

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Department of Corrections
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SUBJECT: *Research in Review*

TO: Executive Staff
 Superintendents/Boot Camp Commander
 Other Readers



FROM: Gary Zajac, Ph.D.
 Research and Evaluation Manager



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Enclosed please find Volume 6, Number 4 of *Research in Review*. This issue of RIR continues the series of special pieces authored by the Department's research partners, summarizing evaluation projects that they have conducted within the Department. The intent of this series is to take RIR beyond simply reporting on research that has been done in other jurisdictions and provide you with information and insight derived from the Department's own active evaluation agenda.

The first feature in this issue of RIR focuses upon the long-term outcome evaluation of the Department's alcohol and other drug (AOD) therapeutic communities (TC's). This study has been conducted over the past three to four years by Dr. Wayne Welsh of Temple University, with funding from the National Institute of Justice and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). This study built upon Dr. Welsh's earlier process evaluation of the Department's AOD programs. This study tracked the outcomes of several thousand inmates who received either TC or a much less intensive AOD education or outpatient program (these served as a comparison group for the TC inmates). Inmates who received TC had a reincarceration rate that was eleven percentage points lower than similar inmates not receiving TC. This supports a strong national consensus that TC's are an effective means of reducing the criminogenic risk of severely addicted offenders.

The second feature in this issue is a summary of the process evaluation of the Department's educational and vocational programs, conducted over the past several years by researchers at the Correctional Education Association (CEA) with funding from PCCD. This study encompassed the broad scope of education programs within the Department and produced findings that are informing educational and vocational policy. The CEA researchers are presently working on an extensive outcome evaluation of these programs, with findings expected in the Summer of 2004.

We welcome your feedback on RIR. It is our hope that this series of RIR issues will not only demonstrate the contributions that Pennsylvania is making to the national literature on offender rehabilitation and reentry, but will also demonstrate how knowledge gained from evaluation is incorporated into a policy and program planning process. Volume 7 of RIR will feature discussions of other Departmental evaluation projects, as well as article reviews and other pieces.

Thank you for your continued interest in *Research in Review*.

Research in Review

Office of Planning, Research, Statistics and Grants

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Special Focus on *Pennsylvania DOC Evaluation Agenda*

Volume 6, Number 4 of *Research in Review* continues our focus on research and evaluation projects conducted within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. This issue closes Volume 6 of RIR, which has highlighted contributions made by our own organization to the national literature on effective correctional programs. As many readers of RIR know, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections maintains an active agenda for evaluating its inmate treatment programs. Information about the Department's evaluation agenda can be found at: <http://www.cor.state.pa.us/Evaluating%20Programs%20&%20Issues.pdf>.

The first feature in this issue of RIR is a summary of the outcome evaluation of the alcohol and other drug (AOD) therapeutic communities (TC's) at five of our State Correctional Institutions (SCI's). This evaluation was conducted over the past several years by Dr. Wayne Welsh of Temple University, with funding from the National Institute of Justice and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). This study builds upon the broad-based process evaluation of the Department's AOD programs, conducted by Dr. Welsh during 1998-1999, and summarized in RIR Volume 6, Number 1. Several thousand seriously addicted inmates participating in TC or in less intensive AOD programs (the latter served as a comparison group for the TC inmates, approximating a *no treatment* group) were tracked for upwards of two years. This study found that inmates receiving TC had recidivism rates 11 percentage points lower than similar inmates not receiving TC. This finding supports a growing consensus in the correctional research and treatment community that TC is an effective approach to rehabilitating seriously addicted offenders. Following this is a commentary on what this research has meant for Department policy and practice.

The second feature in this issue of RIR is a summary of the process evaluation of the Department's educational and vocational programs, along with a commentary on how the study has influenced educational practices within the Department. This evaluation was conducted during 2001-2003 by researchers from the Correctional Education Association (CEA) with funding from PCCD. CEA looked at the broad range of educational programs offered at all SCI's. Data was collected from staff, inmates and from program observations. This study has contributed greatly to our ongoing development of these programs, and has set the stage for CEA's outcome evaluation of these programs, which will be completed by the middle of 2004 and which will be reported on in a future RIR.

Volume 7 of RIR will continue to feature summaries of evaluations of DOC programs, such as RSAT and outcome findings for parenting and educational/vocational programs, as well as article/book reviews and special briefing papers. We at RIR hope that you find these reports to be informative, practical and relevant to your work in corrections.

**OUTCOME EVALUATION OF PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTION'S ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG TREATMENT PROGRAMS**

by

Wayne Welsh, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Department of Criminal Justice, Temple University

The time that drug-involved offenders are incarcerated affords a critical opportunity to break the cycle of drug abuse and recidivism by providing effective treatment. An in-prison Therapeutic Community (TC) is an intensive, long-term, highly structured, residential treatment modality for hard-core drug users convicted of a criminal offense. TC emphasizes the necessity of the inmate taking responsibility for his/her behavior before, during, and after treatment.

Several evaluations of in-prison TC have produced promising results¹. However, studies have been criticized for small sample sizes, faulty research designs (e.g., selection and attrition biases), and inadequate attention to interactions between inmate characteristics, treatment process, and treatment outcomes. No studies have examined prison-based TC across multiple sites nor attempted to include programmatic and contextual variations in analyses of outcome. Numerous questions remain about the true impact of prison-based TC, and the potential impacts of unmeasured variation in inmate characteristics, treatment programs, and multiple outcomes.

This study examines in more detail the individual and programmatic factors associated with effective drug treatment across multiple sites. We examine relationships between inmate characteristics, treatment process, and treatment outcomes, and discuss critical issues in prison based drug treatment programming and policies. We provide recommendations intended to assist correctional agencies in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs that are responsive to the drug treatment needs of their prison populations.

The current project built upon a collaborative research partnership between Temple University's Center for Public Policy (CPP) and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) that began in 1999. As part of a demonstration project, we conducted a statewide assessment of prison-based Alcohol or Other Drug (AOD) treatment programming, including identification of critical service delivery components and goals, and an intensive on-site process evaluation of AOD programs at two institutions. Results from that project have influenced Departmental AOD treatment policies, and led to development of an AOD treatment program database that helped guide the design of the present study (see *Research in Review* Volume 6, Number 1 for a summary of the earlier process evaluation and partnership building project).

¹ See, for example: special issue of *The Prison Journal*, Volume 79, Number 3, (1999) on Drug Treatment Outcomes for Correctional Settings.

Research Design and Methodology

We examined in-treatment measures and multiple post-release outcomes for 2,809 inmates who participated in TC drug treatment programs (n = 749) or comparison groups (n = 2,060) at five State Correctional Institutions (Cresson, Graterford, Houtzdale, Huntingdon, Waymart). Matched comparison groups made up of TC-eligible inmates participating in less intensive forms of treatment (e.g., short-term drug education and outpatient treatment groups) at the same five institutions were constructed based upon known predictors such as drug dependency, need for treatment and criminal history. Process and outcome measures incorporated a range of institutional, intermediate (e.g., attitudinal and behavioral change, participation in treatment) and post-release measures (e.g., drug relapse, rearrest and reincarceration, employment, levels of parole supervision). At the time of this report, 462 TC inmates and 1,152 Comparison inmates had been released from prison, with follow-up periods extending up to 26 months (mean = 13 months). The two groups did not differ significantly on amount of time at risk since release.

Our ability to examine post-release outcomes was limited by the unavailability of automated data regarding participation in aftercare treatment. Aftercare may interact with employment and other observed predictors to influence outcomes. Further research should examine ways to better integrate prison-based drug treatment with post-release needs and resources. As noted in the findings below, post-release employment proved to be a significant factor in mediating outcomes. It is difficult to determine the degree to which employment was a cause or an effect. To do so, it would be useful to obtain more detailed information on parolees' type of post-release employment, employee performance, income, etc. To disentangle potential causes, research should also determine how other factors (e.g., intelligence, cognitive abilities, education, in-prison and pre-prison work history, job training) might interact with drug treatment to influence post-release outcomes (employment, drug relapse, reincarceration and rearrest).

Major Findings

- Offenders in TC received 15 times the treatment “dose” that the comparison group received. This tells us that the comparison group was indeed a good choice to approximate a true no treatment control group.
- We found positive effects of TC treatment upon reincarceration and rearrest rates, but not drug relapse rates (Table I).
- Post-release employment strongly and significantly reduced the likelihood of drug relapse, rearrest, and reincarceration (Table II).

Table I: Effects of TC vs. Comparison Group on Three Measures of Recidivism

	Comparison Group	TC Group	
Reincarceration Rate	41%	30%	*
Rearrest Rate	33%	24%	*
Drug Relapse Rate	39%	35%	

*p < .05

Note. Statistics shown are based on logistic regression results where all control variables including a categorical variable indicating membership in the TC vs. Comparison Group were entered into analyses. Results shown thus reflect outcomes controlling for the effects of all other variables.

Table II: Effects of Post-Release Employment on Three Measures of Recidivism

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Unemployed and Able to Work	Unemployed and Unable to Work	
Reincarceration Rate	17%	26%	24%	65%	*
Rearrest rate	21%	34%	27%	41%	*
Drug Relapse rate	30%	39%	38%	44%	*

* p < .05

Note. Statistics shown are based on logistic regression results where all control variables including a categorical variable indicating membership in the TC vs. Comparison Group were entered into analyses. Results shown thus reflect outcomes controlling for the effects of all other variables.

- Treatment outcomes were generally invariant across institutions, with one important exception. Significantly higher rates of drug relapse were observed for inmates treated at two of the TC's (c. 44%) than for those treated at the other three TC's (with a mean more than ten percentage points lower).
- TC inmates evidenced numerous, positive improvements in psychosocial functioning and involvement in treatment over the first six months of treatment, as indicated by subscales of the TCU Resident Evaluation of Self and Treatment (REST) form, and the TCU Counselor Rating of Client (CRC) form. TC inmates showed significant decreases in *depression* and *risk-taking behavior*, and significant increases in *self-esteem*, *therapeutic engagement*, *personal progress*, *trust in group*, *opinions of program staff*, and *perceptions of counselor competence*. The strongest area of consistency across the five TC programs was in the high ratings that inmates gave of counselor rapport and counselor competence.
- Each unit, while implementing the basic TC philosophy, also exhibited some programmatic variations. For example, two of the five TC units were rather large (100+ inmates). Large units make it difficult to properly implement the TC philosophy, which depends heavily upon positive peer interactions. Second, while the overall termination rate for TC (26%) was reasonable, one program was very low (5%); another was very high (71%).
- Eighteen REST scales and eight CRC scales measuring various dimensions of inmate

psychosocial functioning and responses to treatment were then entered into logistic regression analyses as predictors of the three measures of recidivism (controlling for all other variables). Significant predictors of reincarceration included anxiety, hostility, therapeutic engagement, counselor rapport, ratings of program structure, and rapport with other inmates. No additional predictors of rearrest were statistically significant. Significant predictors of drug relapse included self-efficacy, risk taking, and self-confrontation.

- The validity of our findings were bolstered by the fact that we that we were able to precisely account for total treatment exposure for all inmates in our sample, and we examined the effects of treatment exposure as a control variable. Previous studies have failed to do so.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Nine recommendations are summarized in Table III, along with the specific findings supporting each. For a research partnership to develop and grow, research results must to some degree be localized, short-term, timely, useable, and policy-relevant. For the results to be of wider interest, though, general principles and recommendations applicable to prison-based drug treatment must also be generated. Some recommendations are specific to the particular correctional system examined (Pennsylvania); most are generalizable to other jurisdictions as well. The PADOC has thoroughly studied these recommendations and provided to researchers detailed information on current and proposed strategies, as well as gaps in need of system wide attention.

Policies regarding prison-based drug treatment should focus on strengthening and enhancing TC quality and implementation so as to maximize treatment effects. Guidelines formulated by professional associations and informed by both clinical practice and research suggest that the bar could profitably be raised. Where TC is sufficiently intense but supportive, treatment engagement should be intentionally maximized.

The effects of TC were statistically significant and encouraging, although not unqualified. TC significantly lowered the likelihood of reincarceration and rearrest, but the effects of TC on rearrest or drug relapse failed to reach statistical significance. Post release employment emerged as the strongest predictor of recidivism.

Further policy-relevant research should continue to explore and evaluate productive strategies in these directions, while at the same time examining more detailed interactions between inmate characteristics, treatment process, and outcomes across multiple sites.

Table III

Policy Issues and Recommendations

Recommendation	Findings Supporting Recommendation
1. Correctional officials, in cooperation with Parole, Probation, Community Corrections Centers (CCC's) and privately contracted Community Correctional Facilities (CCF's) should further explore and evaluate strategies to enhance post-release employment prospects.	Post-release employment was strongly related to a lower likelihood of reincarceration, rearrest, and drug relapse.
2. Correctional administrators, working with researchers, drug treatment specialists, and program managers, should examine whether existing procedures aimed at improving inmates' therapeutic engagement and retention in the program can be strengthened. 3. DOC administrators should work with drug treatment specialists and correctional program managers to monitor compliance with recently implemented drug treatment standards and policies. For example, administrators should ensure that selection criteria for TC and other program types are consistently implemented so that program participants reflect appropriate levels of treatment need.	We found some inconsistencies in inmate selection and termination procedures across the five institutions. For example, two TC programs tended to recruit older, lower-risk inmates than the other TC programs. Attrition rates varied substantially (5 – 71%) across TC programs.
4. Correctional administrators should carefully monitor the implementation of assessment, screening and program placement procedures specified by treatment policies. Monitor drug treatment program placements at each institution to ensure that high-need inmates are assigned to high-intensity treatment programs.	Many high-need inmates (e.g., high offense gravity scores, high need for drug treatment) were assigned to less intensive Outpatient programs rather than TC.
5. Correctional administrators should regularly review, update and verify critical data fields entered into automated information systems. Critical data fields include data elements that are used to guide program eligibility, selection and placement decisions.	Considerable variability was observed in time remaining to minimum release date. Missing data on other fields (e.g., scores on drug screening measures) hampered some analyses.
6. Correctional administrators, working with researchers, drug treatment specialists, and program managers, should review standards for assessment of inmate psychological needs at each institution, as well as procedures for ensuring that such needs are addressed during the course of an inmate's treatment.	TC inmates may in some cases have psychological needs that are not being fully addressed, as indicated by REST (inmate self-report survey) and CRC (counselor ratings) change scores and coefficients predictive of recidivism.

Recommendation	Findings Supporting Recommendation
<p>7. Correctional administrators, working with drug treatment specialists and correctional program managers, should examine whether current resources devoted to program quality assurance are sufficient. A good model is provided by the Statewide Integrated Quality Assurance Model (SIQAM) for prison-based TC programs. This model is based upon the TC framework developed by DeLeon (2000) and critical program standards jointly developed by Therapeutic Communities of America (TCA) and the American Correctional Association.</p>	<p>Two of the TC programs did not use pull-ups or "Learning Measures," and individual counseling was provided inconsistently across most programs.</p>
<p>8. Correctional, parole and probation officials should ensure that appropriate levels of aftercare treatment are being identified and provided to inmates upon their release from prison. DOC and PBPP administrators should work together to further develop and strengthen automated procedures for tracking inmate post-release behavior, including but not limited to compliance with conditions of supervision.</p> <p>9. Correctional officials should continue to strongly support the development of offender-based treatment information systems.</p>	<p>At the time of this study, there was a lack of computerized data on several measures (e.g., admissions and discharges from prison-based treatment programs, participation in aftercare treatment) that would facilitate program evaluation.</p>

ENDNOTE:

This project was supported by the following grants:

"Evaluation of Prison Based Drug Treatment in Pennsylvania: A Research Collaboration Between the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the Center for Public Policy at Temple University." Wayne Welsh (Temple University) Principal Investigator. National Institute of Justice - Grant # 99-CE-VX-0009 (\$171,684). January 2000-June 2001.

"Evaluation of Prison-Based Therapeutic Community Drug Treatment Programs in Pennsylvania." Wayne Welsh (Temple University) Principal Investigator. Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency - Grant # 00-DS-19-11188 (\$146,979). October 2001-September 2002.

More information about this project and results are found in the full evaluation reports, available from the Principal Investigator, the National Institute of Justice, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections:

Wayne N. Welsh. (August 2002). *Evaluation of Prison Based Drug Treatment in Pennsylvania: A Research Collaboration Between the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the Center for Public Policy at Temple University*. Philadelphia: Temple University. Report to the National Institute of Justice.

Wayne N. Welsh. (May 2003). *Evaluation of Prison-Based Therapeutic Community Drug Treatment Programs in Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia: Temple University. Report to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

**THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS RESPONSE:
TREATING SUBSTANCE DEPENDENT OFFENDERS**

A growing body of national evaluation literature has concluded that prison-based therapeutic communities (TC's), properly designed and managed, can reduce the recidivism rates of seriously addicted offenders (see RIR Volume 4, Number 2 and Volume 3, Number 1). Pennsylvania has now made a significant contribution to this line of inquiry through its partnership with Dr. Welsh at Temple University. This study of our TC's has employed very precise controls for treatment dosage and carefully matched offenders between treatment and comparison groups, while maintaining a large overall sample size. This study is also unique in drawing data from five separate TC's across the Department. We are extremely impressed and gratified by the methodological rigor that Dr. Welsh has brought to this study, and are pleased with the opportunity to advance the level of understanding of how TC's operate.

This study has provided the Department with evidence that TC's are a worthwhile intervention for the seriously addicted inmates in our custody. The finding of an eleven percentage point reduction in recidivism for inmates receiving TC reaffirms our decision to expand our AOD TC offerings. We now operate TC's in 14 of our SCI's; some of our prisons have more than one. There is some variation in the duration and structure of these TC's, which provides a valuable opportunity to study the differential impact of such variation, taking the evaluation of TC's to its next logical level. The Department is presently working with Dr. Welsh to develop such a study.

The Department had made productive changes to its AOD programs based upon Dr. Welsh's earlier process evaluation (see RIR Volume 6, Number 1). The five TC outcome evaluation summarized above presents a new set of evidence-based recommendations for programmatic improvement. The Department has been reviewing these, and some of them have been addressed by our efforts over the past several years to standardize our AOD programs, embodied in the *AOD Philosophy and Treatment Framework* and the revised AOD policy. Regular programs audits and on-site monitoring by institution-specific quality improvement committees are designed to promote compliance with standards regarding assessment, selection and admission to programs, program retention and termination and program curricula.

Refinement of our AOD programs is an ongoing process. We continue to develop our methods for assessment of individual inmate risk and needs, most recently by the adoption of a common set of assessment tools that are now being administered to all new commitments, that will inform placement into all programs, not just AOD. We are also working to refine our assessments of previous treatment experience and of the correlation between substance use and broader criminality for individual inmates.

One of the more interesting findings of this study is that post-release employment is a powerful mediator of success on the street for offenders who have gone through AOD treatment. Offenders who maintain regular employment after release had better outcomes than those who did not. This

study recommends that the Department enhance its efforts to assist inmates with securing and maintaining post-release employment. The Department's Community Orientation Reintegration (COR) program, begun in late 2001, includes a heavy focus on job readiness. Various other programs, such as CTEP, are also available for selected inmates upon release. The Department is exploring additional lifeskills types of programs that could provide further assistance with post-release employment. While we do not have complete control over the options available to inmates after release, we do recognize the importance of stable employment to successful reintegration, and are committed to helping inmates with the challenge of making a legitimate living.

The outcome evaluation of our TC's has made a significant contribution to our understanding of most intensive AOD programs, and has demonstrated the power of a research partnership between a public agency and a university. We are presently working with Dr. Welsh on an evaluation of our specialized AOD institution – SCI Chester – and we look forward to the fruition of that project in several years.

PROCESS EVALUATION OF PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION'S EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

by

Linda Smith, Ph.D., Stephen Steurer, Ph.D. and Raymond Wasdyke, Ph.D.

Correctional Education Association

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) began working with the Correctional Education Association (CEA) in the Spring of 2001, supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), to evaluate the Department's educational and vocational programs. The evaluation project is comprised of two primary phases: a process evaluation and an outcome evaluation. The process evaluation was designed to collect information on the processes, practices and policies the Department utilizes in providing academic and vocational education and to make recommendations for improvement. Special emphasis was placed on the efficacy and effectiveness of vocational training and labor market re-entry preparation.

The Department developed an advisory committee comprised of Department staff from central office and various State Correctional Institutions (SCI's) to oversee this project. This advisory committee assisted in determining the direction the evaluation would take, and provided feedback concerning the evaluation tools and methods.

A mail survey of academic and vocational instructors and school principals from Pennsylvania's SCI's was conducted. All of the 25 SCI principals completed the surveys that were mailed to them during the spring of 2001 (i.e., 100 percent response rate). Of the 306 surveys returned from educational staff, 234 were from instructors and the remaining 72 were approximately evenly split between counselors and librarians. The response rate for educational staff was 88 percent.

Site visits were conducted at six SCIs (Camp Hill, Huntingdon, Greensburg, Dallas, Mahanoy and Cambridge Springs), strategically located in different parts of the state and including one female institution. Focus groups were also held at these institutions, involving school principals, instructors and program managers from 19 surrounding SCIs. Additionally, inmates at these institutions participating in academic and/or vocational training were interviewed. All onsite work was conducted between September and November 2001. The information collected during the site visits was augmented with vocational program data and reports.

The preliminary draft process evaluation report was presented to the education evaluation advisory committee in February 2002. The report underwent several content revisions and a major style revision and was finalized in May 2003. The report noted common themes running through the findings, which were central to formulating recommendations. These themes are:

- There is a lack of consensus concerning the efficacy of vocational and some educational programming among educational staff and correctional program administrators.

- There is a disconnect between institutional educational and vocational program outcomes and external labor market expectations and behavior.
- Decentralization of educational and vocational programming appears to have contributed to a proliferation of “niche” courses and programs that lack common content, outcomes, and standards.
- Infrequent coordination and communication between academic and vocational instructors have effectively prevented the integration of these content areas and, as a result, prevent integrated or blended instruction.
- Policies and practices have effectively restricted the use of a broad array of technology-based instructional strategies (non-Internet).

Based on these findings, the issues are how to: 1) apply Pennsylvania’s recent teacher certification requirements, 2) increase the commitment to reading, employability skills training and secondary programming for inmates, and 3) move from promise to practice. State correctional policy makers, SCI administrators and educators should all focus on ways to support the formation of public and private partnerships, the deployment of technology, and the system-wide adoption of “best practices” to reduce costs for the criminal justice system. Specific recommendations were as follows:

- Policy makers should develop partnerships with state and national employer organizations and associations for the development of employment for ex-offenders in skilled and technology-based jobs.
- A statewide framework of standardized curriculum content and performance standards for academic, vocational, and technology courses should be established to ensure consistency of programming to achieve state educational goals, national industry-based skill standards and credentialing, greater accountability, and to promote the transferability of inmate competency-based learning records between state correctional institutions.
- Policy makers should consider ways to remove barriers that block access to online resources, courses, and programming and accelerate technology deployment for educational administrators and instructors while ensuring accountability of outcomes and security.
- Policy makers should develop a system for periodically measuring the educational, criminal, and economic system impacts of vocational programming for the purpose of judging the efficacy of these programs.
- Policy makers at the state level should support the continuous development and growth of staff aligned with the specific performance standards of all correctional educators, especially vocational teachers.

- Policy makers and institutional administrators should encourage the integration of life and employability skills in all academic programs.
- Policies should be adopted that encourage and support regular communication between and among academic and vocational instructional staff in state correctional institutions and private and public sectors for collaborative knowledge building, using technology-based as well as more traditional forms of communication.
- A council of educational, correctional, workforce development, business, and labor interests should be created to determine and set mandatory policy and procedures for correctional education.

The process evaluation was designed to provide recommendations for educational program improvement and refinement specifically targeting vocational education programs, while building upon current strengths in educational and vocational programming. The report notes that the Department offers many exemplary initiatives and programs. The Department is the only state agency to have all of its institutional education programs certified by CEA, which is recognized by the American Correctional Association. There is also a curriculum development process in place as part of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Chapter IV curriculum regulations that requires each institution to develop a proposed education plan (PEP). This plan requires a great deal of coordination and team effort. The Department also has a uniform computerized academic program for the adult basic and high school equivalency programs in all SCI's.

The second part of this project is an outcome evaluation, currently underway. Twenty-seven Department staff members from 15 institutions have been trained to facilitate the delivery of a pre-release survey to inmates who are being paroled or who complete their maximum sentence. The pre-release survey is an updated version of the one utilized in CEA's three-state recidivism study. The ten page survey consists of 77 multiple-choice questions. All completed surveys are mailed directly to CEA for coding and evaluation.

Data collection with this survey has been extended through the fall of 2003 to maximize the number of completed surveys. The original goal was 1,500; as of November 2003, there were 1,574 completed surveys, which should provide a suitable release cohort. The evaluation plan allows for an average of twelve months of follow-up with these inmates to determine if they are employed, violate parole, are rearrested or reincarcerated, etc.

The completion of this evaluation project will provide the Department with a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses in the provision of educational and vocational programming. Additionally, because CEA already has completed the *Three State Recidivism Study* in Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio, the Department will be able to benchmark its programming against those states reported in the study.

ENDNOTE:

This project was supported by the following grant:

"Evaluation of the Education Programs within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. " Stephen Steurer and Linda Smith (Correctional Education Association) Principal Investigators. Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency - Grant # 99-DS-19-10760 (\$340,980). April 2001-March 2004.

**THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS RESPONSE:
PREPARING OFFENDERS ACADEMICALLY AND VOCATIONALLY**

Following the presentation of the final process evaluation report, the Department's Bureau of Corrections Education met, reviewed the findings and created an action plan to address each of the findings. Each of the findings is listed below, with the Department's response following:

Policy makers should develop partnerships with state and national employer organizations and associations for the development of employment for ex-offenders in skilled and technology-based jobs. As a result the Department has established a goal of offering industry-recognized certification for 75% of vocational programs under the auspices of the Department's Bureau of Corrections Education by July 1, 2005. As of December 2003, over 67% of the Department's programs offer an industry recognized certification. The Department sent its Curriculum Coordinator to receive certification as a National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) trainer. Upon his return, he conducted four training sessions resulting in the NCCER certification of forty-two vocational teachers who now can teach and certify students. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's (L&I) Director of Workforce Development was added to represent the business sector on the Inmate Education Advisory Committee (IEAC). As a result of this appointment, a joint agency initiative, Project Reconnect, has been instituted to combine the resources of the DOC and L&I to network with local industries in southeastern Pennsylvania and a state correctional institution in Chester, Pennsylvania. Project Reconnect is designed to connect inmates who are returning to the southeast region with employers in that region.

A statewide framework of standardized curriculum content and performance standards for academic, vocational, and technology courses should be established to ensure consistency of programming to achieve state educational goals, national industry-based skill standards and credentialing, greater accountability, and to promote the transferability of inmate competency-based learning records between state correctional institutions. In response to this finding, a Business Education curriculum committee was formed and met three times in late 2003 to review the existing curriculum and align it with state and national business standards to develop a 12-18 month standardized business education curriculum. The next step will be to identify an industry recognized certification that can be integrated as part of the curriculum.

A committee of practitioners will also be formed to evaluate the Auto Mechanics program and evaluate ASE and other certifications for inclusion in the program. The Commonwealth Secondary Diploma Program has been developed and a common curriculum will be used by all SCIs offering this program. All Adult Basic Education (ABE)/General Education Development (GED) programs that are group taught will have Planned Courses of Instruction in Chapter 4 format.

A resume-writing program (WinWay) that is used by the L&I CareerLink Centers is now on the pre-approved software list and will be used statewide, which will help inmates using the CareerLink Centers upon release. AutoCAD software will continue to be the standardized software package for Drafting and CAD programs. Destinations software is currently used in all academic computer labs even though the company has discontinued this software. A committee of practitioners has examined a variety of software packages and has recommended a package developed by Plato. This will be purchased for SCI-Forest and if successful, will be used to phase-out the older Destinations software as funds become available.

Policy makers should consider ways to remove barriers that block access to online resources, courses, and programming and accelerate technology deployment for educational administrators and instructors while ensuring accountability of outcomes and maximum security. Every institution has computers connected to the Department's intranet (DOCNET) and teachers have an email account, which provides teachers with access to all of the resources on the DOCNET and allows for statewide email contact with other professionals in the Department. The Department supports teacher access to computer based training areas located in areas without inmate access and each institution is in the process of setting up an area to facilitate staff access to computer based instruction.

The Department is working with L&I to develop an Internet simulation of the CareerLink's website. This simulation will be available on inmate accessible computers in the library and provide inmates with a working knowledge of how to utilize the site upon release. Other Internet simulations have also been approved for use in the classroom. The Department is also working with the contract Community Correction Centers (CCC) utilized in Project Reconnect, to provide computers for Internet access at the CCC. This will provide the inmates with access to the CareerLink website while in the CCC.

Policy makers should develop a system for periodically measuring the educational, criminal, and economic system impacts of vocational programming for the purpose of judging the efficacy of these programs. As noted above, the CEA process evaluation is coupled with an outcome evaluation, currently underway, which is scheduled to produce findings by the summer of 2004. Another grant, from the Federal Department of Education for Workplace and Community Transition funds contractors to certify inmate students in a variety of training and providing job placement and on-going tracking upon release. These grant funds expire September 2005.

The Department is working with L&I to provide each inmate a career education workshop while the inmate is incarcerated. L&I will then conduct a six-month and a one-year follow-up of the inmates once they are paroled. This type of post-release tracking will also be utilized for Project Reconnect.

Policy makers at the state level should support the continuous development and growth of staff aligned with the specific performance standards of all correctional educators, especially vocational teachers. A three-day staff professional development event will be held late in the first quarter of 2004. This event will offer academic and vocational tracks as well as workshops appropriate for both groups. The Department also supports and approves the self-initiated requests for professional development programs that enhance teacher or counselor skills that apply to their current assignment. Furthermore, the Department participates in a vocational internship program through Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University and Temple University. This program is mandated through the Pennsylvania Department of Education and is designed to teach vocational practitioners teaching pedagogy.

Policy makers and institutional administrators should encourage the integration of life and employability skills in all academic programs. Under the leadership and guidance of the Secretary of the Department of Corrections, the Community Orientation Reintegration (COR) program was developed and implemented in late 2001 to provide employability skills to all inmates prior to their release to a Community. Additionally, life skills are addressed in each institution's Proposed Education Plan and are integrated in academic programming, both ABE and GED.

Policies should be adopted that encourage and support regular communication between and among academic and vocational instructional staff in state correctional institutions and private and public sectors for collaborative knowledge building, using technology-based as well as more traditional forms of communication. Communications have been addressed and are being enhanced by addressing this issue during local and statewide staff meetings. The Department is now approving vocational instructors to attend academic-focused conferences with the goal of increasing the understanding between the academic and vocational learning environments. Local staff training days with both academic and vocational instructors are supported via Act 80 days. This training is also supported with Act 48 hours at each SCI for participants. The Department is planning a three-day staff professional development event in Altoona from March 31 to April 2, 2004. This event will include academic and vocational tracks as well as workshops appropriate for both groups. The Department supports visits of professionals between institutions.

A council of educational, correctional, workforce development, business, and labor interests should be created to determine and set mandatory policy and procedures for correctional education. The legislatively mandated Inmate Education Advisory Committee serves this function. It is chaired by the Department of Education and the committee will assist the DOC in its efforts to offer top quality educational programming to inmates. The make-up of the committee includes members from the Departments of Corrections, Education, and Labor and Industry, teaching practitioners, teacher union and business and industry leaders. Vocational members are an integral component of the Inmate Education Advisory Committee. Since the CEA Research/Evaluation

report, an additional business representative was added. This committee meets semi-annually.

While there are still issues that need to be addressed, the Department has taken many steps in addressing the most critical findings of the process evaluation. This ongoing effort to evaluate education and vocational programs demonstrates the Department's commitment to using evaluations to inform policy.

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Petersilia, Joan. 2003. "When Prisoners Come Home." New York: Oxford University Press. (Number 3)