

*Current
Issues in
Correctional
Education*

*A Compilation
& Discussion*

BY GAIL SPANGENBERG

February 2004 (Rev 2/25)

Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy

in cooperation with the Correctional Education Association



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THE BOTTOM LINE: Overview & Summary

One in every thirty-two Americans passes through a correctional institution at some point in life. At any given time, more than 2.1 million persons are incarcerated in the correctional institutions of America. Some 175,000 are in federal prisons; the balance are held in local jails and state prisons. During the course of a year, between 10 and 12 million people are admitted to jails alone; about this same number are *released* from jail. Many people in this enormous pool are rearrested and reincarcerated time and time again, caught up in a kind of revolving door. In addition to those entering and held in correctional institutions, many millions more are on probation or parole at any given time, about 6.7 million at the end of 2002, or 3.1 percent of all U.S. adult residents. Moreover, the nation has a huge problem of recidivism, with large numbers of ex-offenders headed down a path to more serious crimes and longer terms in state and federal prison facilities.¹

The fact is that unless parolees and others released from confinement have the skills needed to obtain and keep a job, they are apt to find themselves back in the same circumstances that produced their criminal behavior in the first place, with consequent implications for the public safety and the economy. If they are to find meaningful jobs, acquire GEDs, and transition into some postsecondary education (because the nature of work increasingly requires it), carefully targeted policies, funding, and programming need to be strongly supported at all levels.

¹ This information has been drawn from data available from the Federal Bureau of Justice (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs), the Urban Institute, and other authoritative sources.

Studies show that imprisoned individuals are disproportionately and increasingly undereducated, with low skills in the basics of reading, writing, math, and oral communication. Studies also show a close connection between recidivism rates and the provision of suitable educational services for the incarcerated and those leaving prison. Those who participate in correctional education programs have substantially lower rates of rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration than people who leave prison without educational intervention. A range of recent studies, including a substantial body of work at the Urban Institute, establishes a strong case for remedial intervention programs, including basic literacy and adult education.

Ironically, although the need is evident, the economic and policy environments have worsened dramatically in the past several years, causing a reduction in programs and staffing, the exact opposite of what is needed. Mindful of this trend, CAAL decided to explore a new project for its “critical initiatives” programming. We began by speaking with the Correctional Education Association (CEA) about the feasibility of asking several state and national leaders in correctional education to help identify issues of concern. The CEA thought the timing was right and we decided to proceed. In keeping with our founding purposes, our principal aim was to help open the door to a fresh consideration of policy development, the need for increased and better-directed funding, and more effective advocacy for correctional literacy and adult education in the years to come.

In the fall of 2003, CAAL talked at length with fifteen top leaders in correctional and adult education (see Appendix 1 on page 28), posing several broad questions that are treated in turn in this paper:

1. Has public policy in correctional education changed over the past ten years; if so, how? What are the critical public policy issues as we move into the future?
2. How have the level and kind of funding available for correctional education changed in the past ten years? To what extent are the changes due to shifts in public policy and politics, to what extent the presently poor economy?

3. What is the relationship between the Department of Education and the Department of Corrections in your state? Do they work together more or less than they did ten years ago; to what is this due?
4. If national symposia were held on this topic, what issues would you most like to see examined; to what end?

Material gathered from in-depth interviews and subsequent conversations turned out to be sufficiently compelling that CAAL, on the advice of the participants, decided to turn it into this publication. Parts I, II, and III of the paper discuss and analyze what we heard and learned from this initiative. Part IV lists topics the respondents would like to see treated in depth in future conferences and symposia, with specific ideas keyed to individual respondents. Appendix 1 (p. 28) lists the interview participants. Appendix 2 (p. 29) contains a collection of facts and figures about the inmate population, the nature of crime in America, terms of sentencing, rates of reincarceration, and other information.

As a next step, CAAL plans to look more deeply at some of the issues touched on in this paper at a small discussion and planning session at the annual Leadership Forum of the Correctional Education Association in March. We appreciate the generosity of CEA's Executive Director, Steve Steurer, in offering this venue, as well as the time and advice he provided at the outset. Without his help, this work would not have been possible.

CAAL is enormously grateful to the interview participants themselves. These busy professionals found time in their schedules to talk with us, some on several occasions. Many will continue working with us at the upcoming symposium and afterwards.

Very special thanks are due to two CAAL consultants. Summer research intern, Neena Josen, did the first round of interviewing. This remarkable young professional brought sensitivity, intelligence, and dedication to her work. Betsy Feist used her considerable editorial talents to help make this document readable.

One final note: Even though this is a limited foray into a complex topic, the bottom-line challenge for leaders in correctional and adult education is clear: to determine through research, policy, and program development how to do more with less, and how to do it effectively and as a top priority, for a very large and especially needy segment of the American population.

I - PUBLIC POLICY

A. Policy Shifts

The participants were asked: Has public policy shifted in correctional education over the past ten years; if so, how?

Summary: According to most respondents, a major shift in policy has occurred at the national level during the past decade. Although perhaps less dramatic, a shift has also occurred at the state level. The particulars vary from state to state, with some experiencing setbacks and others doing relatively well. In general, attitudes have begun to turn back from punishment to rehabilitation with more emphasis being placed on education in corrections. However, public policy depends on both legislator opinions and current economic issues at any time.

1. CHANGES IN FEDERAL POLICY

Over the past decade, the greatest policy shifts at the federal level came about as a result of mandated changes in the Higher Education Act, the Adult and Vocational Education Acts, and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

First, a few years ago, PELL grants for college education were lost. Then, requirements of the Adult Education Act that a *minimum* of 10 percent of federal ABE funds for the states be set aside for correctional institutions, were changed under WIA to a 10 percent *maximum*. Under the Adult Education Act, 10 percent had been the floor; with WIA it became the ceiling. Similarly, under the Vocational Education Act there had been a *minimum* requirement of 1 percent, which has become a *maximum* of 1 percent.

The way vocational education legislation is presently constructed, there is no requirement that anything at all be spent on adult education in corrections. However, it is important to note that in present efforts to reauthorize WIA, 10 percent of local assistance funds for corrections and persons institutionalized is provided in both the House and Senate versions.

2. CHANGES IN STATE POLICY

At the state level, changes in policy appear less dramatic overall, but participants noted both gains and losses, including the following:

- The states of Oregon, Oklahoma, Maryland, and Massachusetts passed literacy laws making it mandatory for inmates with a certain level of literacy to receive education. In these cases, policy has been relatively stable for the past ten years.
- Some states are giving more emphasis to serving inmates with the lowest levels of education (because this group has the highest rate of recidivism). The trend poses new choices and new challenges.
- State-sponsored correctional education has declined in the last decade, and increasingly programs have been farmed out to other kinds of agencies. This change may have reduced the demand on state funds, but it raises questions about the quality of services being provided by the new service delivery agents.
- Correctional education always seems to lose state funding in times of budget crunching. In the past three years, policymakers have been forced to choose between programs for law-abiding citizens and for offenders. When funding is very tight, correctional education generally loses out because people automatically assume that community welfare is better served in other ways. Some correctional education managers make the point that the right programs can actually improve security.

3. CHANGING VIEWS ABOUT REHABILITATION VS. PUNISHMENT

Many of the participants reported a more positive attitude toward correctional education now than existed a decade ago. Ten years ago, the trend was to cut off programs, including education, because the predominant impulse was toward punishment. But there has been a change from the “lock them up” mentality to rehabilitation. Although

we have a long way to go in improving attitudes, it is a plus that people are at least beginning to recognize correctional institutions as more than just a place to warehouse people.

In addition, over the past decade, inmate needs have gradually been viewed in a broader context. The focus used to be mostly on academic preparation and vocational skills training, but we are now giving more emphasis to reentry skills, parenting, anger management, workforce and financial education, and such. Moreover, program designers understand that inmate needs are more than academic. For instance, many have mental health and substance abuse needs — and such needs must also be addressed if education is truly to pay off.

4. MORE PARTICIPATION IN POLICY PLANNING

In the federal system, correctional education is becoming less insulated. A larger group of stakeholders have become interested in and would like to help define public policy for correctional education. Furthermore, correctional and adult educators are more in touch than they used to be with outside advocacy groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants, and other groups working for ex-offenders and their families.

5. POLICY DEVELOPMENT IS NOW INFORMED BY BETTER RESEARCH

It is generally agreed that there is far too little research in this field, but there is much better research available now than just a few years ago and it provides a foundation on which to build. Some respondents pointed to a number of recent research reports that justify and provide the underpinnings for what correctional education is trying to do programmatically.

One case in point is *Education Reduces Crime: Three-State Recidivism Study* by Steve Steurer and Linda Smith of the Correctional Education Association (2003).

This post-release employment study shows that 33 percent of inmates who have taken vocational training programs do better after release than matched peers.²

Families Left Behind: The Hidden Costs of Incarceration and Reentry from the Urban Institute (2003) has “also opened our eyes, not necessarily to solutions, but to needs.” Other work from the Urban Institute is highly instructive as well. *From Prison to Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner Reentry* is an example.³

Correctional Education as a Crime Control Program,⁴ a study by Audrey Bazos and Jessica Hausman of the UCLA School of Public Policy for the U.S. Department of Education, examines the costs of two crime control methods, expanding prisons and providing educational services. Depending on the method of calculation used, this study finds correctional education to be two to three times more cost-effective in preventing crime than expansion of correctional institutions themselves.⁵

Research is also beginning to inform policy development, which the participants see as a big change over the past ten years. For instance, in Maryland, “the *Three-State Recidivism Study* has helped garner additional stakeholder support for correctional education. Using the study findings, Maryland was able to illustrate that for every dollar invested in education, it saved two dollars in prospective reincarceration costs.”

² *Education Reduces Crime: Three-State Recidivism Study* is available as a pdf document from www.ceanational.org.

³ These are just two of many useful reports and fact sheets about correctional education put out by the Urban Institute, many available from www.urbaninstitute.org. One fact sheet at that site notes that since 1998 about 600,000 people have been released from federal prisons every year (about 1,650 per day), that almost two-thirds of all these people are likely to be rearrested within three years, and that more than one in every six offenders released from federal institutions goes back into the community without any form of correctional supervision.

⁴ *Correctional Education as a Crime Control Program* is available in pdf format from <http://www.spsr.ucla.edu/ps/research/correctional.pdf>.

⁵ The report draws heavily on two recent studies by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and Harvard University: *Prison Education Program Participation and Recidivism: A Test of the Normalization Hypothesis* (Miles Harer, Federal Bureau of Prisons, 1995) and *Learning While Doing Time* (Anne Borrison Piehl, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University Press, 1995).

B. Critical Public Policy Issues

The participants were asked: **What are the critical public policy issues as we move into the future?**

Summary: There was general agreement that despite wider acceptance of the value of correctional education, the issue of correctional education is not really a “hot topic.” It often does not get the attention it deserves, and it is sometimes viewed negatively.

Therefore, most respondents consider it essential to do better public relations and marketing to reframe the issue or underscore its importance in the eyes of the public and decision makers. Most also stressed the importance of maintaining competitive credentials to meet industry workplace standards.

In addition, the basic skills needed to navigate through life are becoming increasingly complex. In order to integrate themselves back into society, former inmates need to have current skills, including technological skills. Respondents cited program impact, funding, and providing quality instruction as other priority issues.

1. PREPARATION TO EQUIP INMATES FOR EVERYDAY FUNCTIONING & JOBS

Inmates need help adapting to the new world they will enter when released from prison and jail. For example, because they return to an increasingly technological society, access to technology is needed, along with knowledge of how to locate information. Computer literacy is essential.

But, as already noted, we also need to make sure the credentials and skills inmates acquire are current with industry standards and can actually be used to get and hold a job. This is a big challenge, often beyond the means of vocational programs. For instance, according to one respondent, correctional training programs for jobs in the printing industry (where the Department of Labor forecasts available jobs) are so

outmoded that inmates who take part in them are not prepared to work in this industry. In addition, printing plants now use digital equipment, often making the cost of training prohibitive.

At the same time, high school graduation or acquiring a GED is no longer sufficient because some postsecondary education is required for a growing number of available jobs. Moreover, the mere possession of a GED, while an accomplishment, does not by itself qualify the holder for college or job entry.

2. BETTER PUBLIC RELATIONS & MARKETING TO IMPROVE ATTITUDES

As indicated above, attitudes about the importance of rehabilitation through education have improved somewhat, but a far wider and deeper understanding is needed. More effective public relations and marketing are absolutely essential, in fact among the top priorities. Educators must get their messages across to the public: rehabilitation will improve certain societal problems; education is a cost-saving measure that ultimately reduces recidivism; and because inmates will eventually rejoin society, it is in everyone's best interest to enable them to lead productive lives.

"If we do not make every effort to help people turn their lives around, we're heading for a worse situation," said one participant. "Inmates are not a race apart but are some of the most needy in our population." Another stresses that "enormous numbers of people are being incarcerated and this load will eventually become unmanageable.

Approximately one of every thirty-six adult males has been behind bars in America. We need to view corrections as being a place for change as opposed to a place where we continue to just warehouse inmates."

Moreover, "the public doesn't really understand that most offenders will be out in a few years (90 percent of inmates leave prison within ten years) and become their neighbors. It's better to have an educated neighbor."

Furthermore, issues of relative cost are not adequately understood. The public tends to think that to imprison someone is simply to lock that person away, when in fact heavy costs are involved. “Some recent research tells us that it costs about \$22,000 per year to incarcerate one person,” one participant said. “We would save \$22,000 a year if they were *not* incarcerated. Generally, when people return to prison they return for more than several years, so multiply the number of additional years by \$22,000.”⁶

That’s one indicator of the cost — and of the potential savings through enabling education. “Another cost occurs whenever the chief wage earner of a family is incarcerated and their family is forced to take support from other government services.”

In short, we need to focus public attention more on the potential of incarcerated people to help energize our economy as tax-paying citizens rather than on their past offenses. Released offenders need to have a way to make a living and pay taxes. That will gain us more than imprisonment in most cases. The public needs to understand better that education is the key and will have a big payoff.

Apart from the general public, we also need to do a better job of getting sheriffs and facility superintendents to understand the relationship between a stronger educational foundation and recidivism. “We get a mixed response from the sheriffs and the superintendents of these facilities,” said one respondent. “Security is their top concern,” said another, “and it should be, but education needs to follow close behind and not be as low on their list of priorities as it seems to be in many cases.”

3. EVALUATING PROGRAM IMPACT & APPROPRIATENESS

Most respondents suggested identifying appropriate performance expectations and standards for correctional education and evaluating the impact of programs. According to them, correctional and adult educators need to be doing what they *should* be doing, and they need to have measures for knowing how *well* they are doing. “These

⁶ To provide some point of comparison, data from the Federal Bureau of Justice indicates that as prisoners age, the cost of incarcerating them rises, reaching an average of \$69,000 a year at age fifty-five.

measures should not be one size fits all,” they pointed out, “but tailored specifically to adult education in corrections, not just adult education in general.”

It was noted that “measuring performance in correctional facilities is challenging because it’s not as continuous and predictable as it would be in, say, a community center. In a community adult learning center, there are standard barriers to people’s retention, participation, and progress (e.g. they get sick or change jobs). In corrections, different factors control access and often neither students nor staff have control. If someone gets transferred to another cell block for security reasons, for example, that person suddenly doesn’t have access to the education program anymore. Only if they get transferred back can they resume their studies.”

Another respondent assessed this issue differently. He said that “it is not fair to compare retention and participation of prisons and community programs. Often prison programs have better participation and retention, because they have to be accountable. Special education, vocational, and postsecondary slots are often reserved so that students are not transferred until they have completed or can be sent to another place to complete. Maryland is very specific on this, for instance, and it rates schools by attendance and retention rates. Ohio has a state law that requires postsecondary students to complete the courses before they can transfer. Other states also have regulations and policies that drive school assignments. ABE and GED are a little different about transfers because students can usually pick up similar programs at a new site.”

One respondent pointed out that “we also need to look more closely at how various kinds of education programs impact on rehabilitation. We are giving more emphasis to reentry, parenting, anger control, and financial education in addition to the traditional academic prep and vocational programs, but we don’t really know how well specific programs work or which models are best. The question is: What kind of education should we be providing, for what inmates, and at what point in their sentences?”

4. FUNDING DETERMINES LEVEL & KIND OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE

A substantially higher level of funding is essential. That message is apparent throughout this paper. The critical funding question on the minds of the participants is whether money will be available to support the correctional education programs they need to offer. Most fear that few programs or services will be adequately funded, despite growing evidence of their importance, because “nobody has any money.” In many states, “the budget shortages are so severe that they simply are not going to give much attention to corrections, even in cases where they are well convinced of its importance.”

It should be noted that in the weeks since CAAL’s consultations were completed, we have been advised that corrections staff are increasingly being laid off in many places across the country, and in some places programs are being decimated for lack of funding.

5. INSTRUCTIONAL & SOCIETAL ISSUES LOOM LARGE

According to the participants, policy and planning for correctional education need to come to grips with an array of questions that bear on the nature of instruction, program design, and evaluation. There should also be far more understanding of the root causes of incarceration as well as effective strategies for prevention. Among concerns expressed were the following:

- The extent to which programming should be career- and job-oriented, related to effective citizenship and parenting, or directed to transitions into postsecondary education is not clear.
- We know that gender differences often require different curriculum and program design approaches, but we haven’t developed guidelines and policy to promote the use of good gender-suitable programs. We also need to find ways to spread the word about exemplary programs, and shape policy to encourage their development.

- Funding cuts for mental health facilities across the country have resulted in pushing many adults with learning disabilities or mental and emotional health issues into correctional facilities. As a result, this population now makes up a significant portion of the prison population. We must develop ways to address the needs of these people. New York is trying to tackle this problem with the *Bridges to Practice* program of the National Institute for Literacy (with start-up and implementation costs paid by the state). *Bridges* provides teachers with techniques and strategies to work with the learning disabled.
- The incarcerated population keeps growing, yet we have *never* been able to serve a large number of inmates due to lack of funds. With so many inmates, how should we focus our efforts? Whom are we going to serve and how will we decide this?
- Regardless of the funding level, we need to address problems of recruitment, retention, and staff training. For example, current staff is getting older and as these people retire, we need to be able to replace them with well-trained people and to continue providing quality programs. How are we going to do this?
- We need to find ways to develop continuity of instruction so that educational services are continued for people who move into or out of prison. We also need to find ways to prevent disruptions in study programs because a student has changed venue.
- We know that we need to do a better job connecting children with their incarcerated parents, but to do that we need to know much more about what models exist that we can learn from, and we need other tools to help guide the way.

- As a society, we need to spend more time thinking about crime prevention strategies that will keep people out of prison in the first place, thereby reducing the educational service burden. One participant expressed the point this way: “We’re incarcerating certain racial groups, specifically African Americans, at an astronomical rate. Crime is not inherent in that culture, the challenge is for society to provide educational and economic opportunities for them. When people get a proper education, they are successful.” It is essential to examine such questions as why the inmate population has grown as it has, whether our sentences are too stiff in some cases, and how to develop more enlightened programs and policies for treatment of the mentally ill. But who is going to do this?

II - FUNDING

The participants were asked: How has the level and kind of funding available for correctional education changed in the past ten years? To what extent are the changes due to shifts in public policy and politics, to what extent the presently poor economy?

Summary: In general, national and state funding decreases were attributed to both policy and the poor economy. But most participants believe that cuts at the federal level have been more due to policy changes and politics while cuts at the state level are more apt to be due to the economy.

Apart from federal and state funding cuts, it was noted that *all* funding has in fact decreased on an expenditure-per-inmate basis because of the ever-increasing size of the inmate population.

At the state level, funding levels and commitments vary. Some states, despite their deficits, have had no cuts. Others have had major cuts. On a national level, the continual erosion of funding, which in the best of times has not been on a par with the level of need, is not only preventing the expansion of program services but putting programs that already exist in jeopardy.

1. NATIONAL FUNDING CUTS ARE LARGELY POLITICAL DECISIONS

A few participants think that funding at the national level has been fairly stable over the last decade, but most do not. Some certainly attribute decreases in federal funding to the economy, but most see the losses as resulting more from political decisions. The elimination of PELL grants for correctional education purposes was most commonly cited as a politically motivated loss.

Moreover, participants expressed strong concern about the lack of innovation and funding at the federal level during the past decade. During the Clinton administration, substantial funding was lost. Until the recent State of the Union address, in which a

\$300 million re-entry initiative was announced by the President, there was little hope expressed by the participants either regarding money for corrections or for human service programs in general. “Such programs have just not been given a high priority,” said one respondent.”

Finally, “over the past ten to fifteen years, many politicians have been campaigning on a get-tough platform and speaking about the criminal justice system and corrections in simplistic terms,” said another. “As a result, we’ve seen a lot of get-tough initiatives that make very little sense but that sound good to the voters.”

2. STATES VARY WIDELY IN THEIR FUNDING & COMMITMENT

The participants were careful to point out that changes in funding and commitment at the state level depend very much on the state. Some states are holding even, others are in troubling shape. The following examples are illustrative:

- Apparently Indiana has had no cuts. In Maryland, “funding is relatively stable, and correctional education is fully considered along with other state programs.” In fact, the governor recently proposed a \$7.5 million increase for juvenile correctional education improvement in the state. In New York, the “budget hasn’t changed that much. We’ve been asked to do more with less and are examining needs a bit more, but we have not had the massive layoffs or cutbacks that some other states have had.” Delaware is reportedly putting more money into correctional education now than in the past.
- Until recently, Oregon experienced steady funding increases. “We had an enlightened decade, and as more prisons were built in the state, funding for correctional education grew incrementally. From 1990 to 2003, the budget grew from \$5-7 million to \$22 million. But in a sudden turn of affairs, current funding is now down to about \$16 million, and we have been forced to close many of our programs. These budget changes are due to the economy more than anything else.”

- In Oklahoma, state funding has decreased. “I’m down better than 30 percent of my budget for staffing because of state budget cuts. However, we have been able to increase federal funds. This is a result of producing successful students and a new empirical database that enables us to put forth a better application for funding. We have been able to show that programs are successful. We have many kinds of participants in our programs, and last year we were able to get connected with community colleges, so we have graduates with AA and BA degrees.”
- Programs in Kentucky were almost closed altogether and advocates had to fight hard to continue them, said a Kentucky participant.
- Funding for correctional education in Massachusetts used to be supported through the Adult Education Act at about 15 percent of the state’s total education expense. “With WIA, this became a ceiling of 10 percent,” said a participant from that state. “Prior to that, we had been using mostly federal funding for correctional education and a little bit of state money. But because Massachusetts has a strong commitment to adult education and correctional education, we kept the funding level at 15 percent even after WIA, with the state picking up a larger portion. Now funding for correctional education is about 50/50. The bad news is the big impact that has come through cuts to the state line item that goes directly to the Department of Corrections for education and training. That has been decimated, probably cut by 80 percent or more. The poor national economy has killed the state economy. At present, the average correctional education program in the state has been cut by 20 percent or more.”
- California, Texas, and South Carolina have also had major reductions, a problem exacerbated in Texas by the growing prison population there.

“The economy has made state governments look at where they can cut services and one area they have determined can be cut is correctional education,” said one participant. “The irony is that when they have to reduce costs, they still *need* to provide funding for locking people up. They too often don’t see it as a *need* to provide funds for rehabilitation.”

Finally, it was noted that whenever there is an economic crunch at the state or federal level, the programs that tend to lose are those that don’t have an active voting constituency, and, traditionally, incarcerated persons and their families are not the most politically active of groups.

III - STATE JURISDICTION

State participants were asked: What is the relationship between the Department of Education and the Department of Corrections in your state? Do they work together more or less than they did ten years ago; to what is this due?

Summary: Of seven respondents to this question, four (Oklahoma, Massachusetts, Oregon, and New York) reported a good working relationship between the two departments, indicating little change over the past ten years. Those relationships were characterized as “superb,” “excellent,” “outstanding,” and “wonderful,” though the issue was seen as more or less important depending on the state.

In Maryland, the question was not applicable; correctional education is the responsibility of the State Department of Education and all correctional educators work directly for the state superintendent of schools. In Kentucky, the Department of Education and Department of Corrections have limited direct contact with each other due to how responsibility for correctional education has been mandated in the state. The Kentucky legislature funds the Department of Corrections for adult basic and occupational education. This department in turn contracts with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System to provide the services.

The Delaware respondent reported a “better” relationship, noting that the two departments work together much more now than they did in the past. It was not clear what steps have been taken to improve the relationship.

These limited responses suggest that there is no obvious connection between jurisdictional relationships and funding level and commitment. In some cases that is no doubt true. However, this is a complicated subject that might well be investigated more fully in the future, in the interest of maximizing the use of available resources and know-how.

IV - SYMPOSIA

The participants were asked: If national symposia were held on this topic, what would you most like to see examined; to what end? Their responses are listed below by topical area. The numbers in parentheses are keyed to the list of participants in Appendix 1 on page 28.

1. **WORKFORCE NEEDS** (2, 6, 11)

Bridging America's workforce needs with the correctional offender population is the challenge of the decade. It is essential to create partnerships with industry, and have industry tell us what they want.

2. **QUALITY & KIND OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

a) **Teacher Training & Certification** (2, 8,11,12,15)

- **Certification.**
Make teacher certification a requirement for funding. We can't expect people to teach special needs students without proper training. States that don't provide certified teachers are not meeting the law.
- **Offer Training in the Following Areas:**
 - Technology
 - Operation of correctional institutions (security, etc.)
 - Adult education training
Most teachers coming into corrections have no training in adult education.
 - Factoring learning disabilities and mental health needs into instructional programs
Teachers should be empowered to deal with the complex needs of their students, as in the Bridges to Practice work of the National Institute for Literacy and the work of NCSALL.
 - Teaching content areas of the GED
 - Creating a classroom environment of respect between teacher and students
The most successful program in the correctional education classroom has an atmosphere of respect.

b) Curriculum (13)

- What subjects should be taught and how should they be taught
- How curriculum should be designed, offered, and controlled

c) Establishment of overall program goals and philosophy (13)

- Focusing academic, vocational, and life skills around work
One of the most important goals in correctional education, if not the most important, is to prepare people to go to work.

d) Administration of programs (13)

- Identification and implementation of important policies and procedures
This can help maintain focus on the overall program goals. Policies and procedures should be comparable and used across the board.

e) Technology (2, 3, 6, 11)

- Ways to provide safe internet access in correctional facilities
Total prison security needs to be protected but internet access would open up incredibly vast educational resources to staff and inmates. Many people are paranoid about giving inmates access to the internet, but it's our medium of communication, and they'll be doomed to failure if they can't use it. Likewise, distance learning for both staff and inmates could be one way to provide postsecondary education.

f) Staffing issues (3, 6)

- Ways to recruit young teachers coming out of college
- Consideration of the human resource potential of inmates
If we are going to have limited staffing resources, we need to find ways to have inmates more involved, ways that are highly prescribed and highly controlled, with guidance from knowledgeable teachers. We need to empower inmates to become part of the solution in terms of helping individuals learn. This can always be a risky policy, so the question is how to do this safely. We found that out in prior experiences with some states where when their teachers were laid off, they just relied on tutors. Also, lawmakers need to understand that teachers are essential.

g) Whom we serve (12,13)

- Designing programs to match the low skills level of most inmates
Literacy programs need to be geared to the lowest level of education because inmates with the lowest skills have the highest rates of recidivism.
- Using individual treatment plans/assessments to identify those inmates who have the greatest needs and would benefit the most

h) Types of programming (1,11)

- Shaping programs to include inmates' broader problems
Don't focus on just education; it's only one part of the puzzle. If someone has a substance abuse problem, focusing on education alone is not going to resolve the problem. We need to take a more holistic approach.

3. PROGRAM EVALUATION

a) Reporting and collecting data (4, 11, 13)

Public policy is based on information. If you can't provide information in a logical, credible way, then your program is in trouble. The only way to justify your budget requests and whether or not your programs are valuable is to produce good, accurate data about outcomes. We should understand how to collect good data, what areas need more research, what outcome measures are important, how to measure these outcomes efficiently and effectively, and what information program administrators, policymakers, legislators, and others need.

b) Benefits of correctional education (4,13)

- Costs of correctional education
There are various ways to control/reduce costs, and to demonstrate costs. We need to know much more about this, about the economics of correctional education, and about the payoffs of educating inmates. Maybe we could bring together people to talk about it — for instance, economists from the U.S. Department of Labor and prominent researchers who can bring different viewpoints to the table.
- Effectiveness of classes and programs
We need much more research to find out if certain inmate educational classes and programs (e.g. in parenting and financial matters) carry over so that when the inmates leave prison they become better workers, family members, and parents. We know this happens but we should be able to document it. Do academic, vocational, transition, or a combination of programs work best? We don't know which is more powerful, under what circumstances, and which produces the biggest payoff. We need more research to show this clearly.
- Effect of correctional education on institutional control
Are institutions with more programs less likely to have riots than those with more corrections officers and fewer programs? Prison activity programs, of which education is a large part, are among the best management tools in corrections because they keep inmates busy in a positive way. This is one of the great benefits of correctional education which no one ever talks about. Some people justify budget cuts by saying that rather than to reduce security, we will cut programs. What should be realized is that it is not an issue of guns or butter, but of guns and butter. If you're all security, you're going to have a hellish place to deal with. If you take any group of people whether they are criminals or not and make them sit around doing

nothing or give them meaningless things to do, they're going to get angry and destructive. If you go to an institution where people are busy doing useful things — jobs, school, programs, activities, recreation — you're less likely to have a volatile place.

4. FUNDING (5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)

Several funding questions need to be considered. For example –

- What programs will be funded?
- What agency is responsible for funding?
- Are there other means to funding these programs?
- How can we restore PELL funding for postsecondary education?
- What are the funding issues around special education?
- How can federal per-student funding formula be made to relate better to adult education for incarcerated persons?

5. REINTEGRATION INTO THE COMMUNITY (7, 8, 11, 14, 15)

We need to draw on community resources and provide stabilization for successful reintegration. How can we create successful transition programs that include community support? We may have done exceedingly well getting an inmate a high school diploma and occupational skills that could translate into a good career path and good job in the community. However, if they can't *get* the job, then our investment has been for naught. Who is going to help them once they are out? This part of the process needs to be systematized to ensure that all the supports are in place for a successful reentry into the community.

One respondent told about one client who had completed an occupational program in a skill area for which there was a huge demand. The client ended up with a job at minimum wage because he didn't know where to go to find the higher-paying job; once he left the institution, the program staff lost contact with him.

6. PUBLIC RELATIONS & MARKETING (4, 5 8, 9, 12)

The topics suggested were:

- How to report information that will be understood at the national level

- How to use data more effectively with legislatures, the press, politicians, the public, and correctional planners
- How to build good public relations, communicate effectively, and market correctional education
We need to explore the feasibility of a public relations campaign that would highlight adult education, not just among correctional institutions and personnel, but also in the wider community, something like no-child-or-parent-left-behind.
- How to talk and work with legislators
- How to inform the public
- How to sell a product that by its very nature is odious to people

7. INMATES' CONNECTIONS TO THEIR CHILDREN (3, 7)

The role of the parent is critical to the success of the child. Children's development doesn't wait while their parents are doing time. Inmates may claim that they can "handle the time," and some can, but their kids cannot. We think of parenting programs as basically helping inmates get ready for release, but we have to start thinking of our parenting programs through the eyes of children. "William Raspberry had an excellent editorial in the *Washington Post* (8/26/03). He reported that educated parents, not necessarily those with degrees but parents who cared about schooling and talked and worked with their children, were the single largest indicator of whether those children would succeed. This is true whether the parents are incarcerated or not."⁷

8. POLICY PARTNERSHIPS (3, 11)

We need to know more about how to link correctional education with other national policy issues. How can we take advantage of government and private organizations that are interested in being part of the solution? We need to figure out how to build these kinds of partnerships.

⁷ There is a solid body of research evidence on this point, including the groundbreaking work of Thomas Sticht.

9. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (3)

Our discipline needs to be better informed by historical perspective. Appreciation of our historical roots and a sense of continuity are really important for our identity and our professional growth. We need to learn from the work of people like Thom Gehring and Carolyn Eggleston⁸ that the issues we're fighting today are historical in scope. They have been going on for hundreds of years and aren't unique to our times.

10. PREVENTION OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS (1, 11)

How can we get to potential criminals sooner, to avoid incarceration in the first place? This is a larger-picture issue of society and education as a whole. Even before we get into the idea of education behind bars, why don't we talk more about the root causes of some kinds of crime and strategies for prevention? Usually a combination of things causes crime: poverty, low education, negative social and home environments.

Overall, lack of adequate education probably plays the biggest role in crime and incarceration rates. More emphasis needs to be given to that fact. In particular, how much does it cost us to incarcerate our way out of these issues compared to what we would have to spend upfront to reduce poverty, make people employable, increase education, and instill better parenting skills so that we won't have to worry about incarceration issues down the road?

Once offenders are in the system, at what point should we target prevention programs? For instance, should we target first-timers? Should we wait until after they've been sentenced and incarcerated to determine suitable education and other program interventions? Or should we target them at the first meeting for parole and probation?

⁸ Carolyn Eggleston and Thom Gehring are co-directors of the Center for the Study of Correctional Education at California State University in San Bernadino. Both have had a major impact on correctional education for many years. Eggleston's work focuses on correctional/special education. Gehring's emphasis is on the history of correctional education and prison reform. To learn more about them, go to www.soe.csusb.edu/csce/index.html.

11. COORDINATION OF SECURITY & EDUCATION (11)

People tend to hide behind security issues when it comes to correctional education. We need to identify what the real security issues are. What are the rules across all institutions that are of critical importance to everyone? Security issues such as not allowing hardcover books or not being able to take more than three pieces of paper back to one's cell can interfere with education.

12. STANDARDIZATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY FROM STATE TO STATE (9)

13. LINKAGE OF FEDERAL OFFICES AND DEPARTMENTS (11)

The Offices of Vocational and Adult Education and the Office of Corrections are physically separated in federal government; they are not in the same building and their staffs are not in regular touch. Yet effective planning and policy development requires coordinated input from both. The U.S. Department of Education has a wonderful accountability system already in place. Perhaps this could be expanded and linked to federal offices and departments responsible for the country's system of prisons and jails.

APPENDIX 1 – List of Participants

NATIONAL:

- (1) **Steve Ingley**, Executive Director, American Jail Association
(www.corrections.com/aja)
- (2) **Charles Kehoe**, President, American Correctional Association
(www.aca.org)
- (3) **Bill Muth**, Director of Education, Federal Bureau of Prisons
(www.bop.gov)
- (4) **Steve Steurer**, Executive Director, Correctional Education Association
(www.ceanational.org)

STATE:

- (5) **Oregon:** **Shannon DeLateur**, State Administrator of Correctional Education (retired)
- (6) **New York:** **Linda Hollmen**, Director of Education, New York State Department of Corrections
- (7) **Maryland:** **Kathy Oliver**, Assistant State Superintendent, Maryland State Department of Education
- (8) **Maryland:** **Carolyn Buser**, Director of the Correctional Education Program, Maryland State Department of Education
- (9) **Kentucky:** **Wendell McCourt**, Chief Program Administrator, Kentucky Department of Corrections
- (10) **Kentucky:** **Al Kelty**, Director of Correctional Education, Kentucky Community Technical College System
- (11) **Delaware:** **Fran Tracy Mumford**, State Director of ABE & Correctional Education; current President of the American Association of Adult & Continuing Education
- (12) **Oklahoma:** **Owen Modeland**, Superintendent of Correctional Education
- (13) **Texas:** **Chris Tracy**, Correctional Education Consultant; Retired Superintendent of Schools for the Texas Prison System's Windham School District
- (14) **Massachusetts:** **Bob Bickerton**, Associate Commissioner, Center of Lifelong Learning, Massachusetts Department of Education
- (15) **Massachusetts:** **Jane Brown**, Corrections Education Liaison

APPENDIX 2 – Some Facts & Figures

- a) From a fact sheet of the American Friends Service Committee of the Arizona Area Criminal Justice Program, and the Prison Policy Initiative, August 2002 (which draws on data from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Sourcebook and various studies) [www.afsc.org/az.htm and www.prisonpolicy.org]
- **Violent crime makes up less than 5 percent of arrests in the U.S.**
 - **Every year an inmate spends in prison costs taxpayers an average of \$22,000. The cost of imprisonment increases as prisoners get older, reaching an average of \$69,000 for persons over age fifty-five.**
 - **Locking up more offenders for longer periods of time does not reduce the crime rate significantly.** [Zimbardo, Philip, *Transforming California's Prisons Into Expensive Old Age Homes for Felons*, San Francisco, Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, November 1994 — www.prisonexp.org/slide-42.htm]
 - **Prisons and the fear of crime are a huge industry in America. About 4 percent of the U.S. workforce works in one or more areas of corrections. In 2002, federal, state, and local governments spent an estimated \$49 billion on corrections. The crime control portion of the police and judicial budgets is an estimated \$51 billion. Private security is another \$104 billion. States spend more on criminal justice than cities, counties, or the federal government.** [Extrapolated from data in the Bureau of Statistics Sourcebook and from *Crime Control as Industry* by Nils Christie, Routledge: NY 3rd ed., 2000]
- b) From a fact sheet from The Sentencing Project of the Urban Institute [www.sentencingproject.org]
- **A 1998 study by the Bureau of Justice found that almost two-thirds of persons released from federal institutions are likely to be rearrested within three years.**
 - **About one-third of all released prisoners are drug offenders. Only 18 percent receive treatment while incarcerated.**
 - **One in every six offenders released from federal institutions goes back into the community without any form of correctional supervision.**
- c) From a research brief of the Rand Corporation [www.rand.org/publications/RB/RB6013]
- **The number of ex-offenders released from state and federal prisons in the past twenty years has increased threefold. In addition, a number of states are considering the early release of state prisoners as a way to reduce state budgets, which would accelerate the rate inmates are returned to communities.**
- d) From the Prison Policy Initiative [www.prisonpolicy.org]
- **We may be approaching the numerical limits of the prison system.**
 - **More than 13 percent of black men in *their late twenties* are already incarcerated.**

- e) From the Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice, January 2004 [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs]
- In facilities under the jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau of Prison, about 55 percent of those incarcerated are serving sentences for drug offenses. About 32 percent are serving sentences of five years or less; some 30 percent are serving five to ten years while about 17 percent have imposed sentences of ten to fifteen years.
 - In facilities under the jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau of Prison, men make up 93.2 percent of the inmate population, blacks make up about 40 percent, and Hispanics about 32 percent. The average inmate age is 38.
- f) From the Urban Institute's *Families Left Behind: The Hidden Costs of Incarceration and Reentry*, Jeremy Travis et al, October 2003
[www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310882_families_left_behind.pdf]
- About 2 percent of all minors — more than 1.5 million children — had a parent in state or federal prison in 1999. Ten percent of all minor children — 7.3 million — have a parent in prison, jail, on probation, or on parole.
 - Because women serve an average term of eighteen months, many female inmates whose children are in foster care with non-relatives face losing their parental rights.
- g) From *Correctional Education as a Crime Control Program*, Audrey Bazos and Jessica Hausman, UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research, December 2003 (for the U.S. Department of Education)
[www.sppsr.ucla.edu/ps/research/correctional.pdf]
- One million dollars spent on correctional education prevents about 640 crimes, while that same money invested in incarceration alone prevents 350.
- h) From *Education Reduces Crime: Three-State Recidivism Study*, Stephen Steuerer and Linda G. Smith, publ. By Management & Training Corporation, 2003
[www.ceanational.org/documents/EdReducesCrime.pdf]
- In the states studied (Maryland, Minnesota, and Ohio), 33 percent of inmates who take vocational training programs do better after release than matched peers.