

# Video as a Tool in Institutional Analysis



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty, Staff, Students of SRA

CC:

FROM: Abram Engelman

DATE: 1/71

SUBJECT: Institutional Analysis Project

Abram Engelman and a group of his students from the Center for Social Research and Action (SRA) will direct an institutional analysis and need assessment of a State Training School for Girls (a correctional facility for delinquent young women and female children in need of supervision.) The entire staff of the institution and fifty percent of the inmate population will be interviewed with the aid of 1/2 inch video tape to determine their needs and to document areas of conflict between the staff/staff, the staff/inmates, the inmates/inmates. The video document will be fed back to the staff and young women in an effort to make them more cognizant of the contradictions and conflict within the institution.

By heightening the contradictions and delineating the conflicts, video will act as a mediator, forcing both staff and inmates to recognize and identify their own and each other's needs. Based on the recognition of those varying needs, staff and inmates can mutually develop programs that, given incarceration, will allow them to begin to deal with the institutional and interpersonal conflicts and to productively utilize their time.

We have included a description of SRA's attempt to assist Training School "X", by means of VTR, to restructure and clarify the school's program and goals. This account consists of: (1) excerpts from the original summary of the project (2) a transcript from the institutional analysis VTR edit (3) why VTR? and (4) some proposed programs.

### (1) Summary

Need assessment is a valuable training device. It offers possibilities for programming in many directions. First, it could be the basis for a concentrated training program directed to the management people at X. This should offer the opportunity for attitudinal development and improvement of organizational techniques. The emphasis would be the use of training as a means of approaching programming on a conceptual level rather than on a maintenance basis. Second, the training program would offer direct training on a departmental level to line staff such as youth supervisors, social workers, teachers, etc. A third and major training aspect of this program would be to establish a beginning thrust toward initiating a governance system among the young inmates at X. Their video taped responses indicated a high level of positive thinking which could be invaluable in the reorganization of the institution. Finally, this training program can be instituted at X initially and then be used

for the other training schools provided by the Department of Juvenile Services. It will serve to clarify the primary objectives and purposes the Department must have when serving the juvenile offender in the State of Maryland. The training offers an opportunity for positive change with maximum input of staff/inmates and a chance to develop a guideline structure for training throughout all of the juvenile institutions run by the state.

Through the use of the video tape method both the implicit and explicit were revealed in the interviews. A clear need for unified programming was amplified, as well as a need for organizational restructuring. There is a definite and unanimous desire for change at X. The training program as designed would affect the top management of the institution, the line staff and all other management areas including the clerical-secretarial pool, maintenance staff and all other supportive services. It would also offer an opportunity for the young women inmates to learn training techniques.