AN OUTLINE FOR INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATION AND TREATMENT OF YOUNG OFFENDERS.

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We have often been asked during the last few years for a statement of what our experiences have taught us concerning the needs and possibilities of work in correctional institutions for young offenders—those of the training or industrial school type. We have all along been chary of making generalized suggestions, and have always been, and still are, thoroughly disinclined to say offhand what alterations will be profitable in any given institution—we know full well how conditions and inmates differ. In this paper, which is offered just now because we are asked for suggestions anent the building up of an entirely new institution, we are not aiming criticism at any particular place, although, naturally, we should be glad if workers in institutions find our outline of value. Many good people we have found in the service, and the best of them say that, like ourselves, they are searching for more light.

Our ideas are based somewhat on observation of various institutions for youthful delinquents, but a hundred times more upon our long diagnostic research into the needs and adjustabilities of delinquents and our study of the actual results of institutional training upon different persons. What we have to say can best be offered in the form of short summaries and schedules. Details would have to be worked up with due consideration of special situations and possibilities. We omit all dealing with administrative phases that are not of immediate therapeutic significance; for instance, it is of no use to discuss the possible officers of the institution as such—what they may be designated and what they may do depends on the size of the institution.

Our great insistence is upon the necessity for constant and common-sense consideration of the actual aim of these institutions and of the general activities by which alone they can ever be successful in large measure. (Through mere housing, tiding the offender over a period of adolescent instability and in the meantime affording some sort of regulated life, institutions always may achieve some success, but nothing like full efficiency.)

The main points for consideration are as follows:

A. The entire aim of the activities of a training school for delinquents is to fit the individual to cope with all phases of an ordinary social environment.

B. The human material to be worked on in this type of an institution must be selected for it by prior diagnosis. Uneducable persons do not belong therein. (Under the exigencies which some institutions have to meet, mental defectives are accepted, but, of course, needs of defectives are only to be fulfilled by giving them special discipline and education, with which we are not here concerned.)

C. Economies of the institution are always under consideration, and may well begin with problems of brick and mortar. When calculating even the first expenditures, the aim of the institution should be kept in mind. The physical equipment, providing it be safe, suitable, and hygienic, is one of the least considerations, inasmuch as it does not make directly for the upbuilding of moral life. Finance committees must remember that the main expenditures should be in offering salaries sufficient to secure the services of people who are properly trained to carry out the aims of the institution.

D. The selection of the working personnel is the most important single consideration. The influence of a man or woman of good understanding upon youthful delinquents, whenever in contact with them, is not to be overvalued. Good understanding itself, however, is not to be had without education in the subject of the particular needs of young people. A

special situation arises through the character-building aspects of this work—even the best planned course of training will fail if fitted persons do not direct these features.

The succeeding items of this outline will denote in large measure what the personnel should be. Here we may suggest that, outside of a few specialists, the prime requisite is capacity for social service. Much economy may be practiced by the selection of persons capable in more than one direction, especially those with ability to take care of other phases of activities besides formal education.

An important outcome of the application of scientific effort in this field is bound to be that it will attract many more competent people than heretofore.

E. A general plan for carrying out the real aims of the institution should be based on the fact that modification of bodily, mental, and character conditions, any or all of them, may be necessary.

- (a) The modification cannot always be thought of in terms of building up. For instance, the self-will of some young offenders is entirely too strong, the general physical well-being of others is too redundant for their moral welfare.
- (b) Likewise, there must be taken into account the possibilities of harmful modifications coming from throwing together a number of delinquents. Too often this is lost sight of. It begins with such simple possibilities as the spreading of disease, and involves also the most insidious forms of contagion in the moral sphere.

F. Planning of even the buildings should be primarily based upon the most fundamental points, namely, the mental and the physical needs of the inmates. There should be:

- (a) A receiving ward for physical and moral diagnosis before the delinquent is further placed. (In this the Hungarian scheme of observation for two or three weeks is admirable.) But it must also be remembered that segregation in this receiving ward is highly desirable, for the very worst may be com-

municated in a few hours. Separate rooms are here, then, most necessary. All contagious diseases can be discovered in the receiving ward.

- (b) Further planning of buildings must depend largely upon the whole nature of the institution. A small plant can continue the scheme of separate rooms. (From the larger institutions come reports that cottage life with small dormitories allow sufficiently for a varied classification of the population.) Without much classification running all through the institutional life, however, the best cannot be accomplished. Altogether, it seems likely that the single room idea gives possibilities of training which cannot be afforded in any other way, and that this idea, carried out, need not be very expensive. Some larger space must be allowed for cases which need close watching in sleeping hours—for this a dormitory is essential.

G. Diagnosis of the needs of the individual: This is absolutely essential for carrying out successful treatment, and all through should be correlated with the educational and other therapy. Earlier causative factors of the delinquency, such as defective heredity, conditions of environment, etc., of course, the diagnostician should know in detail. Whether the other institutional workers should go into this depends upon what type of work they are trying to do and what their training has been. (The idea of deliberately ignoring all that the delinquent has done previously, in order to let him charitably start with a clean record in the institution, is justifiable only when there is no such thorough diagnosis of causation as may give valuable suggestions for treatment.)

The work of the diagnostician is useful all the way through institutional life; it is not ended with admission or with the first cross-section study. It will be of special service in cases where some given form of treatment has failed; the cause of which failure and the needs of the future may be thus studied. Likewise, in case of outbreak of bad conduct, etc., diagnosis of causes is important.

- (a) Physical diagnosis: It goes without saying that all

definite diseases should be recognized. Then all general defective conditions, such as anemia, must be ascertained. Special weaknesses, or sources of irritation, which in some cases may be correlated with delinquency, should be sought for. Sensory defects are especially important to know.

(b) Psychological diagnosis:

1. Special mental disabilities, defects, or aberrational tendencies should be carefully studied.
2. Special talents or powers ought to be thoroughly recognized for the sake of their utilization whenever possible.
3. It also is very important to know the details of mental content which may be causative of the delinquency. For instance, undesirable obsessions and impulses must be diagnosed to be rationally counteracted.
4. The diagnostician must have knowledge of habits, both of mind and body. With some delinquents the treatment of these is absolutely necessary before there can be moral recovery. The study of habits ranges all the way from getting at what is habitually represented in the mind to ascertaining any physical sensations which may have untoward influences.

- (c) There should be a thorough diagnosis of the moral background of the individual in order to know what normal experiences have been left out or what features of experience perverted.

H. Conferences; staff meetings: To get co-operation in the work of an institution, staff meetings are absolutely indispensable. By their stimulation of interest they may prove nothing less than inspiring to the workers. Only by putting together what is known from different standpoints and from different observers can a true picture be had of the individual and the causes of his conduct.

I. Medical department: The needs of such a department vary tremendously with the special population, and the necessary equipment can only be determined in this light. Far less is needed in an institution for males than in one for females.

J. Records: Essential records of an institution are those which give such items of case histories as furnish data of value in relation to the aims and results of the institution. They should be totally different from the meager statements which are usually recorded. (Of course, we are not discussing at all in this paper any bookkeeping pertaining to the upkeep of the institution.)

The value of complete case records is the following: First, we have the value to the individual. One can only deal with him in the most efficient way by recording an accurate study of the facts concerning him. Good records focus on the point of his well-being and well-doing. Second, records of physical changes, mental growth, school work, and social behavior, when so made as to indicate the attainment or not of the ultimate purposes of the training, give some criterion of what the institution has been able to accomplish. This is not known otherwise with anything like the accuracy it should be, and remains one of the weakest phases of the whole situation of reformatory work. Third, by accumulation of this type of knowledge there may be a chance for professional training of institutional workers and for the future development of the art or science of training delinquents. It is astonishing that almost nothing has been worked up in any scientific way to this end.

K. Length of time in the institution: Notwithstanding difficulties that are urged against any plan other than that of uniformity of time to be served, it is clear from a practical and scientific standpoint that the period necessary for different individuals to be in an institution must vary greatly. The whole matter of character building cannot be measured in terms of days. Sometimes, in order to tide over a long period of instability, years of treatment are necessary, and then again a very short term will bring about a marked and satisfactory change. Variations of time are specially important

in the light of the fact that the delinquents enter at different ages.

L. Follow-up work: To get the proper social adjustment, after training has been given in the institution, is one of the most important activities. A probationary period is frequently most valuable, during which the individual is studied in his reactions to the new environment. Particularly to be noted is the frequent need after release for a change into a different environment from that where the delinquencies occurred. All sorts of psychological observations prove the wisdom of not renewing old social and mental associations—nothing is so uneconomical as to have a breakdown after years of educational treatment. Another reason for follow-up work is to ascertain the real merits and efficiencies of what has been done in the institution. Has the treatment really fitted the delinquent for normal social life? Furthermore, where the individual has acquired higher standards these should be satisfied.

M. Treatment in general: Before discussing specific phases of treatment its general methods and aims should be taken up.

- (a) The entire institutional life should be adjusted with the idea that it is treatment, that it is educational, and all to the end that the delinquent shall be better fitted to meet an outside environment.
- (b) This requires high individualization. One of the arguments against the advisability of a set system is found in the successes which are actually obtained by a rational and understanding approach to the problems of the individual. Both education and work must be adapted to individual needs.
- (c) Three things to avoid are any kind of deceit, the show of pedantry, and any demonstration of irrationality. It is most desirous to make the individual rational and honest, and this can only be done by showing a good example in these respects.
- (d) The method should be elastic in all ways, particularly in institutions for girls, where allowance must be made for outbreaks and explosions of pent-up

emotions and energies, either occasional or periodic. Of course, physical fluctuations must be allowed for.

- (e) Punishments: These must be highly individualized according to personalities involved. There is no doubt that stimulus to doing better is more apt to result from the promise of rewards than the administering of penalties. There must be goals toward which the delinquent is to work as the reward of good behavior. With constructive treatment the problems of discipline largely tend to disappear. It should be remembered that coercion and punishment by inflicting pain are the lowest levels of control.
- (f) Above all things, *mental vacuities*, either on week days or Sundays, must be prevented. "The empty mind is the devil's workshop." There should be abundant opportunity for good conversational reactions. This may be as important as formal instruction, and always the mental life should be the first and foremost consideration.
- (g) The whole institutional equipment should be used with the sole idea of its social and moral worth.
- (h) General social and educational life should include the planning of service and of rendering helpfulness to others in the institution. Cultivation of this is worth much, and from it can be built up larger ideas of social relationships. Perhaps the best way to avoid jealousies is to inculcate the idea of service, one to the other in the institution.
- (i) Intimate social life: One of the best helps toward a better life is an understanding friend and advisor with whom the cause and the help for trouble may be discussed.
- (j) In considering treatment in general it must not be thought that building up is always the point, or that positive habits are the only good; the inhibitions of bad impulses must be also considered. In some cases excessive physical vigor, or obstinacy of will, make special forms of modification necessary.

N. Dress: A moot question is ever the dress of the institutional inmates. One point stands out clearly proven, namely, that any self-expression that is practicable in this matter should be cultivated.

O. Work: The arrangement of work to be done by the inmates has its economic and also its social and moral values. The immediate economies must not conflict with the aims of the institution. If the work has a deteriorating effect, or is interfering with treatment, it should be done by outsiders. But this does not mean that difficult or even so-called menial work should be neglected.

The idea of duty on the part of the spelling may be cultivated, although perhaps with difficulty in early adolescence, through the understanding that the institution ought to be largely self-sustaining. Work of all kinds is done, chiefly for common welfare. If it is merely assigned as a matter of routine or punishment without this feeling, work is apt to be detrimental and cause a grudge.

Very much of housework and other work can be done in the spirit of scientific training. There may be attention to skill and success in many household occupations. It must be shrewdly recognized that there may be great benefits accruing to selected individuals through their engaging in hard labor, either physical or mental, or both.

P. Religion: Religious training would be out of place to discuss here. In general, we may say that religious training which takes the individual as one of a group and does not meet special problems is not apt to get results. Then it must be remembered, in all common sense, that natures differ greatly. The religious appeal is very strong in some, and others are oblivious to it.

Q. Plan of school training.

I. General underlying principle.

1. Emphasis of the *social* values in each subject of the curriculum.

(1) To be applied according to the needs of the pupils and the opportunities of the locality.

II. Specific purposes.

1. Creation of good habits of thought and conduct.
2. Creation of permanent wholesome interests.
3. Obtaining of knowledge that makes for better social functioning of the individual.

III. Central idea.

1. Social life and its manifold relations. This might center about the home, for girls, and about the industries, for boys.
 - (1) Relation to individual welfare and happiness, *e. g.*, questions of sanitation and hygiene in the home. (This particularly for girls.)
 - (2) Relation to civic life—social welfare, *e. g.*, questions of educational and recreational opportunities, political organizations, etc.
 - (3) Relation to industrial life, *e. g.*, vocational possibilities.

IV. Illustrations of points of attack in subjects of the curriculum.

1. Reading.

- (1) General point of view. No regular series of readers will suffice, since the subject-matter is not adapted to older pupils who often have had wide experience, but little educational training.
- (2) Possible plan.
 - (a) Leaflets especially prepared, dealing with current events, with phases of civic life, with processes of manufacture, with principles of hygiene and sanitation, with interesting and valuable information regarding historical and geographical events, with lives of interesting personages, etc.

- (b) A large part should be reading both by and to the class of good literature—purely for enjoyment and for development of appreciation.
- 2. Language.
 - (1) General point of view. Language should be taught for the purpose of developing powers of expression, and incidentally the teaching should give opportunity for the exchange of opinion.
 - (2) Plan.
 - (a) Free and frank discussion of actual living problems that arise daily, or that have arisen in the past. There should be no specified period for this, but it should be done as occasion arises.
 - (b) Retelling items of interest that have been read in or out of class, in magazines, etc.
- 3. Writing and spelling.
 - (1) General point of view. This should be a rational outgrowth of the above. Spelling then becomes that of words actually needed in every-day life.
- 4. Arithmetic.
 - (1) General point of view. This should emphasize applied features and give mastery of the tool aspects as needed for solving problems that may, probably will, actually arise.
 - (2) Plans.
 - (a) *E. g.*, even the processes of adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing may be based on keeping household and other accounts.
 - (b) Later study of interest, understanding of checks and simple banking knowledge.

- (c) Application in cooking classes, in discussions of food values, in dressmaking and art courses, in the case of girls; in manual training and other occupations, in the case of boys.
5. Aesthetic training.
- (1) General point of view. This should be purely from social standpoint. It should deal altogether with applied art, and should emphasize technique only as that is needed. Its aim should be, not artistic creation, but appreciation and the expression of choice.
 - (2) Art.
 - (a) Principles of art as applied in design and decoration, principles of color combination, of form. For girls, particularly household design, home furnishing, etc.
 - (b) Familiarity with good pictures, both of painting and sculpture. Discussions of same as to what is liked and why, leading to standards of value.
 - (3) Music.
 - (a) Here again, not for technique, but for spontaneous and joyful expression.
 - (b) Familiarity with good music to develop appreciation. Good music should be heard through the medium of performers, player-piano, victrola, and discussion regarding individual preferences should follow.
 - (4) Dramatic performances.
 - (a) With younger children this may be simple dramatizing of stories read.

- (b) With older children it may take the form of dramatic performances, giving opportunity for self-expression, for pleasure and recreation. (This offers a splendid chance for co-operation and mutual helpfulness in making costumes, decorating, etc.)

6. Geography.

- (1) This might well begin with the home, then take into consideration the State, then the United States and other countries. It should emphasize relationships, industrial, cultural, historical.

7. History.

- (1) This might be presented from the same point of view as the above. Discuss current events, holidays, etc., and gradually develop systematic view of United States history. The amount of detail would depend on the time available, possibly only the high points might be included.

8. Domestic art and science (for girls).

- (1) This depends on the equipment and amount of training obtained in the actual running of the institution. Where girls are taught to cook in the kitchen of the institution, much might be added in school by giving the scientific principles underlying household management. Where they receive no such practical training, cooking classes should be conducted as part of the school curriculum.
- (2) The same is true as regards sewing. If not taught elsewhere, it should also form a part of the school course.

9. Nature study.

- (1) This and related topics depends on the facilities of outdoor life. Farming, for boys, and at least gardening, for girls, should be part of the activities. This might be made the basis of much useful and helpful work.

10. Self-government.

- (1) There should be an opportunity for this somewhere, even though outside control is necessary to some extent. It not only affords an approach to principles of civic government, but gives scope to develop wisely-controlled ability in leadership.

11. Physical training.

- (1) Point of view. This is twofold; on the one hand, it gives an opportunity for developing control and good habits; on the other, it affords wholesome recreation.
- (2) Plan of work.
 - (a) Drills for developing accuracy in movement, physical control and promptness of action. Particularly true in military drills or setting-up exercises for boys and gymnastics for girls.
 - (b) Folk dancing for girls. This is really an art form which permits of general social participation and pleasure.
 - (c) Outdoor games; team games not only afford exercise, but develop class spirit, sense of fair play, etc.

12. Vocational training.

- (1) This, where possible, should be incorporated in the school training of both boys and girls, but particularly in the case of

the former. It might even be made the core of all school work. It would not preclude the necessity for much of the training outlined above; the two should go hand in hand. The relative emphasis depends on the amount of time available for school work.

13. Special instruction. This should be given to meet individual problems; there should be an opportunity for correction of various types of individual difficulties. Thus—
 - (1) Corrective gymnastics for physical disabilities.
 - (2) Special teaching for specialized mental disabilities, *e. g.*, in arithmetic, language, reading, etc.
 - (3) Training for development of special talents not adequately given in ordinary classes.
 - (4) Corrective work for sensory and motor defects, such as speech difficulties.
 - (5) Special counteractive aids for those whose delinquencies arise on a basis of obsessive mental imagery.

No one of these necessitates the withdrawal from the ordinary classroom during the whole day or the formation of special classes. The special teacher should give daily such time as the individual case requires in the special field, whereas other work can be carried on in the regular classroom. The co-operation between teacher and diagnostician should be particularly close in these cases.

R. Recreation.

- I. Sufficient discussion in regard to this feature has been given incidental to other points. Much under the head of aesthetic training, under physical training and elsewhere is pertinent here. The

need for genuine recreation is universally recognized, and many wholesome forms of it can be devised and correlated with special needs of the individual.

We would firmly contend that the above scheme is not Utopian; it is thoroughly practicable where a group of intelligent and well-trained workers can be gathered in an institution. The basis of our survey of the subject is simply, as we have said, experiences with needs of delinquents, and successes and failures of treatment. If our ideas of constructive efforts appear complex and difficult, it must be remembered that they are not any more so than the details of education and home life in any well-conducted school and family. As for ultimate values accruing from such efforts—well, we are told that in Heaven there is much rejoicing over even one delinquent saved.