Transition   to the Community;
Prison   Literacy   Programs   and Factors
Which   Lead to Success   in the Community

by

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A Practicum report

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Social Work

to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

University of Manitoba

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TRANSITION TO THE COMMUNITY:

PRISON LITERACY PROGRAMS AND FACTORS WHICH LEAD

TO SUCCESS IN THE COMMUNITY

BY

RUSSELL JAMES LOEWEN

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University

of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

RUSSELL JAMES LOEWEN   1997 (c)

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the people who, over the past fifteen years, have enriched my life as I met with them in prison.

ABSTRACT

This practicum occurred at five prisons in Manitoba and Saskatchewan during the spring of 1997. Five teachers and fifty-seven students participated in this study which sought to describe what occurs in prison schools, reasons for prison school attendance, school-related goals upon release, and self-identified factors influencing the success of these goals.

Conclusions reached as a result of this practicum intervention point to the importance of a safe and respectful prison school environment in order for learning to occur. The type of learning environment and subject content in prison schools are influenced, in part, by the philosophical orientation of teachers, prevailing penal philosophy, goals of the local prison administration, and the security level of the prison. Teachers play an important role in helping prisoners set realistic goals for release. As well, maturation and self discovery can occur for prisoners who are willing and able to be committed to the process of personal change.

Students in prison make significant gains and many set realistic education-related goals for release. The four primary self-identified factors which prisoners believe will influence the success of release goals include personal motivation, family support, drugs/alcohol, and employment or financial resources.

Finally, the implication for literacy research in prison is that Guba and Lincoln's fourth-generation evaluation procedures can assist in a valuable learning process for all stakeholders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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"Yesterday I could not sleep because yesterday I wrote my name."
*   - Brazilian Peasant*

"The commitment I'm making to school is making me feel free."
*   - Canadian Prisoner*

Prisoners in Canada are actively engaged in education. The Canadian public, prison officials, prison teachers, and students generally agree that education makes a difference for people when they are released from prison. School holds an integral place in prison programming in Canada.

This study was an attempt to ascertain educational opportunities available to prisoners, literacy-related goals of prisoners for release from prison, and prisoner-identified factors which influence the attainment of those goals.

Literacy and education programs in prisons are not new. The first North American prison, built in the late 1700's in Pennsylvania, was intended as a quiet place for study and reflection. Prisoners were to reflect on their wrongdoing, change their values, and become reformed. According to Cohen (1985), the people who founded the penitentiary believed that it could be a solution to the crime problem. They believed that a better society could result (p. 195).

The first Canadian prison to open its doors was Kingston Penitentiary in 1835. The penal philosophy of the

time included a strict regime of sanitation, inspection,
separate confinement, sobriety, coarse diet, hard labour,
and a rough and uniform apparel. Retribution, not
rehabilitation, was strictly enforced. During the 19th
century a teacher provided individual instruction in cells
during the evening hours and the emphasis was on basic
literacy for a few prisoners (MacLean, 1992, p 21).

Whether the penitentiary or education within its walls
is a solution to the crime problem is open to debate. But we
do know that some form of prison education has remained
relatively constant during the history of the penitentiary
in Canada. According to Griffiths (1994),

> Over the years, various reports and commissions of
> inquiry have criticized federal corrections for failing
> to make the education of inmates a high priority
> despite the fact that a large number of offenders have
> severe educational deficiencies. In 1991, for example,
> approximately 65% of inmates in federal correctional
> facilities (compared to 25% in the general population)
> had math and language skills below the level of grade
> eight." (p. 514)

During the past two decades, when the "nothing works"
debate in North America (Martinson, 1974) fuelled attacks on
all prison programming, school programs survived and, in
fact, flourished. Linden (1984) has noted that since 1946
there has been an expansion of education in Canadian prisons
however there have been few attempts to evaluate their
success (p. 65).

The predominant aims of prisons in Canada are
punishment and rehabilitation. Literacy and education

programs are generally regarded by prison officials as a means to provide the rehabilitative function. Timmins (1989) indicates that, historically, prison education has sought to fulfil five functions,

> 1. Uplifting morals through Bible study, hard work and discipline, 2. Training in skills, 3. Developing intellectuality and human understanding, 4. Changing personality or behaviour modes, and 5. Increasing opportunity structures (p. 62).

Research into school in prisons provides two interesting observations. Firstly, there appears to be a lack of consensus regarding what is to be evaluated. Secondly, success is variously defined and interpreted. Most prison research regards the prison authorities and staff as primary stakeholders. Where prisoners are involved, they are typically viewed as passive recipients or as acquiescent beneficiaries of prison research. In fact, the vast majority of documented prison research to date could be characterized as technical, descriptive, and/or judgement oriented.

Guba and Lincoln (1987) propose fourth-generation evaluation which places primary importance on the claims and issues forwarded by a variety of stakeholder audiences. This practicum contends that the primary stakeholders in prison education are prisoners. Teachers and the prison administration are viewed as secondary stakeholders. Value pluralism - the notion that there are conflicting judgements in the face of the same "factual" evidence -is a basic premise of this research. It follows that the findings and

judgements will affect the stakeholders. Therefore
stakeholder acceptance and recognition of the process and
results is important. According to Guba and Lincoln (1987),
an evaluator who pronounces judgements on stakeholders
"infringes the rights of certain of the stakeholders,
dishonours the values of the infringed groups, and exploits
the power of the evaluation to override their self-perceived
interests" (p. 208).

Davidson's (ed.) (1995) book entitled, "Schooling in a
Total Institution; Critical Perspectives on Prison
Education", provides a valuable perspective for this
practicum report. Because the practicum is based on
participatory research methods which value stakeholder
perceptions and concerns of teachers and students,
Davidson's (et. al.) questioning of traditional and value-
laden education in prisons provides a balance to traditional
evaluation of prison education. Past evaluations of prison
school programming have been primarily descriptive and
judgement oriented, without much regard for prisoner or
teacher issues.

Davidson (1995), claims that prison education is viewed
by prison administrators a means to habilitate,
rehabilitate, and/or reform prisoners by correcting
functional learning deficiencies correlated to criminal
activity, hence the term correctional education.

Have evaluators determined that prison education has

been "successful"? That depends, in part, on the value positions of evaluators. If success means higher moral or cognitive development in prisoners resulting in reduced recidivism, then we must remind ourselves of the 70 - 80% recidivism rate in Canada. If, on the other hand, we view higher education as a means of lowering the crime rate, we need not look far to discover that the crime rate has remained relatively stable over the past two decades. If we mean that people with higher education will be less prone to commit crime, then we are reminded that, in terms of total monetary value, the biggest percentage of crime is committed by white collar workers who are relatively well educated. Alternately, we may wish to evaluate education in prison on its postulation that it provides individuals who would otherwise not read or write to have the opportunity to receive a literacy certificate or even high school standing. Whatever the determination of "success", education in prison continues to play a prominent role. According to a United Nations report entitled "Basic Education in Prisons", "A prisoner's problems are greater than any solution that education alone can offer, but without education the problems are unlikely to be dissipated by a prison regime" (Sutton, 1992, p.12).

The goal of this practicum was to practice fourth-generation evaluation methodology to study prison education in five prisons in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. It was

conducted in the spring of 1997 by this writer, as an employee of The John Howard Society of Brandon, through a grant from The National Literacy Secretariat. The five sites included Brandon Correctional Institution, Regina Correctional Institution, Riverbend Institution in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Stony Mountain Institution and Rockwood Institutions in Stony Mountain, Manitoba (10 km. north of Winnipeg). Fifty-seven prisoners and five school staff participated in the study.

Why Education Research in Prison?

Education currently enjoys a prominent place within prison programming and will likely continue to do so for the foreseeable future. So why study prison education? I was interested in knowledge and skill development based on the implementation of fourth-generation research methods for literacy in prisons. For the purpose of this practicum there were two primary reasons for education research in prison: 1) to develop greater knowledge in the implementation of literacy research within a prison environment, and 2) to develop skills as they relate to design and implementation of literacy research with prisoners. This was to be accomplished through a review of the literature and qualitative research in five prisons in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The research attempted to determine what exists in

prison education and how it may be making a difference for individuals in prison. More specifically, this study attempted to determine

1) specific schooling models practised at five prisons in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 2) reasons prisoners attend school, 3) literacy-related goals which students are setting for their return to the community, and 4) factors which prisoners believe will affect achievement of these goals upon release.

Rationale for the Practicum

Studies pertaining to prisoners and prison programs are common in North America. Unique to this practicum is the application of a qualitative methodology which defines the primary stakeholders as prisoners and prison teachers. The qualitative approach (Lord, Schnarr, & Hutchison, 1987; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1990) can provide an in depth process of people's transition toward increased control in their lives. This research utilizes Guba and Lincoln's (1989) fourth-generation-evaluation model which is based upon the tenets of value pluralism, stakeholder constructions, fairness, merit and worth, and negotiation. A goal was for prisoners and teachers to have the opportunity to influence the parameters of the study. This was done through participatory methods such as the focus-group process and returning a draft copy of the findings to

teachers and prisoners for changes, recommendations and discussion.

Findings were documented in a Report to the Literacy Secretariat of Canada entitled, "Transition to the Community Prison Literacy Programs and Factors Which Lead to Success in the Community." The Report was written and forwarded to teachers and students for comment. These comments accentuated different value postures and, in some cases, accommodations were made to the Report. One significant correction to the Report was the need to modify the final section of the report and call it "Conclusions of Teachers", "Conclusions of Students", rather than "Recommendations to Teachers" and "Recommendations to Students." The term "recommendation" implies power differential while "conclusions" indicates power sharing.

CHAPTER 2   LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review literature relevant to this
practicum report. It considers literature pertaining to
fourth-generation evaluation, definitions of literacy, and
the social and prison contexts of education in prisons. The
literature also discusses issues specific to prisoners who
are enroled in prison schooling, the purposes of
imprisonment and correctional planning and its impact on
prison schooling. Attention will also be drawn to the
various models and philosophical paradigms of prison
education and their impact on learning. It will consider
definitions of success as they pertain to prisoners.

Industrialization has brought with it the need for a
literate workforce. One can hardly argue against the
importance of a population which is literate and educated.
In Canada, as in other societies, literacy and education are
recognized as "sacred" national programs. Mental images of a
parent reading a nursery rhyme to a two year old child or
the vision of a six year old child reading her first book
evoke powerful images. Conversely, Canadians are appalled
when we learn that a healthy 13 year old child has
difficulty reading or completing simple math equations. We
do know that prisoners in Canada, on average, have a lower
formal educational standing than society at large. Toward
this end, literacy programs have become a fixture in
Canadian Prisons.

Prison Education In Canada

According to Wier (1973) prison education began to play a prominent role in Canada in 1946. An evaluation of prison education in the late 1970s revealed that approximately 20% of federally sentenced prisoners were in full-time education. The Solicitor General in Canada has, since 1987, stressed the growing importance of literacy education in federal prisons. On the one hand higher education is promoted as an investment in human capital allowing the prisoner to gain access to the dominant culture and, on the other hand, it has been seen as a means for moral development for the prisoner (Cordella, 1995, p. 147).

The Canadian criminal justice system identifies sentencing goals as being deterrence, incapacitation, rehabilitation, retribution, "just deserts" and denunciation (cf. Griffiths and Verdun-Jones, 1994). A 1983 nation-wide gallup poll found that 79.5% of Canadians believed that sentences in criminal courts were "too mild" which, according to Doob and Roberts (1983), has placed pressure on the state to become more punitive (p. 1).

In 1980, in the federal prison system, there were approximately 2,000 students in Canadian penitentiaries participating in full-time educational programs. There has been a rapid expansion of programs and facilities relating to prison education over the past twenty years (Linden, 1982, p. 45). In 1989 the average number of full-time

prisoners "employed" in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs alone was 3,171 (Solicitor General Canada 1990, 58).

In 1993/94, there were 4,212 enrolments in the ABE Grade 8 program and an additional 2,739 enrolments in the Grade 10 program. Adult Basic Education remains a priority education program for CSC. It employs approximately 55% of the teachers and appears to be growing. According to CSC's Basic Facts About Corrections in Canada; 1994 Edition, 20% of the federal jail population in 1993/94 attended school . This represents little change over the past several years (Minister of Supply and Services, 1995, p. 35-39).

Adult learning offers unique challenges and opportunities and this is especially true for adult learners within the prison setting. The fact that 1/5 of all prisoners in Canada are in educational programs points to the fact that prison administrations view education as important for individuals leaving prison.

According to Sutton (1992), education in prison could be viewed as a benefit to released prisoners. He writes,

> Education has been seen to aid the process of resettlement; it can help the offenders to take a non-offending path. It can do this by providing the basic education and skills which make law abiding survival more possible; qualifications, both general and vocational, which make the attainment and holding of worthwhile jobs more possible; stability and structure to an individual's life, especially in the crucial first few months after release; a mind-broadening and maturing experience; and perhaps for the first time, prestige, success and self-esteem in the non-criminal world (p. 12).

Perceptions relating to how literacy education will benefit prisoners abound. While Sutton's perceptions are valid within the context of his particular value posture, they may or may not be relevant for others. If we chose, for instance, to adopt Sutton's United Nations Report as the standard by which to conduct evaluations, we may determine prison schools are successful when prisoners take a non-offending path, attain and hold worthwhile jobs, have a mind broadening and maturing experience and gain higher self esteem. While these values may be laudable or acceptable to the United Nations, that is no guarantee they will be acceptable to students or teachers in the five prison schools chosen as research sites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Then again, they may.

The evaluation model which provides a framework for this research is Guba and Lincoln's (1989) fourth-generation model. It was chosen primarily because it provides a basis for evaluators to respect and validate all stakeholders. Practically all evaluations of prison programming - especially those initiated by administration - do not empower all stakeholders. Conspicuously absent from design and construct of the evaluation are teachers and students. This practicum was an attempt to value the information of all stakeholders. Issues of importance to prisoners and teachers such as interaction in the classroom, everyday issues of prejudice and racism, and survival inside and upon

release may be more important to prisoners than taking a "non-offending" path. Then again, they may not.

Fourth-Generation Evaluation

Fourth-generation evaluation is a collaborative approach to evaluation which implies power balancing between stakeholding groups. In this study, students, teachers, and prison administrators/program specialists are viewed as stakeholders; students, because they are primarily involved in the learning; teachers, because they are involved in delivering or facilitating learning models and materials; prison administrators or program specialists because it is within their jurisdiction to sanction, design, and implement education in prison.

Guba and Lincoln (1987) herald fourth-generation evaluation as a new approach based on value pluralism, stakeholder constructions, fairness, merit and worth, and negotiation (refer to Appendix A for the principles). Guba and Lincoln's (1987) article entitled "The Countenances of Fourth-Generation Evaluation: Description, Judgment, and Negotiation", describes three prior models of evaluation in recent history beginning in the early 1900's .

The first generation of evaluation began at the turn of the century and was based on little more than measurement. It was technical in nature with subjects seen as the raw material to be "processed". According to Guba and Lincoln

(1989), "Evaluation was seen as a means of determining whether pupils measured up to the "specifications" that the school had set -- largely college preparatory specifications" (p. 203). The authors indicate that this model of evaluation is still used today.

The second generation of evaluation, according to Guba and Lincoln, began in the mid 40's (cf. Smith and Tyler, 1942), and was characterized by the description of patterns and strengths and weakness with respect to certain stated objectives. The evaluator's role was that of describer and the technical aspects of evaluation were retained from the earlier model. Second generation evaluation was described as an objectives-oriented descriptive approach.

This call for judgment in evaluation marked the emergence of third-generation evaluation. Stake noted in his 1967 paper, "*Both* description and judgment are essential -- in fact, they are the two basic acts of evaluation" (p.109). The third generation of evaluation flourished for about ten years beginning in 1967. According to Guba and Lincoln (1987),

> "[Third generation] evaluation was characterized by efforts to reach judgments, and in which the evaluator assumed the role of judge while retaining the earlier technical and descriptive functions as well. While evaluators were not comfortable with this role of judge they were, nevertheless, urged to accept that obligation, largely on the ground that among all possible judge-candidates they were without doubt the most objective (Scriven, 1967).

The fourth generation of evaluation is not yet fully

developed according to Guba and Lincoln (1987). However
their article attempts to articulate and define this model.
They write,

> The fourth generation is presently emerging, as a new
> class of models takes its place on the evaluation
> scene. Commonly called response, these models take as
> their point of focus not objectives, decisions,
> effects, or similar organizers but the *claims,
> concerns, and issues* put forth by members of
> *stakeholding audiences*, that is, audiences who are in
> some sense involved with the evaluation. Such audiences
> include agents (e.g., developers, funders,
> implementers), beneficiaries (e.g. target groups,
> potential adopters), and (e.g., excluded target groups,
> potential beneficiaries of opportunities forgone by the
> decision to implement the particular evaluand) (p.
> 209).

Fourth-generation models share the belief that value-
pluralism is explicitly recognized by the evaluator who
cannot ethically undertake to render judgments. What he or
she must do instead is to act as mediator in a negotiation
process. The specific principles which undergird fourth-
generation evaluation will now be explored in greater
detail.

Value Pluralism

Earlier generations of evaluation assumed value
consensus - that the objectives were agreed to by all.
Fourth generation evaluators include different value
positions, such as what is to be studied, how it is to be
studied, what reports are to be completed, and the role of
the evaluator.

Stakeholder Constructions

This new generation of evaluation, according to Guba and Lincoln (1987), is rooted in relativist ontology which holds that reality is multiple and constructed in form, so that inquiry continuously diverges (the more you know, the more of the unknown you contact). They contend,

> In a very real sense evaluations create reality rather than objectively discover it. But they do so in relation to the contexts in which the evaluands are found... Contexts and values thus play a vital role in reality definition. It is value differences that account for the different constructions made by different stakeholders in some given context ... but the fact of differing constructions is usually hidden from the stakeholders themselves, who are prone to be aware only of that one admitted by their own values (p. 211).

Fairness

Due to the fact that different stakeholders may base their judgments on very different value patterns, the evaluator must be aware of this and not give unfair preference to one or another in the evaluation. Guba and Lincoln (1987) remind us that evaluation produces information, and information is power. "To deny information to some groups is to disenfranchise them" (p. 212).
As Cronbach (1980) points out,

> An open society becomes a closed society when only the officials know what is going on. In so far as information is a source of power, evaluations carried out to inform a policy maker have a disenfranchising effect. (p. 4, In Guba and Lincoln, 1987, p. 212)

The Concepts of Merit and Worth

Merit and worth both are aspects of value within the context of evaluation according to Guba and Lincoln (1987). Merit depends on intrinsic characteristics of the evaluator such as interviewing and writing skills while worth is an extrinsic assessment based on the nature of the environment. The worth of an evaluator is based on his or her ability to engage students where they are at and ability to attract funding from interested parties for conducting research. Guba and Lincoln (1987) write,

> Merit may be assessed through an examination of the evaluand in relative isolation, while worth can only be assessed in terms of its ability to meet needs-in-context. Values have a "double dip" here: They are the basis for defining the needs whose fulfilment may be the purpose of the evaluand (although sometimes needs are met as a serendipitous side effect of an evaluand intended for some other purpose), as well as for setting the standards useful for determining how well the needs are "in fact" met (p. 213).

The question to be asked of the evaluator is: "What needs are you intending to meet through the evaluation exercise?" Being aware of biases and personal agendas is important in order for the fourth-generation evaluator to be effective.

The Concept of Negotiated Process and Outcomes

Both in the gathering of information and after the documentation of information, negotiation with stakeholders is practised. It is the role of the evaluator to present findings with integrity to stakeholders. A final report is

more than the "truth" as promulgated by the evaluator. The task upon documenting findings, is to present these findings to stakeholders with an eye to fully appreciate the diversity which exists and to negotiate the outcome. Guba and Lincoln (1987) provide a guide for the "new evaluator",

> The new evaluator appreciates diversity, respects the rights of individuals to hold different values and to make different constructions, and welcomes the opportunity to air and to clarify these differences. The new evaluator must possess the personal qualities of honesty, respect, and courtesy, and like Caesar's wife, his or her integrity must be above suspicion. Without it the evaluator loses the one ingredient without which no four-generation evaluation can be conducted successfully: trust. Nor can there be any question of the new evaluator's professional competence; training and experience that include not only technical skills but social, political, and interpersonal skills must be clearly demonstrable. The new evaluator must have a high tolerance for ambiguity and a high frustration threshold. The new evaluation is a lonely activity, for one must remain sufficiently aloof to avoid charges of undue influence by one stakeholder group or another. The new evaluator must be aware of the possibility that he or she is being used by clients or other powerful groups, as well as of the fact that stakeholders may, individually or in groups, engage in lies, deceptions, fronts, and cover-ups. Finally, the new evaluator must be ready to be personally changed by the evaluative process, to revise his or her own constructions as understanding and sophistication increase. To be willing to change does not imply a loss of objectivity but a gain in fairness.

Having provided a general context for the evaluation model applied to this practicum, the literature review will now turn to the writings concerning literacy, the prison and prisoner.

Definitions of Literacy

Literacy, for the purposes of this research, was broadly defined. Individuals enroled in prison schools who were taking Adult Basic Education (ABE) I and II or English as a Second Language (ESL) clearly fall within the definition of literacy. Those taking General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or high school courses, however, may not fall into traditional definitions of "literacy." The researcher, during the course of the introductory group sessions with prisoner, expressed interest in interviewing students involved in literacy-related work, individuals were given the opportunity to participate if they determined their work to be literacy-related. Distinctions were not made for definitions such as "functional illiteracy." The process of obtaining information and applying it to solve problems in everyday life, as forwarded by Gillespie (1990), could be said to occur in a wide range of schooling options.

> To be literate means to be able to fulfil one's own goals as a family and community member, citizen, worker, and member of churches, clubs and other organizations you choose. This means being able to get information and use it to improve your life, being able to use reading and writing to do the things you decide to do, and being able to use literacy as a tool to solve problems you face in everyday life (page 16).

Ennis and Woodrow (1992) state that adult learners view literacy as "increasing independence and personal power so as to be able to act on the world." For some, it is a level of competence and confidence necessary to deal with

situations and opportunities within their environment. This implies greater freedom and power over one's life and direction.

Prison Literacy: The Social Context

Winterowd (1989) views literacy as the key for political access to society and details how the withholding of these skills has been used as a means of social control. Stuckey (1991) is also critical of the content and delivery of literacy programs because she claims they contribute to social control. She writes,

> Literacy itself can be understood only in its social and political context, and that context, once the mythology has been stripped away, can be seen as one entrenched class structure in which those who have power have a vested interest in keeping it (p. viii).

It could be argued that in prison, more than any other settings, social control is prevalent. Much of correctional programming is designed to address "criminal thinking errors."

Critical thinking and dialogue about power and class structure is not, I would suggest, daily menu of prison programmers. This may, in part, be a wider reflection of society's preoccupation with finding "scapegoats" to punish for social problems. According to Erikson (1966),

> A community's capacity for handling deviance, let us say, can be roughly estimated by counting its prison cells and hospital beds, its policemen and psychiatrists, its courts and clinics - and while this total cannot tell us anything important about the

underlying psychological motives involved, it does say
something about the manner in which the community views
the problem... When the community tries to assess the
size of its deviant population, then, it is usually
measuring the capacity of its own social control
apparatus and not the inclinations toward deviance
found in its members (p. 24-25).

Reiman's (1990) "The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get

Prison" places the issue of criminality within its social

context.

The criminal justice system does not protect us against
the gravest threats to life, limb, or possessions. Its
definitions of crime are not simply a reflection of the
objective dangers that threaten us. The workplace, the
medical profession, the air we breathe, and poverty we
refuse to rectify lead to far more human suffering, far
more death and disability, and take far more dollars
from our pockets than the murders, aggravated assaults,
and thefts reported annually by the FBI. What is more
this is human suffering that is preventable (p. 78).

Quinney (1990) questions the legitimacy of public

policy in understanding the problem of crime claiming that

is has not brought us any closer to solutions. Fay Honey

Knopp (1991), writing out of her compassionate work with

prisoners, notes that common responses to crime come out of

what she calls a "war model mentality." This perspective

views the people who commit crimes as the "enemy" and

therefore the corresponding solutions offered are more

punishments, more weapons, more caging of human beings. She

states that war-model responses to problems that are

essentially social, cultural, political and economic have

failed and will continue to fail" (p. 182). According to

Knopp they fail for two reasons. Firstly, the war-model

solution fails because it neglects victim-survivors,

secondly, with caging often seen as the "just" response, it

ignores the prisoner's need for restoration, resocialization

and re-education. Scull (1983) has stated:

> Indeed, I question the very legitimacy of the idea,
> implicit in such terminology, that the problem of crime
> and imprisonment can be 'solved' by internal technical
> adjustments. The social roots of our difficulties are
> too deep... tinkering around with the criminal justice
> system in a radically unjust society is unlikely to
> advance us very far toward justice, equity or, come to
> that, efficacy (p. 165).

While space does not allow this literature review to

conduct a full investigation of the social context of crime,

at a minimum it raises questions regarding the

implementation of prison literacy programs within its

contexts. What activities should occur within the walls of

prison schools? To what extent should we pay attention to

the social context which is the reality for many prisoner?

Harris (1990) advocates for feminist values which suggest

that we should move toward conceiving restriction of liberty

as having less to do with buildings, structures, and walls

and more to do with human contacts and relations" (p. 95).

It would appear that adult learning settings in prison must

be mostly about human contacts and relations.

Prisoners, especially those serving lengthy sentences,

are critically aware of the social context of their crime.

Prisoners are also aware of the issues brought about as a

result of imprisonment.

Prisoner Issues

Sutton (1992) provides a description of the prison

population in industrialized countries such as Canada. He

notes that prisoners are disproportionately of a minority

race, lack social skills, may be dependent on drugs or

alcohol, suffer emotional disturbance, come from unstable

homes, have a history of failure in schools, are poor, and

have a low level of self esteem. This description is

supported by research conducted by the National Anti-Poverty

Organization (NAPO) (1992) which found the following,

> It is poverty and other forms of inequality that create
> the barriers to good education for many Canadians. ...
> Low-income earners and the long-term unemployed, Native
> people, seniors, prisoners, people with disabilities,
> racial and cultural minorities - all have higher than
> average rates of both under-education and poverty. They
> speak of the difficulties of growing up poor,
> disadvantaged homes, of beginning life with few
> opportunities. They describe how their opportunities
> dwindled further in schools biased against children
> from poor families, against people receiving social
> assistance, against minorities. They pinpoint their
> main problems today as unemployment, lack of money and
> inadequate housing - the same problems their families
> faced (In Manitoba Education and Training, p. 41).

Abuse is often part of the upbringing of those who end

up in jail according to Lisa Hobbs Birnie. This Canadian

parole board member kept a tally of the family and social

histories of all the people between the ages of 18 and 40

she interviewed as a member of the Parole Board. Hobbs

Birnie (1991) discovered that 78% had been "cruelly abused"

when they were young" (p. 30). This social reality for many

prisoners affects much of what they do and how they do it.

In particular, it has a negative impact on self esteem.

Weiss (1995) reminds us of the fact that one of the greatest issues for prisoners is their loss of self esteem. He writes,

> Prisoners pay a high price in lost self-esteem for their belief in the dream of opportunity. The knowledge that they blew their opportunity to "get ahead" leads many to one conclusion: "There must be something wrong with me, so what's the use in trying." This self-defeating attitude is central to the psychology of their powerlessness (p. 128).

Paul's (1991) comments are also important within this context,

> Prison is an environment that feeds upon weaknesses. Building walls around oneself helps to disguise those things that will, in all likelihood, be perceived as weaknesses by others. Illiteracy is one of those things. ... It takes courage for the person in the community to seek help reading and writing. The need for courage is even greater for those in jail, where there are few secrets, and there is little tolerance for weaknesses (p. 25).

Johnson (1987) contends that prisoners can increase chances of reform and success both within the prison and upon release if it is done through *mature coping*. According to Johnson, *mature coping* deals with problems in a straightforward manner rather than engaging in denial and manipulation, avoids the use of deception and violence in addressing problems, and makes an effort to care for oneself and others, for example, by being altruistic (pp. 55 - 73).

According to Griffiths and Verdun-Jones (1994), the potential for positive responses to this environment is determined by the individual, the staff and administration

of the institution (p. 506).

One study of prisoner coping strategies found that formal prison programming did little to help prisoners adjust to prison life. Zamble and Porporino (1988) found that prisoners "became concerned with survival in the prison environment and adjusting to the prison routine, rather than with developing coping strategies that would allow them to address their problems and make positive decisions about their future" (In Griffiths and Verdun-Jones, 1994, p. 505).

Martinson's (1974) articulation of the "nothing works" postulation was a significant catalyst in which U.S. prisons chose to move away from programming to warehousing. We have not seen the same shift in Canadian penal philosophy which may indicate that there is a belief that something works. But, given the many personal issues facing prisoners such as preoccupation with prison survival, possible past histories of abuse, poverty, racism, low self esteem, and prejudice, what works? What should "correctional" programming look like? What should prison school attempt to accomplish? Which of the sentencing goals - punishment, rehabilitation, protection, deterrence - is important for prison programming to be concerned with?

According to Linden (1984), literacy and education within the prison context have two primary aims; "imparting values and increasing employability" (p. 70). Toward this end, correctional departments have attempted to establish

programming which seeks to recognize the social and personal
realities which prisoners face. While the major portion of
prison resources are devoted to security concerns,
programming, at least in Canada, continues to receive
notable attention.

An example of this is the establishment by the
Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) of a set of core values
which guides prison programming. The Core Values of CSC
begin with an affirmation of positive values. Core Value 1
states, "We respect the dignity of individuals, the rights
of all members of society, and the potential for human
growth and development." A related strategic objective (1.4)
provides a guide for interaction between staff and
prisoners. It recommends that staff seek to "provide a safe,
secure and clean environment that promotes health and well-
being and encourages positive interaction between staff and
offenders. Strategic objective 2.4 is concerned with
correctional programming. It states, "To ensure that
offenders are productively occupied and have access to a
variety of work and educational opportunities to meet their
needs for growth and personal development." The following
quote from a 1990's CSC directive clearly articulates the
goal of educational programming within federal prisons:

> All of our programming is directed towards meeting the
> criminogenic needs of the offender - those specifically
> related to criminal behaviour. However, the
> relationship with some is not as direct as it is with
> others. The lack of educational achievement may not, in

and of itself, have led an offender to criminal
activity, but it may have been one of the contributing
factors. Therefore, educational programming is
important for offenders. They may need Adult Basic
Education to help them to read, write and do
arithmetic, skills and knowledge which will assist
their reintegration; or they may need the more advanced
education which is a prerequisite for the trades
training that would alow them to seek a meaningful job
on their return to the community. We offer them these
opportunities and encourage them to participate until
they have achieved at least the grade 10 level.

Provincial corrections do not appear to have clearly
articulated value statements or consistency in program
directives to the same degree as their federal counterparts.
However, in the wake of the April 1996 Headingley Riot in
Manitoba (in which the school was virtually the only section
of the prison untouched), the Hughes Inquiry recommended a
more clearly articulated role for prison staff and
management.

Sutton (1992) claims that the treatment of prisoners
depends, in large part, on the prevailing penal philosophy.
Canadian penal officials have articulated the importance of
education to secure employment or other "pro-social" values
upon release. The implied emphasis is on preventing
recidivism. Sutton reviews prevailing philosophical schools
influencing penal programming. He notes that, in the
classical school, justice means appropriate punishment of
crimes committed, without regard to the individual situation
of the criminal. The positivist school places emphasis on
the personality of the criminal and the correction of his

future behaviour. The sociological school considers above all the social factors which cause crime rather than the causes of individual deviance while the socialist school suggests that the laws which are contravened by prisoners are not based on a consensus but on the interests of a minority class.

Recognizing the reality of the philosophical context within which prison schools operate, we are reminded of the personal characteristics of adult learners. A handbook, entitled "Let's Get Started; An Initial assessment pack for adult literacy programs" (Manitoba Education and Training, n.d.), outlines characteristics of adult learners and identifies characteristics relevant to prison schooling. It recommended the following characteristics of prison schools,

> Courage - It takes a great deal of courage for adult learners to admit their needs and ask for assistance. Energy - Adults are sometimes tired as a result of other duties. Learning Styles - Some adult learners learn more easily if other senses are involved such as touch or sight. Life Experience - Adults have a wide range of personal, family, work and life experiences which provide unlimited possibilities for the creation and understanding of lessons. Motivation - Adult students are usually highly motivated when they begin but can lose interest quickly if they become discouraged. Needs change - Early goals may become more realistic over time and change with life's circumstances. Responsible - Adult learners have other responsibilities such as earning a living or just trying to survive. The latter is highly relevant within the prison context. Results - Adult students need to see immediate change and growth and may be intolerant of anything that does not help them achieve their goals which may, in any event, be overly ambitious. Self-conscious - Excuses for non-performance may be used as a strategy for lack of education. Uneven Learning - Adults will not learn at an even pace because some

things may be more challenging than others. Or there may be external factors affecting their ability to concentrate (p. 57).

Wlodkowski's (1993) comments regarding the importance of meeting safety needs are particularly pertinent within the prison environment.

"[Safety needs] are arrived at through a sense of stability and freedom from fear and anxiety. They are partly made up of the needs for structure, order, and reasonable limits. Safety needs bring learners to the learning environment as well as operate in the learning environment itself" (p. 119).

Knowles (1980) has reminded us that adult learning will be maximized if the learning environment is characterized by physical comfort, mutual respect and trust, mutual helpfulness, freedom of expression, and acceptance of differences. He advocates for the facilitators to accept the learners as persons of worth and to respect their feelings and ideas. Knowles emphasizes the importance of building relationships of mutual trust and helpfulness with and among the learners by encouraging cooperative activities while refraining from activities which promote "competitiveness and judgmentalness" (In Manitoba Education and Training, p. 58). According to Wlodkowski (1993), "Exhortation is used more and accomplishes less than almost any behaviour-changing tool known to man" (p. 72).

Prison Literacy: The "Inside" Context

People who are sentenced to prison enter a world unto

its own. An "inmate code" or social system has evolved over

time which allows the prisoner to survive. Prison schools

are located inside these walls. It would therefore appear

crucial that prison administrators, teachers, and students

understand the effects of the prison environment on the

learning environment. Griffiths and Verdun-Jones (1994) have

stated,

> There is little doubt that the pains of imprisonment
> first identified by Sykes in the 1950's are still very
> real for inmates in Canadian correctional institutions.
> The constant threat of violence, the loneliness and
> anxiety that accompany the loss of freedom, and the
> uncertainty of when one will be released all combine to
> make the prison, first and foremost, a place of
> punishment (p. 521).

As a means of survival, prisoners have established a

system of conduct which is intended to enhance predictable

social interaction. Griffiths and Verdun-Jones (1994)

provide an overview of the major components of the prisoner

social system which include:

> (1) a code of behaviour; (2) a hierarchy of power among
> the inmates; (3) an "informal" economic system, which
> provides illicit goods and services; and (4) a variety
> of social or "argot" roles assumed by prisoners. The
> convict code is designed to increase inmate solidarity
> and implores prisoners not to exploit one another, to
> be strong in confronting the deprivations of
> confinement, and to assume an oppositional stance
> toward prison authorities" (p. 504).

The Prison School Environment

The prison school exists within state and social constructs. The school environment is impacted as well by the specific level of security rating of any particular prison. The security rating at the five sites in this study were varied; two of the federal institutions were minimum security, the two provincial institutions were medium/maximum while Stony Mountain institution was rated at medium security but also had a Special Handling Unit (SHU) (Maximum Security) to which education was delivered on a special basis. Thomas (1995) reflects on the special dynamics of high security prisons,

> By their nature, maximum security prisons simply are not designed for delivering adequate, high-quality educational programs because too many obstacles subvert the learning process. Some of these are readily discernible and reflect the conditions of control; others are far more subtle. These obstacles range from overt hostility and disruption of classes by staff to broader socio-structural influences which intensify the discrepancy between educational goals and actual practice. (p. 27)

Thomas (1995) describes the classroom disruption which can be orchestrated by guards. He asserts that effective teaching requires more than preparing competent lectures and assignments. Writing in the context of college courses in prison he notes that it also requires that instructors participate fully in resisting, defusing, and mediating among the tensions inherent in prison life. Thomas (1995) states,

The delivery of quality education, therefore, is
dependant not so much upon an instructor's knowledge of
course material and ability to deliver it, but upon
interactional skills in a cultural war between groups
competing for status and control (p. 30).

Added to the social context faced by prisoners is the

reality of prison and the need to simply survive.

Accomplishments in school can be complicated and even

sabotaged by others. Disruptions by guards can, according to

"Recommendations of the Manitoba Task Force on Literacy"

make it difficult for learners.

In some institutions, a small percentage of guards and
correctional staff impede the work by making it
difficult for learners to attend programs, pulling out
learners from tutoring situations just prior to their
sessional times, not providing time and / or space for
tutors and learners to work together, criticising the
program, etc. Practitioners have found when this
situation exists the program has grave difficulties
functioning (p. 5).

Given the internal and external issues faced by

students within prison one might question the relevance of

attempting to provide adult learning environments inside the

walls. Michael Collins (1995), in "Shades of the Prison

House: Adult Literacy and the Correctional Ethos", states,

At a fundamental level, the provision of adult literacy
programs in prisons can be justified simply on the
grounds that it provides prisoners with another chance
to learn to read, write, work with numbers, and
converse with a reasonable degree of assurance. This
straightforward rationale is also tied to a notion that
adult literacy adds a much needed aesthetic dimension
to prisoners' experience and constitutes one of the few
prison activities in which civil discourse might be
fostered (p. 50).

In view of these barriers, teachers and students within

the prison classroom need to be aware of the factors which support student learning.

Factors Supporting Student Learning in Prison

Accepting that there is a role for prisoner education we will now review what the literature has to say about methods and teaching styles which support student learning in prison. According to Paul (1991), three key aspects of educational programs in prison are important when considering student learning in prison. These include the values and disposition of the teacher, the philosophical orientation of the program as borne out by the particular model, and interest of the student including the degree to which feelings of respect and safety are felt. Paul (1991) writes,

> Successful literacy workers are sensitive to the needs of adult learners. They recognize that, for many of the people who participate in their programs, previous attempts to master basic reading and writing skills have been unsuccessful (p. 27).

Brice Heath (1990) provides an interesting perspective regarding working with adult learners. She advocates an empowerment approach,

> The fourth vision is, then, one of learners talking and considering together. Three conclusions seem to point to past achievements of institutions and simplistic definitions of literacy: 1. All of us ... learn most successfully with and from each other when we have full access to looking, listening, talking, and taking part in authentic tasks we understand. 2. We can compliment each other in particular areas of expertise as we learn to communicate our experiences; sharing what we know

helps bring the group to higher performance than
private reflections of individuals do. 3.Humans must
move beyond information and skills to meaning and
interpretation for learning to take place and to extend
itself (p. 302).

Adults have a wealth of life experiences which provide

unlimited possibilities for educational experiences.

According to a Manitoba and Education and Training paper on

adult learning, the need for a safe learning environment can

not be overstated:

Adults often come into a learning situation with fear
and apprehension following a long history of failure.
It takes a great deal of courage to admit their needs
and ask for assistance. Once in a program, some may
exhibit negative attitudes because of their past
failures (p. 55).

Others writers support the need for education within

prison. According to Lawrence (1990),

Education within a prison is a way of providing hope in
the face of despair. By deciding to work inside the
walls, the prison educator shows convicts that their
lives, condemned by others, have value (p. 148).

Soifer, Young and Irwin (1987), writing from their

experience in adult learning environments contend that adult

learners have strengths and the challenge lies in guiding

learners to become aware of these strengths. They assert

that many have a poor self concept and therefore teaching

must be both challenging and non-threatening. They contend

that the role of the teacher is to stimulate interaction

within the group and assist learners in overcoming self-

doubts about their ability to learn. They affirm that the

learning environment should convey a message of respect and

offer a contrast to the noise and distractions of the workplace. This would appear particularly pertinent within the prison context. They also recommend that the learning centre should be easily accessible and the classroom should be arranged so that groups of eight to ten adults can work comfortably together around a table (p. 65).

Individuals who teach in prison are, early in their career, faced with the realities of prison. Williams (1991) offers some words of advice here,

> This makes how we work with prisoners all the more important. If we disagree with (for example) the secrecy of the parole system, why should we conceal this from our clients? If we reject the paternalism of prison regimes, is it not better to say so, than to collude with it? If we are in a position to expose the racism of the system, and to protect the position of individuals victimized by it, should we not do so? We shall sometimes find ourselves in conflict with the system if we take up issues which are conventionally seen as illegitimate, and one needs to pick carefully the issues on which we fight, but such a strategy has the merit of avoiding collusion with the prison system. It is a system which is in crisis precisely because it does not do what it claims to do; it does not reform people, it does not rehabilitate, and it has trouble even incapacitating. The only part of its mission in which it is successful is in punishing offenders, and as we have seen, even there it fails because punishment is distributed in arbitrary and unjust ways (p. 111).

Adult learning settings like prisons may have penalties that may be applied such as those for absenteeism, tardiness, or incomplete projects. According to "Recommendations of the Manitoba Task Force on Literacy", rules and penalties should be explained and discussed with the learners from the outset of the learning experience.

This paper recommends,

> When such rules can be formulated with the learners
> themselves it is best to do so.... When adults have
> assurance that the rules are applied by the instructor
> in a predictable and fair manner, adults know they are
> equally respected and can relax about the boundaries of
> their safety (p. 5).

The literature stresses the importance of teachers who are sensitive and committed to the needs of adult learners. Teachers who become preoccupied with prison rules and are in constant conflict with these and wider social issues can become ineffective. As Williams (1991) has stated,

> Prisons are large, sophisticated bureaucracies. This
> makes it hard for those new to them, and those hostile
> to their aims, to work with them. No matter how much we
> disapprove of the prison system and what it does to
> people, it is a fact of life, and it holds large
> numbers of inmates who need outside contacts and help.
> It is easier to give this help if one has some basic
> knowledge about how prisons work and what the people
> working in them do (p. 1).

This is not to say that issues of inequality and racism are to be avoided. According to the literature, the effective teacher is able to cultivate the energy derived from these deep seated social problems and promote learning goals and further social justice. The prison teacher, working within the reality of social and prison contexts, is well aware of the influences which affect her or his teaching style.

Perhaps the greatest influence on classroom activities and nature of contact between teachers and students is the teacher's philosophical framework. Collins (1995) has provided a framework for this discussion by outlining the

various philosophical models which are active within prison
schooling today.

Models of Prison Education

Michael Collins (1995), in an article entitled "Shades
of the Prison House", outlines historical/philosophical
paradigms of prison education. He notes that there have been
at least four observable paradigms active over the past 150
years in Canadian prison schools; the medical model, the
opportunities model, creative approaches and participatory
learning initiatives.

According to Collins (1995), the **medical model** surveys
criminology as a professionalised discipline viewing
criminality with individual, psychologized deficiencies that
are amenable to treatment by behaviour modification or
normalizing techniques. **The opportunities model** promotes the
postulation that prisoners should be given a wide range of
educational and training opportunities in order to keep them
"meaningfully busy." The **creative approaches** model has been
operative in some prisons where school is viewed as a
secondary or less important program to other programs or
activities. This provides teachers of students from
marginalized groups with the opportunity to experiment with
curriculum and teaching strategies as long as students are
kept meaningfully busy. **Participatory literacy initiatives**,
originating from the work of Paulo Freire, provides students

with a say in the formation of curriculum and the selection of relevant texts. The life stories of prisoners become primary material for the learning process (pp. 51-60).

Davidson (1995) notes that two courses of thought have been most prominent in guiding prison school programming. He identifies the functionalist theory of the 60's and 70's and another which is a marriage between cognitive theory and neo-liberal perspectives on deviance.

The functionalist theory of the 1960's and 1970's viewed the prisoner as someone lacking academic, vocational, and social skills to achieve socially acceptable status. According to the functionalist theory, meeting educational and cultural needs should correct criminal behaviour by opening up job and social opportunities that allow one to achieve goals legally. Davidson contends that the "opportunities model" is currently the explicit, official propose of schooling, especially in the field of literacy education.

The second school of thought is a marriage between cognitive development theory - Piaget and Kohlberg - and neo-liberal perspectives on deviance. According to Davidson, this school suggests that crime results from individuals making poor decisions when faced with life's many problems. Davidson (1995) writes,

> Out of neo-liberalism comes the market metaphor, in which individuals make rational decisions based on calculating benefits against costs. Law-abiding

citizens make socially acceptable decisions even when
they face great adversity. They do so because their
cognitive development is sufficiently mature to
calculate into the cost/benefit equation potential
punishment for wrongdoing, social costs, and moral
interpersonal considerations. Immature or deficient
reasoners fail to calculate properly the true
(instrumental, moral, social, personal) consequences of
their choices. Thus, the proper aim of education is to
promote cognitive development so that the person will
calculate the real instrumental and social costs of
resolving problems with criminal activities and will
choose instead law-abiding alternatives (p. 4).

Defining Success

The emphasis or direction of prison programming based
on one theory or another - one model over another - is
primarily an attempt to discover "what works." The goal of
"Correctional philosophy" is largely an attempt to prevent
crime from occurring. The goal of prison programming is to
rehabilitate prisoners in order to prevent recidivism.
Recidivism and rehabilitation have been the subject of much
discussion and debate since Martinson's (1974) critical
examination of this topic. Prison philosophy, especially in
the U.S., has been influenced by the "nothing works"
perspective and the result is the massive warehousing of
prisoners. In Canada, research and writing has attempted to
keep the debate alive and provide a more convincing argument
for rehabilitation as a means of reducing recidivism
(Andrews, 1995; Bonta 1992; Holosko and Carlson, 1986;
Bonta, Boyle, Motiuk, and Sonnichsen, 1983; Gendreau and
Leipciger, 1978, Cormier, 1981)

A significant amount of corrections research is devoted to addressing criminogenic factors which cause prisoners to return to prison (recidivate). Correctional research has determined the primary factors ("the big four") which cause ex-prisoners to return to prison are anti-social attitude, anti-social peers, anti-social personality, and anti-social history (i.e. past criminal behaviour) (Bonta, 1992).

Glaser's (1969) work on defining success or failure classifies prisoners into four categories. 1) Clear reformation - the individual has not committed any further known crimes, has a steady job or is attending school regularly, and has avoided the company of criminal associates, 2) Marginal reformation - has not returned to prison but has legitimate occupation, has been involved with minor offenses, or habitually associates with individuals who have known criminal records, 3) Marginal Failure - has been returned to prison for minor crimes or technical violations of parole regulations, and 4) Clear recidivist - has been returned to prison for committing a major offense.

Based on his research in British Columbia prisons, Duguid (1992) asserts that post-secondary education in prison has a rehabilitative function noting that only 14% of the university sample were re-incarcerated compared to 51% of the control group. He argues that lower incarceration rates are a powerful argument against those that question the value of higher education in prison. However, according

to Knepper (1989), studies of prison schooling programs have been guilty of "selective participation." Knepper (1989) writes,

> First, it can be argued that those offenders who are likely to complete college programs while in prison are exactly those offenders who would be expected to be more successful upon release anyway - they are simply "better risks" to begin with. Second, it can be argued that those offenders who choose to participate in college programs are more determined to succeed having expressed a "motivation to learn" and therefore are atypical of the general offender population. Again, one would expect "motivated" offenders to be more successful upon release even without completion of a college program (p. 113).

How should prison education programs be measured, if at all?

According to Seashore and Haberfeld (1976), "successful educational programs in prison must provide both viable educational experience for participants and result in more productive and satisfying life experiences than they would have had otherwise" (p. 46). Sutton's (1992) analysis regarding "successful" reintegration stated,

> The importance of continuity between education within the prison system [and] education as part of a social reinsertion after release, can hardly be overstated. ... The importance of follow-up is becoming more widely recognized (p. 44).

Programming which provides prisoners with the opportunity to discuss release issues openly and in a safe context has shown that prisoners are aware of broader social issues. According to Loewen (1989), prisoners suggest that poor employment prospects, drug and alcohol abuse, negative social supports and lack of family supports all affect their

success in the community (p. 37).

Success is a term variously defined by evaluators. It has much to do with the particular values held by the evaluator. In prison programming the overwhelming choice for measuring success appears to be recidivism. According to Parlett (1982),

> In the final analysis, the function of prison is primarily, by consensus, the protection of society. Society is not protected in the long run if the products which the prison turns out have not attained a sense of reason and proportion and revert once again to criminal activity. It is, then, insufficient to show paper and pencil growth. Freedom from crime and non-return to prison must also be shown (p. 66).

McCollum (1976) provides another context for prison research in which issues of family and socioeconomic conditions are considered. She writes,

> Despite these desires it is extremely unrealistic to try to measure the effectiveness of a particular prison program in terms of recidivism. To my view, this approach requires a complete suspension of common sense; further, it is an expensive exercise in futility. *The total prison experience coupled with a multitude of such other factors as a person's life history and the quality of that life at the time of incarceration are much more relevant.* Additionally, post-release family and other socioeconomic connections, if any, access to opportunity systems, mental and physical health, and a host of other variables contribute substantially to an individual's behaviour on release from incarceration (in Martinson, 1974, p. 51).

Once an organization or program establishes a set of goals for a program, it is held accountable to them by the organizations and interest groups that monitor it and provide legitimation. The goals become the criteria by which

an organization is evaluated (cf. Hasenfeld, 1983).

While recidivism is the preferred evaluation measure for the prison industry, others have identified prisoner-related goals. For obvious reasons, rates of recidivism are of great interest to provincial and federal correctional agents while prisoners, while concerned generally about avoiding prison, establish personal indicators of success. This writer has chosen, through the process of fourth-generation evaluation, to consider success from the perspective of the primary stakeholders - prison students.

Prisoners are not given the opportunity to design measures or define success. Likewise, the debate regarding recidivism rarely involves the direct input of prisoners and they are rarely consulted in the development of literacy programs. Prisoners' demands for the provision of more basic education following the 1976 Archambault prison riot are particularly poignant here.
Prisoners demanded immediate literacy programming for all prisoners in need. They prefaced these demands by articulating the following vision:

> To us, talking about education means talking about the chance to acquire an intellectual and practical formation that increases understanding and decreases alienation from things, from reality and from life. A step toward a liberated spirit (In Davidson, 1995, p. 13).

Paulo Freire's (1970) writings on empowering people within learning environments advocates for individuals to be

active in the organizing process and the delineation of objectives of the organization (p. 145). This "liberation" approach has particular application to prison settings.

Research which seeks to measure goals unrelated to prisoner-identified goals is incomplete. Research subjects are more than raw material to be processed, objects to be described, or subjects to be judged. Guba and Lincoln's (1987) emerging fourth-generation evaluation which forwards value pluralism, stakeholder constructions, fairness, merit and worth, and negotiation is of particular value in research regarding schooling in prisons.

Return to The Community

We know that practically all prisoners in Canada will return to the community one day. Released prisoners enter social environments which can either be nurturing, stable, supportive and positive or include violence, poverty, alcohol abuse, unstable relationships, mistrust, and chaos. In some cases prisoners have made the decision to leave a negative family environment. In others, the return to family can provide support not found previously. Family relationships are a factor for most released prisoners. McCormick (1994) writes,

> Family relationships are a deeply ingrained aspect of many, if not all, societies including that of Canada. The unique and special status of a family relationship is recognized by and entrenched in Canadian law. Both private and public law, impose special

> responsibilities, obligations, trusts, benefits,
> privileges and so on, on individuals solely on the
> basis of their family relationship to one another. Even
> when a family relationship is not positive it still
> maintains a status that is different from any other
> type of relationship in our society. Under the
> circumstances it would seem reasonable to conclude that
> whatever happens to one family member, even if that
> member is in prison, directly affects the lives of each
> of the other family members (p. 157).

Prisoners who have devoted a significant amount of their energy into educational pursuits return to the community with fresh vision and optimistic goals. Some do so as part of an early release package - parole or temporary absence pass. Here, the individuals who determine "success" are institutional staff. The elusive carrot of early release dangles ever so closely when one can say that the faults of the individual (ie., his unemployment or lack of formal education, ed. note) are responsible for imprisonment in the first place. Bracken and Loewen (1992) write that prison shelters prisoners from life's realities, teaches them to cope by manipulation and coercion, and fails to foster a sense of control over one's own life (p. 164). Success may be redefined for some as an ability to manipulate the system.

Return to the community is inevitable for practically all prisoners and the decision to apply the achieved prison education in the community is made. According to Sutton (1992), upon returning, prisoners must either reject the values of the education received, introduce new values into

the environment and thereby change it, or abandon that environment and push into a new one without family or friends. Both of the latter ones require great tenacity and strength of character, and the importance of supportive through-care and outside contacts is seen (p. 55).

According to Challis (1991) there are significant challenges for prisoners who want to make the transition from prison-based literacy programs to community-based programs. He indicates that barriers to success upon release include low self confidence, chaotic lifestyles, unclear or unrealistic goals, insufficient academic potential, physical or mental disabilities. He also notes that there are several external barriers to finding success in the community and these include lack of seats in most programs, lack of information regarding courses, financial aid and career options, insufficient or insecure sources of income, a lack of articulation, collaboration and coordination between programs.

CHAPTER 3 PROCEDURES

Goals of the Practicum

As indicated earlier, the goals of this practicum were to develop greater knowledge and skills as they relate to design and implementation of a particular model of literacy research with prisoners. The research, based on Guba and Lincoln's (1987) fourth-generation methodology, attempted to describe current prison educational models including their philosophical influences, solicit literacy-related goals of prisoners and determine prisoner-identified factors which may lead to the successful completion of these literacy goals. The following is a report of this work which occurred during March, April, May and June of 1997.

Establishing a Context for Research

Gaining entrance into two provincial prisons and three federal prisons was a necessary first step to conducting the research. This was accomplished through four steps: 1) securing a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat of Canada to conduct the work, 2) forming a local Advisory Committee, 3) obtaining formal consent from wardens or program officers of those prisons and 4) establishing positive rapport with teachers/instructors.

Research Methods and Questions

Information was gathered through the following methods: 1) review of existing literature, 2) qualitative one on one interviews with prison literacy instructors, 3) observation of classroom activities, 4) focus group interviews with five groups of approximately 10 prisoners in each group, and 5) qualitative one on one interviews with prison literacy students. The principles of Guba and Lincoln's (1987) fourth-generation evaluation were utilized.

The research was qualitative in nature and most of the interviews were recorded by audio cassette. Qualitative research methodology provided a medium for the evaluand and participant to discuss issues openly and diverge on issues of common interest. According to Bogdan & Taylor (1975), "Qualitative methodologies refer to research procedures which produce descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words" (p. 4).

Questions of prison literacy instructors pertained to the nature of their specific school program, including admission of prisoners into the program, nature of teacher or peer support, and how they provided technical or supervisory support for prisoners. Prisoners were asked questions regarding their literacy-related goals upon release and the factors which they believed would increase or decrease success of reaching those goals when in the community. Prisoners were asked questions in both the focus

groups and individual interviews.

Selection of Research Candidates

Two of the five schools were located in provincial prisons; Brandon Correctional Institution and Regina Correctional Institution. Both Regina and Brandon are medium/maximum-security prisons. Provincial prisons are those that fall within the jurisdiction of Provincial control and hold prisoners sentenced to less than two years. Average sentences in most provincial prisons are three to 6 months in length. Three of the schools in this study were in federal prisons; Riverbend Institution, Rockwood Institution, and Stony Mountain Institution. Correctional Services Of Canada (CSC) holds federally sentenced prisoners serving sentences of two years or greater. Both Riverbend and Rockwood are minimum-security male prisons while Stony Mountain is a medium security male institution.

In all prisons, the "gate keeper" providing access to prisoners was the teacher. In order to gain access to interviewing prisoners, the researcher's initial communication with teachers requested participation of ten men with literacy-related goals for release to volunteer their time for this study. These men were informed, usually by the teacher, that they would be asked to be involved in literacy-related research which would initially involve approximately 1 to 2 hours of their time - approximately 45 -

60 minutes of group discussion/research and 15 to 45
minutes for an individual interview.

Personnel

Conducting research within institutions necessitates
the cooperation of the "gatekeepers" of large bureaucracies.
In most cases, the warden or assistant warden is this
gatekeeper. Prison officials need to be convinced of the
merit of the research and the integrity of the researcher.
Prison officials may either be disinterested in the research
or suspect of the researcher. The researcher attempted to
overcome these issues through reliance on the sponsoring
organization's established rapport with prison officials and
line staff.

The John Howard Society (JHS) is entering its fortieth
year of existence in Manitoba, and although corrections
officials are increasingly more opposed to traditional
advocacy functions, it is seen as a credible organization in
the criminal justice community. The John Howard Society has
been active in Brandon for more than thirty-five years and,
in 1996, was incorporated. This lengthy history has given
JHS workers a virtual "key" to entering and working in
prisons in Manitoba. This history, coupled with the
researcher's fifteen years of criminal justice experience,
enabled him to find support amongst correctional officials
in Manitoba. This long standing relationship with prison

administration and line workers was likely a catalyst to obtaining access to the prison for the purpose of this research.

A major challenge confronting this research was to effectively engage the primary stakeholders (prisoners and teachers). Prison teachers are busy people and the extra time and energy required to support a "diversion" such as this research could be viewed as unnecessary. This necessitated teachers confidence in the merits of the research.

Gaining the confidence of teachers occurred in two ways. Firstly this was accomplished because of the official sanction of prison administration. Secondly, this was accomplished through telephone and written communication from the researcher explaining the details of the research. Appendix C provides an example of correspondence to teachers.

A fourth significant challenge to conducting this research was gaining the acceptance of students necessary to involve them not only as participants but as "owners." Prisoners are generally cautious of "outsiders" who want something from them. Firstly, the researcher relied on teacher cooperation to inform students about the research which included a copy of the consent form outlining ethical considerations. This occurred prior to actual contact with prisoners. Secondly, prior to the focus groups, the

researcher provided a description of the research. In two
prisons, those who were unsure about participating in the
research were welcomed to stay for the focus group sessions
in order to gain an appreciation for the nature of the
questions.

Guba and Lincoln's (1987) fourth-generation evaluation
methods indicate that stakeholder construct and direction
are essential elements. Obviously prisoners were to be
convinced of its merit. The researcher attempted to overcome
these issues through reliance on a pre-established rapport
with prisoners, prison officials and other John Howard
Society workers, and a thorough explanation of the goals of
the study to prison administrators and staff. An advisory
committee, which represented stakeholder concerns and
comprised of individuals with knowledge and connection to
prisoners and prison administration and staff, was
established as a means of providing greater acceptance of
the research with prisons and prison officials. Fourth-
generation evaluation is viewed as both a political act as
well as an investigatory process. The inclusion of Davidson
(1995), Collins (1995), and other writers in this report,
balance the predominant and prolific writings of evaluators
who normally represent status quo ideologies.

Procedures and Methods of Intervention

As noted in a previous section, the procedures used in

the intervention included a literature review, one to one interviews with fifty prisoners, interviews with literacy program coordinators, and five focus groups of approximately eleven prisoners in each group. The information obtained in the focus groups and individual interviews has been held in confidence by the researcher. All reports generated by this research did not identify the names of prisoners involved in the research.

Literacy education in prison was important for study because its findings may give direction to prisoners, teachers, and people who administer and developing prison literacy programs. This information may lead to greater success for ex-prisoners because its methodology is one which defines prisoners as primary stakeholders. It may also provide the prison student improved direction as he seeks to determine his own definitions of success related to literacy goals upon release.

Sample

This practicum involved fifty-seven prisoners in literacy programs. Five prisons were chosen in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and forty-eight completed the individual interviews. These forty-eight agreed to participate in the follow-up (Phase II) of this study.

For the purpose of this study, selection of individuals was based on active current participation in a prison

literacy program, willingness to participate in the study, and clearly defined literacy-related goals for release.

Projected difficulties of this research including access to prison literacy students were overcome through approaching prison administration at each of the five prisons. Formal verbal approval was provided by each of the five Wardens at each of the five institutions. Literacy instructors, upon learning that prison administration supported the research, mostly became interested supporters and participants. Accurate information about the research, as well as assertive interpersonal skills were needed in order to gain the trust of all stakeholders. Prison administrators, teachers, students never questioned the methodology of fourth-generation evaluation.

Linden and Perry (1982) have asserted that evaluations of "prison education programs are generally poorly done however they provide us with some insights namely that prisoners are amenable to vocational and academic training and, if staff are innovative and talented, dramatic gains can be achieved" (p. 54).

Duration

The duration of this intervention extended over a four-month period - March to June, 1997.

Recording and Evaluation

As stated above, an advisory group was established which helped to oversee the entire project. Periodic written updates regarding the research questions, method of implementation, and measures ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were completed for this advisory group.

Criteria used for measuring successful intervention include this practicum report which provides a literature review and findings section. The findings reflect the fact that prisoners were supportive of the research as evidenced by their active participation in both the focus group discussions and personal interviews. Another measurement is acceptance by the Literacy Secretariat of Canada of "Transition to the Community; Prison Literacy Programs and Factors Which Lead to Success In the Community."

Educational benefits to student

According to fourth-generation evaluation, the necessary skills of collaborator, learner/teacher, reality shaper, mediator and change agent must be practised as well as being beneficial to the student's education. Criteria for evaluating educational benefits to the student include a formal appraisal of the work by the practicum committee, the Literacy Advisory Committee, and the Board of the John Howard Society of Brandon, Inc.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This research involving five sites in Saskatchewan and Manitoba found that schools in prisons were generally filled to capacity and that the adult learners who chose to attend found meaning and purpose in furthering their educational potential. The prison environment offered special challenges to students and teachers but it could be a new and positive experience for those who have had negative past school experiences.

School Enrolment

The sites in this study had an established waiting list of prisoners who were interested in attending school. In two prisons, the number of individuals placed on the waiting list was as numerous as the total available seats in class. Approximately 17.5% of the total prison population of the five sites were active in schooling (Please see Table 1).

Attendance at prison schools in this study was expected and students were rewarded with standardized institutional wages of between $2.00 and $7.00 per day. Several teachers, however, related that if prisoners viewed school primarily as a "job" they were less motivated to reach specific educational goals. And, while it was true that pay was docked when individuals did not attend class, teachers preferred not to view this as a punitive measure or as a means to ensure class participation.

Table 1

Number of Prisoners Enroled In Prison Schools

Prison (y-axis): STONY MTN, ROCKWOOD*, RIVERBEND, REGINA, BRANDON*

- STONY MTN: 450, 85
- ROCKWOOD*: 160, 70
- RIVERBEND: 100, 15
- REGINA: 380, 22
- BRANDON*: 120, 20

Number of Prisoners
* Part Time Students Included

Series2 / Series1
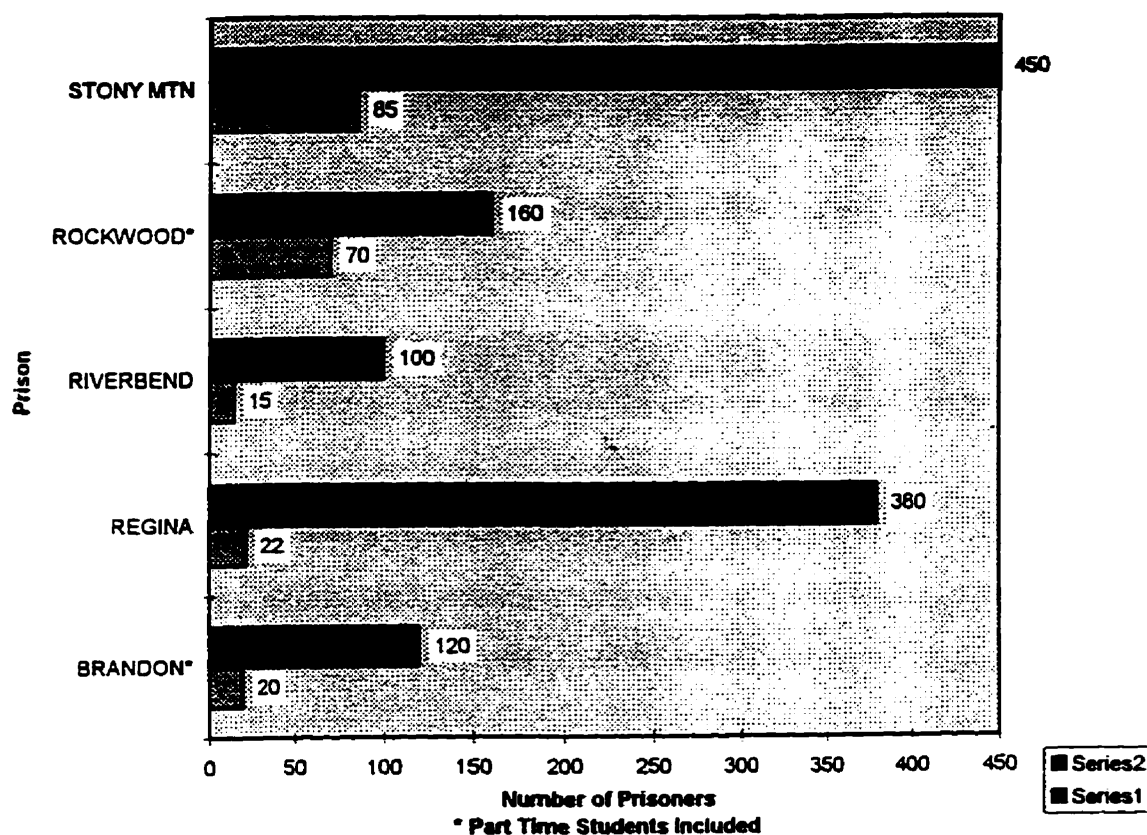
In the course of their job within prison, teachers were
asked to provide performance evaluations on students for the
purposes of parole board hearings or early release hearings.
Some teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the procedure
of reporting "on" students because, given that their
relationship with students was based largely on trust and
respect which is foundational to learning, reporting to an
external body was seen as a breach of this relationship.
There were varying degrees of support for these
institutional requirements amongst teachers. Although not

specifically measured, there appeared to be a correlation between "resistance to reporting" and "commitment to individual learning goals" of students.

Most teachers indicated that a clear set of rules and consistent application of the rules were necessary to establishing an environment supportive of learning goals. This study learned that there was a need for teachers to show fairness and acceptance to all students. Wlodkowski's (1993) comments regarding fairness and acceptance were highly relevant within the prison context.

From time to time prisoners quit school and reasons for students quitting school were numerous. However the most common reasons cited by teachers included relocation within the prison or to another prison for security reasons, inability of the student to concentrate or stay physically in one spot for long periods of time, the rules being too strict, unrealistic commitments, and lack of motivation.

The Role of Prison Staff

Prison is a place where a variety of staff serve a variety of functions with multiple purposes or goals. The primary goal of the prison administration is a safe and secure environment in which conflict is minimized. Toward this end, tasks and activities of staff and prisoners are routinized and made to be predictable. Prison guards have the task of enforcing security measures and, of all the

staff, are in the most overt conflict with prisoners.

Counselling and program staff are charged with the

responsibility of "rehabilitation" and perform duties such

as case planning. In federal institutions these staff are

called Case Management Officer I (CMOI) while in the

provincial prison's "Case Management" system, prison guards

and program staff both perform functions defined as

"rehabilitation."

Teachers, while regarded by most as performing

primarily a rehabilitative function, viewed their role as

distinct and separate from all other prison staff. Within

the prison "family", school was observed to fulfil a

nurturing role. Prisoners gravitated to the school because

of its nurturing and supportive characteristics. As long as

students were making an effort, they were afforded the

"unconditional" support of teachers. This relationship

between teachers and students was regarded with some degree

of scepticism and even cynicism by some other staff in the

institution. This notion was supported by a Manitoba Task

Force on Literacy (1989),

> In some institutions, a small percentage of guards and
> correctional staff impede the work by making it
> difficult for learners to attend programs, pulling out
> learners from tutoring situations just prior to their
> sessional times, not providing time and/or space for
> tutors and learners to work together, criticising the
> program, etc. Practitioners have found when this
> situation exists the program has grave difficulties
> functioning (p. 5).

Virtually all of the interviewees indicated that the

school was a "safe place" where values of respect and dignity were evident. This was especially true for those settings where prisoners were encouraged to freely express their values and opinions without judgement. Teachers were typically viewed as positive and supportive and set apart from other prison staff because of their genuine and caring attitude. Interviews with prisoners indicated that the teacher's active role in creating a safe environment was the primary reason for deciding to attend and to continue schooling in prison. Prison schools generally were viewed as a "sacred" place within an otherwise negative environment. The school at Rockwood Institution had a formal contract outlining guidelines for school participation (See Exhibit #1).

The Prison School Environment

The observation of this researcher indicated that prison school teachers understood very well the environment in which they worked including the importance of establishing a setting in which learning goals could be accomplished. Toward this end teachers generally worked hard to establish a physically and emotionally safe environment.

Exhibit #1

SCHOOL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS
Rockwood Institution

Class Attendance
 Rockwood Education Centre will provide an opportunity, within the context of your individual Correctional Treatment Plan, to attain specific educational goals. Your achievement in school will be determined by your attitude, performance, and effort.

Performance Evaluations
 Performance evaluations will be prepared by your teachers on an ongoing basis.

Standards and Expectations
 The following standards and expectations will help to ensure that your school experience is positive and productive:

1. *Punctuality:* Arriving at school on time, mornings, afternoons, and after break times is essential.

2. *Appointments:* It is your responsibility to notify your teacher of appointments, programs, and TA's. Any absence from school is subject to prior consultation with your teacher.

3. *Relationships:* An atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance must be maintained at all times.

4. *Participation:* Although students work on individual educational programs, participation in group and class activities is expected. These activities will provide many opportunities for you to progress and grow, both personally and academically.

5. *Attitude:* A positive learning environment is fostered at the school, and it is expected that you will support and contribute to this goal.

6. *Problem Situations:* Any situations which may arise at the school regarding security, personal relationships, etc., are best dealt with as soon as possible in consultation with your teachers. Although teachers are not CSC Staff, they are responsible to the Institution to abide by Institution rules.

I understand and agree with the standards and expectations described above.

_____   _____
Student Signature   Date

Several students in each of the prisons provided comments which indicated that they appreciated this safety. This study found that schools were generally regarded as sanctuaries within the prison environment. A commonly expressed sentiment of prisoners was that school was a safe place in which opinions and values could be expressed and that they would be listened to and not judged. It was apparent that learning was directly influenced by the degree of safety felt by students. Most students' past school experience had been unrewarding. Therefore, the creation of a safe and positive adult learning setting was crucial to learning in prison. All the teachers in this study indicated that they placed a priority on creating a safe environment in the school setting. According to one prison teacher,

> Safety is absolutely essential and it could take up to a month before they will accept the fact that they are not going to be ridiculed particularly by me but also by their peers.

Another teacher asserted,

> It is important to have a non-threatening atmosphere. But I expect them to work. I monitor activities. I interact with them 90% of the time.

The following dialogue was common of interviews with students who referred to the safety of the school as a "different" environment:

> (RL): What role do the teacher's play here in terms of you reaching your goals?
> (Student):They push you and help you out. They're positive - positive feedback I guess. That's why most guys come to school too. It's a different environment from the rest of the prison.

This study found that each of the schools was physically set apart from the rest of the prison. This separate location appeared to contribute to a safe and predictable environment, free from fear and intimidation, with choices and personal responsibilities not honoured in the rest of the prison environment.

Students were generally supportive of the special nature of the school environment and respected the need for safety and trust not generally found in the rest of the prison. Students were observed to freely offer support and encouragement to other students and described school in the following ways: "safe place", "respectful", "positive", and "a way to put aside gang values and do something positive."

For most prisoners in this study, school experiences during formative years were largely negative. Those who have not found success in this world, have generally not had positive school experiences. According to Linden (1987) the correlation between school failure and delinquency is relatively strong (p. 227).

For many of the students in this study, their childhood school experiences were anything but safe and respectful and therefore the need for a safe place was increased. One student recounted,

> (Student): I had a lost childhood. That equals a lost education. I haven't had a chance. ... Beat up all the time eh by my dad cause all my brothers doing this shit and then I'll be the one to blame eh. And then I'll be the one ending up getting the slap so I just kind of

kept to myself staying inside all the time.
(RL):Sort of carried on from there.
(Student):Yeah. I took upgrading in (another prison)
one time but that was nothing. I couldn't read, eh,
cause I always ended up screwing around all the time.
(RL):Didn't work?
(Student):Nope couldn't concentrate on work.
(RL):Not a safe place?
Yeah that's right. If I don't have something to do in
here I sit down and I have a little journal there, eh.
I sit there and write. Helps out a lot.
(RL):You've stated it's not easy to undo a lot of the
put downs that have happened in the past, in the
family.
(Student):Especially I know from my dad he didn't give
me a lot of praise but I really needed it. I really
wanted it sometimes you know.
(RL):Do you get praise here?
(Student):Yeah, I do.

Interviews with teachers at each of the five sites

indicated that all had school schedules which coincided with

institutional routines. Prison school teachers appeared

interested in distancing their activity from the label of

standard "correctional" programs. This study found that

prison teachers spent a significant amount of their energy

attempting to create a setting apart from prison values.

Control over one's life begins with the safety necessary to

take responsibility for those things that one can actually

change, not those beyond his or her control.

All of the sites in this study were classroom settings.

In two of the five settings the students faced one

direction. In the others, the seating arrangement was around

circular or large square tables which facilitated

interaction between students.

One of the institutions provided for "night school"

but, due to prison scheduling and security issues, the realization of night school took a significant effort.

Adult Learning Models in Prison

Adult learning differs in style and content from common classroom models. Teachers informed that they structured their learning environment, content of material, and teaching style to reflect these differences. Each of the sites involved the presence of at least one full time teacher and the role of the teacher varied depending largely on one's personal style and interest. Some were highly structured while others were informal. Peer tutoring was observed to occur spontaneously in settings where seating facilitated this, especially in the schools which provided tables for groups of students to sit around. While this could have been construed as distractive, upon further observation, it appeared that genuine learning was occurring.

Teachers at all of the sites were observed to take a great deal of pride in their work and in the accomplishments of their students. They recognized students not as numbers but as individuals.

Interviews with teachers indicated a high level of commitment to the learning goals of students. Due to the higher turnover rate of students in provincial institutions, more time and resources at these sites was consumed with

intake procedures and setting up individual school plans.
Federal prisoners, because of longer sentences, were
generally involved in work with long term goals.

Instruction occurred at one of the prisons for half of
each day while, at all the other sites, individual one to
one support was observed with little or no formal
instruction. The teachers role was largely a variation of
facilitator and individual supporter. Prisoners were
especially appreciative of teachers who were genuinely
interested and vested in their success.

According to a March 1990 publication called "Literacy
in Corrections; What's Happening?", all but one prison in
Manitoba used peer tutors and half used community
volunteers. In this study, informal peer tutoring was
observed to occur at three of the five sites.

Paradigms of Prison Education

Chapter 2 discusses Collins' (1995) paradigms of prison
education. This research found that elements of these
paradigms were present in the research sites. This paper
will now examine each of the schools within the context of
Collins' philosophical paradigms.

Riverbend School

The school at Riverbend Institution appears to be
influenced, in part, by the **medical model** described in the

literature review. Indicators of this include Riverbend's established schedule (see Exhibit 2) which was followed closely. The teacher's role was observed to be largely that of a manager. On four days of the week an assignment was to write two sentences reflecting on a particular activity or learning. It appeared that the teacher's primary objective was to provide consistency of curriculum. While in each of the other 4 schools, the majority of students could articulate their specific and individualized learning plan, at Riverbend only two of the ten students could do so. While most of the prisons in this study attempted to treat individual psychological issues by behaviour modification or normalizing techniques, the Riverbend school program was most overt about this.

Exhibit #2

DAILY SCHOOL SCHEDULE - Riverbend Institution

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 - 8:50	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Atlas Study	Atlas Study
9:00 - 10:15	Current Events & 2 Sentences	Current Events & 2 Sentences	Spelling	Current Events & 2 Sentences	Current Events & 2 Sent.
10:25- 11:30	Grammar Science	Grammar Science	Grammar Science	Grammar Science	Reading
1:00 - 4:00	Deskwork Tutor Time Computer	Deskwork Tutor Time Computer	Deskwork Tutor Time Computer	Deskwork Tutor Time Computer	Flexible ie: educat. videos

Collins (1995) description of the Medical Model contends that students' learning needs and their learning objectives are already programmed into the curriculum design. The literacy teacher is redefined as a "facilitator" or "manager" (p. 51). This appeared to be the case at Riverbend.

Rockwood School

Students at Rockwood school were given a wide range of educational and training opportunities including hands on activities (i.e. managing a garden). The teacher at Rockwood indicated that students were kept busy with a lot of group work and she tried to work in at least one area of each student each day. She noted that the direction in corrections is toward a lot of hands on experience. This teacher stated that writing assignments were common and they published a quarterly newsletter completed largely by students. The school at Rockwood Institution appeared to be influenced by the **Opportunities Model** presented by Collins (1995). The Opportunities Model "is tied to a notion that prisoners should be given a wide range of educational and training opportunities while they are incarcerated. ... The curriculum is envisaged as keeping prisoners "meaningfully busy"" (p. 53).

Brandon Correctional Institution and

Regina Correctional Institution

School in the two provincial prisons in Brandon and

Regina appeared to fall largely into Collins' **Creative**

Approaches paradigm. Observations of these provincial sites

determined that they suffered from inadequate budgets and

lack of importance within the larger scheme of prison

activities in comparison to the federal sites in this study.

In one prison students were regularly pulled out of class to

work in other industries or programs.

In both provincial prisons, education was not

considered a "core" program. Provincial sentences were

shorter and prisoners who were sentenced with a requirement

to take special programming like anger management could have

been required to discontinue schooling when a particular

program was offered. This marginalization within the larger

scheme of the prison complex provided teachers with an

opportunity to try creative approaches. Extra activities to

enhance student learning were not typically required and

attempts to introduce creative approaches entailed extra

work. Collins (1995) observed that it is "possible to

witness prison-based adult literacy projects which, in terms

of creativity and commitment, make some institutionalized

adult literacy programs for "disadvantaged" people on the

outside appear pedestrian by comparison. ... Conscientious

literacy teachers of prisoner-students, and of the

population groups on the outside from which many prisoners originate, can take advantage of these laxer circumstances to create alternative curriculum and teaching strategies" (p. 59).

While each of the five teachers provided several examples of creativity in their work, the teachers at the provincial prison schools were observed to provide a significant degree of creativity and variety. The teachers at provincial prisons indicated that this was, in part, because of tight budgets and a higher turnover of prisoners. For example, at Regina, the teachers had established significant connections with outside resources in an attempt to help meet continued learning goals for students who could not accomplish this in their short the provincial prison. Prison workers' establishment of supportive linkages with programs and people outside of the prison context appears to be losing support in the Canadian penal system.

At Brandon Correctional Institution the students were encouraged to collaborate on reworking a government handbook on the issue of alcohol and drug abuse. According to the teacher, this was not supported by prison administration when it was "discovered."

Stony Mountain Institution

The school at Stony Mountain Institution was large by comparison to all of the other schools in this project.

Eighty-five full-time students were active in a variety of activities at a variety of levels. Teachers were observed to take the time to develop special projects. For example, students took the lead to compile and publish a book of visual art, poetry and stories entitled "Spirit Within Our Dreams." This book was written and directed largely by prisoners giving them a direct say in the content of their curriculum. The predominant model of literacy programming observed at Stony Mountain was Collins' **Participatory Learning Practices**. In addition to "Spirit Within Our Dreams", students had recently completed a module on racism in which they organized extra activities such as a feast. Another observation at Stony Mountain was that students took initiative during the focus group by largely directing and leading the discussion. Thirdly, they took greater initiative in regulating individual interview times indicating an emphasis on democratic practices in the classroom. Collins (1995) Participatory Learning Practices model emphasizes the consistency of democratic values and democratic practices in the classroom.

During the focus group discussion regarding factors influencing success upon release, students at Stony Mountain institution raised external factors such as racism, government cutbacks, and prejudice. They were the only group which raised this issue which indicates that they were conscious of what Collins (1995) described as "coercive

forces which affect how they express themselves, imagine their futures, ask their questions, and weigh and judge the worth of their answers" (p. 20).

Summary of School Models

Teachers are individuals first and teachers second. It was observed that each of the classrooms were "flavoured" by the uniqueness of the teachers. It could also be stated that teachers come from philosophical premises which influence their style, content, and delivery. The above comparisons of prison school programs to Collins' (1995) paradigms of prison education indicate that the micro can be influenced by the macro.

The advice of Lunsford, Moglen, and Slevin (1990) rings true for all of the sites in this study. That is, students learn most successfully with and from each other when they: 1) have full access to looking, listening, talking, and taking part in authentic tasks, 2) when they can compliment each other in particular areas of expertise and learn to communicate shared personal experiences, and 3) when humans move beyond information and skills to meaning and interpretation (p. 302).

Collins (1995) treatise encourages prison-based teachers to explore the range of options for literacy material especially since much of it, he contends, is based on the penal philosophy of control. From this research it

appeared that students thrived in settings where teachers were committed to student's individual learning goals. Learning was enhanced when adult learners took part in authentic tasks, were empowered to share personal experiences, and moved beyond information and skills to meaning and interpretation.

This study found that practically all of the participants were genuinely interested in furthering their education. How this occurred varied from prison to prison.

School Intake Procedure

The method by which a prisoner enters the school setting varied from site to site. Within federal prisons, newly sentenced individuals participated in an intake interview and assessment process in which an assigned case manager identified program needs and options. The resulting "Case Plan" specified required programming and treatment, including whether school was appropriate. According to a Correctional Service of Canada committee,

> Classification can be generally defined as "a continuous process through which diagnosis, treatment-planning and the execution of the treatment plan are coordinated to the end that the individual inmate may be rehabilitated" (Oimet Committee, 1969:11, in Griffiths, 1994, p. 509).

In the two provincial prisons, school participation was based largely on a prisoner-initiated referral process. It was largely the prisoner's responsibility to contact his

case worker who completed an assessment related to school. The individual was then placed on a waiting list for the school. At both provincial prisons, instructors completed testing to determine the level at which the individual was working.

Within prison there were numerous other "jobs" available and, in some cases, placed in higher demand than school by the administration. On occasion a student was moved out of school to work in a prison industry. At Regina Correctional, a provincial institution, the average stay in the classroom was approximately 30 days. This presented a special challenge to teachers who, in any given year, saw more than 200 different students, each with individual learning goals and potential.

Within federal prisons the average length of stay per student was considerably longer than that of their provincial counterparts. In one federal minimum prison the length of stay in the class was approximately 6 - 8 months.

School Program Options

The following Table illustrates the program options which students in this study were involved.

Each of the five sites provided a curriculum for a variety of student needs. The following headings delineate the nature of school programming and the approximate number of students in each category (Total N=48).

School program options accessed by students

Table 2

English As a Second
Language (ESL)
6%

General Equivalency
Diploma
29%

Adult Basic Education
40%

Computer / Typing
4%

Correspondence High
School Courses
2%

Riverbend Generalized
Program
17%

Saskatchewan Indian
Federated College
2%
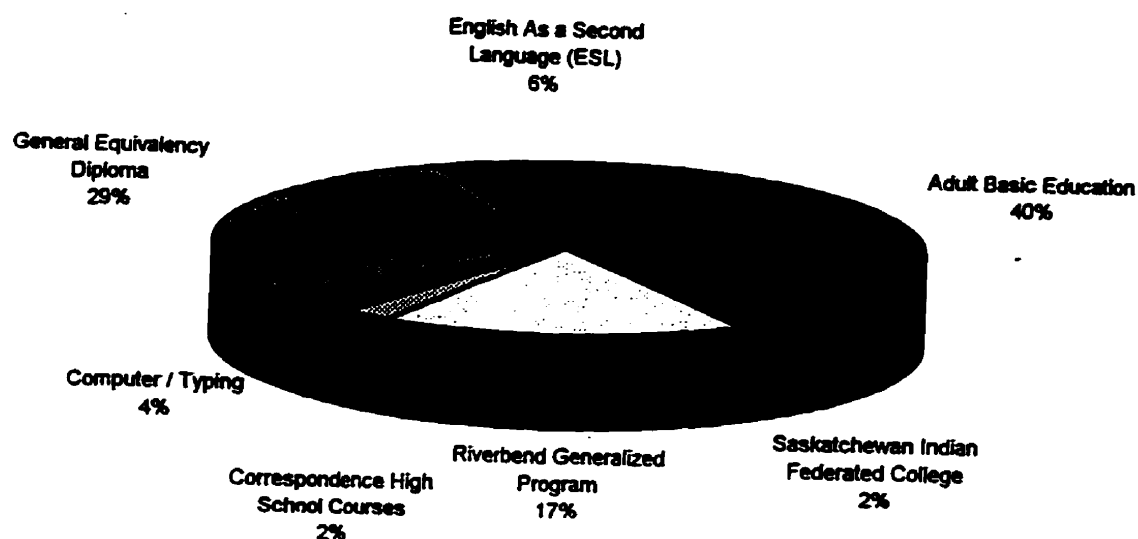
Teachers commented that factors such as a safe and positive learning environment, time between breaks, length of classes, and seating arrangements, all have an impact on learning.

Option 1: Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Basic Literacy

Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Basic Literacy were the most common options chosen among the prison school programs. All five sites offered these and nineteen of the forty-nine students in this study were enroled in this program. Adult Basic Education was subdivided further into ABE I, ABE II,

and ABE III.

Individuals in federal prisons who expressed difficulty reading or writing are enroled in ABE I which is considered the equivalent of a formal grade 0 - 5.

Adult Basic Education II & III were considered equal to Grades 6 - 10 and, according to one teacher, it could take approximately 6 months to finish ABE III. In many instances GED was replacing ABE III because it was easier to administer and divided into modules for easier completion.

Prior to involvement in ABE some individuals enroled in basic literacy. In Manitoba a formal literacy certificate was offered to individuals who completed basic course material in literacy. This was both a motivator and a reward for students.

Option 2: General Equivalency Diploma (GED)

Teachers indicated that several students each year achieved their GED. While generally regarded as a formal Grade 10 standing, the GED served as both a motivator and a confidence boost for students who completed it. The General Equivalency Diploma is easily adaptable to the prison environment because it is divided in modules. Fourteen of forty-nine students were enroled in GED studies.

One student began his schooling in a GED program and had little interest in educational goals but has made great progress. He said,

(Student):The reasons for being in school here were,
firstly, to get out of work. The other reason was to
accomplish something while I was in here. I started
with GED and then, after that, it came relatively easy.
So I decided while I was in school, I sort of decided
on a field that I wanted to get into which was Civil
Engineering. I needed a math course for it. So I
decided to pursue that and [the teacher] had told me
that the Math 300 would have been too difficult to just
jump into. So she suggested that I take Math 200. So I
did and actually next week I"ll be writing my final
exam for it.
(RL):Excellent.
(Student):So I"ll be passing that and like that's what
I got out of it.
(RL): So your goals have kind of changed from the
beginning to actually work towards something.
(Student):Yeah.

Teachers often had students write a GED pre-test in

order to determine their readiness to write the GED. At

Regina Correctional Institution, the prison covered the cost

of writing the GED test if the student passed.

Option 3: English as a Second Language

Prisons in Manitoba and Saskatchewan imprison

disproportionate numbers of native prisoners. For many of

these men in this study, English was a second language.

These men expressed a special need to be free from ridicule.

As a result, some of these men concentrated initially on

math skills, particularly computation. One instructor noted,

This [computation] is excellent to get them feeling
competent and more sure of themselves and to realize
they are in a safe place. They need to know that they
are not going to be ridiculed. I will give them math to
do and once they have grasped the concepts then I will
put the math into a problem form.

The following comment by one student illustrated his

special interest in his first educational experience. When asked why he started attending school he stated, "Because when I was back home I didn't go to school. This is my first time I go to school. I try to learn English, get more education." Reading a restaurant menu or map for the first time unlocks many doors for the released prisoner.

Option 4: Correspondence: High School

Because the GED certificate was recognized by teachers as equivalent to a formal grade 10 standing, some prison schools provided students the opportunity to obtain formal high school credits through correspondence courses. In Saskatchewan this was done through the Saskatchewan Correspondence School while in Manitoba this was accomplished through the Winkler School Division or, in the case of Brandon, through a counsellor at a local high school. In Regina, students were able to obtain a grade 10 certificate issued by the Saskatchewan Institution of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) which is module based. Special financial support was available to Regina residents. Released prisoners who were on social assistance for one week following release were eligible for SIAST funding to continue the schooling they began in prison.

Option 5: Correspondence: University

The five sites visited in this study did not offer formal university courses as part of a curriculum, however some students did register for correspondence university courses. Students expressed disappointment in the formal discontinuation of regular post-secondary studies in federal institutions.

Option 6: Correspondence: Technical

In some of the schools, teachers took the time to provide their students with calenders from technical schools or community colleges. In most cases, prisoners were required to initiate these studies. Limited support was provided in some cases to those working on this kind of material.

Option 7: Correspondence: Other

At Rockwood Institution teachers encouraged students to correspond with outside contacts which served to maintain a formal link with the Aboriginal Literacy Program in Winnipeg.

Option 8: Supplemental Studies: Specific Studies

In Saskatchewan's prison schools, a university connection was pre-established with Athabasca University in Alberta. Athabasca provided this service for individuals who

wanted to upgrade math, for instance, for a specific trade on the outside.

Within Regina Correctional Institution, where the length of stay in the classroom averaged 30 days, "special studies" were available and included learning the metric system or the driver's handbook.

Option 9: Supplemental Studies: Computer Skills

In each of the five prison schools, computers were available and fully utilized by students. Federal prison schools had a much higher ratio of computers to students than did the provincial prisons. Computers were used as a means of improving key boarding skills and as a form of entertainment. Some educational programs, such as Pascal and Mavis Beacon, a typing tutor program, were installed and used.

Option 10: Supplemental Studies: Specialty Programs and Projects

According to one teacher in a federal institution, the direction in federal Corrections was "practical hands on experience." In one prison a teacher raised the subject of AIDS and the entire class completed a project which involved guest speakers and presentations. In another prison the theme of racism was studied. One student was particularly interested in the study on racism. He said, "Yeah, that was

a theme week and we finished it with a feast. We brought in breads from different parts of the world and had a video and ate together."

Stony Mountain school's publication, "Spirit Within Our Dreams", was an example of a specialty project. At another prison, students worked on a garden as part of their daily routine.

Option 11: Supplemental Studies: Library

Students in at least three of the settings had the benefit of a well stocked library. Specific library times were part of the schedule and a student acted as the librarian in these locations.

Tutors: Community

Several of the teachers indicated that an established relationship between the student and an outside volunteer could serve as an important bridge to the community and facilitate the accomplishment of pre-set goals. The Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) stated, in their recent Mission statement,

> We recognize that the establishment and maintenance of positive community and family relationships will normally assist offenders in their reintegration as law-abiding citizens. ... The involvement of community organizations, volunteers and outside professionals in program development and delivery will be actively encouraged.

At the time of the study there were few outside tutors

working with students. Teachers advised that the time and energy involved in training, matching, and supervising volunteer tutors, in addition to external security issues and concerns, rendered the administering of a core of volunteers a significant challenge. All agreed that highly skilled and dedicated tutors, and those with respectful approaches, whether community-based or peer, would be a positive addition to the school.

The Manitoba Task Force on Literacy (1989) recommended paying volunteer coordinators in literacy programs where peer tutoring or volunteer training was part of the literacy program (p. 6).

Tutors: Peer

Formal peer tutoring (prisoner to prisoner) occurred in two of the sites. Informal tutoring appeared to happen naturally in four of the institutions where it was facilitated by seating. The choosing of a peer tutor was deemed an important task in prison. In addition to issues such as security, teachers were aware that effective literacy tutors needed an empowerment approach and were sensitive to adult learning issues.

At Rockwood recently, six inside tutors took training from a Winnipeg-based tutoring program. One teacher indicated that the peer tutor was invaluable providing the inmates could tutor "without dominating." She added,

> Many men think oh yes they're smart and they'll come
> and lick 'em into shape and they'll tell them what to
> do. Well that's not the type of tutor you want.

Overall, tutoring was viewed as an important activity which, to be effective, needed the investment of resources and time.

Reasons for Attending School in Prison

This study found that reasons for school attendance in prison were as varied as were the individuals themselves. Information obtained in the focus groups indicated that the primary two reasons for attending school included "a fresh start" and "a positive place to be." This revealed that the school was largely an affirming place for those who wanted to learn.

Information obtained from the individual interviews regarding reasons for attending school differed slightly from that of the focus groups. Most notably, the information gathered from the groups affirmed the importance of a positive environment while the data from individual interviews was more related to specific personal educational goals. The table 3 presents data from individual interviews and provides insight into the reasons why individuals attended school in prison (Please see table 3).

Table 3

Reasons for Attending School in Prison

Part of Correctional Plan
1%

Family Priority
1%

Peaceful Place to Be
1%

For my Children
3%

Better Job in Future
4%

Learn/Improve English
14%

Further Education/Refresher
32%

Personal Enjoyment
6%

Improve Reading
3%

Something to Do/Place to Work
11%

Get into College Upon Release
4%

Personal Advancement
7%

Improve Math Skills
10%

Early Release
3%
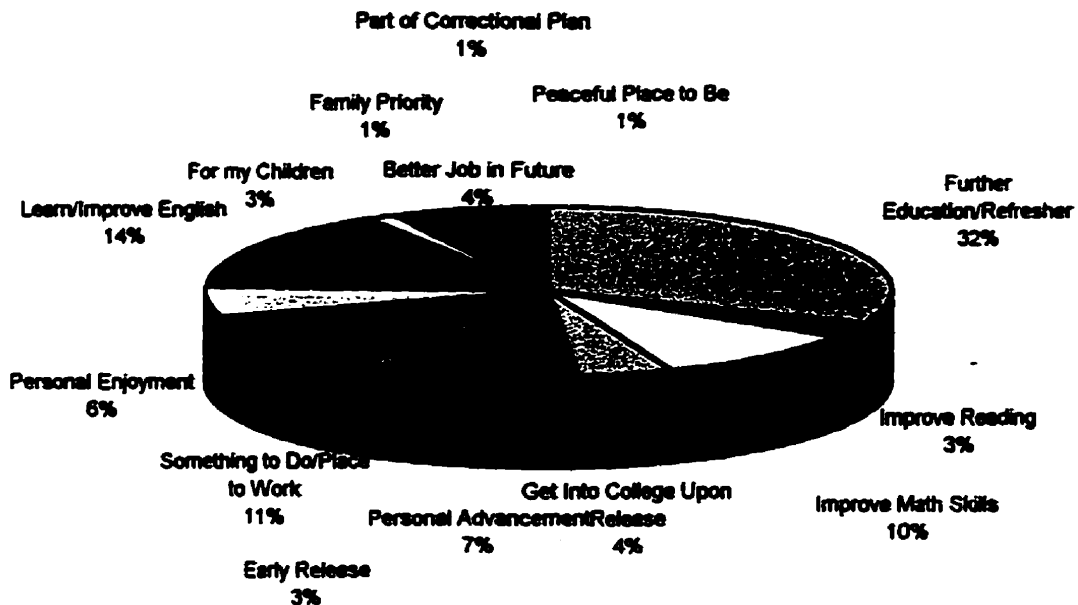
Reason 1: A Fresh Start

Several of the students who participated in this
project described childhoods fraught with abuse and/or
neglect. Their attempts to cope with this situation drained
their mental and creative energies. For them, school was
well down on their list of priorities in childhood. Survival
was foremost. As one individual revealed, "I was never
taught about my culture when I was young cause I started
very early to get off the path." Another individual said,

"In school I am getting focused on changing my life totally... gotta start a life somewhere or I'll end up back on the street again." Another student confirmed, "Being in here, going to school, taking the programs. I found out a lot about myself, the relationships that I had affected."

Prison students were similar to community adult learners who, in the process of furthering their education, began dealing with sensitive personal issues. These issues, if left untouched, continued to affect the ability of the student to make progress. For this reason, several students indicated that taking other kinds of programs in prison could help an individual move from a paralysing past to an unlimited future. The following story emphasizes this:

> I started pretty early. I was 13 years old when I left
> home. My dad was never there for us so I started living
> a lie. ... It doesn't hurt for me to say this any more
> 'cause I've dealt with it. My dad he raped my mom...
> Nine months later I popped out so I wasn't conceived
> out of love or anything. I found that out when I was 13
> and that's when all my problems started. So I kind of
> tended to rub it in the wrong way too with my family
> everyday. I got back at him in my way. I had a lot of
> anger.

Lisa Hobbs Birnie compiled research as part of her work as a member of the National Parole Board. According to Paul (1991), she discovered,

> Abuse is often part of the upbringing of those who end
> up in jail. She kept a tally of the family and social
> history of all the people between the ages of 18 and 40
> she interviewed as a member of the Parole Board. She
> discovered that 78% had been "cruelly abused" when they
> were young (p. 30).

For the following student, prison was a place of

rediscovery. He had been in school in prison for a full year

and, through a process of self discovery, he unlocked his

learning potential. He asserted,

> (Student):I come from a background where there was a
> lot of booze - there was a lot of drinking.
> Rediscovery, about myself personally was one of the
> greatest things in this place. I am looking to get
> somewhere with education now. But before, I wasn't
> really into it.
> (RL): And that's been because you've been in school and
> you realized the different possibilities.
> (Student):Possibilities, exactly.

Several of the students indicated that they were

affiliated with or a member of a gang in the community. This

association can play an portentous role in an individual's

life. One former street gang member stated,

> (Student):I'm stubborn. I came here and I'm thinking,
> "Hey if I get into this school I'll just go with them
> or whatever." But the thing is in the class they ask
> you questions and then they have individual one-on-one,
> you know. So that's when they really get to know you
> ... you know what I mean and I just said, "Hey, you
> know I want to change myself. You know I want to learn.
> I want to finish." ... You try putting on that mask for
> a while and say, "Hey you know I'll act the way they
> want me too." But, you know, after a while you have to
> learn. It's all up to you.
> (RL): I hope you have a lot of success when you get
> out.
> (Student):Well you know I want have a lot of success
> cause this is changing me. I'm growing up and now is
> the time, now is the time for it. I could still be
> around some of my old friends. Maybe not all of them,
> but I have a few that are positive and I need the
> positive more you know. ... The positive one's. Those
> are the ones that are going to be with me cause they're
> going to be my anchor.
> (RL):'Sounds like you're really focused on what you
> want.
> (Student):Yeah, I know what I want.

For several individuals, addressing "life" issues

helped create a stable environment in which to learn. Some became interested and ready for school in prison after they had begun working to resolve other important life issues with the help of an interested teacher or other staff member. The help of genuine and caring program counsellor helped one individual begin to consider school as a positive option. Others, too, reflected on the help of a counsellor who had taken a special interest in them. The following comment of one student demonstrated this:

> (Student):I used to want to beat all the guards.
> (RL): You've found some peace about it?
> (Student):Oh yeah. Like with (name of counsellor)
> there. He told me to smarten up. Like whenever I have a
> problem he gives me a lecture about it first. Then he
> tells me to think about things. I used to blame myself
> for that but now like (name of counsellor) said. It's
> not your problem. It was never your problem. So I see
> it that way now ... It doesn't bother me as much as it
> did. I find it interesting because that guy there leads
> the cog group (Cognitive Skills Program). ... Yeah I
> talk to him, eh. He's like my (pause).
> (RL): Counsellor?
> (Student):Yeah. Something like that.
> (RL): Mentor?
> (Student):Well, I consider him my white elder. He gives
> me advice. He gives me shit once in awhile. Pardon my
> 'french'.

Another individual discussed the importance of discovering his aboriginal culture and its positive impact on his life. He stated,

> (Student):I've taken a readiness program working on our
> anger and emotions and inner child. The readiness is
> lead by an aboriginal person. He does the sweats too.

For many students, school itself was a brand new experience, a new way of relating to someone in "authority"

and a brand new way of doing things - a fresh start.

Reason 2:   Positive Place to Be

This study learned that confidence was built with achievement and, in turn, achievement was fostered by a positive and respectful environment. Several students admitted that they chose school just as a "place to be." Once in school however, they found the environment rewarding and conducive to learning. According to one student,

> (Student):It wasn't really my first choice to come into this school program, but I'm here now. The first day getting down here to school I thought I was on the street. I couldn't believe it. It's like something I wasn't accustomed to since I got into jail here. 'Cause when I hear somebody down here say, "Hi. Hello how is your day? How was your lunch?" I couldn't believe it. It was like a breath of fresh air ... I have to pinch myself. I said, "Yeah this is real." ... It's a lot different, these people are so nice.

Several students spoke passionately about how their level of self esteem improved over time because of accomplishments within the positive environs of the class. Some were surprised at how easily learning came. One student stated, "It's the whole self-esteem thing. If you can get it, it'll make a big difference." Another claimed, "I'm gonna be somebody, eh, somebody important." Others stated,

> (Student):School is definitely a positive environment ... not thinking of scams or nothing." ... I'm just cranking out the numbers now! ... Actually my word speed's going up pretty good. Every week I usually get one or two more words in there per minute up on the average but the fastest and the most accurate I've typed is 30 words per minute with 100% accuracy. ... I began at zero here. I improved my reading. I did all by

myself. 'Actually proud of myself that way. ... I just picked up a book and said I'm smart."

One individual, who had dropped out of school in his adolescence, was brimming with confidence during the interview. It seemed as though everything he touched (educationally) was turning to "gold." Others were bolstered by increased typing speed, reading, math, or writing skills.

This study found that teachers were intentional about creating the safety and positive atmosphere necessary for adult learning to occur. Students recognized this effort which is reflected in this student's comment, "Teachers are positive. That's why most go to school. In here we're dealing with guys who are trying to learn." The following quote emphasized the difference between school and other settings in prison:

> (Student):I was working in the kitchen and then I quit that job because people were bugging me about my crime and stuff, eh. But I feel okay in here.

Reason 3: Part of a Case Plan

For some students, especially those with very little or no formal education, the stated reason for attending school was that it was part of their "case plan." In some instances, a case management officer may have recommended participation in school. School attendance, became part of a "correctional plan."

Students, however, were often candid about the fact

that their positive goals were sometimes incongruous with the case plan implemented by a Case Manager or CMOI. Many indicated a need to feel they had some control over changes which were occurring to them. Prisoners had relatively little control over their external environment and, therefore, control over personal change became important.

Students confirmed that the most effective teachers or Case Management Officers were those who were able to step back when the adult leaner claimed personal success. The choice to change, however, always remained with the prisoner. According to one student,

> (Student):Case management didn't ask me to take [anger management]. I took it on my own. We have correctional plans-which programs should suit you and which ones you should do in order to get parole. But basically I do my own thing. I know what I need and I am going for it.
> (RL): Like school?
> (Student):Yeah. Like school.

Reason 4: "Something to do"

Being subjected to prison routines and structures was described as monotonous and confining by some students. They related that school could be a way out of their "house" to break up the monotony of the day. Some indicated that school simply provided them with something to do. The following comments reflect this sentiment:

> I get enjoyment. ... Free coffee. ... It kills time. ... I'm out of my cell. ... Helps me get up, 'get through the day.

Of all the students interviewed, only one student

indicated that his primary motive for remaining in school was the money. He said, "I get $3 a day. I've been trying to quit school since I got in here, but I just keep staying."

Reason 5: Self Affirming

Prison environments are rife with put downs. Because of this, prisoners search out people and places which would build confidence, joy, and hope. For many, simply the ability to spend an afternoon reading or writing without fear, noise or intimidation was affirming. According to several students, attending school was a way of doing something positive or true for oneself. For some, changing a criminal mind to a positive mind was identified as self affirming. One individual stated,

> My education is my most important goal. It is important to get my education by myself. ... I've been a failure all my life. ... It is important not to let things upset you that can take you off track or that.

Another student recognized the importance of giving himself a second chance to improve his personal circumstances. He said,

> I want a head start in life again. This is the second time around. It took me ten years to straighten out. I was fourteen when I got into trouble. I gotta smarten up. At last I'm free from alcohol and drugs. I'll have one year's sobriety next week but that's just being in here.

The first step to self affirmation for some prisoners was to get out of a rut. Some spoke enthusiastically about ending a cycle they had been on for too long. The following.

comments of a prisoner who decided to forego a chance to get parole in order to address his issues depicts this well.

> The reason why I mentioned death is because death affected my life a great deal. My brother passed away. He got stabbed. That was in 19__ and 19__ and I drank for five years. I said fuck it. It affected my life a great deal. I don't even remember 19__, 19__. Blurred you know. Drunk. Put myself in situations where I could get killed myself but I survived. There's a different purpose for me you know. That's when I first started going to jail eh. It has been positive reassuring. For instance, it gave me a new purpose in life. ... the kind of responsibilities that come along with being who I am as a native person. ... I was a gang member before too. Now I dropped out by myself. ... I'm supposed to be going up on full parole ... but I signed it away because I'm not ready. ... The Warden asked me that I should do this for him. I said I can't do it. I told him straight out, 'I'm not going to do nothing for you.' He asked me, 'why?'. 'cause if I do something for you I'm not doing it for myself.' If I want something done it has to be for myself, not for anybody but myself.'

Reason 6: Specific Goals

This research found that individuals had practical and specific reasons for attending school in prison. Some were practical about the fact that a jail term leaves a "gap" in one's resume, especially when one is in prison for more than one year. Some specific goals of students included re-evaluation of skills, finishing grade 12, furthering training/GED, getting that job which eluded one previously and learning English. One student indicated,

> I like to work on cars and, like, in a garage they'll only hire you if you have a mechanic's license or a certificate and I don't have one so this would be a step to getting that. I really thought about it. I like it as a hobby. But then I started to think I could

actually do that for the rest of my life.

Reason 7: Parole / Temporary Absence (TA) / Early Release

Upon arrival in prison, each prisoner is made aware of his or her release date. Prisoners are, of course, eligible for early forms of release such as parole. The granting of parole depends on several factors including institutional conduct, willingness to address "criminogenic factors", a viable release plan, and, among other things, the level of support in the community. This study found that some students worked hard to get parole while others were less interested. Constant discussion and attention paid to release dates caused increased anxiety for prisoners.

Interestingly, students rarely raised the topic of parole or early release during the interviews. More frequently, students raised the topic of release to inform me that they would forego a favourable parole in order to continue working on their own identified issues. Those men who had made significant self discoveries and appeared motivated to learn more about their issues while in prison, were generally less concerned about release dates.

Reason 8: "For my Children"

Many students in prison expressed that they have young children attending their own school. For some, this was a reminder of past school experience which was unsuccessful.

One student explained that his two young children were the primary reason to get his "life back." He chose school as a means to accomplish this goal. He asserted, "If I lost my kids I would quit trying and that's all." Another indicated, "I am taking this class to be a better parent for my son." And another stated, "It sort of boosts the kids if you can know the answer. If [daughter or son] is going to ask a question and you don't know the answer he'll say, "How come you didn't learn it? Why am I supposed to learn it?!"

Reason 9: Altruism

As indicated earlier, school was an opportunity for some to become more aware of the issues around them. Some believed that education was a way of improving conditions in one's home community. One student said,

> My goal is to help others. To go to school to educate myself. Learn how to, like, talk to people about my life story. Especially younger people, eh. Most of my friends on my reserve they've been sexually abused and they have a hard time coping with it. I lost about three of my friends on count of suicides. They couldn't handle it or talk to anyone about it because they didn't know what they were feeling. They weren't really good in English and that's why I like to educate myself more and learn how to say the words. One of my goals is to be a [youth] counsellor. I don't have to get paid.

For another student, school was a means of allowing him to address political issues in his home community. He said,

> Well further on down the line I guess I plan on running for Council on the reserve.
> (RL): What motivates you to do that.
> Well I've seen too much. Like, even though I'm always in jail, I hear about my reserve. The chief and council

> are always playing with money. Corruption. They don't look at their people. They look at themselves. The people need somebody that will talk for them.

Words were viewed as a powerful agent for change.

Reason 10: Recommendation of Peer(s)

Most of us asked others when shopping for a college or place to get professional help. People in prison also asked one another about the integrity of programs, counsellors or school. Several individuals said they started attending school because they heard good reviews about the teacher and the school from a student.

Reason 11: General Interest

While some students had specific objectives such as completing their GED or obtaining a literacy certificate, others were less goal oriented. Some simply expressed a general interest in computers or reading. This was more often the case with individuals who had not been in school for more than one month.

Reason 12: Peaceful Setting

This study found that school within the prison offered students a tranquil setting in an otherwise disruptive environment. One student compared it to a church-like setting while another said, "Its peaceful in here." Another said,"One word? Hospitality!"

Summary of Reasons

As this research discovered, the reasons for attending school are numerous and varied for prisoners and choices to attend school were based on a variety of factors. The research of these five sites found that, once students began school, they were generally greeted by an environment which facilitated learning. An adjustment period was necessary for students but, once settled, many set realistic goals for their release.

School-Related Goals Upon Release

Data gathered from the interviews provided insight into the goals which students in prison set for release (Exhibit 3). These goals, which cut across socio-economic boundaries, are the same goals for which perhaps the majority of Canadians strive.

Phase II of the research proposes to contact each individual who participated in the first phase of the research to determine whether they achieved the goals which they set in prison.

Exhibit 3 provides the reader with a brief description of release goals as identified by students. The purpose of phase II of this research will be to measure the success of student's release goals and factors leading to this success.

Factors Influencing

Success Upon Release

The literature review indicated that Martinson's articulation of the "nothing works" postulation has influenced U.S. penal programming. While it is true that prison education has largely continued in both the U.S. and Canada, factors determining the success of programming was largely based upon recidivism as the primary indicator. This study has chosen largely to address prisoner-identified factors related to success upon release

Exhibit 3

Release Goals of Students (Listed alphabetically)

ability to continue to learn
basic education / better job
better equipped for whatever
better future
better performance
business course
change / renewal in direction
college, civil engineering
computers
confidence, joy, or self-esteem
continue doing what I'm doing in here
contractor
courses: carpentry
finish grade 12
further training
G. E. D., honest grade 10
get a job
get a job I can like
higher education
improve conditions on reserve
improve quality of life
more opportunities
prepared to take 300 subjects
technology
upgrading
understanding
university entrance

rather than to choose recidivism as the measure of success for prisoners. The comments of students clearly indicated that the cycle of imprisonment had as much or more to do with personal growth and maturity as it had to do with

criminogenic factors affecting return to prison.

In the focus groups, individuals identified factors which would influence success of reaching literacy-related goals upon release. Then they voted for the three factors which they believed would most influence the achievement of their goals. In total, fifty-seven men participated in the focus group voting.

The results of the focus groups clearly indicated that there was one key factor which students believed would influence the success of school-related goals upon release. The foremost factor was **positive personal motivation**. Seventy-nine per cent of students chose personal motivation as a primary factor affecting the achievement of their goals upon release (See Table 4). Prisoners identified several other factors which would influence the success of prison-related goals. The three which were of secondary importance included family support, drinking/drugs, and money/employment. This paper will now examine these factors in more detail.

Positive Attitude / Personal Motivation (45/57)

Students advised that a positive mind set, self-motivation and perseverance were absolutely essential to achieving goals which they set for release. Awareness of personal strengths and limitations, dedication, confidence, and personal respect were defined as ingredients for a

Table 4

Factors Influencing Success
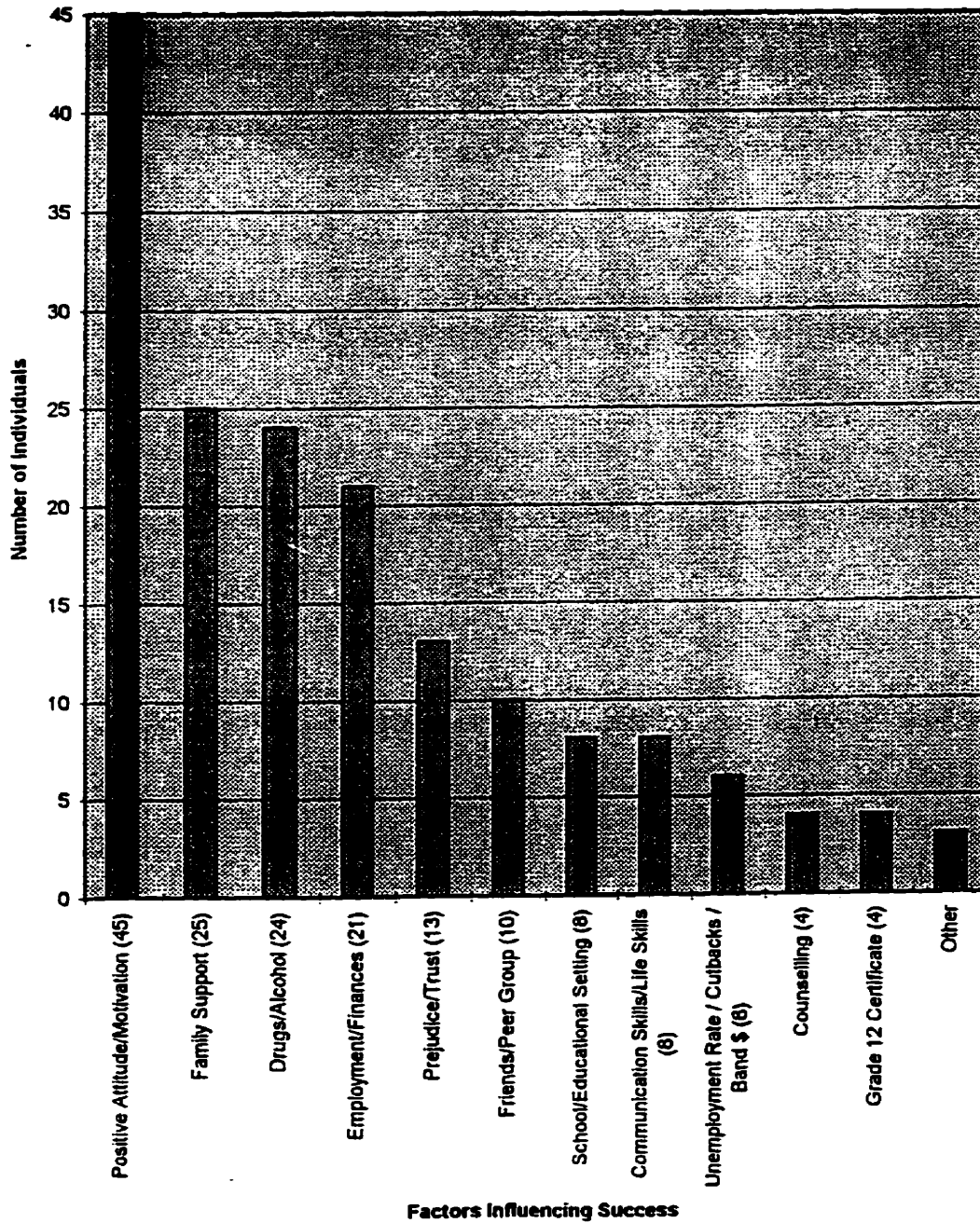
positive attitude for students. In part, this resolve of students appeared to be in response to factors out of their control such as availability of drugs or alcohol and the negative comments of friends and family. One individual stated,

> I know one thing that's really going to help me reach my goal is self-motivation cause I'm a fairly happy go lucky kind of guy. But when I get down I get down so it's good to keep the engines running as high as possible too, you know, get the maximum achievement. My self motivation's gone up since I've gone to jail which is kind of strange ... because I'm taking this class. You know I can only go up from this point on so I'm actually feeling quite good.

Several individuals believed that a positive attitude would be the main factor to keep them focused on their goals.

> You know, I think that's mostly the goal of everybody's life. To have a plan to better yourself ... a positive outlook. ... Without a plan, if you're going to go and just attack life having no particular direction like I used to. Then you start to get - I guess - confused on where you're going, where you've been. I have a plan so that if other things start to put themselves in the way then I'll just have to integrate them in the plan and try to work it out best as I can.

Several compared their past school failures to their current school success noting that their motivation would be much different as a result of their most recent school experience. One individual stated,

> I've always had trouble at school. I finally figured that out. Now I'm motivated to do school here. It's going pretty good. You know I decided that I need to get my grade 12.

For some, nurturing a positive attitude was seen as a

wonderful gift to oneself upon release. A student asserted,

> If you got a shitty attitude and you're expecting
> things to be handed to you and stuff like that and not
> willing to sacrifice anything to get it then you're
> going to run into difficulties. I think that's probably
> the most important thing is if you have a positive
> attitude and don't let everything get to you. Like
> don't be overwhelmed by all these little problems when
> they happen.

Self initiative was viewed as not only important for

success upon release but also as a necessary ingredient to

achieving success inside. According to one student,

> Yeah, well I noticed months there passing by. Here sign
> this. There goes my day parole. Here sign this. There
> goes my full parole. Here sign this. There goes my....
> I got sick of it and decided to do something for
> myself. Cut the bull shit and do something, eh. It's
> for you. I did this school thing on my own. Kind of
> done it the hard way in a way.

Family Support (25/57)

Almost half of the students who participated in the

focus groups acknowledged the importance of family as being

one of the most important factors for their success upon

release. During the individual interviews the topic of

families and family support dominated the discussions. For

many, unresolved family issues, past abuse, and uncertainty

of future support were foremost concerns. These feelings

were epitomised by the following student's assertion,

> Now I'm trying to say, yeah, I love you and whatever. I
> was wrong. I'm trying to get on to a roller coaster
> with her. Get that thing I need from my father. It's
> really hard on me so sometimes I don't call her.
> Nobody's ever come and seen me in jail. The only person
> who ever come and seen me was - I was very proud of him
> - was my dad my personal dad and I didn't see him since

I was two so I was proud of that. He came to see me in jail.

Prisoners found it difficult to maintain community-based relationships with any degree of emotional depth. Several individuals noted that they simply put their relationships with partners or family on hold because of the emotional energy required to sustain those relationships. Re-establishing a supportive relationship was identified as a potentially difficult task upon return to one's community. One student stated,

> I don't have a girlfriend. I did before I came in here. I just told her I don't want to get involved with anybody behind bars and then she just left. What's the use in getting into a relationship here and then she ends up screwing around and stuff. I'll be sitting here all mad and just make my time harder and getting in fights. That's what I told her and she couldn't understand it.

According to one student, his mother's trust will be important to re-establish because of the invaluable support she provided to him in the past. He reflected,

> So I find that she is having a hard time dealing with who I am now than I was before. She's having a hard time to accept the fact that I don't drink anymore and that I don't smoke any more so that's probably why she always asks me if I'm drunk or not, eh. It's going to take a lot to gain that trust back sometimes I wonder why she trusted me and why I treated them with disrespect. Now that I'm straight, they don't trust me. But it doesn't bother me. I can understand it, eh. Each night I go to bed I pray and I do my sweet grass and I thank my creator that I am in prison. It gave me a chance to look at my life. You know, if I wasn't in prison, if I wasn't charged with (offense), I'd probably be six feet underground or probably be doing life twenty five and life cause that's just the way I was. I didn't care.

Drinking/Drugs (24/57)

Another major factor influencing success of students' release goals was alcohol and drug abuse. Several indicated that alcohol and drugs will play a major role influencing the success of goals for many upon release. It was evident that the students involved in this study were aware of their problems with alcohol and drug issues. As one individual stated,

> With all the information that I've received so far (about drug/alcohol treatment) I know more about it now. I would take it on my own cause I didn't really know about the effects of drugs before. All I knew before was smoking and getting high made me feel good and you know I've never been to a program before. You know I never had a boost or somebody saying maybe you should get help like has happened here. Right now I know what it does and it not only hurt me, like it hurt my family as well.

Another individual was candid about his need to address this issue,

> The only people that don't use in my family are older than I am. Like years older. I have to get off alcohol and drugs first in order for me to deal with my problems and if I don't deal with my problems man, I'm just coming back again.

Money/Employment/Financial Sponsor (21/57)

Students were practical about factors influencing their success. Nearly all students realized the importance of "clean" money to reaching their goals. Some, whose goals were furthering their education, had already established contact with community resources such as student aid and were aware of needs such as transportation and housing costs. According to one student, "Work is important. I mean it also gets me a

little extra money and plus something to do, keeps me busy and out of trouble."

Prejudice (13/57)

Many students were keenly aware that other people's attitudes toward "ex-cons" would be a factor in reaching goals such as employment. Most prisoners were fully aware of the fact that a prison record was stigmatizing. During the focus groups and individual interviews students related incidents of prejudice, "put downs", and racism. As well, they acknowledged a need to re-establish trust in relationships upon return to the community.

Friends (10/57)

The support of friends was identified as an important source of support upon release. For some, their primary interaction with friends in the community was criminal in nature. The transition to friends understanding and supportive of education-related goals was identified as pivotal for some.

Living skills (8/57)

Readjustment to community life was identified as a significant challenge for unassertive individuals and those who have difficulty meeting personal basic needs. Several students recognized their need to improve in this area. One individual said he would approach a community organization to

help his re-integration into the community. He said,

> My room mate got a pass to the YMCA from John Howard. ... That would help out a lot. I was thinking about that. We were talking about getting a membership there.

Personal Maturing / Growing Up (8/57)

The men participating in this research were principally between the ages of twenty and thirty. For many, a healthy nurturing childhood was not part of their development, and prison was where they "grew up." This newfound maturity was identified as new support upon release. According to one individual,

> I don't know if it's my age or whatever. It just sort of all started making sense and I wanted to change or something. ... I've learned more in the last year than I did in my whole life. Well not my whole life, but I mean since I was about 14.

The following lengthy dialogue provided insight into the maturity of one individual:

> (Student):I've learned a lot about myself in here and learned a lot about life sort of in here and just how one sided my life was before. It was all self, like for instant self-gratification ... just partying and things like that. ... Now I started looking at life in a different way and how I should have some kind of a balance between like having a career like and having time with my family and time for recreation.
> (RL):What gave you that insight? What led you to that?
> (Student):I don't know. It was just like an awakening for me. Somehow it just all clicked together for me. You know, like before I had no real concept or nothing like I never even thought of it. Just programs from here and things like that. Something somebody will say and all of a sudden it just clicks for you. When I got arrested like that was an eye opener for me too. Right like a couple years ago two or three years back I probably never thought I'd be here. Like here I am. It can happen so quick. I don't know it's just greater insight into

yourself and into your motivations like why you do
certain things you know and just being able to understand
that helps a lot. ... I didn't really care. I had no
goals or anything like that, that's probably the biggest
difference I notice is having goals. ... I was really not
concerned about the future at all.

Educational Setting (8/57)

Eight of the students who had identified clear
educational goals asserted the importance of having an
educational setting in the community which would be as
supportive as the school they were currently attending in
prison. Some who were returning to remote northern communities
had very little hope of furthering their formal studies. On
the other hand, there were some signs of hope for individuals
who came from native communities which had positive and
supportive schooling in place. A recent United Nations study
stated,

> The importance of continuity between education within the
> prison system and education as part of a social
> reinsertion after release, can hardly be overstated. ...
> The importance of follow-up is becoming more widely
> recognized (Sutton, 1992, p. 44).

Jobs/Education: External Factors (6/57)

For prisoners the daily recognition that there were many
things beyond their control contributed to inner emancipation.
Students who had the wisdom to recognize those things which
were within their control and those things which were not
appeared to take greater responsibility for personal issues.

Recognition of what could not be controlled was a liberating experience for many students.

Achieving Formal Standing (4/57)

The ability to achieve a formal educational standing such as a GED or Grade 12 prior to release was seen as an important accomplishment for several students. In addition to "opening doors", several stated that it would add confidence upon release.

Counselling / Public Education (4/57)

Three men indicated that, although they had already been granted parole, they were not going to accept it because they believed they were not ready for release. For them, the counselling or programming which they began in prison was worth continuing. They recognized a need to continue this positive growth. These individuals were relatively anxious about being finding and maintaining quality counselling upon release.

Prison-Related Problems and Setbacks (1/57)

Some individuals indicated that they encountered unwarranted put downs and racist comments from a handful of prison guards. Provincial prisoners, in particular, appeared to be more deeply affected by these prison-related setbacks.

Remaining Crime Free (1/57)

The ability to stay away from friends or family who were actively involved in crime was identified as an important task in order to succeed in the community. Interestingly, only one individual identified this factor as important to succeeding at his goals. According to most individuals, maintaining a positive mind set enabled them to remain crime free. More emphasis was placed on having a positive mind set.

Culture Religion and Health (1/57)

Culture, religion, and health, while occupying a significant amount of time in group and individual discussion, also received only one vote. Several individuals indicated that prison became the place in which they discovered their culture and traditions. Most individuals who had made this discovery noted that it would be of support to them upon return to their home community. One individual stated,

> I need to continue with my spirituality, attending meetings, counselling and talking with the elders. ... The spirituality is based on everything. It means sitting in a healing lodge with elders, talking.

Other Factors

Several other factors were identified during the group sessions. These other factors which would influence success upon release included having a Narcotic's Anonymous or Alcoholic's Anonymous sponsor, community supports,

connections, things beyond one's control such as the death of family member, "red tape", and "bureaucracy". One individual requested, "Call me whenever and see how I'm doing." He added, "It helps to have someone check up on me. It'll be like somebody's watching out for you besides your parents and stuff. Like ... you know they'll always be there. It'll make me try harder to stay out there."

Summary of Factors Influencing Success

The interviews indicated that individuals believe personal motivation is an important determinant which influences success upon release. Students related that the support of families, awareness of alcohol and drug issues and employment or financial support were important factors to achieving success.

For many, their time in prison provided a chance to mature and identify life's goals and direction. Some made use of correctional programs to help examine personal issues. Many of the students claimed to have made positive connections with someone else in prison. Often this positive connection was with a teacher.

Recidivism was not the determinant of success in this study although most research regarding released prisoners measures it. This study discovered that several of the sample in fact returned to prison for a second or third term of imprisonment. This return, in many cases was deemed by

students not so much as failure but as a chance to reassess, grow, build personal confidence, and set more realistic goals for the present and the future.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this practicum was to practice skills necessary to conduct research within prison. Fourth-generation evaluation methodology, while not commonly used in prison education research, was implemented in this practicum. Students and teachers generally welcomed the chance to provide input into the process and conclusions.

Research methodology was guided by Guba and Lincoln's (1987) fourth-generation evaluation which advances value pluralism, stakeholder constructions, fairness, merit and worth, and negotiation. Toward this end, interviews with primary stakeholders - students and teachers - were qualitative. Information for this practicum report was obtained through review of the literature, focus group discussions, informal observation of classroom activity, individual interviews with students, and personal contact and interviews with five teachers.

Full attention was given to the fact that this research was in prison, with individuals who have less formal power than others. In the case of this study, the researcher's objective was to give voice to students and teachers. Because this study was conducted by a non-profit organization with a community-based board and financially supported from the National Literacy Secretariat and local resources it enabled the stakeholders greater input and ownership of the research.

Information was shared with students and teachers, in

part, through the focus group meetings. Follow-up meetings with stakeholders is planned for 1997/98 with the intention of providing each with a complete copy of the report and an opportunity to respond to the findings.

Overall, the findings indicate that prison is foremost a place for punishment. The schools in this study were viewed as safe and respectful environments which affirmed student's capacity to learn. The creative energy of teachers in prison directly impacted the school environment. All the prisoners in this study set goals for their release. The primary factor influencing their success upon release was personal motivation and positive thinking. Supportive families, awareness of alcohol and drug issues and financial resources were also seen as important factors to achieving success.

For many, time in prison has been used to mature and identify life's goals and direction. Some made use of correctional programs to help examine their issues while others made a positive connection with someone else in prison - usually a teacher.

As noted above, recidivism was not the determinant of success or failure in this study. For some, the return to prison was viewed not so much as a failure but as a chance to reassess, grow, build personal confidence, and set more realistic goals for the present and the future. The specific research methodology of this practicum provided an opportunity for students, teachers, and this writer to document and

understand this issue more fully.

Return to the community will likely occur for all participants in this study prior to March 1998. Release brings with it a variety of feelings and thoughts - optimism, fear, hope, apprehension, new dreams, etc. For some of the students, their goals have been cultivated, in large part, because of a positive school experience in prison. For several students this was, sadly, the first positive school experience they had.

For the most part, teachers and students at the five sites were observed to be making the most of their time together in prison -teachers facilitating safety and respect in the classroom and students making positive educational gains. The following itemized "conclusions" of teachers and students reflect important learning of this study.

CONCLUSIONS OF TEACHERS

Conclusion 1: Establish/Maintain a Safe and Positive Environment

The level to which prisoners feel safety and trust within the prison school will directly have an impact on the student's learning which may occur. Teachers are fully aware of the reality of prison life and of the need to establish safety in order for learning goals to be accomplished. Lawrence (1990) reminds us that education within a prison is a way of providing hope in the face of despair. Prison

education is about affirming the value of the lives of the people who choose to be in school (p. 148).

Conclusion 2: Maintain Personal Boundaries

Testing is reciprocal in school. Teachers can be expected to be tested frequently in prisons and in some instances, this testing comes from prison staff as well as students. Maintenance of professional and personal boundaries at all times is important; emotional survival depends upon it.

Conclusion 3: Trust Moves Mountains

Teachers stated that it is impossible to be all things to all people at all times. One of the inevitable consequences of being a trusted teacher is that the student may decide to develop trust in others and be trusted by others. Trust established in the prison may carry into the community where learning may be continued.

Conclusion 4: Be Aware of Release Issues For Prisoners

Few things are more stressful for the prisoner than uncertainty about release dates. This uncertainty may cause students to become moody and appear uncommitted to their school work. Teachers understand these tensions and work with them for student gain. Teachers are also aware that their reports on student's progress regarding parole or early release may directly affect the future of e student's life.

Conclusion 5: Address Issues of Justice

Teachers continue to expose racism and other injustices through school projects thereby empowering individuals to take control of those things which are controllable and letting go of that which is beyond their control.

Conclusion 6: Learn To Let Go

Teachers indicated that, while they have an inclination to be supportive and even protective of students, they were aware that students will be released one day. They noted that it is, therefore, important to establish linkages with caring community professionals in order to support release goals. While this is not a direct part of a teacher's job description, in some cases, a timely phone call or community connection can help a student reach important goals.

Conclusion 7: Share Rather Than Dictate

Much of the literature on adult education advocates for high interaction between students. Teachers are aware of this and, by empowering students while ensuring parameters of respect and dignity, teachers offer gifts to students.

Conclusion 8: Treat Students With Respect and Dignity

Teachers realize the importance of establishing respect and dignity in the classroom. With few exceptions, students

reciprocate this respect and dignity. As Soifer, Young, and Irwin (1987) contend,

> the teaching must be both challenging and non-threatening to stimulate interaction within the group and assist learners in overcoming self-doubts about their ability to learn. ..The Learning Environment. ... the physical and psychological environment should convey a message of respect and offer a contrast to the noise and distractions of the workplace. ... Ideally, the learning centre should be easily accessible to workers, and the classroom should be arranged so that groups of eight to ten adults can work comfortably together around a table (p. 65).

CONCLUSIONS OF STUDENTS

Conclusion 1: Take Risks To Learn In The Classroom.

Students frequently reiterated the fact that the opportunity to learn within a supportive environment was limited. Taking risks in the school setting encouraged other students to take risks also. This research found that teachers were supportive of students and did not ridicule or put down students for failures or mistakes.

Conclusion 2: Support One Another

Students asserted that a safe learning environment was worth protecting. School was not always respected or supported by other prisoners or staff outside the classroom doors. Thus it was important for students to remind one another that all have a role to play in supporting this positive environment.

Conclusion 3: Ask For Support

Being positive and having an optimistic outlook were great starting points for students. However students also needed the support of others in order to realize goals. When teachers were asked for help, they typically provided it. Several have already made valuable contacts for release because they asked the teacher for support upon their release.

Conclusion 4: Respect Self and Others

Students noted that it was a very positive experience to be in the safe and respectful environment of school. Because the school was in prison, there was a conscious effort by students and teachers to maintain this positive environment. Students were regularly reminded of this when they walk through the doors of the school. The student's positive attitude was based on self respect - both inside prison and upon release. This respect can have a positive effect on others, especially on new students.

SUMMARY

This practicum was an attempt to implement fourth-generation evaluation methodology in the study of prisoner education in prisons. Guba and Lincoln (1987) have provided a context for research in which the researcher shares the power of process, knowledge, and results with stakeholders. This power-sharing approach appears to be foreign to current prison research. What one often finds in current prison research are

quantitative methodology including judgements and recommendations which affect prisoners lives directly, but which do not afford prisoners with input into the process or negotiation of the results. As a result of this, I was initially questioned by prison administration, teachers and prisoners about motives and intended use of the results. Perhaps this empowering process was the reason for the willingness of prisoners and teachers to provide detailed and personal data to this writer on their first and only contact.

Knowledge which was gained through the implementation of literacy research within the prison environment includes, among other things, greater awareness of the need for a research process which shares power with primary stakeholders. This process seemed to allow for greater ownership of the issues and a corresponding responsibility to address those issues. Current "correctional" programming is based almost entirely on cognitive approaches which are devoid of the broader social contexts which affect the whole person. Fourth-generation evaluation provided stakeholders with the opportunity to articulate both the psychological and social issues which affect their success upon release.

The second major goal of this practicum was to develop skills as they relate to design and implementation of literacy research with prisoners. The practice of gaining access to prisons, engaging the support of teachers and students, and qualitative interviewing techniques, were all directly related

to the development of research skills. Given the nature of the interviews, the relative ease with which access to the prisons was granted, and the ability to share detailed accounts of prisoners lives all point to the achievement of the goals of this practicum. The findings of the study further attest to the achievement of the practicum goals.

The findings in this study were based primarily on focus groups sessions and personal interviews at five sites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In total, fifty-seven students participated in the focus groups, forty-eight students participated in the individual interviews, and five teachers provided information through individual interviews for this report.

Additionally, the findings indicate that literacy instructors generally were able create an environment which was safe to support adult learning goals. With the support of students, teachers were able to accomplish this by modelling respect to students, utilizing effective screening, intake and normalizing processes for new students, helping students establish positive learning goals, and hard work.

Paradigms of prison education and teacher personalities appeared to influence school models and teaching/facilitating styles at each of the five sites. There were a variety of models and program options available to students however the greatest percentage of students are involved in Adult Basic Education and General Equivalency Diploma (GED) studies.

Approximately 17.5% of prisoners at the five sites were involved in school programs. Prisoners enroled in school for many of the same reasons that community members return to school. And, like their literacy student counterparts in the community, the gains which were made in school can be substantial given the right environment. Prison teachers were generally aware of the needs of adult learners and have worked hard to ensure a positive learning environment.

The reality for most students in this study was that they had unrewarding prior school experiences. After a time in the prison school, many students had established realistic goals, were typically engaged in meaningful adult learning, and had a balanced and astute understanding of the factors which would influence the success of their release goals. A positive attitude was regarded by students as the primary factor influencing the attainment of literacy related goals.

The candour and openness of the students and teachers who participated in this qualitative study of five sites provided for a useful review of the issue of literacy education in prison.

Appendix A

**Guiding Principles of Fourth-Generation Evaluation
(Guba and Lincoln (1987)**

Principle 1: Conflict, rather than consensus, must be the expected condition in any evaluation taking account of value differences.

Principle 2: The technical/descriptive/judgmental processes that have completely characterized evaluation practice in the past cannot alone deal with partisan discord; some means must be invoked to reach an accommodation among different value postures.

Principle 3: The parties holding different value postures must themselves be involved if there is to be any hope of accommodation.

Principle 4: The evaluator is at times a person who must learn what the consequences of stakeholders are, while recognizing that the very act of learning them helps to create those constructions.

Principle 5: The evaluator is at times a *teacher* who communicates the constructions of other stakeholders to each stake holding audience, and in the process, clarifies the value positions that account for them.

Principle 6: The evaluator is ethically bound to solicit the constructions, claims, concerns, and issues of all identifiable stakeholders, and to clarify the values that undergird them.

Principle 7: Equity demands that the evaluator honour all constructions, claims, concerns, and issues by collecting information that is responsive to them (for examples, validates or invalidates them) without regard to their source audience, and to disseminate that information so that it is equally accessible to all.

Principle 8: The evaluator must collect information in ways that expose "facts" useful to both protagonists as well as antagonists of the evaluand.

Principle 9: The evaluator must release findings continuously and openly so as to provide ample opportunity for the assessment of their credibility from all constructed points of view, and for their rebuttal should that be the desire of some audience(s).

Principle 10: While merit can be assessed in isolation, worth can be assessed only in relation to particular needs-in-context. Change the context and you change both needs and worth.

Principle 11: The evaluator cannot carry out an assessment either of needs or worth except with field-based methods that take full account of the local context.

Principle 12: Transferability of assessments of needs and/or of worth form one context to another depends on the empirical similarity of sending and receiving contexts.
> Note: "Most past evaluations have been exogenous, that is, with control vested entirely in the hands of the professional evaluator. A few evaluation are endogenous, that is, with control vested in the hands of the audience(s) ... But what is called for in light of fourth-generation position is *full collaboration*, in the sense that evaluator(s) and stakeholder(s) or their representatives are continuously involved."

Principle 13: Stakeholders must be given an opportunity to react to findings for both validational and ethical reasons, to satisfy the weak sense of the collaboration requirement.
> Note: Weak sense: "Stakeholders are given an opportunity to react to findings and to the evaluator's constructions thereof. This is also called "member checks".

Principle 14: The evaluator must involve all stakeholders at all points in the evaluation process, soliciting and honouring their inputs even on what might be called the more technical decisions that must be made.

Principle 15: Stakeholders (or their representatives) must be engaged in a negotiation process to determine what course of action should be taken in light of their findings. This stakeholder group, not the evaluator alone, would act as judges in making recommendations. The evaluator rather acts as mediator of the process.

Principle 16: The evaluator must allow for the possibility of continuing disagreements among the stakeholders. The goal of the negotiation process is not so much consensus as understanding.

Principle 17: The evaluator should act as mediator and change agent in these negotiations, encouraging follow through in relation to whatever may be decided by the parties and acting as monitor to assess the extent to which follow-through occurs. The evaluator's role thus extends well beyond the point of reporting findings.

Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

This is to indicate that I, _____,
understand the nature of my involvement in this project. I
realize that the results of the research will be included in
the researcher's Practicum Report at the University of
Manitoba and a report to the National Literacy Secretariat of
Canada.

I have been assured that my participation will be kept
confidential by the researcher and that no names will be used
in the presentation of the results. No details of what I
reveal will be shared with the institution. However, there may
be limits to confidentiality in that a person with both
knowledge of myself and the study could possibly identify my
participation.

By signing this form below I give my consent to be interviewed
and have this material included in the research project. I
also recognize that my participation in this project will not
in any way influence or expedite my release.

I give my consent to have this information recorded by tape
recorder. All information will be stored in a locked filing
cabinet and destroyed when the research is completed.

I understand that I may withdraw from this research project at
any time.

I understand the information on this form.

Signature of Participant: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C
Introduction of Research Project to Teacher

<u>FAX</u>

DATE: Date
TO: Teacher's Name
FAX #:   number
FROM: Russell Loewen, John Howard Society of Brandon
RE: Literacy Research Project

NUMBER OF PAGES TO FOLLOW: __1__

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today about the literacy research project. Further to our conversation, I am forwarding the promised information. I'll see you at ..... on ...... 1997 (to be confirmed) when we can discuss this in more detail. Please also confirm with (Warden) about the possibility of interviewing students on .... 1997. Thanks.

"Transition to the Community"
Literacy Research Project

<u>Preamble</u>

Funding for this project comes from the National Literacy Secretariat of Canada. An extensive literature review is under way and will serve to inform and provide a context for the research.

<u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of "Transition to the Community" is to determine which factors increase/decrease success for inmates (ex-inmates) who have participated in literacy programs in Prisons. This research will consider the factors involved in inmates realizing literacy/educational goals which they set while involved in prison literacy programs. The research will also consider the impact of various literacy models and of volunteer or other support offered to participants both within the program and upon release.

Methodology

This study proposes to interview 50 inmates - 10 each from five federal and provincial institutions in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The inmates chosen for the study should be personally motivated and have set literacy-related goals for release. In addition to interviewing each of the inmates personally, the Project proposes to hold focus group interviews at each institution. The focus group will ask participants to identify factors which increase/decrease the likelihood of released inmates reaching their literacy-related goals. It is proposed that these interviews and focus groups occur on ...

Phase II - Four to six Months after inmates are released, in Phase II of the Project, follow-up interviews will be held to determine the level to which literacy students are reaching their goals and to discover the reasons for their level of success.

About the Research and Researcher

This research will be conducted by Russell Loewen, Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Brandon who brings more than 10 years of criminal justice experience to this project. Mr. Loewen has worked for the John Howard Society for seven years in Manitoba. Prior to this, he worked in the justice system as a probation officer.

This project completes his "practicum" requirements toward a Master of Social Work degree. Overseeing this work is an advisory committee which includes both federal and provincial correctional officials and Mr. Loewen's practicum Committee at the University of Manitoba. Confidentiality of information and protection of research subjects will be ensured via a review by the ethics committee at the University of Manitoba.

Appendix D

Information Sheet - For Prisoners

This Information Sheet is intended to give you some information about this research project. Hopefully it will be of some help to you as you decide whether or not to participate in this project.

The research will be conducted in the months of March, April, and May, 1997 by the John Howard Society of Brandon with Russell Loewen being the primary researcher. It is sponsored by the National Literacy Secretariat.

The intent of the project is to determine the goals of people who are taking literacy courses in Prisons. In other words, what do people want to do with what they are learning inside? Secondly, this project wants to find out what will either help or hinder the accomplishment of these goals.

The research will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will involve a personal interview of approximately one hour and a focus group discussion of one hour in length involving you and approximately nine other literacy students. This first phase will occur inside prison during the three months prior to release.

The second phase will be completed approximately six months after the person is released from prison and will be a follow-up to phase one. Phase two will ask about the literacy goals you set in prison and the factors which have lead to greater or lesser success for you.

In the final analysis, this research would like to determine which factors are helpful for people accomplishing the literacy goals which people set for themselves in prison.

The results of this research will be published in a final report form for the National Literacy Secretariat and may also be published in a journal.

People who participate in the survey will not be identified in any way in any report (including inmate number). A coding system will be used which will only be known to the researcher. Information gained from the research will ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating.

Sincerely,

Russell Loewen
Research Coordinator

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