TECHNICAL NOTE

A PORTABLE OBSERVATION-EXPERIMENTAL BOOTH¹

One-way observation facilities are commonly used to allow the observation of subjects with a minimal amount of distraction. The nucleus of the conventional one-way observation device is the construction of a one-way mirror, usually built in the wall of the room to be observed. Unfortunately, permanently built observation devices are expensive to construct and limited in function, and therefore the need for inexpensive versatile observation facilities is evident.

Gewirtz (1952) developed a one-way vision booth that resembled a small closet. The basic construction is three sides and a roof, with the open side being placed against a permanent wall. The observer sits

inside the structure with his back to the wall and makes his observations via a one-way mirror located in the side of the structure overlooking the space to be observed. Its unique qualities are: easy dismantling, portability, and inexpensiveness. Burton (1971) illustrated a similar structure utilizing only one side and a roof that could be placed in a corner of a room. The observer would stand or sit with his back to the corner and make his observation via a one-way mirror located in the side of the structure. Although somewhat limited in observer working space, Burton's model is less expensive than Gewirtz's.

The proposed model, although more expensive than either of the two previously cited models, is considerably less expensive than the conventional perma-

¹The authors are indebted to Mr. Doug Campbell for assistance in technical facets of design.

Figure 1. Dimensions of portable-collapsible unit.

Fig. 2. Portable-collapsible unit in stage of unfolding.

nently constructed model. The present model retains a large degree of portability and, since it is physically larger than either Burton's or Gewirtz's, it allows for a greater variety of observational activities. Its biggest advantage is its versatility, which can range anywhere from a timeout room, or testing room to a play house.

When unfolded, the structure resembles an empty box without a floor with dimensions of: 11'5" long by 7'4" wide by 7' tall (see Figure 1). The shell is composed of 0.25-in. (0.6 cm) plywood and is insulated with 1-in. (2.54 cm) styrofoam. The styrofoam is attached to the plywood by contact cement. The supportive frame is 2 by 2 in. (5 by 5 cm) pine. The structure is designed to sit on any level surface. The bottom edge of the structure is rimmed with indoor-outdoor carpet to prevent scratching floor surfaces and ensure a snugger, more soundproof fit with the floor. It is suggested that a foamrubber mat or a piece of indoor-outdoor carpet be placed on the floor to muffle noises that may occur within the booth. Gewirtz and Burton recommend that a fan be installed to help muffle sounds emanating from the booth as well as to provide air circulation. Entrance into the structure is by means of a door centrally located in the front panel. Centrally located in the back panel is a one-way mirror. The structure, in its storage-stage, has dimensions of 11'5" by 10" by 7' and thus is able to fit through a standard door frame, movable within small areas by means of removable casters, and conveyable over long distances by small van or pick-up truck (see Figure 2). The cost of materials to construct a portable observation-experimental booth is as follows:

electrical outlet, switch and wire	\$7.00
Sears ventilator fan	18.00
Ozite indoor-outdoor carpet	35.00
Styrofoam	48.00
One-way mirror	63.00
Contact cement (1 quart)	3.00
Wood (0.25 in. plywood & pine bracing)	75.00
Total	\$249.00

In conclusion, the authors would strongly recommend that anyone contemplating the development of an observation facility study Gewirtz's, Burton's, and the present model before construction. A careful study of the three models may help eliminate or at least minimize what might otherwise be considered bad planning.

REFERENCES

- Burton, R. V. An inexpensive and portable means for one-way observation. *Child Development*, 1971, **42**, 959-962.
- Gewirtz, J. L. Plans for the construction of a portable one-way observation booth. *Child Development*, 1952, **23**, 307-314.

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