

the LETTER

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Corrections Follow-Up

Book Review: AGING WITH GRACE:

Leading Longer, Healthier and More Meaningful Lives

By David Snowden, Ph.D.

Corrections

In the last issue of *The Letter*, Volume 4, Issue 3, brief reference was made to the successful work in Corrections of Daryl Conrad and Gordy Graham in California; and of our colleagues in South Africa, Patrick Coetzee and Lorinda Bergh, Director of Psychological Services in Pretoria, South Africa. More extensive follow-up work by these project directors was indicated for this issue.

California

The work of The Pacific Institute in California, beginning in 1988, has been well conceived, designed and evaluated. The Institute's derivative program, *Breaking Barriers*®, was administered to a group of inmates at the California Medical Facility South. The program had the "objectives of producing increased cooperation between inmates and staff, increased motivation of inmates to program and positive change, and greater success of releasees on parole through inducing value and attitude changes in both

inmate and staff participants." (California Department of Corrections memorandum, December 6, 1988.) Apparently, the most important outcome desired by the Department of Corrections was the affect of the program on parole. More specifically, did the *Breaking Barriers* program reduce recidivism, defined as "a return to custody from parole, with a parole violation or with a new term, within two years following release to parole."

The design of the study included 265 graduates who received the *Breaking Barriers* experience between the Fall of 1988 and the Spring of 1989; and a 272 inmate group who had been released to parole two years prior to September, 1991, and who, of course, had not attended *Breaking Barriers*. All participants were volunteers, but apparently much effort was made to match the control group with the experimental group in terms of those variables thought to be related to the outcome measures, such as "custody level, age,

ethnicity, commitment offense, classification score and earliest release date on parole." (Berkowitz, F., "Breaking Barriers to Successful Parole," June 1990, *Corrections Today*.)

A questionnaire was administered to all participants which was designed to measure changes in inmate attitudes such as "inmate cooperation on the yard, in the classroom, or in the living units." (California Department of Corrections Memorandum, December 6, 1988.)

Results

Recidivism

Six month follow-up measures of recidivism were conducted on both the experimental (*Breaking Barriers*) group and the control (did not receive the program) group. Only 24% of the experimental group had returned to custody, while 36% of the control group had returned. In a letter dated November 2, 1989, Fran Berkowitz, Assistant Director, Program Development, Department of Corrections, State

A Message from Lou & Diane:



We are pleased that the current issue of The Letter contains additional information about our effectiveness in working with officials and inmates of correction and law enforcement agencies in the United States and South Africa.

Our readers will notice that interim and follow-up reports of various Institute initiatives are frequently appearing in The Letter. We applaud this for several reasons. First, the effectiveness of our work with our clients is demonstrated over time with assessments – months or even years – after initial work is completed. Also, preliminary results through interim reports may provide encouragement for those considering work in a particular initiative described by The Letter. Finally, the value of The Letter may be enhanced as a marketing tool for our project directors.

Project directors are encouraged to contact either the editor, Dr. Glenn Terrell, PhD., or the associate editor, Christy Watson, if they wish to have reports of their work with clients appear in a future issue of The Letter.

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of California Youth and Adult Correctional Agency states that, "Thus, the project is generating significant cost savings (approximately \$476,000 at the rate of \$14,000 to incarcerate an inmate for one year, assuming the parolees do not eventually recidivate.)" She further states that, "The cost of the project was only \$80,000, suggesting a savings of \$396,000." Of course, it is the authors' estimate that the cost per inmate for one year has escalated by close to a factor of three, while The Pacific Institute's cost increase, since the late 1980's, is significantly less.

Discussion

It is clearly obvious that the *Breaking Barriers* program reduced the incidence of recidivism in the California study, an outcome exceedingly important to our California friends. The test of statistical significance of the difference between the recidivism rate of the *Breaking Barriers* group (61%) and the control group (70%) yielded a value of .05. This means that the probability is only 5 out of 100 that factors other than the effect of the *Breaking Barriers* experience may have contributed to a recidivism difference of this size.

What is the impact of the fact that the participants were all volunteers, and that those who elected to participate would be expected to participate more enthusiastically and perhaps benefit more than those who may have been randomly selected? The California group, while acknowledging that random selection would have been ideal, asserted that "because the groups and their environments in this study were carefully selected to be similar, no uncontrolled factor other than self-selection could be identified as contributing much to

the difference between them in parole outcome.” Another reason for believing that self-selection did not contaminate the findings of the study lies in the fact that the control group was matched with respect to “age, ethnicity, custody level, commitment offense, classification score, county of commitment and minimum date of release to parole.”

Recidivism rate was not the only interest of the California Corrections leaders. The following quote, taken from a letter from Fran Berkowitz, Assistant Director Program Development, Department of Corrections, reveals that *Breaking Barriers* also produced significant changes in the general attitude of participants. “Inmates’ willingness to communicate with staff has markedly increased, as has inmate cooperation with staff. We also notice a visible improvement in inmates’ attitude towards their lives, their interest in programming and their energetic involvement in *Breaking Barriers* follow-up sessions, which are conducted solely by inmates.”

SOUTH AFRICA

In 1998, Patrick Coetzee, projector director working with the correction services in Pretoria, South Africa wrote a report on the success of *Investment in Excellence*®, published in Client Profile, a publication similar to The Letter. This report is so enthusiastic about the success of *Investment in Excellence*, with both prisoners and prison staff members, that your editors are quoting from it extensively. Because of the success of Mr. Coetzee and Lorinda Bergh, director of Psychological Services in Pretoria, our readers will experience the same enthusiasm so strikingly portrayed by their report.

“When South Africa introduced the *Investment in Excellence* program into its prison system, two very unexpected results occurred.

“First, the program’s popularity quickly spread by word-of-mouth. Inmates began recruiting other inmates. As a result, there are now waiting lists to get in.....The demand is growing daily. The feedback we are receiving from offenders and personnel is excellent. It’s as if the program has a life of its own.....Secondly, officials found that corrections officers and offenders could go through training simultaneously. This discovery was made quite by accident. On a cold winter’s day, a corrections officer who was standing guard outside the classroom was invited to sit in with the inmates. Before long, he started participating. The next day he returned.”

Berg calls the outcome nothing short of astonishing. “It opened up a new line of communication.” Prison officials decided that it was not only feasible, but in some cases desirable, to have prisoners and correction officers go through training at the same time in what is known as the Unit Management concept.

A strength of the program in South Africa lies in the fact that evaluations were conducted immediately after the completion of the program and again six months later. These results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1	
Inmates immediately after the program	Six months after the program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved self imagine • Improved self-confidence • Being positive • Improved self-knowledge • Improved feelings of self-worth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased insight • Increased motivation • Improved introspection • Improved self-discipline • Improved acceptance of circumstances • Increased tolerance • Changed attitude • Changed outlook on life • Changed thought processes • Changed perceptions • Changed communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader vision of the future • Flexibility • Readiness to change • Ability to conceive of entrepreneurial skills

Results

Since the pilot program was first introduced two years ago, more than 5000 people have completed it; about half of those individuals are offenders. Although participation is strictly voluntary, the goal is to enroll all prisoners, preferably within their first three weeks of incarceration. Correction officers sign up the first three weeks on the job, as part of their basic training.

At South Africa's new Malmesbury Prison, which has been built using the Unit Management concept, the program is now available to anyone who wants to enroll. The goal is 100% participation. At other prisons, the *Investment in Excellence*® program has proved so popular there are waiting lists. Part of the program includes training enough facilitators to keep pace with the demand.

"There is the expectation that the program will be available in all 230 prisons, nationwide. Although the *Investment in Excellence* curriculum was met initially with skepticism, the momentum has reached the point where it seems unstoppable. It is the only program that is really working and allowing all persons involved in it (both offenders and personnel) to change old habits and attitudes," said Bergh.

Concluding Statement

The information on our colleagues' work with corrections in South Africa and the United States, which provides the data for this issue of *The Letter*, is based on work performed in the late 1980's and early 1990's in California, and the late 1990's in South Africa. Although *The Client Profile* report by Patrick Coetzee, dated "Summer 98," is quite up-to-date, there may be even more recent results in South Africa.

This also leaves unreported the results obtained by our work with corrections in the mid-90s, and in 2000 and 2001 in California and elsewhere (for example, England). Because of the importance of the correction initiative, we expect to report ongoing results in future issues.

We have saved the last part of this section of *The Letter*, describing our colleagues' experience in South Africa, for a very moving, powerful testimonial offered by a prisoner.

"I now hold a certificate as being a facilitator to a group of fellow prisoners and/or wardens, and I am in a hurry to begin. To all wardens I want to say the following: Almost every prisoner yearns to better himself. Specifically, the prisoner who repeatedly commits offence is the one actually crying out for attention. We do find the odd ones who don't want to change, so there should be a place for the likes of such where the rest can't be contaminated. Wardens, you have the toughest of jobs, but that should be in fact more to the challenge. With the knowledge and directives to be gained from *Investment in Excellence*, your task will be more of an accepted challenge as something you actually look forward to each day. So go for it, wardens. You can only benefit yourself in order to benefit others too. Halfway through the course already you will be a changed person.

"For my fellow inmates, let's show the world we can be better. Let's prove the critics wrong. Let's prove that we can change because we want to change. Let's understand ourselves better, let's understand why we do the things we do. This very course, *Investment in Excellence* is now also available. I can tell you in no uncertain terms that at

the end of the course you will be a different person, with different ideas and ideals. No more need the prisoner be in a state of hopelessness, no more need you shed tears of despair and regrets. *Investment in Excellence* can do that for you, no doubt.

"To Lou Tice and his wife, I'll put all I wish to say into one word, SALUTE! From a prisoner with a broad vision and a very definite set of goals."

In the opinion of your editors, this testimonial is worth a hundred tests of significance!

Significantly, our colleagues in South Africa have informed us that "Since the pilot program was first introduced in 1996, more than 16,350 persons have completed the program – 8900 prisoners and 7450 correctional officials." It is also significant to note that, "Mr. Deon de Bod, Deputy Director of Psychological Services in the Department of Correctional Services, has been appointed as the Coordinator of the *Investment in Excellence* program. He has trained 319 correctional officials and 22 selected prisoners as facilitators of the program on a national level. Due to demand, one master facilitator for every province (9) has also been trained by The Pacific Institute in 1999 in order to facilitate and coordinate the programme more effectively." ■

Book Review

AGING WITH GRACE: Leading Longer, Healthier and More Meaningful Lives

By David Snowdon, PhD.

Introduction

The original plan was to include the entire review of Snowdon's book in this issue of The Letter. However, the information we obtained from our friends in South Africa regarding their experience in corrections was both powerful and persuasive, making it desirable for us to devote the entire issue to their experience.

This issue will contain a very brief summary of Snowdon's book. The entire next issue of The Letter will be devoted to Snowdon's groundbreaking study of factors contributing to "longer, healthier, and more meaningful lives," including happiness, mental and physical activeness, and continuous goal-setting.

Dr. Snowdon's analysis of human longevity is highly regarded in several respects:

1. Both neurological and cognitive variables related to aging were analyzed.
2. The population he studied consisted of 678 Catholic sisters.
3. The study is longitudinal, providing data for analysis in follow-up studies.
4. Dr. Snowdon, PhD, an epidemiologist, is associated with the well-known Sanders-Brown Center on Aging at the University of Kentucky, a distinguished program well equipped with scientists and facilities.

5. Dr. Snowdon's research is well recognized today for its information regarding both cognitive and neurological factors related to Alzheimer's disease.
6. The participants agreed to permit the immediate use of their personal and medical records, and their brains upon death, data that will continue to be useful for many years to come.

Hopefully, this brief summary will excite the readers' interest in Snowdon book, both for its general value, and for the emphasis the author places on the results of his study on factors that contribute to the optimization of human potential, i.e., self-efficacy, happiness, and a life of continuous goal-setting.



Dr. Glenn Terrell

earned his B.A. in Political Science from Davidson College, his M.S. in Psychology from Florida State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.

Dr. Terrell served as Chairman of the Department of Psychology, University of Colorado, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and as Dean of Faculties at the University of Illinois in Chicago before an 18-year tenure as President of Washington State University. He also served as President of the National Association of State Universities and Colleges, Commissioner for the State of Washington on the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, served on the Board for General Telephone Northwest and West for 23 years, was a Fellow for the Society for Research in Child Development, and a Fellow for the American Psychological Association.

Dr. Terrell has received numerous honorary degrees and awards, among them a listing in Who's Who in America: American Men of Science, and Distinguished Graduate of the Department of Psychology, University of Iowa. He has managed multimillion dollar technology transfers and faculty and student exchange programs throughout the world.

Christy Watson is Director of Marketing for The Pacific Institute, as well as acting as Associate Editor for The LETTER. In addition to her marketing responsibilities, Christy has played the editor's role in the creation and updating of many Institute programs. A Seattle native, Christy received her B.A. from the University of Washington.