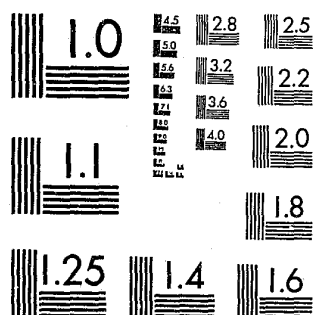


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EDUCATION IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

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Many correction facilities offer both academic and vocational educational programs for the following reasons. First, prisons, jails, and other types of correctional facilities ideally are to serve rehabilitative purposes. Most of the people incarcerated have both substandard academic and vocational skills. At least one-third have less than an eighth grade education; about two-thirds have less than a high school education or GED (General Education Diploma). Most inmates function at a level that is two to three grades lower than the last grade completed. The high school diploma or the GED are often basic requirements for getting a job. People who cannot get a job often turn to crime.

Second, both academic and vocational programs can be utilized as a management tool by prison administration. Programs give inmates something constructive to do with their time. Activity can assuage, to a degree, the violence, anger, hostility and frustration that are often a natural consequence of boredom.

Third, the Federal Standards for Prisons and Jails (1980) state that education programs should be available through the high school level in long-term facilities. Education programs should meet the needs of the inmates, including non-English speaking inmates. Other standards amplify the general goals of educational and vocational training. (See page 5 for further information on standards.)

The programs most often offered in prison are: (1) ABE, adult basic education, which provides for basic literacy and math skills necessary to prepare one for high school or for the GED study. (2) GED, general education (or equivalency) diploma is offered in lieu of the high school diploma and is based on general competency tests. (3) PSE, post-secondary education consists of college level courses. (4) SE, social education, tries to teach inter-personal skills, communication skills, and generally, how to get along with other people. One of the primary reasons for ex-offenders getting fired or leaving a job is the inability to inter-relate in a socially acceptable manner with other people. (5) Vocational education tries to teach marketable job skills. (6) The last category generally

consists of self-help programs such as those for drug and alcohol addicts, counseling, or recreational programs. It is also true that some people in jobs have only one leisure activity, crime. They have never learned to use their spare time in a creative or recreational activity.

Another variation on programs is an institutional chapter of the Jaycees. There are over 600 prison chapters with about 25,000 members. The Jaycees operate on the belief that the cost of recidivism is too high and that American communities need to become part of the solution to crime. One of the Jaycee projects is a Model Re-entry Program which seeks to facilitate the transition from prison life to being free. For further information on the Jaycees, write John Seymore, U.S. Jaycees, P. O. Box 7, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74121.

School programs are funded either by legislative appropriations as a subsection of the correctional facility's budget or through appropriations to the facilities that constitute a school district on the order of the rest of the state's school districts. Texas and Arkansas are among the states that have prison school districts.

The advantages to utilizing the school district approach are (1) there is homogeneity in planning and (2) funding is directed towards meeting specific educational needs. The primary disadvantage is that the school district may not pay special attention to the special needs of uneducated adults in a unique environment.

The primary advantage to making the education programs a part of the corrections' budget is that the programs can be a special innovative aspect of the facility's daily operation. The disadvantage is that education programs are easy to cut in a time of short money supply.

The Texas Windham School District requires inmates to attend classes at least six hours per week if they achieve less than a fifth grade equivalency on a standardized test. About 10,000, or slightly less than half of the inmates, attend the remedial classes and a variety of other classes which are accredited through the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges. There are special programs with special teachers for the emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded, blind, deaf and psychotic.

In 1979 the Windham budget was \$6.2 million; \$5.1 million came from the state. This funds a total staff of 324 teachers, counselors, aids, etc., who work both the academic and vocational areas.

By 1979, 14,434 inmates had received high school diplomas or equivalency diplomas; 5,422 had received vocational certificates. In the college program 970 had received the A.A. degree, and 67 a B.A.

The Vienna Correctional Center (VCC), a minimum security unit in Vienna, Illinois, is unique in that local citizens participate in classes with inmates. The VCC education program is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. In Fiscal Year 1979 VCC education program operated with a budget of \$8.3 million.

Although the VCC inmates have a minimum security status, they are not all the "cream of the crop." Other equally qualified or even better qualified inmates may be kept in the more secure institutions to provide a stabilizing influence.

Students get a half-day's experience in each of several curriculum areas to determine their interest and aptitude. There are 15 full time and four part time vocational courses at VCC. These range from office machine repair, surveyor assistant, and emergency medical technicians to the more traditional welding, auto body and auto mechanics courses. There are also special education courses such as driver's education and job acquisition skills. College courses range from botany, to art and political science.

The California Youth Authority has extensive education programs for its wards. The Youth Authority provides for remedial education for students under 21 who are two or more grade levels below age/grade expectancy. Developmental education

prepares the student for the GED examination. Physical education courses meet high school requirements. Vocational education is succeeded by job placement and a follow up for students who successfully complete their classes. Junior college courses which are applicable to an A.A. degree are offered at five facilities.

The California Youth Authority also offers classes in survival education which includes consumer economics, health, job survival, and legal rights. One unusual vocational course covers the skills used by commercial fishermen.

In Colorado, with an inmate population of 2,309, 29% of the inmates have less than an eighth grade education; 67% have less than a high school diploma; 33% have completed high school or have a GED; and 8% have some college credit. Fifty-four percent of the population is Anglo, but only 7.4% of the Anglos participate in adult education. Twenty-six percent of the population is Chicano, and 37% of the Chicanos participate in adult education. Nineteen percent of the population is Black, and 35% of the Blacks participate.

Colorado has found the illiterate the easiest to place in programs. Their deficiency is obvious even to them. Those who are within easy grasp of a GED are the next easiest to place. The hardest are the seventh, eighth and ninth grade dropouts who can read and basically function but who need to do a lot of work to complete the GED.

Colorado has two unusual programs in progress. One concerns the attempt to integrate vocational education with prison industries. The idea is to provide a realistic work environment while also providing training in marketable skills. The emphasis is on quality work within specific time frames. In a normal work situation, a person cannot take all day to straighten a bent fender, and correctional industries try to impart a sense of self-discipline and promptness as well as quality accomplishment.

The Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Education, Department of Higher Education, and two divisions of State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education have entered into an agreement to provide educational opportunities for both correctional staff and incarcerated adults. The DOC is basically responsible for providing education for inmates, but the agreement calls for cooperation between all concerned agencies and expands the programs to provide opportunities for staff as well.

There are a number of problems in setting up any kind of educational program -- either academic or vocational -- in a facility that holds people against their will. Most of the inmates have already experienced failure in education. They tend to be reluctant to try again. They also tend to be oriented toward immediate rewards, not something that will come months later. One inmate even brought suit claiming that enforced attendance in the Arkansas prison school district constituted a violation of his constitutional rights, (Rutherford v. Hutto, 377 F. Supp. 268 (1974)). The court found that the state has a right to rehabilitate convicts and had a vested interest in bringing them up to a fourth grade level.

Inmates may regard classes as busy work created for the convenience of management. In some cases, classes may be taught for occupations that require state licensing and such licensing may be denied to ex-inmates.

Another problem may be a variation on Catch-22. An inmate may have hopes of transferring from a maximum security facility to a medium facility. The transfer will be denied if he is in a program. On the other hand, the transfer may be denied because the inmate did not show enough interest to be in a program. At one time inmates in Connecticut were charged a "visit" when a teacher from the community college came.

Other inmates may badger those who do attend classes. If the inmate wins parole, there is generally no follow up or effort made to continue classes after release. In some cases the technology taught may be significantly inadequate and outmoded.

Women traditionally have been steered into courses that would prepare them for low paying jobs. If the men got computer programming, the women got keypunch. Nine out of ten women leave the prison to be the sole support of themselves and their dependents, yet the belief persists that they will go back to a man who will take care of them.

In an effort to combat the special problems of women, the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor has joined forces with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to offer apprenticeship courses for women in non-traditional areas such as plumbing and carpentry. The effort has generally been successful for the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

A conference was held at the Federal Bureau of Prison's Women's unit in Alderson, West Virginia to acquaint state officials with the apprenticeship program. It was found that Maryland and Oregon already had programs and Ohio and Michigan had begun to explore the concept.

There are two basic difficulties with starting a women's apprenticeship program: (1) attitude, and (2) money. Many of the correctional staff are traditionally conservative and not receptive to women doing "men's" work. Many of the women who might benefit also have negative attitudes.

The other factor, money, also plagues men. Anyone who is sufficiently competent to get into an apprenticeship program could probably already be working in prison industries. There the inmate can earn money to use in the commissary and in some cases can earn enough to send home for dependents. To eschew concrete economic benefits for intangible ones in the future seems unwise. Although some states pay inmates to attend education programs, the rewards are seldom as great as those of the prison industry.

Last, some of the public resent inmates getting "free" education -- either academically or vocationally. Their reasoning is that they have to pay for the education of their children and people who act against society ought not to get anything desirable as a consequence of the crime. But the costs of education are less than the costs of incarceration.

Congress has passed a number of laws that at least tangentially deal with education in correctional facilities. The acts do one or all of three things. They may authorize the appropriation of money to individuals to aid in their education. They may authorize the appropriation of money to agencies to allow them to provide or upgrade educational opportunities. They may authorize the appropriation of money to states for reallocation to provide or upgrade educational opportunities.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Title I, provides for assistance for compensatory education for youth under 21 who are not high school graduates and who need remedial work. This can apply to many young inmates and is used extensively by the California Youth Authority. Title IV(B) of the same act can provide books, materials and supportive equipment for correctional institution libraries.

The Library Services and Construction Act (P.L. 89-511) authorizes federal funds for libraries for people who cannot utilize the services of public libraries. This certainly applies to most correctional facility inmates.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) attempts to provide services for students who have physical, mental, emotional and learning disability handicaps. There seems to be a link between learning disabilities and delinquency, and most correctional inmates seem to be handicapped in some fashion.

The Community Employment and Training Act (CETA) (P.L. 94-444) authorizes assistance for those with employment handicaps. Funds under this act may be used for inmate programs.

In the Education Amendments of 1978, P.L. 95-561, Part J, the "Correction Education Demonstration Project Act of 1978" was established. Funds were authorized but not appropriated for demonstration projects relating to the academic and vocational education of delinquents and adults.

Almost all correctional inmates are qualified to receive financial assistance for college level courses through the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG) and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG). Most are not dependent upon their families and most are poor. These funds can pay for classes offered by junior colleges, via the Newgate Program in Federal Institutions and in similar programs in state institutions.

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 authorizes aid for those who need special vocational training - such as the handicapped, those who need vocational guidance and counseling, and those who need aid in language development to increase their job potential. This applies to many inmates.

The Veterans' Administration (V.A.), through P. L. 96-466, also has funds for the academic and vocational training of veterans. Many inmates are Viet-Nam era veterans and also suffer from service related disabilities. At present the funds available to correctional inmates who are veterans is in dispute.

The Ethnic Studies Act of 1974 calls for multi-cultural education which is particularly appropriate for institutions with large minority populations.

In the last session of Congress, Senator Clairborne Pell of Rhode Island introduced S. 1373, the Federal Correctional Education Assistance Act. It authorized funding for education programs in correctional facilities. It recognized that the unemployment rate of ex-offenders is three times that of general public and that this unemployment is related to the lack of education and vocational skills. The problem that Senator Pell sees is a lack of strong commitment to truly effective programs. The act would provide "a direct source of funding specifically for programs in corrections education" eliminating the piece-meal search that must go on now. A similar bill will be reintroduced by Senator Pell in the present session.

There are two consistent statistics that relate to correctional education. One is that the more violent crimes are committed by the less educated offender. Secondly, there is a correlation between unemployment and the crime rate. A number of studies seem to indicate that on the whole, offenders who have been in education programs do better after release than those who were not in programs. There are a host of variables which can skew such results. It may be that those who enter into programs already have a positive motivation to do better.

Since education is only one of the many factors that influence an offender, it is not possible to draw a direct cause and effect relationship between education and crime. What can be stated with assurance is that a competent education program changes one variable and at least broadens the opportunities for other changes.

#### Federal Prison Standards

Copies of Federal Standards for Prisons and Jails, 1980, are now available through:

Office of Public Affairs  
U.S. Justice Department  
Washington, D.C. 20530  
(202) 622-2015

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These standards will be used to determine if the federal government should initiate actions against state and local corrections systems under the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act. They may also be used in determining

the distribution of federal grants. The standards are not law, but they have the potential for becoming law if a federal judge should decide to order implementation.

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*NCSL Criminal Justice Project Staff: Lanny Proffer, Director; Barbara Foster, Research Analyst; Karen Morgan, Senior Staff Analyst; Linda Monroe, Research Assistant; and Susan Ponder, Administrative Assistant. Subscription price for non-legislative subscribers is \$10 per year.*

**END**