system do not have regular meetings or

conferences where the opportunities to share information are made available. The isolation they feel contributes to the difficulty of operating the same program at different facilities. This is more apparent in some facilities than others. SPSM facilities' educational staff seem to exchange information more frequently, which may be attributable to their geographical proximity as well as the meetings which are held for all SPSM educational staff members. Educational staff in other locations, especially the U.P., benefit from this opportunity much less.

The fact that few opportunities for inter-facility communication are available has an influence on staff members whose professional pride is noticeably intra-facility. Perhaps this is natural, but professional pride among teachers in the same educational program across facilities is important because opportunities for improving an entire educational program or its instructional system are more likely to occur when there is cross-facility communication. This is true for ABE teachers as well as teachers in the other educational programs. As one ABE instructor indicated, the perspectives of the EDL publishers are different than those of the ABE teachers who use the EDL system. Therefore, inter-facility opportunities for suggesting improvements or changes which would make both systems (EDL and CBI) more effective would be beneficial to teachers.

#### Lack of Program Promotion

##### CBI

Staff members across facilities were not persuaded that the instructional system was meritorious enough to warrant adoption on a

Department-wide basis as the primary educational delivery system. It is not known if the program is beneficial or an effective instructional system. This is partly due to the fact that the CBI system was the only competency-based instructional system adopted across facilities for GED. Because it was not a pilot program which had "proved" its success, there is no basis of comparison to similar instructional approaches and systems which also might have met the goals of the Department while satisfying the established program needs.

Central Office educational coordinating staff report that the CBI instructional system was not piloted on an experimental basis because too many educational staff members, both teachers and principals, wanted to adopt the program initially.

##### ABE

ABE teachers also expressed dissatisfaction about the decision to adopt the EDL system without considering other systems which were available. Most of the concern, however, was related to the fact that they felt left out of the decision-making process which led to adoption of EDL.

##### Monitoring vs. Coordination

As was mentioned previously, educational teaching staff often view the role of Central Office educational coordinating staff as issuing directives rather than as one of offering coordination. The process of program monitoring occurring in classrooms is particularly illustrative of this view.

For many staff members, the only contact with Central Office coordinating staff occurs when their classroom is monitored, while other teaching staff members report that they have never been observed. Teachers who have had Central Office educational coordinating staff monitor their classes suggest that the process seems, to them, to be shrouded in secrecy.

Staff members claimed they often do not hear from Central Office educational coordinating staff or educational administration about the purpose of the visit though departmental operating procedure specifies that this information should be given to staff members by the educational administration of the facility (OP-BCF-41.01). Approximately five minutes is spent observing in the classroom. Few questions were asked of teachers but when they were, they were related to the resources available in the classroom. Little interest in the classroom activities is shown to the teachers. One staff member compared the process to an army inspection when "what is seen is what ought to be seen and not what actually is."

According to Central Office educational coordinating staff, the purpose of the monitoring visit is discussed with the principal. Following the observation, the positive aspects of classroom procedures are discussed among Central Office educational coordinating staff. When this is accomplished, a meeting is held which includes both Central Office educational coordinating staff, educational administration, and the superintendent of the facility. Problems and possible solutions are then discussed.

The Central Office educational coordinating staff is presently limited to two staff members. Because of this limited staff and extensive duties, little time is devoted to assessment visits. The educational coordinating staff report that additional staff are necessary for more effective performance of current functions.

#### Impact of the Problems

Limited staff training and a lack of coordination among institutional staff has negatively affected how instructional systems are used and the operation of the educational programs. Pervasive dissatisfaction with the instructional systems can be traced to the ineffectiveness and inadequacy of the staff training process.

#### Recommendations - Staff Training

1. A manual which instructs staff on the procedures of the CBI system, explains its philosophy, and clarifies misunderstandings about the system should be written and distributed to staff members. Issues which require clarification should be articulated. Some of these are the following:
  - A. Use and authorization of resources.
  - B. Use of group instruction in an individualized instructional system.
  - C. Use of course map and sequence of the modules.
  - D. The starting point for the curriculum.

E. Function of testing in competency-based instructional system.

F. In summary, which CBI procedures can be interpreted flexibly and which ones require more rigid application must be clearly indicated.

2. If using the CBI system is mandatory, staff training should be mandatory for those who will be using the system. Staff members who are presently using the system and have not participated in staff training should be trained in its use.
3. Methods to revise, update, improve, and further develop instructional systems are necessary. Provisions for regular meetings should be established, and staff should be informed of the mechanism which was established for calling curriculum meetings.
4. Opportunities for a more general exchange of information among staff members across facilities who teach the same educational programs, should be available.
5. It is important to promote the instructional system across facilities at the staff level, in the absence of the conviction that the CBI system is the most useful system.
6. Teachers would benefit from more positive interaction between themselves and Central Office educational coordinating staff. Presently, monitoring seems to occur at the expense of coordination. Part of the solution is improved coordination and communication within facilities between teaching staff and their educational administration about visits from Central Office educational coordinating staff.

7. Staff training occurs on an ad hoc basis instead of regularly. Perhaps additional Central Office educational coordinating staff could be used to provide more systematic staff training as well as assist present staff members in the performance of their duties.

## Conclusion

The descriptive assessment of the ABE and GED programs, reported in preliminary fashion in the preceding pages, was of limited scope and intent. It did not undertake the evaluation of the programs or program designs per se; its focus was more narrowly confined to the functioning of these programs. The study assumed that the programs would continue to take basically the same shape that they have taken in the recent past and asked how, given that basic configuration, they might be made better or more efficient.

A number of problem areas were singled out: frequency of testing, inadequate program development (especially in the CBI system), inadequate staff training, and inadequate transfer of information among facilities. The problem areas share a single focus, a general lack of adequate information flow. The failure in this general area becomes critical when a resident transfers from one facility to another, but it ramifies throughout the system. It is manifest in the distrust expressed by educational staff towards Central Office staff and towards other facilities, in the resultant frequency of testing of the residents, in the failure of some staff to understand the proper use of the CBI program, in the failure of staff to use and consult even such records as are available, and in the prevailing cynicism towards most efforts of others. The problem could be given another focus. The policies of the Department of Corrections portray the educational system in the institutions as a single, comprehensive program with several centers. The residents ought to be able to move freely within the system, knowing at each stop that they are in the same program. The facilities, however, tend to view their own educational programs as

self-contained. Many of the problems listed above could be attributed to this tension or incompatibility between the whole and the parts. The problem thus limned is not an easy one, susceptible to simple solution. It requires that all parties address a series of smaller, subsidiary problems in the hope that each of these small steps will lead to the better functioning of the whole system. Nor does the problem undermine the whole: the raising of it seeks to improve what may well be a generally sound system.



**END**