FEMALE INMATES PERSPECTIVES ON INCARCERATION AND CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION AT COFFEE CREEK CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

by

CLARA GUADALUPE ELLIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
ANTHROPOLOGY

Portland State University
2005

THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Clara Guadalupe Ellis for the Master of Arts in Anthropology were presented November 3, 2005, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

COMMITTEE APPROVALS:

Margaret Everett, Chair

Tom Biolsi

Steve Reder

Annette Jolin
Representative of the Office of Graduate Studies

DEPARTMENT APPROVAL:

Kenneth Ames, Chair
Department of Anthropology

This work is dedicated in memory of my Grandmother Clara Thomas v. de Ellis

Acknowledgements

There are no words that will suffice in conveying my never ending gratitude to my family and friends for their encouragement and support while I endeavored to complete my Master's degree. Were it not for you all, I doubt I would be the person I am today.

I would like to thank Margaret Everett, Tom Biolsi, Annette Jolin, Regina Smith, Steve Reder, Clare Strawn, Connie Cash, Oregon's Department of Corrections staff including but not limited to Paul Bellaty, Lori Humbert, the staff at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, and my interview subjects, for all of your help. Truly without you all, this work would not have come to fruition.

ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Clara Guadalupe Ellis for the Master of Art in Anthropology presented November 3, 2005.

Title: Female Inmates Perspectives on Incarceration & Correctional Education at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility

Prisons provide us with a place to segregate criminals from the population at large, but the ongoing question is what to do with them once we have incarcerated them? On one side there is the idea that prisons should be used to punish those who have broken the law. On the other is the idea that prisons should help to rehabilitate prisoners so that they may be reintegrated into society upon their release.

The purpose of this study was to examine the role correctional education programs played in the life of female offenders in light of the debate mentioned above. Based on qualitative research, the aim of this study was to *listen to the prisoner's voice.* What did inmates think about correctional education programs offered? Did they want such programs? Did they feel empowered by them, or did they resist being 'rehabilitated' and feign compliance? How did inmates make sense of their learning experience?

In October of 2004, ten incarcerated women in Oregon's Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, shared their life stories with me and answered these questions. Nine of the women believed that they had undergone both intrinsic and extrinsic transformations during their incarceration. They posited correctional educational

programs or individuals associated with such programs, as the catalyst for change. The maxim, "Knowledge is power," proved to be true for these women as they saw themselves rise above their previous limitations of education, low self-esteem, and drug use. Experiencing success in their programs led them to feel self-empowered. In its simplest form, empowerment came from turning away from saying, "I can't," to saying "Yes, I can," or "At least I can try."

It is my hope that conversations such as the ones I had with these inmates will make the dialogue over policy qualitatively different from that in the past. The need for this research becomes more compelling in light of detrimental government policies such as the elimination of Pell Grants for prisoner education and budget cuts which force the cutting of correctional education programs that can in fact empower inmates by providing them with experiences and skills they feel they can apply and reap the benefits of, both during and after their incarceration.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments		ii
Table of Contents		iii
List of Tables		iv
List of Figures		v
Preface		vii
Chapter 1	Introduction Research Questions & Methodology Some Facts about My Respondents at CCCF	1
Chapter 2	Theoretical Perspective The Debate Over Nothing Works	10
Chapter 3	Prisoners & Literacy Educational Programs in Prisons	23
Chapter 4	Life Stories Katherine's Story Nancy's Story	34
Chapter 5	Common Threads Growing Up The Power of the Peer Group Prison as a Good Place Experiences in Correctional Education Programs Sense of Self	63
Chapter 6	Conclusion	81
References		88
Appendix A	Programs offered by ODOC	92
Appendix B	Programs offered at CCCF	94

List of Tables

Table 1	Respondents at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility	7
Table 2	Incarceration count in OR state prisons September, 2004	7
Table 3	Pew Research Center for the People and the Press	20
Table 4	Educational attainment for correctional population and the general population	25
Table 5	Educational attainment for Oregon's correctional population, 2002	26
Table 6	State prison inmates who had not completed H.S. or the GED	27
Table 7	Adult Basic Skill Development Statistics: Instructional Program 7/03 –6/04	27

List of Figures

Figure 1	Original and Final	5
Figure 2	Oregon's CEP model at Coffee Creek	28
Figure 3.	Katherine's Beginnings	35
Figure 4.	Memories of Elementary School	36
Figure 5.	Leaving School	37
Figure 6.	Her GED	38
Figure 7.	What brought you here?	38
Figure 8.	Cosmetology	39
Figure 9.	Other Programs	41
Figure 10.	The Teacher	42
Figure 11.	Katherine's Advice	44
Figure 12.	The Most Important Things	44
Figure 13.	Mother to Son	46
Figure 14.	On Track	47
Figure 15.	Turning Back Time	48
Figure 16.	Going Forward	49
Figure 17.	Growing up	52
Figure 18.	Getting to CCCF	53
Figure 19.	"I Can't"	54
Figure 20.	From Student to Teacher	56

Figure 21.	Over time	57
Figure 22.	Nancy's Advice	59
Figure 23.	Family	59
Figure 24.	Friends on the Outside	61
Figure 25.	Transformed	61

Preface

1994 proved to be an epic year for Oregon's Department of Corrections. First, the U.S. Congress abolished Pell Grants for prisoners by passing the 1993 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act and the Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1994 (Ubah, 2004). These acts effectively shut down the primary funding for higher education programs offered in the U.S. prison system.

In Oregon, citizens passed two measures which amended their constitution. One was Measure 17, which made participation in a correctional education program mandatory. Becoming section 41 of article I in the Oregon constitution, it states that inmates:

> Should work as hard as the taxpayers who provide for their upkeep; and whereas the people also find and declare that inmates confined within corrections institutions must be fully engaged in productive activity if they are to successfully re-enter society with practical skills and a viable work ethic; now, therefore, the people declare:
> (2) All inmates of state corrections institutions shall be actively engaged full-time in work or on-the-job training.
> (3) Each inmate shall begin full-time work or on-the-job training immediately upon admission to a corrections institution, allowing for a short time for administrative intake and processing" (Oregon Constitution 1999).

The other, was Measure 11, which provided more stringent mandatory sentences for violent crimes committed by persons aged 15 and older. In November of 2000, Oregon voters had the option to repeal Measure 11, but did not. During the 2000 legislative session, Governor Kitzhaber and other lawmakers planned to draft bills that would ease some of the provisions of measure 11 and allow judges to have

discretionary power in sentencing people convicted under that measure. At the time of this writing, Oregon's current governor, Ted Kulongosky, had not taken any major steps towards
abolishing Measure 11.

In November of 1996 Oregon Crime Victims United helped change the language of the Oregon Constitution to read "Laws for the punishment of crime shall be founded on these principles: protection of society, personal responsibility, accountability for one's actions and reformation" (Oregon Constitution 1999). Prior to this change the Oregon constitution read as follows, "Laws for the punishment of crime shall be founded on the principles of reformation, and not of vindictive justice" (Oregon Constitution 1996).

These measures and others like them represent our society's attempt to deal with criminals. Prisons provide us with a place to segregate criminals from the population at large, but the ongoing question is what to do with them once we have incarcerated them? On one side there is the idea that prisons should be used to punish those who have broken the law. On the other is the idea that prisons should help to rehabilitate prisoners so that they may be reintegrated into society upon their release.

What are correctional education programs, and what purpose should they serve? T. A. Ryan defines correctional education as, "That part of the total correctional process of changing behaviors of offenders through purposefully contrived learning experiences and learning environments. Correctional education

seeks to develop or enhance the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values of offenders" (Ryan, 1987). According to Peter Finn the purpose of correctional education programs is to "Attempt to give inmates the tools to avoid re-offending (and to keep them occupied). Most state and federal prisons . . . typically offer a range of educational programming" (Finn, 1998).

This work seeks to explore the role of the prison through the eyes of inmates. One aspect of this work will look at how female inmates react to their incarceration and what they think and feel about being forced to participate in correctional education programs.

Chapter 1

Introduction

My interest in correctional education programs began in September 1999, when I was a graduate research assistant for the Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning in the department of applied linguistics at Portland State University. I was part of a cadre of graduate students whose job it was to interview respondents about their learning experiences as adults.

A few of the respondents ended up being incarcerated and I volunteered to interview them. Those interviews shed light on an aspect of education I had not been aware existed, that of education being provided in jails or prison. I was surprised to find that jails and prisons were offering classes for offenders in the areas of ABE (Adult Basic Education), ESL (English as a Second Language), and GED (General Education Development). I had even learned that at one point inmates had been able to take college level courses. I wanted to know more about education in correctional facilities, especially since I'd been teaching elementary school for six years at that time and had never considered the possibility of curricular / academic education taking place anywhere else outside of the traditional K-12 and university settings.

My curiosity led me to look into the impact Measure 17 had on prisoners and the state prison system. I was fortunate to meet with and interview the head of the Workforce and Development programs for the Oregon state prison system, as well as the correctional education program directors at Oregon State Penitentiary

and Oregon State Correctional Institution. Here in Oregon, correctional education is one facet of a much larger system- that of corrections as a whole. Correctional education falls under the auspices of Oregon's Department of Corrections (ODOC)- Workforce and Development. During the 1999 – 2001 biennium, Shannon DeLateur was the administrator for all educational programs in the Oregon state prison system. (Federal prisons, local jails, and the youth correctional facilities fall under different management systems.) Ruth Perkins was the education manager at Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP), while Diane Muchunze was Oregon State Correctional Institution's (OSCI) education manager.

When I interviewed Ms. DeLateur, I learned that Oregon's correctional education was/is based on a tri-partite system that consists of literacy, cognitive skill/ behavioral programs and vocational education (work-based training). Appendix A provides an illustration of the types of programs available and their stated goals.

In the fall of 2000, I investigated the WICS (Women in Community Service) program at the Columbia River Correctional Institution. This ten week program "helps women offenders develop the skills needed to transition back into the community. Specifically, the WICS program sought to promote increased self-esteem, motivation to change behavior, positive lifestyle change, self sufficiency and economic independence through empowerment, preparation for employment, and mentoring" (Jolin, 1997).

From the interviews I conducted at that point in time, I concluded that correctional education programs provided inmates with constructive usage of their time and aided in maintaining order by providing worthwhile activities that broke the monotony of prison life. The positive experiences expressed by the women and men who had participated in correctional education programs seemed a stark contrast to Foucalt's idea that prisoner rehabilitation was an oxymoron because prisons only served to perpetuate criminal behavior.

Convinced that there must be a balance between punishment and atonement, and that the state of Oregon had a progressive and humane agenda towards its inmates, I sought to research the role correctional education played in the life of incarcerated individuals in light of the "let's be tough on crime" policies advocated by victims and other members of our society.

Research Questions and Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the role that corrections and education programs played in the rehabilitation of an offender. This reflects the premise that incarceration can be beneficial to inmates and society and not be merely punitive.

The data presented in this work is both quantitative and qualitative in nature, but the primary emphasis of this work is a qualitative study of inmates at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF). The quantitative aspect of this work will illustrate correctional education programs offered in Oregon state prisons, as

well as national and state trends in incarceration, literacy and recidivism rates of prisoners. This data was furnished by the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) and The United States Department of Justice.

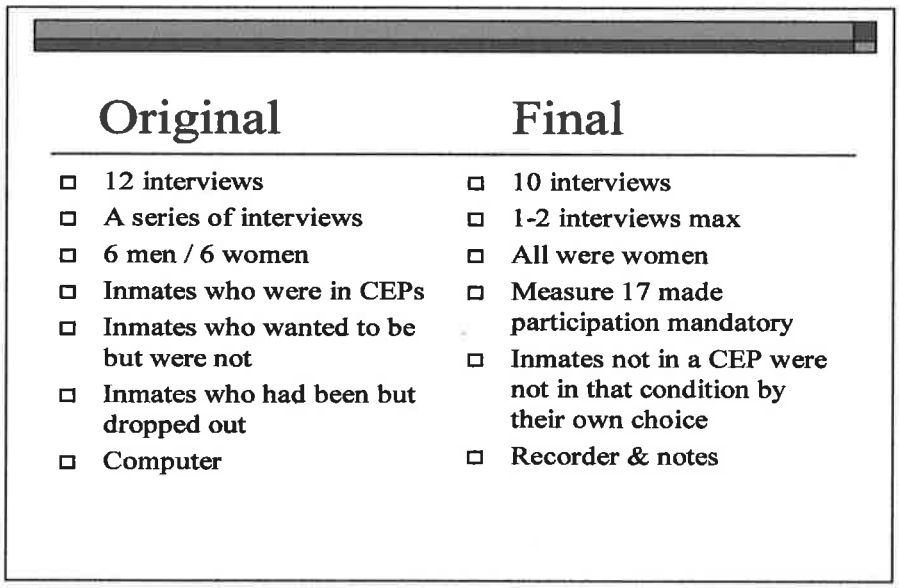
The road to completing my research was a long and winding one. After Portland State University Human Subjects Committee had accepted my thesis proposal, I then had to submit my proposal to ODOC's department of research. Once that was done and my proposal was accepted I met with Paul Bellaty (the head of ODOC's research department) and came up with a plan that would allow me to interview inmates. It was at this point that I learned that my work would take me to CCCF for it was the only place I would be able to interview women inmates.

In order to get respondents, I first had to write a letter of request asking for volunteers. Next I had to attend a six hour class taught by the head of ODOC's Volunteer Program. During this time, Mr. Bellaty got in touch with the assistant Superintendents of the correctional facilities I was interested in doing research at and briefed them about my work (Lory Humbert and Chuck Seeley of CCCF and CRCI respectively). Afterwards Mr. Bellaty sent me a list of fifty randomly selected inmates from both institutions and I chose twenty from each, to whom I sent letters asking for volunteers. Sixteen women (80%) responded that they were interested in participating in my study.

I had to attend an additional three hour workshop and tour at CCCF where I had to be photographed and fingerprinted in order to receive an ID card whose

job was to give me ease of access to the facilities. Once I had chosen which inmates I wanted to interview, the assistant superintendents then set up the dates and times for the interviews. This was a very time consuming process because I had to work within ODOC's schedule for volunteer training as well as those of Mr. Bellaty and the superintendents. With the deadline for my research fast approaching, I did not have time to interview the men at C.R.C.I As a result of this, my work ended up looking somewhat different than I had originally imagined. Figure 1 contrasts my original intent with my final work.

Figure 1. Original and Final



Originally my goal was to complete a minimum of twelve interviews composed of six men and six women. In actuality I completed ten interviews. Instead of interviewing an equal number of men and women, I spoke with ten women. These interviews were confidential, and semi-structured, with both closed and open-ended questions. Due to time constraints my goal was to get a snapshot

of each inmate's life experience, emphasizing their participation in correctional and education programs. I spoke with the women over a two week period with each interview lasting anywhere from forty-five minutes to two hours.

At the onset of my research, I had hoped to have a group of inmates who: a) Were currently in correctional education programs b) who would have liked to have been in programs but were not, and c) had been in programs but had dropped out.

However, due to Measure 17, my second and third criteria became moot, since it made participation in correctional education programs in Oregon, mandatory. Also the inmates who were not in programs were not in this condition by their own choice. These were inmates who had gone into the correctional system with a GED so were not eligible to participate in GED courses and did not qualify for ABE or ESL courses.

Some Facts about My Respondents at Coffee Creek

Beginning the week of October 11, 2004, I interviewed ten female inmates at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Of these, six inmates were in the medium security facility while the other four were in minimum custody. My respondents were between the ages of 27 to 51 their average age was 42, older than the average age of an incarcerated woman (29 years). The majority of the women in my randomly selected group were in their forty's (see Table 1). Unlike the national norm where more than half the incarcerated women are women of color,

nine of my respondents defined themselves as Caucasian. Only one inmate defined herself as Native American. This is consistent with Oregon's incarceration rates in which Caucasians have the largest incarceration numbers (See Table 2).

Table 1. **Respondents at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility**

Name	Age	Ethnicity
Lara	27	C
Katherine	36	C
Lauren	38	C
Geraldine	40	C
Rae	40	N
Leslie	46	C
Kendra	47	C
Alex	48	C
Lady	49	C
Nancy	51	C

Table 2. **Incarceration count in OR state prisons September 2004**

	Male	Female	Total
Total incarcerated	11,824	934	12,758
Asian	126	11	137
Black	1,111	102	1,213
Hispanic	929	67	996
American Indian	240	48	288
White	9,057	1,067	10,124

ODOC 2004 "Inmate Population Profile"

Eight of the women who'd been incarcerated were there for drug related crimes. As of December 2004, 47% of women under correctional control had committed some drug related offense (ODOC, 2004). Half of my respondents had been incarcerated more than once. Eight women had children, and of those, seven had children by the time they were eighteen years old. Seven out of ten respondents stated that they'd suffered sexual, physical, or emotional abuse while growing up. Two women said they had ADHD and two responded that they suffered from mental illness.

When asked about their education growing up, seven of the women replied that they had hated school while growing up. Only one respondent said that she

had loved school as a child, while two others classified their early educational experience as "Okay." Two respondents had been placed in a special education class while growing up; neither felt it did them any good. None of my respondents completed high school and only three had received their GED prior to incarceration. Seven of my respondents got their GED while incarcerated and two had taken college courses while incarcerated.

At the time of the interviews all of my respondents had participated or were currently participating in a correctional education program. My respondents covered a range of educational experiences, parenting classes, to vocational classes in computers and cosmetology, to college courses taken prior to the elimination of Pell grants for offenders. (See appendix A for a listing of programs available). When asked if they felt they had good relationships with their teachers, they all said yes and that their relationships with their teachers were very positive. Seven women claimed they had good relations with their family and nine felt they had a strong support network.

All ten respondents stated that they wished there were more correctional education programs available. We did not speak of ODOC's budget nor space for more programs. Since 2004 ODOC's work-based education program has been cut by approximately 70%. Of 21 work-based programs offered, only six remain.

Education does not provide us with a magic cure to all the ailments of our society, but it does give knowledge that can be used for self-empowerment and self- development. In light of the correlation between educational achievement

and economic status, practically speaking, a college education enhances the chances of anyone getting a well paying job. Inmates will re-offend if they do not have the proper tools / skills and support with which to make it out in the community. The women at CCCF attest that we can even out the playing field for them by providing them with a drug free environment, consistent support, and quality education. Given this opportunity it is likely that they would choose to pursue their education and consider a career, not just a job that would provide continual intrinsic gratification as well the possibility of improving their economic situation once they were back "on the outside."

Chapter 2

Theoretical Perspective

The United States is number one in the world… in incarceration rates. We have exceeded Russia in the number of people we incarcerate per capita. We imprison 715 prisoners per 100,000 people (Young, 2004). What has led to the rise of our prison population? Society. For the past twenty years the number of acts defined as punishable by incarceration has increased, the most prevalent being drug related offenses.

For many years now criminal justice experts, philosophers, and sociologists have questioned the role of the prison in western society. As Morris points out the question revolves around four major themes: Incapacitation, Deterrence, Retribution, and Reformation (Morris & Rothman, 1998). My thesis seeks to explore the theme of prisoner rehabilitation (reformation) specifically when it comes to women. Ruth Perkins, the educational manager at the Oregon State penitentiary (1999-2001), suggested that perhaps we go through these four phases or themes because our, "Society doesn't know what it wants from its inmates" (Perkins Interview at OSP May 12, 2000).

There is a long-standing debate over this topic and it involves the answer to the following questions: Do rehabilitation programs in prisons work? And on what basis do we judge these programs to be successful or not? On one side we have opponents who state that research shows that rehabilitation and reform

efforts are not effective. On the other side we have proponents who believe that research shows that rehabilitation efforts show positive effects on prisoners. Both sides use prisoner recidivism as the dominant standard to prove a program's failure or success. In many cases they also tend to use the same research to validate their positions on the aforementioned debate.

In his work Discipline and Punish, Foucault traces the history of the Western prison and raises three major points. The first is the idea that Western society has "shifted the focus of punishment from the prisoner's body to his/her soul" (Foucault, 1995). The second is his idea that "Prisons, like all social institutions, create and reinforce power and knowledge" (Foucault, 1995). For Foucault, power is the ability of one person or group to make another do as they wish. However, power need not be physically exerted (i.e. violence). Power can also be derived from "mental force-" the ability of one or a few to impose his/her ideas on others. How are these ideas imposed on others? Knowledge is constructed and becomes technical or specialized. Once this occurs, knowledge can be used to define what is "normal" and "abnormal" and these categories can then be used to exercise both power and control.

His third point is that the idea of the prison as a deterrent or a place of reform and rehabilitation is an oxymoron (Foucault, 1995). For Foucault, the prison is a failure because it creates and perpetuates that which it was supposedly created to eliminate- delinquency. Foucault lists 6 points, which reflect the failure of the prison system. According to him:

1. Prisons do not diminish the crime rate: they can be extended, multiplied or transformed; the quantity of crime and criminals remains stable or, worse, increases.
2. Detention causes recidivism; those leaving prison have a greater chance of being imprisoned in the future.
3. The prison cannot fail to produce delinquents. It does so by the very type of existence it imposes on its inmates.
4. The prison makes possible, even encourages, the organization of a milieu of delinquents, loyal to one another, hierarchized, ready to aid and abet any future criminal act.
5. The conditions to which the free inmates are subjected necessarily condemn them to recidivism: they are under the surveillance of the police; they are assigned to a particular residence, or forbidden others.
6.Lastly the prison indirectly produces delinquents by throwing the inmate's family into destitution (Foucault, 1995).

Foucault describes the prison system as a failure because it fails to accomplish its stated intentions (i.e. those of deterrence and rehabilitation) and creates real social effects. In one sentence Foucault defines the prison's ongoing role in society: "The success of the prison, in the struggles around the law and illegalities, has been to specify a 'delinquency'" (Foucault, 1995). In reply to Foucault, my work will show that for ten women this need not be the case. Rehabilitation of inmates can and does take place.

Foucault wrote that not only can delinquency be learned in prison, but that delinquents would band together and aid each other if the right moment presented itself (Foucault, 1995). He alludes' that inmates experiences bond them and bind them in a brotherhood of sorts. With regards to my respondents and their experiences while incarcerated, this could not be further from the case. Regardless of the large number of people who are incarcerated, the prison experience is a

lonely one. Whether incarcerated in a cell or in dorm style rooms each individual is still doing his/her time alone. One does not walk into a prison and expect to make best friends. While one inmate may aid another in a delinquent act, s/he does so for the perceived self benefit they may get out of it, not due to any sense of loyalty or sisterhood.

My respondents spoke to me about many of the things they learned while incarcerated and not all of it was academic or curricular in nature, nor was it criminal or delinquent. A few of my respondents told me that upon their incarceration they "watched and learned." They watched the way other inmates behaved as well as how staff dealt with them. My respondents watched and learned which behaviors were rewarded and which were punished. Observing the behavior of other inmates allowed my respondents to reflect on their own behaviors and help them decide whether or not they would change theirs, and if so, to what degree. The punitive elements of the prison can (and does- as Katherine's story highlights) play a deterrent role in the lives of the incarcerated.

The Debate over "Nothing Works"

Martinson and Morris are credited as being the forefathers of the modern "Nothing Works" ideology that has persisted in this country since the 1970's. Martinson's 1974 work "Rehabilitation, Recidivism, and Research" is considered the corner stone on which opponents of rehabilitation programs stand. In 1968 the New York State Governor's Special Committee on Criminal Offenders,

commissioned Martinson to review past research and literature on the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs in New York State (Martinson, 1974). In the concluding section of his report Martinson summarized his findings, asking the question: "Does Nothing Work?" (Martinson, 1974).

Martinson concluded that it was possible that some treatment programs were working, but previous research records were so bad that it was difficult to tell (Martinson, 1974). He also added that the instances of success or partial success that had been visible were isolated incidents and produced no clear patterns (Martinson, 1974). In the end however, he argued "It may be, that there is a more radical flaw in our present strategies- that education at its best, or that psychotherapy at its best cannot overcome, or even appreciably reduce, the powerful tendency for offenders to continue in criminal behavior" (Martinson, 1974).

Martinson's work became the rallying cry for conservative law makers who had been trying since the 1940's to eliminate rehabilitation programs in prisons (Ubah, 2004). Martinson himself did not advocate eliminating all correctional programs and sought to readdress the issue in 1979 when he wrote a paper in which he acknowledged errors in his earlier work and reported on a number of studies which showed that some things did work (Antiss, 2003). According to Ubah, Martinson's work was used as ammunition by critics of rehabilitation programs to argue for financial cutbacks to corrections as well as the eradication of prison-based Pell Grant funding in 1993 - 1994 (Ubah, 2004).

In response to and Martinson's (1974) work Morris wrote The Future of Imprisonment (1974). Morris stated that his intent in writing that book were to "try to save something of the rehabilitative ideal and to debunk Martinson's false rhetoric" on the ineffectiveness of rehabilitation programs (Morris, 1974). Morris argued that the varying types and uses of rehabilitative programs were not working; these programs along with the overly bureaucratic and apparently whimsical sentencing of prisoners in the penal system needed to be changed to be more "principled and just" i.e. logical and humane, for prisoners (Morris, 1974). He stated that rehabilitation programs should in fact be expanded, "but prisoners should not be sent to prison for treatment" (Morris, 1974). Morris and others in his camp were reacting against the "Treatment" Model of offender rehabilitation that evolved in the early 20th century. This idea derived from a medical perspective and viewed crime as an illness that with proper treatment could be "cured."

Morris wrote that the current model of rehabilitation that was being practiced (the Treatment model) was flawed in two major ways 1. We could not "Predict the likelihood of criminal behavior in the community by observing the prisoner's response to prison training programs" and 2. The treatment model "suffered fundamentally from a belief that psychological change can be coerced" (Morris, 1974). Essentially Morris advocated rehabilitation programs, however the manner in which he presented his arguments can and has been used as ammunition by both sides.

By the 1990's the hardcore "Nothing Works" position had undergone some subtle changes. Some proponents of this idea had modified it such that the initial position was softened. For example, in their work "From Nothing Works to the Appropriate Works: The Latest Stop on the Search for the Secular Grail" (1990) Lab & Whitehead responded to criticisms of their 1989 work on recidivism and in their defense they wrote:

> Although we did conclude that our findings were "far from encouraging for advocates of correctional interventions," we were careful to point out any successes. Thus, a careful reader should agree that the depiction of our research as partially supporting "a very firm version of 'nothing works' is not entirely correct.... Our review of a particular set of studies showed that the majority of [intervention] programs were not effective, but some interventions were effective (Lab & Whitehead, 1990).

While some of the "nothing works" proponents have softened on this position, hardliners still persist. While doing research for his book The Prison Reform Movement: Forlorn Hope (1990) Larry Sullivan wrote:

> It became obvious after I began my research that few- if any- methods of rehabilitation and deterrence work.... Perhaps if there is a practical solution, it is the realization that the prison's primary mission is to punish and not to ameliorate behavior. Once that aim is understood, punishment can be carried out in a humane and dignified manner, and we can say that the penitentiary's existence is justified (Sullivan, 1990).

Proponents of rehabilitation programs would take issue with Mr. Sullivan's comments. They would ask: Given the choice of returning an ex-convict who spent his/her time idly stewing in a cell, versus one who has had the

opportunity to go through correctional education programs, back to the community, which would you choose? The latter, they would argue.

Since 1974, the proponents of rehabilitation programs have argued against Martinson's conclusions. In 1975 Palmer argued that Martinson's study was "characterized by bias, inconsistency, and omission of facts" (Ubah, 2004). In 1987 Don Gibbons responded to Martinson's findings in his book The Limits of Punishment as Social Policy. Gibbons patterned his book after Martinson's and entitled his response "Nothing Works- Or Does it?" According to Gibbons, "treatment" advocates believed that rehabilitation can and does work (Gibbons, 1987). Programs would be more successful if better efforts were made to implement them (particularly in the areas of sustained funding, well-trained staff, etc), if the sole standard on which these programs are measured (recidivism) were not too strict, and programs were not haphazardly directed to all prisoners, for one shoe does not fit all (Gibbons, 1987). Gibbons ends this section by stating that "New evidence indicates that instead of being an idea whose time has passed, the full potential of rehabilitation and social intervention has not yet been realized" (Gibbons, 1987).

Like Gibbons, Gerber & Fritsch (1995) also found that current research advocated rehabilitation programs in prisons. Their contention was that not only were these programs good for offenders, these programs helped maintain order in the prisons. Their review led them to conclude that while it was impossible for rehabilitation programs to cure all the problems for prisoners upon their release,

programs "lead to fewer disciplinary violations during incarceration, reductions in recidivism, to increases in employment opportunities, and to increases in participation in education upon release" (Gerber & Fritsch, 1995).

The argument against rehabilitation can be summarized by the observation that "It is hard to train for freedom in a cage" (Morris & Rothman, 1998). Gibbons responds by telling us which aspects need to change for effective, successful, treatment. Gerber & Fritsch (Gerber & Fritsch, 1995) argued for the success of rehabilitation programs based on their ability to help maintain order. But what exactly does a successful program look like? What components are needed for a program to be successful?

DuGuid (2000) maintains that the most important part of any successful program lies in the way in which society, prison staff, and teachers "view" the prisoner. In his book Can Prisons Work? DuGuid's main argument is that prisoners are viewed and treated as objects/ things, versus subjects or people who were once (and will again be) part of society. He argues that many current rehabilitation programs curb the most important relationship that may help the prisoner the most, that of student and teacher. For DuGuid the goal of the prison "Must be a renewed commitment to citizenship on the part of the released prisoner and, in the inevitable dialectic, a renewed commitment by society to assist those individuals in sustaining their efforts (DuGuid, 2000). This argument contradicts Morris' argument that prisons should not be seen as purposive.

Lin (2000) suggests that there is a deeper problem that affects rehabilitation and reform efforts- that of program implementation and management in prisons. Morris (1974) did discuss the problem of the penal system, but he wrote about it in terms of disorganization. Lin specifies the problem this way, "The lack of attention to programs and how they fit into the everyday prison environment reflects a fundamental problem: the tendency of researchers and policymakers to see programs separately from the organization" (Lin, 2000). According to Lin, "The task of those who would rehabilitate rehabilitation is thus not primarily to discover "what works." Instead, the task is to discover "how programs work": to understand how the interaction between programs and their context redefines programs from prison to prison, and ultimately how if affects their success" (Lin, 2000).

Thus for the advocates of rehabilitation, successful programs should have: sustained funding, a proactive administration, qualified prison and teaching staff willing to work together to implement the programs so that it meets the immediate needs of both the prison and the inmates, separate housing for inmates in programs that will help foster community and citizenship, and finally stated objectives which are attainable and measurable- both qualitatively as well as quantitatively.

During July through August of 2003, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press randomly selected and polled 1,284 adults asking, to what

extent they agreed with the statement, "The criminal justice system should try to rehabilitate criminals, not just punish them." Here are the answers:

Table 3. **Pew Research Center for the People and the Press**

Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Don't Know
29 %	43%	14%	11%	3%

Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, August 2003

I believe that this shows that the pendulum is swinging back to the idea that rehabilitation of offenders should be a major goal of our penal system.

In 2001 the Correctional Education Association published the results of the Three State Recidivism Study. This longitudinal study tracked 3,200 inmates in Maryland, Minnesota, and Ohio, after their release. Its intent was to learn, "If education independent of other programs, could have significant impact on the behavior of inmates after release," (Steurer, Smith, & Tracy, 2001). The results of this study showed, "That inmates who participated in education programs while incarcerated showed lower rates of recidivism after three years. For each state, the three measures of recidivism: re-arrest, re-conviction and re-incarceration were significantly lower, and wages were higher for the education participants than the non-participants" (Steurer, Smith, & Tracy, 2001).

How do we define and measure program success? Is the experience of the incarcerated woman different from that of incarcerated man? If so, how do their experiences differ? These are but a few of the questions that anthropologists can

help search for answers. For while anthropology has much to offer in terms of prison studies, as Rhodes points out, "Little work in anthropology concerns prisons" (Rhodes, 2001).

In her work, "Toward an Anthropology of Prisons," Lorna Rhodes categorizes writing on prisons into two types, the first, "consists of normalizing discourses;" while the second, "attempts more self-reflective and problematizing approaches, while also revealing the difficulty of escaping the prison's disciplinary orbit" (Rhodes, 2001). She then breaks down the latter category into four types of writing that anthropology would be most beneficial to, they include:

> (a) contemporary critiques directed against the numbing effects of the current situation; (b) efforts, particularly following Foucault, to revisit and revise our understanding of prison history; (c) sociological and anthropological work that attempts an entry into and a direct engagement in the interior of the prison; and (d) work that addresses women as prisoners and problematizes the predominance of masculine perspectives in and on the prison (Rhodes, 2001).

While not being prolific in the area of prisons, anthropology certainly has been so in the area of educational research. The anthropology of education has: a) chronicled native and colonial education systems in foreign countries (Gegeo, 1999; Charter, 1996); b) Examined the impact of a dominant culture's language on language minority groups (Mendoza-Denton, 1999); and c) Pointed out inequalities in our educational system (Bourgois, 1995) to name a few. With regards to my work, the anthropology of education will focus it lens on adult education as experienced by incarcerated women.

For a long time now we have been privy to the thoughts and opinions of experts, victims, politicians, and correctional staff regarding the role of prisons and whether or not we should try to rehabilitate or reform inmates. But where in this discussion was / is the offender? My work aims to bring that group into the foray. Specifically, the female offender who has first hand knowledge of correctional education programs because she has participated in them.

My hope is that by adding an anthropological voice to the ongoing debate regarding prisons and programs they offer, it changes the dialogue over rehabilitation in a qualitative manner.

Chapter 3

Prisoners & Literacy

In 1988 Congress wanted to know whether or not there was an adult literacy[1] problem in the United States (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, and Kolstad, 1993). They decided to fund NALS- The National Adult Literacy Survey, it was the first survey of its kind (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, and Kolstad, 1993). In 1993, Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Results of the National Adult Literacy Survey was published. It was the first of several reports on NALS findings. Although there were many discoveries, I will highlight three. This report found:

1. "That over 40 million Americans had significant literacy needs."
2. "There is a strong relationship between literacy and economic status. Relatively high proportions of adults in the lower literacy levels were in poverty;" and 3. Compared to the total population, prisoners tend to be young, male, from a minority group, and less educated (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, and Kolstad, 1993).

---

[1] ***Note**: Functional literacy goes beyond the simple ability to read words. The National Literacy Act of 1991 defines "literacy" as, "the individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential." (Public Law 102-73, the National Literacy Act of 1991 Public Law 102-73 102nd Congress -- 1st Session [H.R. 751] 102 P.L. 73; 105 Stat. 333 1991 Enacted H.R. 751; 102 Enacted H.R. 751 DATE: JUL. 25, 1991: Sectoion 3).*

In October of 1994, Literacy Behind Walls: Profiles of the Prison Population from the National Adult Literacy Survey (Haigler, Harlow, O'Connor, & Campbell, 1994) was published. This report focused on the literacy skills of inmates. Table 4 highlights some of the findings of this work. When comparing educational attainment we can see that inmates have less education than the general population (note rows 1- 4 of table 4).

Row 5 shows us that the majority of those incarcerated tend to be minorities- About 65 percent of prisoners are minorities versus 24 percent of the household population. Row 6 shows that prisoners in general attain lower levels of education than their parents do; While rows 7 and 8 tell us that prisoners outperformed the household population in the lowest two levels of the NALS. One jarring difference between the household population and inmates are the self-reported cases of learning disabilities, 3% versus 66% (Row 9). The statistics for Oregon (where available) tend to reinforce the findings mentioned above.

Table 4. **Educational Attainment for Correctional Population and the General Population**

	Household Population	State Prisons
1. Some H.S. Ed. or less	18.4%	39.7%
2. GED Certificate	4%	28.5%
3. H.S. Diploma	33.2%	20.5%
4. Post Secondary	48.4	11.4%
5. Minority	24%	65%
6. Less ed. than parents	21%	39%
7. Below 230 in Reading	22%	64%
8. Below 230 in Math	22%	40%
9. Learning Disability	3%	66%
10. Completed GED while incarcerated		26%

National Center for Educational Statistics, National Adult Literacy Survey, 1994 "Literacy Behind Prison Walls," Tables 2.3 & 2.8

The Oregon Department of Corrections puts out the following data (see table 5 below), which helps us understand the deficiencies of Oregon state prison inmates. Almost 75% of Oregon inmates have dropped out of the educational system prior to completing high school (add rows 1 & 2). The second row shows that 33% had a GED certificate upon entering prison. The third shows that 18% had a high school diploma, while the fourth shows 2% had a post secondary degree (2-8 year college degree). 1 out of every 4 inmates (25%) are below the minimum functional literacy levels established by the '91 Oregon Legislature and cannot read at a functional level (Row 7). 3 out of every 4 inmates (70%) are

below the minimum functional math literacy levels established by the '91 Oregon Legislature are not functionally competent in math (Row 8).

***Table 5.* Educational Attainment for Oregon's Correctional Population 2002**

	Oregon Prisons 2002
1. Some H.S. Education or less	46%
2. GED Certificate	33%
3. H.S. Diploma	18%
4. Post Secondary	2%
5. Minority	21%
6. cannot read at a functional level	25%
7. are not functionally competent in math	70%
8. Completed GED while incarcerated	03 – 04 517

Oregon Department of Corrections 2004

Table 6 shows a more recent and clearer picture of inmates who had not completed high school or gotten a GED prior to their incarceration. While table 7 shows the average number of students participating in an instructional program offered through Oregon's Department of Corrections from July 2003 till June 2004.

Table 6. **State prison inmates who had not completed H.S. or the GED**

Males	40%
Females	42%
Whites	27%
Blacks	44%
Hispanics	53%
24 or younger	52%
45 or older	35%
Learning disability	66%
No disability	37%

Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003 "Education and Correctional Populations" Page 1

Table 7. **Adult Basic Skill Development**

Statistics: Instructional Program 7/03 – 6/04

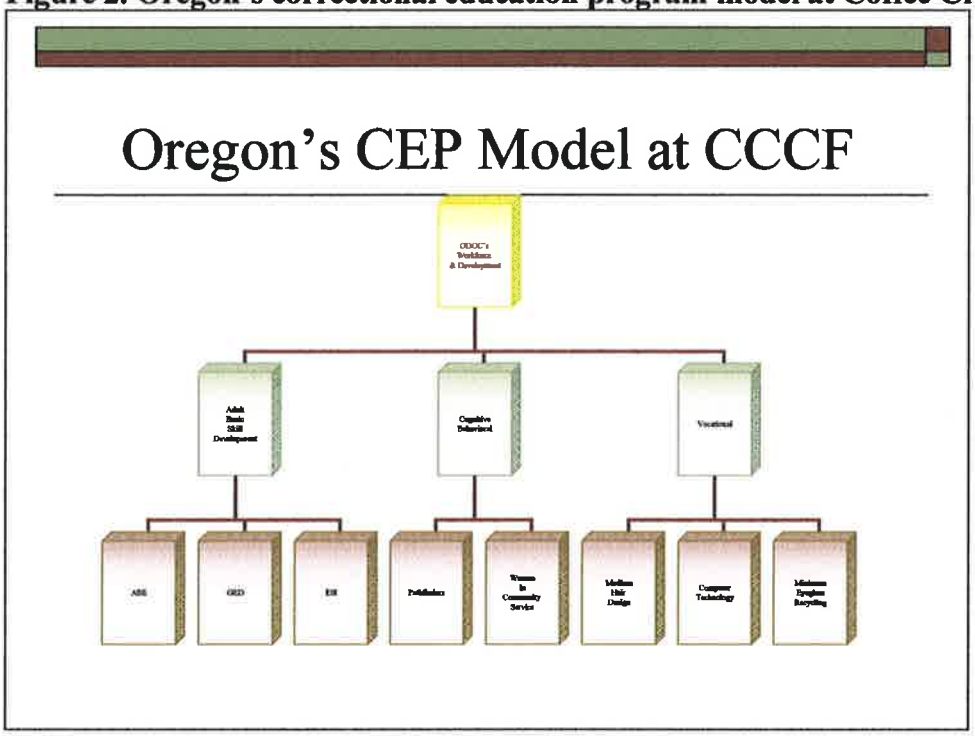
Program	Av. # of Students
ESL	215
ABE	2,237
GED	441
Basic Skills Upgrade	178
TOTAL	3,071

ODOC 2004

In Oregon, correctional education falls under the auspices of Oregon's Department of Corrections (ODOC)- Workforce and Development. Federal prisons, local jails, and the youth correctional facilities fall under different management systems. Oregon's correctional education is based on a tri-partite system which consists of literacy, cognitive skill/ behavioral programs and vocational education (a.k.a. work-based training). Figure 2 on page 23 illustrates Oregon's correctional education program model as it is in place at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Appendix A, provides an illustration of the types of programs available at 11 of the 13 institutions.

Inmates are given a battery of tests at an intake center. These tests include: Psychological testing (known as PAI), Medical Screening, Drug and Alcohol screening and Educational testing- BASIS. Inmates are also assigned a risk score

Figure 2. Oregon's correctional education program model at Coffee Creek



based on these and other factors known as Special Case Factors. These can include medical & dental, emotional, personal (such as an enemy in a particular institution) or educational. All of this determines at which institution the inmate will be placed (Muchunze Interview, May 2000).

To determine an inmate's literacy level, the BASIS (Basic Adult Skills Inventory System) is administered at the Intake Center. While the CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) test is administered at each individual institution. There are two sites at which inmates undergo testing to see if they are learning disabled and qualify for Special Education (Muchunze Interview, May 2000).

Educational Programs in Prisons

What is the purpose of correctional and education programs in prison? I would argue that they serve a dual purpose. The first is to educate inmates with some levels of employable skills. And the second is to help maintain order by providing inmates with activities that keep them occupied. In the former statement, education is a tool used to rehabilitate offenders.

Let us explore why education can be the key to rehabilitating an offender. Ubah writes that overall we perceive education to be an equalizer of opportunities (Ubah, 2004). Studies have shown the correlation between educational attainment and earning potential. Thus the greater one's earning power, the greater the possibility for upward mobility (Ubah, 2004). One key reason for educating inmates is because education can provide them with the necessary human capital resources (skills and knowledge) that can help some of them "go straight" when they are released back into society (Ubah, 2004).

Correctional education programs are filled with inmates who failed in traditional educational settings. The goal for correctional education programs is to help inmates become vested in learning that is socially appropriate. Do inmates accept the education offered to them? Do they believe that these programs will in fact help them improve their chances to succeed once they leave prison?

With regards to my respondents: none of them completed high school, 6 of them made use of the educational opportunities "offered"[2] to them and hoped to continue their education after release; Katherine and Nancy's stories show their belief that the programs they had participated in will be an asset to them after their release. The academic success met by the women I spoke with, was pivotal in bolstering their self-esteem. As one inmate put it, "Having a GED I have more self-esteem, more goals than I did have [before]." Another stated, "I used to get high on drugs, now I get high on my grades."

All ten of my respondents lamented they could not take college courses while incarcerated. And while we never spoke of it, the fact is that since 1994, Oregon's Department of Corrections like its brethren have suffered serious budget cuts that have affected the loss of many correctional education programs. Two arguments that were used by conservative law makers who wished to eliminate Pell Grants for offenders included: a) Martinson's article on prison reform which gave rise to the "nothing works" philosophy and b) the idea that Pell Grants were being given to offenders at the expense of poor and / or law-abiding citizens. I have spoken about point a in my theoretical perspective. I will now discuss the impact losing Pell Grants has had on inmates in general and my respondents in particular.

---

[2] I placed the word offered in quotation marks because attaining one's GED is sometimes a part of an offender's individual program and can be part of their condition for release or participation in another correctional education program.

Pell Grants are government grants that help subsidize education costs for students from poor families (Ubah, 2004). As grants, these do not have to be repaid. Pell Grants came into existence after WWII, and were known by a slew of different names, however, they were specifically created for veterans (Ubah, 2004). The Higher Education Act of 1965 allowed offenders to apply for financial aid and entitled them to Pell Grants if they qualified for them (Ubah, 2004). By the 1980's Pell Grants constituted the primary source of funds for many post-secondary correctional education programs in this country (Ubah, 2004). According to Karpowitz and Kenner:

> By 1982, there were more than 350 college programs available in 90% of the States. Of the $5.3 billion awarded in 1993, about 34 million went to offenders. Less than 1/10 of one percent (1%) of the total awards went to inmates.
> The annual offender Pell Grant consisted of $1,300.The grants were given to the education providers, not to inmates to pay for the educational expenses. And finally, death row inmates and those serving life sentences without parole were not eligible for Pell Grants (Karpowitz & Kenner, 2005).

With the elimination of the Pell Grants for offenders in 1994 the only ways inmates can get funds for a college education are through Federal Perkins Loans, private funds (their own or family money), and state-based education grants (Ubah, 2004). However, there are obstacles that make following any of these paths difficult. First, states are experiencing budget crisis especially in the area of education. Second, inmates do not have access to the amount of money it would take for them to pay for classes. And third, section 668.40 of the 1998 Higher Education Act denies financial aid to students with drug convictions (The Center

on Crime, Community & Culture, Open Society Institute, 1997). The law is graduated, so that one's first conviction makes him/her ineligible for one year, a second conviction equals two years of ineligibility, and a third conviction permanently bars an individual from receiving financial aid (The Center on Crime, Community & Culture, Open Society Institute, 1997).

Looking at the statistics (Tables 4 - 7), we can surmise that those who end up in prison have been failed by public education and are for one reason or another already living in the periphery of society. In my respondents cases poverty, drugs, violence and bureaucratic ignorance (i.e. how to tap social resources) prevented them from pursuing their education while they had been "on the outside". While it might seem to make sense to ask inmates to pay for their education it is not really feasible for them. As Alex[3] phrased it "You can go to college in here but you have to pay $600.00. Now how the heck they think us dope fiends can pay that kind of money!" Regarding the federal crime bill which eliminated Pell Grants for inmates Geraldine agreed that she understood the public reasons for it, "But on the flip side I see there are ways for anybody to get their education. If you didn't figure out how to do it then it's not a shame on the DOC for allowing prisoners to get it, it's a shame on you for not finding a way to get it."

Experience is the key to adult learning and development. But what about free will? Is not free agency an important component of adult learning / education.

[3] Note: all names have been changed to protect the identity of my respondents.

"I choose to be here. I choose what is important for me to feel that I have learned, grown intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and interpersonally." How does this translate to incarcerated inmates who **must** either work and / or take correctional education classes? I hope my respondents life stories can help shed light on this question.

We must think not only of who we incarcerate, we must also think about who it is we want to release back into society.

> Politicians and policymakers rarely note, at least in public, the obvious connection between the failure of our educational system and the burgeoning minority prison population. Increasingly, states across the country are making correctional facilities a higher spending priority than public and secondary education, according to the Justice Policy Institute.... Not only do we spend more to imprison, we spend less to fund alternatives to prison that are more productive and less costly (Block & Weisz, 2004).

And if during budget cuts correctional institutions scale back or eliminate educational programs, then we have failed our citizenry not once, but twice.

Chapter 4

Life Stories

The following two sections are the life stories of two inmates, Katherine 36 and Nancy 52.

When CCCF staff went to get my respondents to bring them to the visiting room, they did not tell them who their visitor was. Many of my respondents had forgotten that they had signed up to interview with me. Needless to say they were not sure who their visitor was till I introduced myself to them. Many thought they were going to meet their parole officer. But they adjusted quickly once I introduced myself and talked about my research.

Katherine was my second interviewee. She was a thirty six year old, single, white, female, and mother to a sixteen year old boy. At the time of the interview, Katherine had served fifteen months and had eighteen more to go. She was taking a cosmetology class at CCCF. Not knowing what to expect, or what I was looking for, Katherine like all my respondents, was guarded with me at the beginning of the interview. Once they realized that all I wanted was their story, they were able to relax and open up with me.

I did not ask my respondents about their crimes. Instead I asked them what life circumstance brought them to where they were i.e. incarceration. As you read their stories you may be able to ascertain the nature of their crime if not the crime

itself. I have tried to stay true to my respondents by letting them speak in their own words.[4]

Katherine's Story

Figure 3. Katherine's Beginnings

I was born in Eugene, Oregon but raised in Houston, Texas. And then I bounced around because my father was a traveling man and then I eventually ended back up in Oregon and that's where I've stayed since probably twenty-two and I'm thirty-six now.

I went to high school in Los Angeles. My dad worked in Compton. I went to, it was more like for people who had pregnancies or had trouble in regular school and stuff like that. That's what this high school was. (Was it an alternative high school?) *Yeah, alternative. Did not graduate, moved back to Oregon and then I fell in love, had my son, worked and then got into drugs, lost my son, ended up in prison.*

Katherine was by no means an army brat, nor was her father a traveling salesman; he was more of an itinerant worker. Her father moved the family from one work place to another. The constant moving caused Katherine to have a fractured childhood. She did not speak of friends during this time of her life. She felt she had no place to call home till she was twenty-two. And her education was choppy to say the least.

I have found that the majority of children who lead transient lives tend to be behind in school, both academically and socially. The reason- they do not spend enough time in class. I have had students who stayed but a few weeks, then

[4] I made some editing decisions that I felt would help make their points a little clearer. Inside the text box you will find excerpts of our conversation. Texts in parenthesis were questions I asked them, clarifications or observations I made during the interviews.

moved on to another place. The move itself tends to keep them out of school for prolonged periods of time. And if the child has a learning disability (like Katherine), this adds to the child's lack of success, which leads to their frustration and dislike of school, as you will see in the next section.

Figure 4. Memories of Elementary School

I went to elementary school in Eugene, Oregon, first through fourth, and then we moved. It was still in the same little town but different school so, my last year of middle school I went to a different one.

(Did you like school?) *No, I did not like school. Back then I had a learning disability, today they call it hyper, over active.* (ADHD?) *Yeah, exactly. And back then they didn't have a name for it, or if they did they didn't use it. So I was always labeled "learning disabled." So I really hated school because not only was I made fun of, they really had nobody to help.* (Help you?) *Yeah, and when they were learning you learning disabled* (when they found out you were learning disabled) *they were focusing on ways to teach you, but how can you teach someone when you can't appropriately diagnose? So I struggled all the way through.* (So were you in Special Ed, special education classes?) *Yeah, ummm, hmmm.* (And in that environment you felt they were not helpful to you?) *No, not at all.*

(Did you have siblings?) *Yeah, I had one older brother and two older sisters.* (When kids were bothering you, didn't your siblings stick up for you?) *No, I'm four years apart from (the) closest one. But no, I think that's how come I've become like I am today- so outspoken. It probably was a good lesson for me. It was hurtful and life shattering but I mean it's made me who I am today.*

Katherine's strong dislike for school when she was a child stemmed from her negative experiences with her peers. She built a wall around herself to try to stop hurting. When Katherine spoke of how she felt her teachers were of no help

to her, I do not believe she realized that she was angry at them not for being incompetent in teaching, but for not coming to her aid. In her mind, it was a tit for tat, they did nothing for her, so she did nothing for them.

Katherine credited her elementary school experience with making her the outspoken person she was as an adult. There is no doubt in my mind that the harassment and molestation she suffered while growing up were key factors in making her the wary and guarded individual that sat before me. By fifteen Katherine had given up on school. There was nothing anyone could say or do to redirect her.

Figure 5. Leaving School

(How old were you when you left school?) *I was probably fifteen or sixteen, ninth grade, and I think I missed all of it. Then I went to alternative school for six months.* (What was that like for you?) *I don't really remember much 'cause I remember doing it because my parents made me. I didn't apply myself. Pretty much I did the same thing I did in regular high school, got out of it whenever I could. Did enough just to get by, and what I didn't know, I just copied. It really was another wasted six months.*

It took her going to prison ten years later before Katherine decided to take a serious stab at getting her GED. Until her incarceration Katherine had no impetus to get her GED. She had not needed it for the jobs she got prior to her incarceration. Now the GED was a means to an end. If she wanted to participate in any educational program she would need to have her GED.

Figure 6. Her GED

(You didn't graduate from high school, did you get a GED?) *Yeah, but not till I went to the Lane County Jail before I came here.* (How old were you?) *Thirty-six. I take that back I was thirty-five.*

(What made you get your GED?) *Because they told me I couldn't do any programs without it. And I thought unhh, unhh, that is not going to stop me being in computer class, being early reduction sentence, whatever. I was not going to let that stop me anymore.*

(Did you take a program to get your GED, or did you just sit down and bang whip it out?) *I just whipped it out. I thought if I would have known that it's really not all that hard, or that I was not this stupid, I would have taken it a long time ago.*

Amazingly, eight of my respondents had not thought themselves capable of passing the GED tests! They each experienced surprise at passing the GED exams the first time they took them. Fear of failing was the single greatest factor in their decisions not to take the tests.

Katherine did not pinpoint any one major event as being the catalyst for her going to prison. For her it was the totality of her life experiences that led her there.

Figure 7. What brought you here?

I would like to blame it on drugs, but that's such an easy excuse. I mean to me, everything is underlined. I'd have to say probably my childhood. You know, I'm not here to blame my parents or... certain things that happened throughout my life. Because they didn't happen to my sisters or my brothers, and they've never had any of the problems I have. So it leads me to believe, my childhood that happened to me, has brought me to this point. (Is this your first incarceration?) *Yeah, this is my first time ever to prison.*

Katherine alluded to having suffered sexual molestation by a relative while growing up. And although she denied it, that event was perhaps the most pivotal in shaping her life.

The following conversation with Katherine was most enlightening for me. Katherine was very thoughtful and candid with me about her incarceration. In order to understand our conversation about County and CCCF, I need to define the difference between jail and prison. Jails are run by counties. They are for the most part, holding cells. A person is placed in jail to await trial. After trial if a person is convicted there are two possibilities: a) if one is sentenced for less than one year, they remain in jail or b) if sentenced for more than a year that person will serve time in a state or federal prison. And some jails provide correctional education programs for inmates.

Thus when talking about County, Katherine is talking about the county jail.

Figure 8. Cosmetology

(How would you describe your experience since you've been incarcerated?) *I can't say County did much for me, I wasn't there that long. And here I can say that, gosh how do I really feel about that? Being here has inspired me to do the things that I've always talked about doing but haven't had the gumption or the knowledge to go out and do it.*

(Can you give me an example?) *Yeah, I'm in the cosmetology program here. Something I wanted to do all my life but, I never would go get my GED to be able to go to cosmetology school. When I was in the County jail they told me that in order to go to boot camp once I got up here, to get an early reduction sentence, I had to have my GED. That's all they had to say! I got my GED within one day. You know, so I think they give you the push to want to do something. Here, you either sit and do nothing all day long or you further your education in whatever way they allow you to. Some people choose not to. For me, I do. Not only is it something I've always wanted to*

do, but if I've got to be here I'd rather be learning. I mean when I walk out of here I'm going to be a woman with eighteen felonies on my record. I don't think my odds are going to be getting a good paying job. Here they're offering me a cosmetology class where I can walk out a certified beautician. And I don' t really think that I'll have that hard of a time, beating my head, you know, trying to find a job, being a cosmetologist cause I'm really not dealing with money, computers. You know, so I feel I'd be a fool and not to grab that and say okay I'm going to take it.

(Who's teaching the cosmetology class you're taking?) *T. K. I just heard her say this morning that she works for Portland Community College, and I'm sure DOC* (Department of Corrections) *somehow.* (How many days a week is your class?) *Five days a week, from 7 in the morning to 2:30 in the afternoon.*

"Prison,... inspiring?!"- talk about an oxymoron! I can hear the scoffing and the mutterings that Katherine bought into the system because she had no real choice. But this is where it becomes important to listen to her and note why she decided to participate in correctional education programs. Katherine chose to take part because she felt the programs would benefit her then as well as in the future.

Being in a correctional education program would occupy her during her sentence and in her opinion, give her something she would be able to put to use after her release. Katherine believed that with a prison record her chances of getting a high paying job after her release would not be good. But she felt confident that she would be able to find a job as a cosmetologist, which paid decently.

In the following section I ask Katherine if she was participating in any other programs. From her responses you will note how gong-ho she is to make sure she has a finger in every available pie. Being aware of Katherine's terrible

experience with school while growing up, I was surprised to see that she had signed up for virtually everything under the sun.

Figure 9. Other Programs

(Aside from cosmetology, have you taken any other classes?) *I'm on the waiting list for Pathfinders, Cog 1, and I think there's another one. But I'm not sure what the name of that is. I guess they go by your length of time. So I'm not top priority for those, because according to them I still have some time. But before you're ready to be shipped out, or go to programs or whatever they will put you in those.*

I started a computer class with Mr. B, it just started back up. I took it for probably two months and I was having a hard time. I'd have to run from cosmetology school to that. And I'm stupid with computers, totally. I mean he had to show me how to turn it on. And it was just getting to be too much, because after doing hair all day, to go sit there and try to do something that took a lot of brain power, I was not getting it. So I sat down with Mr. B, because it's not something I want to give up on, but my first priority is cosmetology school. So he agreed with me, cause I'd only been in the program (cosmetology) for 6 months, I'm still new to all of it. And so we decided to wait a little while. When I'm ready, he'll put me right back in class.

(Have you had any drug and alcohol treatment?) *No.* (Nor at the jail?) *No.*

(Do you have a counselor or a psychologist or someone here that you talk with?) *Well we have a counselor. I have a counselor that I see every six months. They just tell you if you're complying or not (like being in the Cog classes), if you've been in trouble. So I'm complying because I signed up to be on them. I'm complying because I don't get in trouble, D.R's* (Disciplinary Reports). *That means like if I hit you, I go to the hole, they give me a piece of paper saying why they're taking me out, kind of like a ticket. Then they (counselor) tell me things they think I should be doing that I'm not. Which I'm fortunate, I haven't had to have any of that. So I meet with my counselor every six months and they just say, "Good job. See you in six more months." We really don't get to talk to them as one-on-one. I mean I'm sure if we had major problems where we needed to see them they would. They're not the type of counselors where they sit down and talk with you. They are more like academic counselors.*

Neither Katherine nor any of my other respondents participated in any drug or alcohol rehabilitation programs while in jail or prison. I became aware that

inmates would turn to religious groups, or chaplains, for spiritual (and perhaps psychological) guidance.

My respondents at CCCF spoke highly of the teachers, volunteers, and mentors that came to prison and worked with them. Take a look at Katherine's depiction of and interaction with her cosmetology teacher.

Figure 10. The Teacher

(How would you describe your relationship with the person who's currently teaching the class?) *Good. At first I didn't think it would be. I thought maybe she'd be a little hard to get along with. I thought our personalities would clash a little bit. And this is another learning experience for me. I can sit and look at somebody and think, "I don't like that person." Now I have not a clue, cause some I do end up not liking but the majority of them I do, and the same with my instructor. It's like I was talking to my sister on the phone last night. You gotta learn to live with a lot of different people in here. Some people not nice, some people nice. I can't judge them for their crime because I'm one of them. And like I told my sister last night, "The people that I look at and think, I will never end up liking, are the ones that I end up liking."*

So regarding my instructor, I just adore her now. She's very fair, she speaks what's on her mind and she lets it be known what she expects. I like that. It's not, well, "I'm going to leave it up to you," and then belittle me because I didn't do it like she would have done. She just says, "This is what you need to do, this is what I expect you to do." And then she'll walk away, and then it is up to me then to do it. And I really respect her. I can't imagine walking into a prison. I mean like right now, I'm thinking before you got here- "What's it going to be like for a woman to walk in and interview women in prison? Would that not be nerve wracking?" I was trying to think how you would be feeling. My sister comes and she still gets nervous coming. And I think about my poor instructor, days she comes in, she's got fourteen inmates in there cutting hair with scissors (sharp objects) and you got tons of inmates coming in throughout the day to get their hair done. That could not be easy for anybody. So she's putting effort into this, and I like it. How can you not respect somebody who's willing to take a chance....

(You also said, you thought she was fair?) *She's very fair.*

(And she let's you know her expectations?) *Uhhh, hmmm.*

(Do you think those are parts of your personality traits?) *Yeah, and I think that's why it works for me. I can't say she does that with the next person, because I worry about what she tells*

me only, and focus on my own program. And I'm sure she can handle somebody else a different way in the class. From what I perceive she has her own way that she deals with each of us. She does not make us uniform. Because being in prison, they do, do that. "Okay, you're all inmates, you're all to follow these rules, and there's no exception." Now when we go into our classroom, our teacher knows yeah we're inmates but we're not all the same. She lets us do things in our own way, but she will step in if it's not the appropriate way. And it's not like she's letting us flake off, she's just letting us see how our way works. And if it's not working for us or for her, she will step in and show us a better way.

She works with twelve women. Every single one of us has different personalities. (What's the age range?) *The youngest one, I think is twenty-one and the oldest is going to be Nancy who's fifty-one. And we're all in between there. And you get twelve women in there, in a room that's maybe this room and the next one in size. All our stations are lined up; it's like a real hair salon. And you get these women who are competitive. We're all in here for different reasons, we all have different crimes, there's some Black, there's some White, there's some Hispanic, there's all different nationalities in the room. Not all of us are friends, not all of us like each other. But when we walk in that room, our instructor knows she can talk to one girl jokingly a certain way, but no this one's a little bit sensitive. So If you can, get to know your students a little bit individually you will know what way works best for them and for you. If you can get in tune with your pupils and then you'd know that the attitude they might have is not about you, they might hide behind it because they can't do it.*

Why was this experience different for Katherine? First, she was no longer dealing with her juvenile tormentors. Second, she had passed her GED and had a positive attitude regarding her aptitude. Third, she was in a stable environment. Fourth, she had time on her side. And finally, she had a good teacher that helped her overcome past obstacles by fostering her strengths and scaffolding her weaknesses.

For Katherine, the epitome of a good teacher was one who mirrored her cosmetology teacher's style.

Figure 11. Katherine's Advice

(What would be your advice to me, someone who wants to teach adults, possibly in a place like this?) *Let's see, what would my advice be? My advice would be, to keep an open mind and figure out each individual for themselves. I think if you can look at each person as an individual and what they're needs are and you can figure out a way to conquer it so that they can have their needs met, no matter how challenging or how light. Individuality is a big, big, big thing. And I never realized how big of a thing individuality is, I'm in here with 1000 women and I don't think I'm like any of them. Before I would have said, "Oh women are women." So individuality.*

According to Katherine, the most important thing she learned since her incarceration was how different people were. She believed that her teacher's strong suite was being able to work with each individual student. Her advice to me then, was to tailor my approach to each individual person.

Katherine's comments on the importance of individuality highlighted her fear of being lost in a sea of a thousand faces. Her cosmetology class was important to her, not just for the skills she was learning but also (and perhaps more valuable) because it was the one place where she felt validated as a person. In this section we will see being in this class matters so much to her that she begins to learn to monitor and modify her behavior.

Figure 12. The Most Important Things

(What motivates you when things get tough in here?) *Well I'm fortunate because I have my family still. I have my mom, my dad, my sisters, my son, my boyfriend, my immediate family that I had when I was out. I come from a rather large close knit family. My parents come at least once a month from Florence. My sister lives in Beaverton here, so she brings my son almost every weekend. But right now he's into football.*

That (her family) *and I have found really being in the cosmetology program really makes me think twice about anything that I'm going to say or do. I call it my Turret's Syndrome. It's really not, but somebody says something to me and I just pop off with the first thought. And then I say, "Oh excuse me." And so now the joke is I have Turret's and I just cover my mouth when it's inappropriate and everybody knows. So now I really try to think, is it really worth my consequences on this, because I am getting my dream met, being educated. I'll walk out of here certified in something. Is it worth it? Because if you get in any ounce of trouble in here they will take that program away from you.*

There is only ten women in this program, out of the thousand that are here. And it lasts for twenty months. They do not play. And you have to take the program serious. If you're in it just because you have nothing better to do, it's not going to work for you. If you're in it to learn, to (get) knowledge, you can't just say, "Okay I'm going to do cosmetology because I don't want to work in the kitchen." So if you're lucky enough to get in there, which I was, cause I was only here ten months before I got accepted, and ever since I have been accepted, it has made being here okay. Okay, not wake up and think, "Oh my God another wasted day in the prison." Now it's, "Okay I can make it through another day." It's one more day closer to becoming a cosmetologist. You know, you can base a little bit more dreams on a goal. It's better than thinking "What am I doing in this prison sitting here cleaning food off a tray!"

For Katherine, her family was like a light at the end of a tunnel. They will be there for her upon her release. Her cosmetology class on the other hand, was the life vest that was keeping her afloat in prison. Her fear of losing that class was palpable. It was a giant carrot whose loss would be devastating, because successful completion of the program could mean early release and that would mean that she could be out five months ahead of schedule.

This scenario shows the complexity of power. On one hand Katherine accepts what is being offered her, a chance at gaining an education. Here she is exercising her power to choose that which she considers to be beneficial to her. Yet in doing so, she subjugates herself to doing all that will be required of her to

stay in that class. Discipline is then maintained via the threat of punishment: that being- If she does not follow the rules or breaks them, then she will be removed from the class.

Some will argue that this shows the absolute power of coercion embedded in the institution of prison. But let us not miss the point here that in order for the "coercion" to take place, the individual at some level has to agree to participate. Some will say that the "agreement" is forced out of the individual. And at this point I will end this seemingly philosophical argument by directing them to Scott's (1985), Weapons of the Weak.

Lest we forget, incarceration is not only difficult for some individuals it is also difficult on their family. In this next section, Katherine speaks to me of her son, and what being in jail has meant to both of them. Katherine had her son at twenty-one, he is her only child.

Figure 13. Mother to Son

(How has being here impacted your relationship with your son?) *It's hard, it's hard, but on the other hand I think that everything I've ever lectured him about in life, don't do this, don't do that, now he knows why. It's not a bunch of talk. It's, okay I might have been lecturing you about it, I might have been doing these things too, but at least I knew what I was talking about. And I think it's hard for him to come here. It's hard for me to have him come here. It's still a hard thing to see your child, sitting here in one of these places. But, I think it's also good for him to come here and see that this is no joke. I can't just say okay I'll meet you at home in half an hour. I have to call you at certain times, you can't just pick up the phone and call me. This is definitely a learning experience for both him and I, because it's always been just him and me in our immediate family.* (Katherine glows with pride when she speaks of her son.)

My sister and her husband, my son is fortunate, they have two girls. They've always been close, so when he went to live with them it was no big thing. He just fit right in. He plays football, he goes to school. My sister owns an espresso stand. The kids go and work after school two hours

each, with her there. And they get to keep the tips, for some money. (They do things as a family, i.e. go on cruises, vacations, etc) He's getting a car.

(His life is dramatically different from yours. Was that your intent or did it just happen?) *See, I don't know, I have to ask myself that because you know raising him, I always thought I only want the best for him. What mother doesn't? And being a single mom I struggled, only making eight, nine bucks an hour, raising a kid, car insurance, rent, tadada. Sometimes we'd have $100 bucks left at the end of the month and that was it. And that wasn't for shoes. So it was always a struggle for me and I don't think I ever got to truly enjoy being a mother. You know where you got to sit back and say, this is worth it. I was always on the go, I never got to sit back and say.... So I've always worried about him fitting in, you know, because I never did. So it always reflected back to that. I always worked harder to make sure he always had the things I thought he needed.*

Well now he gets those. Now he's getting the car, which I would never be able to buy him. He gets to go on cruises, which we would never get to do. So you know this is,... sometimes I have to ask myself.... And now he's in a family with a mom and dad, who have time to sit back and say, "We really enjoy you." So how can I say that's not a good thing for him?

When I asked my respondents who they would credit with changing their lives around, three said God. Katherine was not part of this minority. Her answer again reflected her belief in her individuality.

Figure 14. On Track

(Who's put your life on this trajectory you're now on?) *It was me. It was me. When I came into this prison and I found out they had the cosmetology program, I knew that's what I wanted. I had gotten my GED in County, so now I could do it. When I found out only ten women could do it, every twenty months, last March (2004) the first ten women graduated. And I got in, in May (2004). I was a pesky, consistent little fart. The only thing that stopped me this long from doing it, was because I didn't think I was smart enough to get my GED. But I did do that. I bugged her (the teacher) and bugged her, and bugged her, till she just said, "Okay, you're in, leave me alone." I'd send her letters, you know kites, and I would send her kite after kite asking, "Could I please?" and "When do I?..." Finally she had to write me back and say, "No more. No more wasting paper, you're in."*

When I asked Katherine if there was something she could go back in time and change, I was waiting for a response in which she would pinpoint that one moment in her life that she felt changed the trajectory of her life. I felt that her early educational experience along with the sexual molestation she had suffered were key elements which shaped her "don't mess with me" approach to the world. In the following passage I noticed her struggling with the repercussions of the molestation.

Figure 15. Turning Back Time

(If you could go back in time and change one thing, what would it be?) *Okay, I got sexually molested. And I'd like to say, "Okay I'd like to change that," but I'd only like to say that because of what people's perceptions would be if I didn't say that. Well I really can't say* ***that*** *(that she wishes it had not had happened) because that did make me who I am today- outspoken, I don't take crap off nobody, no man's going to rule my tadatadada. But, I would have liked to have it where it didn't... (I think she wanted to say, it didn't affect her life the way it had). I'm going to have to say I always wish I could have gone to college. All my cousins went to college, my sisters went to college. They went to proms, ... you know I never got to do any of that. And I always think if I could have picked my career, kind of like I'm doing now, see I'm doing what I've always wanted to do, but I'm having to do it behind bars. I always wondered if I would have been able to grow up, graduate high school, go to college, like what was expected. If I would have done that, would I be sitting here today? 'Cause I'm a firm believer, don't let life's mishaps make your life. But in some sense it did, but I think that was always an excuse too. For me I think everybody always said, "Oh poor K, well you know she was molested." I think it was always kind of a crutch from my family to okay me to do this kind of behavior, instead of getting me the help, the counseling, working through it.*

(And now, how's your relationship with your family?) *Well I mean it's always been good with them... even like me being in here, they think this is going to fix it all. And that's not the case. I know I never want to come back to this place. It's terrible, but it's still not going to fix what's wrong with me inside.*

On the one hand she says that she believes she should not let life's mishaps make her life. She then affirms that the molestation did in fact shape her life, and then says that in some ways that event served as a crutch. It became an easy way out for her family and herself to explain away why her life seemed out of control.

Sexual molestation is devastating to an individual; the core of one's being is assailed. When this act occurs to a child, then they are left feeling bereft. Katherine was aware that she needed counseling and that perhaps it would be good for her family as well. Sitting with Katherine I felt that there was a part of her that wanted to take her family to task and ask them: Where were they when this was going on? Did they not know? And why did they not do anything to help (save) her? I know Katherine was not receiving any psychological counseling while in prison, I wonder if she will get any once she leaves?

If there was one thing she made sure she got across to me was the fact that she never wanted to go back to prison again. For all the positive gains one can make while incarcerated, the loss of one's freedom is not ameliorated. Katherine was trying to be resilient. She felt she was much more aware of herself and her place in the world.

Figure 16. Going Forward

(Are you on medication?) *No. I had been on Prozac. I started taking it after I'd been here for a while and I didn't like it. I can't speak for other people, but me personally; I don't feel like life's that bad to medicate myself. But I need to find a way to let it out, instead of letting in fester inside.* (Do you fear falling back?) *Into depression, or bad behaviors? No I don't.* (How come?) *Cause I'm the go getter, doer, and I know that this is the life I never want and I know the*

life I do want. And before everybody made excuses for me and I always thought, "It's okay, it's okay," now it's ***not*** *okay.*

For Katherine the correctional education class she was participating in met several needs. Attending a correctional education class provided her with two very practical and tangible things: the first was a worthwhile way to spend her time; the second was state certification in cosmetology. Katherine preferred to be doing something she thought valuable i.e. pursue her licensure in cosmetology, as opposed to sitting in her cell idly stewing away. If she successfully completed the program then not only would she be a licensed beautician, she might also get out a little early.

For Katherine the intangible was just as valuable as the tangible. Katherine's participation in a correctional education program imbued her with hope. Having hope allowed her to feel that she could tackle another day of incarceration. She had at least one good friend there and a teacher that encouraged and nurtured her in ways that she had never had before. While her academic growth might not have been stellar, Katherine felt that she was growing as an individual. Her development could be seen in her ardent desire to succeed in her new endeavor. She was willing and learning to make intrinsic changes in her behavior. She wanted to change behaviors that were detrimental to her relationships. Katherine became aware that her words and deeds could affect positive or negative reactions, not just in prison, but in the outside world as well.

Katherine was experiencing an awakening of her self. And she was not the only one of my respondents to undergo such a transformation. Another respondent said it was akin to waking up from a haze of drugs. It was as if they were emerging from a cocoon and the person that came out was a different and better version than the one they had been before. I will not say that it was solely because of her participation in a correctional education program that Katherine began to change, but I will say that it certainly served as a catalyst.

The following story belongs to Nancy. She was a fifty-one year old Caucasian woman, divorced, mother of two, and grandmother of five. Nancy was quite the story-teller, as a result I decided to present it in the narrative form in which it unfolded.

At the time of the interview Nancy had been incarcerated for thirteen years.

Nancy's Story

Figure 17. Growing up

I'm very nervous about meeting with the parole board in January. I'm getting ready to do my psych eval. If I'd had to have done it when I first came in, I would have been really scared because I didn't feel I was smart enough for anything. Now, it makes me nervous, cause I want to go home. And it's all going to depend on how I present myself to them. When I came down, I came down with a life sentence and they set me at fourteen years.

I basically grew up in Oregon. I wasn't born here. I was born in Missouri and we moved a lot. (Because of that) my school experiences weren't great. We moved so often, my mom called my dad a Gypsy, because he could not stay in one place. There were nine kids. My oldest sister was married, so there were eight of us that traveled with my parents.

We moved so often that by the time we got comfortable in a school or anything it was time to pack up and move again. And it just got to where I didn't care. I didn't care about school. I convinced myself that it was because I wasn't smart, that I couldn't do the work. I went like that, and I graduated from eighth grade here in Oregon. I passed to ninth grade and did two months of my tenth grade. So basically I had an eighth grade education. I could read, I could write, I could do math.

Like Katherine's family, Nancy's family also moved a lot. In the previous passage it becomes evident that constantly moving took a toll on Nancy. She began to lose confidence in her abilities. It affected everything; from her no

longer trying to make friends, to feeling insecure about her academic abilities. Without adequate academic support at home, Nancy began to fall behind in school. She did not stay in one place long enough to get the extra help she needed in school which acerbated the situation.

Lacking a community or social institution (such as school or church) to help support her, Nancy looked for another way out of her family situation. As the next section shows, Nancy believed that married life would be her panacea.

Figure 18. Getting to CCCF

I was thirty-eight when I was incarcerated. It was my bad judgment that got me here. See, I was raised with morals. And even though we moved around a lot, my parents were very strict. I was married at seventeen with my dad's consent. My mother wouldn't sign, so my dad did. He signed for me to get married. And it was only two months before I turned eighteen. My father signed.

Had I waited, I don't think I would have gotten married. I thought that if I got married, I could do what I wanted to do. And I could go and I could do. It wasn't like that at all. I mean, my husband was worse than my mother and father. I had a baby at eighteen. My husband started doing drugs and drinking. And so I was Mrs. Suzy Homemaker for six years. When my oldest son was four, I got pregnant and had my second son. When I divorced my husband, I worked at the beginning, you know, the single mom.... Then I started meeting the wild people. And it was just a bad judgment because I thought well this is the life that I want to live.

I divorced when I was twenty-five and after that, it just went from worse, to worse, to worse, to worse and I ended up in prison. The crime for which I was incarcerated occurred in 1978. I didn't get arrested until 1990. So I basically, was straightening out my life when all this caught up with me and so here I am.

Nancy believed that through marriage she would be free from the transient lifestyle she had with her family. She wanted to be free to do as she pleased and I am sure part of that meant staying still and not moving any more. But marriage

provided her with a different type of instability. It introduced her to a world of drugs, alcohol, and physical and mental abuse (which comes out in the following section).

It was through her marriage that Nancy was exposed to a world of drugs and alcohol. The friends she encountered lived a life that was antithetical to the one she had growing up. Freedom for Nancy meant doing what she wanted to do and in this case that meant partying, drinking and doing drugs. After her divorce, her dysfunctional peer group usurped her life. Nancy was not a passive object to whom bad things were happening to, she was an active participant in the chaos around her. Being aware of the downhill trajectory her life was taking, Nancy tried to get a hold of herself and her life. During the dozen year interlude between the crime and her incarceration, she tried to take small steps to change her life. But as this next section shows, Nancy's super low self-esteem paralyzed her to such an extent that her small efforts, prior to incarceration, came to naught.

Figure 19. "I Can't"

When I came to prison, I didn't think I could do any work other than bartending or just menial labor. But one day, one of the education staff took me in under her little wing and talked me into getting my GED. That was in 1991. C.M. was part of the education staff at OW and I was just doing GED classes to get out of the pot (the room). She kept telling me, "You're a lot smarter than just being a janitor. Take your tests and if you pass your tests," she said, "And I have no doubt that you're going to pass these tests, I will give you a job in the library;" which was a top paying job.

And I said, "I can't do it."

And she said, "Just take the test."

And I kept saying, "But C. I can't do it, I'm just not smart enough, I cannot do this."

And she said, "Yes you can." And she goes, "Just do this for me, take the first three."

And I said, "Okay. But I'm telling you right now I'm not going to pass these." And I passed with flying colors. I said, "Wow!" I was just so amazed. So then I took the rest of them and passed every one of them.

The times when I went to the colleges, and I would get the books, and I was going to get my GED and I would sit down and I would open up that book and I would think, "You're just not smart enough. Why are you even doing this?" And I don't know where I ever started getting that in my mind, because my dad always told me, "Nancy you can do anything you set your mind to. And the reason you can't do this is because you don't want to."

I would cry, "Oh daddy I can't do this."

He was a math wiz. I can do basic math great, but if I sit down, as long as I don't think about what I'm doing I can do algebra and all that. But once I start thinking, it doesn't work. But it was just C. coaxing me and telling me, "Just try it." I didn't think I could ever learn how to type or how to run a computer, because my ex, my children's father, he was not only a physical abuser, he was also a mental abuser. And it was, "You'll never amount to nothing, you are as far as you're ever going to go." So instead of going and doing, I did nothing.

I had people tell me, when I worked in a restaurant, "You got the will and the want and all that. You could be managing a place if you would just put your mind to it." I'd tell them, "I can't do that. I can't do that. I can't manage people". But it took coming to prison to figure out I can do what I put my mind to do. And it just amazed me. Just before we left OWCC, C. came and saw me and she says, "Look where you are now?!" And I said, "Yeah, thanks to you."

After I passed my GED tests, I went into the law library and started learning a little bit about law and stuff like that. Then I took some college classes, at OWCC through Chemeketa College. That's when we could still apply for the Pell Grant. And when they stopped that, then there was not a lot offered. And I did want to take the business class, but because of my work schedule I couldn't do it. I took history, biology, and I think I was going into sociology and that lasted for the first quarter. I also took a course on drug and alcohol.

Then I went to work in the clothing room, I mean I worked all the time so being able to go to classes and stuff it wasn't real easy to do. But then, I finally went into a computer class and I completed that. I think it was Introduction to Computers and then I went into Microsoft.

Some of us were moved out of state to Arizona in 1996 and '97. We were there for twenty months and there I took every computer class that I could take. That was about all the education that was offered there. I've done drug and alcohol classes. In Arizona I did a year, it was primary, secondary, and after-care drug and alcohol.

When we came back to Oregon, I spent 9 months at EOCI over in Pendleton. I went back to OWCC and went back to work for DMV, worked for them for twenty months. Then I worked in

the law library for a year then came up here to CCCF. When I came here, I went into hair design. I'm a licensed hair dresser now! I've also taken the TELT training, so I can tutor other people. And right now I'm still enrolled in a computer class.

"I can't," was the monkey on Nancy's back. Her low self esteem paralyzed her ambition and will, until she went to prison and a compassionate staff member took interest in her and nurtured her. Prior to her incarceration, Nancy's peer group influenced a large portion of her life, in prison- it was one individual. And that individual was part of the correctional education program where Nancy was incarcerated. When thinking about the "success" of correctional education programs we should consider the ways, and degree to which the teachers contribute to the student's success. This section of Nancy's story highlights the importance of the human factor in the "success" of a program. It is evident here in Nancy's story that the interrelationship between herself and her teacher was pivotal in her personal development.

Davidson (2000) argues that adult education in correctional facilities can positively affect an inmate's identity especially when the inmate is transformed from prisoner to teacher. The following section is a testament to Davidson's idea.

Figure 20. From Student to Teacher

My relationship with my teachers were actually really good, they couldn't believe that I had such low opinion of what I was capable of learning. They could see more than I saw. And they were very encouraging. I owe every one of them a lot. And T., my teacher now, geez! I wanted to quit, because I told her, "I can't do this." And yet in fifteen months I had completed all of my requirements. I gave up my station to one of the other students and started tutoring. Then I graduated in March (of 2004) got my license, and now I just tutor. I finished out my hours breaking in new students, teaching. I told her, "I can't do this, why did you ask me?" She saw a

lot more than I did. I'm the type of person, I learn as I go. It's easier for me to have hands-on, than it is for me to sit down and read. Because I can sit down and read something and be lost. But I can look at something, or somebody can show me something and I know how to do it. I think T. is just wonderful. She has taught me so much. And anything that I don't understand or I don't see, she's more than willing to guide me or help me.

I'm a tutor. I have ten students. If you would have told me, when I come into prison that I'd ever be teaching somebody else, I would have just... (not believed it). With my own students, sometimes I just think, "why don't you see this?!" But they are great and a lot of it is, because there are ten of them and there's only one of me. It gets a little frustrating at times because you go from one hair cut into another, into another, into another. And some of them catch on really fast and then there's some that you have to coax through. But every one of them has been great.

Even with her accomplishments, Nancy's low self-esteem rears its head whenever she contemplates partaking of a new endeavor. It is a constant battle for her to believe in herself. Her teachers' encouragement becomes a scaffold giving Nancy the support she needs in order to move ahead.

This next section will point out the importance that time plays in rehabilitating an inmate.

Figure 21. Over time

I've completed every program I've ever signed up for. There in the beginning I would start a group, start a class and I would convince myself that it wasn't for me. I had better things to do. But just slowly over the time... (I changed). When I first started going into the classes, it was like, "I wasn't going to learn nothing. It wasn't going to help me or anything," and it didn't happen that I recognized it overnight that things were changing and everything. It was over a course of years and everything changed.

Now, I have at least a college level education, at least an A.A. I wish they still had college courses. There's a lot of the kids that come in, it's very limited as to what is offered and I think that if they had that chance, a lot of them would be able to turn their lives around, because they're a lot smarter than they think they are. And I tell them that. When I sat down to do the

TELT Training, I just thought it was me that didn't think that I was ever smart enough. But there are a lot of people like that!

I was surprised when Nancy told me that she had not been aware that she was undergoing a transformation. She did not keep a diary during her years of incarceration. It was not until now, getting ready to go in front of the parole board that she thought about the changes that she had undergone.

Nancy's wish that college level courses were still offered is telling of her experience. But she was not alone in this wish and her reasons for it. Two other respondents had the opportunity to take college level courses during their incarceration. And like Nancy, the manner in which they expressed themselves was more eloquent than the respondents who did not. College level classes are not guaranteed to make one more eloquent, but these three women had the aura of, "I took college level classes and I passed them!" They exuded confidence in their academic skills.

For my respondents, being able to take college level courses was the equivalent of climbing to the top of a mountain. The women who participated in college level courses hungered for more education. I was told that taking college level classes redirected the energy they had previously used to get drugs to something much more positive. The knowledge they gained and the success they achieved became their new drug.

If imitation is the highest form of flattery, then my respondents' correctional education teachers should feel highly flattered. As you will read

below, like Katherine, Nancy's advice to me revolved around what she felt she got from her teachers. But they were not the only ones, for all of my respondents advice was like that.

Figure 22. Nancy's Advice

I think it would be great if you taught adults, because there are a lot of adults that need the encouragement, they need somebody that's really interested in helping them. When I was going through this tutor training, and I never thought of it that way, I know I used to get embarrassed because I didn't know things. But that's the way a lot of people are that don't. And my dad could read and everything so I was one of the lucky ones. There are people that their parents can't read and can't write and they're too embarrassed to ask for help. I think you would be great at it.

Katherine advised me to get to know each of my students as individuals and tailor my approach to each. Having lacked confidence in her abilities, for Nancy the best thing I could do for my students was to encourage them.

Nancy had been incarcerated for thirteen years at the time of the interview and she spoke highly of the correctional education programs and the teachers who had helped her during that time period. But she was anxiously looking forward to her release. Nancy along with seven other respondents considered themselves fortunate to have their family in their lives. Pressure from trial and prison time can have devastating effects on one's family. Thus those who manage to maintain or rebuild family ties consider themselves lucky indeed.

Figure 23. Family

When I leave here, I'm going to continue school. I'm going to go and get certified as a nail tech. I'm going to take an advanced class in hair color and styling. I want to own my own

salon. (You have to do 1,950 hours to be a licensed beautician, and that's not counting nails. Nails are another 600 hours.)

I'm lucky that when I leave this place I will have my family's help and support. My sisters tried to get me to get me to get my GED and to do something with my life. But I was just too busy having fun. I'm the seventh out of nine. My father past away when I'd been in prison for a year, he had just turned eighty. My mother's birthday is tomorrow and she will be eighty-seven.

My older sisters, I think they quit school in early high school, but my sister B is a manual laborer, she worked in a ply wood mill for seventeen years. My sister M- she was just a house wife, and now she helps her new husband run his company. And my little sister, she got her GED, she went to Business College and she now has a $40,000 a year job in Georgia running computers, or billing for this company. My brothers just worked in the woods, they were loggers. My youngest brother is a building contractor. He's also on the east coast now. They all were just around doing their own thing.

When they let me go, I'm going to be staying with my brother and his wife. She's a beautician and he owns his own company. I have a niece's works for a lady that wants someone to take over her beauty shop. She's going to retire and it will be right around the time I'm going to get out. There's also a possibility I can go to work as a staff tutor at one of the beauty colleges in Springfield.

We see here that Nancy's immediate future after settling in with her brother and sister-in-law consisted of pursuing her education in cosmetology. This is a great boon from correctional education programs. Inmates become aware of resources previously unknown to them (i.e. educational loans) and with support are able to pursue their education after their release. Correctional education programs provided these inmates with some sense of support, the same must be done upon release. Nancy, Katherine and several other respondents are lucky to have their families that they can fall back on, but not everyone is so lucky. And without a support system they will and do go back to known old haunts and networks and suffer a slide back to the world of drugs.

I asked my respondents about their friends because I wanted to know whether or not they considered their old friends a threat to their new way of life. Nancy's answer was typical of all my respondents.

Figure 24. Friends on the Outside

It's going to be a whole new process dealing with friends. My old friends are gone. I choose not to go back down that road. I have some friends that I knew when I was married to my husband that aren't into drugs. So it's going to be all new, it's going to be a whole new way of life when I get out there.

Nancy was going to be much more careful about who she called friend. At fifty-one she was no longer looking to live the wild life. She was looking forward to living a more settled lifestyle and spending time getting to know her five grandchildren.

Over half my respondents echoed Nancy's sentiment that it took their going to prison for them to begin to believe in themselves and stand on their own two feet. For my respondents, drugs represented a way to opt out of taking the reins of their lives. No longer having drugs and alcohol during their incarceration, they are forced to come face to face with themselves. Each incarcerated woman they saw or interacted with reflected back some aspect of their individual self, as Nancy's final passage reveals.

Figure 25. Transformed

You know, when I first came in here I was so head strong about, I wasn't doing nothing. The state did this to me and I had nothing for them. My brother who knew me when I came in said, "You're not even the person that went in there." My family has noticed that I've changed for the

better. I think I was always this person, I was just underneath all the drugs and the alcohol and the perception that I was lower than whatever. But that's not the case anymore.

The people that were in prison when I came in told me, "Nancy, to just stand back and look at you now and when you came in, you're just a totally different person." I was angry, I was hateful, now I love teaching, I love helping people. I think it's because I saw people that acted like me and they had no intentions of doing anything to change and that is just a very ugly picture. And there are still people coming in, and there are still people that I came in with that are still there. They've done nothing. I think growing up more than aging may have something to do with people changing. It did for me.

Chapter 5

Common Threads

Let me reiterate that this work is based on ten incarcerated women in the state of Oregon. The very small number of respondents in this study does not allow me to statistically correlate my findings on a state or national level. Then again, that was not my intent. My intent was to allow some female inmates the opportunity to speak about their life experiences, specifically those gained from correctional education programs during their incarceration.

I chose to highlight Katherine and Nancy's stories because I felt their stories were representative of the women's lives. While not the youngest of the group, at 36 Katherine was second to the youngest and at 51 Nancy was the oldest of them all. In the midst of these two women, lay the years and experiences of all my other respondents. From the interviews, I found certain themes common to all ten women. In this section I hope to share the commonalities of their individual experiences.

Growing Up

It is a sad but true saying that, "No matter how bad you think you've had it, someone else has had it worse." From the dysfunctional family to molestation and rape these women have seen it all. The closest semblance to a stable family was experienced by Geraldine (age 40) whose parents were both college educated, "My parents were high on education. Go to school, get an education. That the

message we got growing up." So for the most part she did. At 15 when she decided to drop out of school because of boredom. Her mother gave her the choice of working or going back to school, her decision was simple, "I'll go back to school". But instead of high school she stated "I'd like to go to Portland Community College please. My mom said okay. My mom basically paid for my education."

But for Rae (40), Alex (48), Leslie (46), Kendra (47) and Lara (27) life growing up was more difficult. Rae grew up in a reservation and was raised by relatives but mainly her mother's mother. The alcoholism, violence, and general mayhem around her became her impetus to leave at the age of seventeen. After she had gotten her GED a year later, she found herself married to an older man and became a mother at eighteen. Leaving the reservation, Rae was able to create a quieter and more stable family life for herself. Her husband provided her with the opportunity and encouragement to pursue her education and career goals. Having first hand experience of the destruction that alcoholism brought on her family life, Rae made it a point to stay clear of alcohol and drugs in general.

Alex started drinking moonshine at the age of ten. She described her family as being, "A bunch of drunks." She stated like all the others who had been drug addicts, "That alcohol was just the beginning. I've been a heroin addict, crack, crystal, cocaine addict and alcoholic all my life." Her stepfather's mental and physical abuse led her to run away at sixteen. When talking about the insults and name calling she suffered from her stepfather Alex said "It's sad because

when they tell you that you believe it. I became the world's most famous prostitute. So all I've done all my life is been a prostitute, a topless dancer and they own restaurants so I do know how to be a good waitress." Alex never had children. She stated it was the one conscious decision she had made. She feared that if she had a child it would suffer the repercussions of her drug abuse in two ways: first it would be ill and second she might have considered selling the child for drugs if her situation got bad enough. Alex said she never wanted to go through that and thus never had children.

Leslie was molested for six years by an uncle from the age of six to twelve. She was raped at 14 and her mother made her have an abortion. She said that, "From being molested I didn't like being around people, I had no self-esteem. I was nervous around people, shy. I tried to commit suicide at 14 soon after that I started drinking and smoking pot it got to where I've done every kind of drug there is."

Kendra moved around a lot and each time they moved to poor neighborhoods and she attended poor schools. With alcoholic and drug addicted parents Kendra said that, "School was not my priority, my siblings were my priority. School was very difficult for me. I was shy… I could not read the whole time." Kendra became an emancipated minor at 15 and looked after her younger siblings. But she said, "My parenting abilities were not… it sounds like it was all good parenting, it was not. I only did what I learned to do. That was keep them

fed, keep them clean, send them to school." Kendra confessed to me that she'd been a heroin addict for almost 30 years.

Like Kendra, Lara's family also moved a lot while she was growing up. She too did not like school growing up. Her parents were also alcohol and drug addicted so she cared for her younger siblings and got pregnant at sixteen. When I asked her what she would advise her seventeen year old sister she said she'd tell her "Don't get pregnant. No really that's what I did." Lara has five children ages10, 8, 6, 2, and 1.

Katherine and Nancy also moved around a lot while growing up. As a child with a learning disability Katherine had a difficult time in school, her early academic experience was marred by constant feelings of failure and moving around did not help improve her situation.

The instability in her life, made Nancy look for ways to cope with her situation. Her answer was to convince herself that she was not smart and could not do the work. "I can't" became her mantra for the majority of her life. "I can't," was the crutch eight other respondents also used throughout their lives. Fear of failure paralyzed these women, their wants and ambitions were subsumed by it. It was not until they went to prison and a superstructure was imposed on their lives that they began to feel stable and safe enough to begin to break out of their inner incarceration. This finding contradicts Foucault's ideas that prisons produce delinquents because of the type of existence it imposes on them (Foucault, 1995). Yes, prisoners can learn advanced criminal techniques from

each other when incarcerated and become highly skilled at their craft. But imprisonment as Foucault suggests, is not the one and only environment that fosters this. As Philippe Bourgois shows, it is the peer group or cohort which "effectively fills the formal instructional vacuum created by truancy" (Bourgois, 1995).

Bourgois discusses how gangs provide alternate instruction for boys in el barrio because the primary institution i.e. school has failed them. Bourgois' drug dealers met failure in school primarily because of socio-cultural and linguistic issues. Family members not able to communicate effectively in English were at a disadvantage when trying to deal with the school bureaucracy (Bourgois, 1995). These drug dealers were culturally and linguistically isolated from the status quo.

My respondents were also alienated from school for socio-cultural and linguistic reasons. Excluding Geraldine, all my respondents' families were poor. They were dysfunctional to the extent that they could not provide my respondents with viable emotional support, were economically disadvantaged and did not possess the language necessary to get their children or themselves the help that they needed. Foucault posits schools, the military, and prisons as three major societal institutions where knowledge and power are coerced for the benefit of one group over another. My respondents' stories suggest the addition of "the family" to this list.

My respondents did not have positive early educational experiences in school primarily because of the chaos they were experiencing in their home lives.

As an elementary school teacher I seek to create relationships with each of my students so that I can provide them with a safe and nurturing environment in which to learn. However this becomes difficult to do with children whose families have a transient life style. The wheels of bureaucracy (educational or otherwise) move slowly, and time i.e. staying still in one place long enough to get help, was the one luxury many of my respondents did not have growing up.

The Power of the Peer Group

Like Bourgois' drug dealers, my respondents' families and schools were not able to give them the support they needed to make it in the dominant culture. And I agree whole-heartedly with his comment that while school is obviously a powerful socializing force, it is by no means the only institution capable of pushing marginal children into street culture (Bourgois, 1995). According to Bourgois, "When asked how they ended up on the streets, most of the dealers blamed their peer group" (Bourgois, 1995).

As stated earlier, eight of the ten women were in prison for drug related crimes. Their crimes had nothing to do with them selling drugs. They had everything to do with them getting involved in illicit activities to get money to buy drugs. When I asked them what they thought brought them to prison they all agreed it was their having made bad judgments while on the outside. And I will say that the "bad judgments" meant getting involved with drugs and the peer

groups that could support their habit. My respondents were introduced to drugs by one of two groups: their family or their friends.

These women were not adventurous, they did not stray from their known world. They grew up with a dysfunctional core support group (i.e. their family) and when they were old enough they sought external support groups (i.e. husbands or friends). The glitch for them was that the external support groups they sought to create were also dysfunctional, for their new support networks were mired in a culture of illicit drug use. Like Bourgois' boys, truancy was directly responsible for the networks these women found themselves in. Nancy's statement is quintessential of this, "I started meeting the wild people. And it was just a bad judgment because I thought well this is the life that I want to live.... It just went from worse to worse,... and I ended up in prison."

In their own words, my respondents attest to having little to no self esteem while growing up. As young adults their new found peer groups provided them with recognition and acceptance. Going to prison forcefully eliminates these peer groups and the women are forced to realize that in order to reconstruct their lives they must also reconstruct their peer groups and support networks.

Many of my respondents spoke about rebuilding or recreating relationships once they got out of prison. Inmates are not the only ones affected by their incarceration, their families are as well. Lara's greatest wish for when she got out was "To be together and healthy, just happy and together, even just once." When I asked Nancy about friendships when she gets out next January she replied

"Friends, it's gonna be a whole new process. My old friends are gone. I choose not to go down that road. It's going to be a whole new way of life when I get out there." Lady was looking forward to being a grandmother and she was not my only respondent to feel this way. The three grandmothers in my group of ten, saw grandparenthood as a second chance to get things right. One of my respondents said that, "It was hard to tell my grandchildren that I was going to prison for 13 months; harder than when I was being imprisoned when my kids were growing up."

Breaking the cycle of dysfunction, violence, drugs and alcohol was paramount in the minds of these women, and they accepted that in order to do that they would have to change their peer groups into support networks that would accept, encourage, and nurture them in positive ways.

Prison as a good place?

Foucault must be rolling in his grave at the title of this section, and those opposed to prisons as places for rehabilitation will guffaw skeptically to it as well. But the fact was that my respondents felt that being in prison at that particular time in their lives was good for them.

My façade of cool interviewer failed me when I asked these women what they thought about being incarcerated. In all my dreams I would never have thought that anyone would consider going to prison as being a good thing. But eight of these women did just that. Geraldine stated that she "Was lucky to have

been incarcerated during a time when they believed in education." Alex told me "This prison has made a believer out of me. This prison is the strictest prison I've been in, in my entire life, which is very, very good. This prison is off the hook." Leslie said she'd been saved (accepted Jesus as her savior) while incarcerated, she spoke with pride as she stated that she had been baptized ten days after getting to CCCF. Katherine stated that "Being here inspired me to do the things that I always talked about doing but haven't had the gumption or the knowledge to go out and do it."

Imagining going to prison as a good thing was difficult for me to grasp but comments such as, "It took coming to prison to figure out that I can do what I put my mind to do. And it just amazed me" and "Sometimes I feel like I want to go home but I'm not sure that I'm ready yet. In two years I'll have more and then I'll have more to give. I'll be more ready then" made me realize that my respondents saw their incarceration as their last chance to have a life that was not caught up in violence or drugs or family dysfunction.

As stated earlier, these women did not represent the national average for incarcerated women in regards to age or ethnicity. Looking at the fact that the average age for an incarcerated woman is 29 years (much older than the average age of incarcerated men) I wondered if age played a part in the transformation of these women. Alex admitted to me "I'm getting too old for this stuff" and many of them pointed out that they were no longer spring chickens. But several of the women pointed out that age was not a factor in their taking advantage of the

correctional programs and looking forward to putting what they had learned to use once they got out, growing up, maturing did.

The transformation that these women experienced, while deeply personal, did not take place in a vacuum. Tennant and Pogson were correct about change occurring in a social and historical setting (Tennant & Pogson, 1995). Interacting with a variety of people described as, "Some people not nice, some people nice" these women felt they could not judge their fellow inmates because they were one of them. These women felt they shared a bond of punishment with the other inmates not that of loyalty or sisterhood as Foucault thought. They saw other inmates as mirrored versions of themselves and while not having the power to change them they did have the power to change themselves. When I asked them why they decided to change I was told pretty much the same thing, "I think it's because I saw people that acted like me [when they had originally been incarcerated- many described their behavior as hateful, spiteful, angry] and they had no intentions of doing anything to change and that is just a very ugly picture."

Interestingly enough it was belief in them or their abilities or potential by another person (a teacher or ODOC staff member) that served as the spark many of them needed to begin to believe in themselves and change. One respondent credited the guards with humane treatment when she said "The guards help a lot here. They've been kind and understanding." On the flip side, some of the guards I spoke with felt they were there to help inmates, not punish them. With the

elimination of their external peer groups, the women now garnered support and encouragement from teachers, staff, and other inmates.

Earlier I stated that the women saw their stay at CCCF as positive because it was their last chance to get it right, so to speak. They felt that they were getting older and did not have many more chances left to get their lives back on track. But that was not the only reason why many of them saw prison as a good place for them. CCCF was a good place for them to be because it provided them with a stable structure, a relatively safe environment, the chance to pursue some education, consistency in the way they were treated, and support or encouragement.

Instability was an important factor in my respondents' early lives. As Nancy's story shows living a transient lifestyle when one does not expect to do so can play havoc in one's sense of self. Not knowing where they are going or not knowing what to expect the following day caused anxiety, fear, apprehension, and antisocial behavior in these women when they were growing up. And the cycle continued in their adult lives when they searched for their next meal or their next high. Prison imposed a structure in which they had to stop. There was no more movement to be done; for once these women had to stay still in one place. With no high to hide behind, their reality came crashing down on them, and they were left having to make decisions about how they were going to do their time and later, the type of lives they wanted for themselves once they were let out.

While violence can be a part of prison life, this was not the case for my respondents. CCCF provided my respondents with a relatively safe environment. My respondents were not in fear of their lives. Being clean and sober, made my respondents aware of the prison expectations and the consequences they would encounter should they not follow CCCF rules. Being aware of the daily rigid routine of prison life, they knew what they could expect day in and day out. This is where prison educational programs become a boon for both inmates and staff, because it can break the tedious monotony of prison life. For inmates educational programs can offer the opportunity to be in an environment to learn and interact with others so that for a moment one can forget that they are in fact incarcerated. As Katherine said, educational programs can give inmates hope because they have something positive to look forward to.

Experiences in Correctional Education Programs

Every woman I spoke with felt that correctional education programs were beneficial as a whole and to them specifically. When speaking about the college courses they took Geraldine said it was "A privilege to be there. We wanted to take classes that would make us feel smarter. Open up a world to us we didn't have." Nancy lamented the loss of college level courses because "When they stopped that, then there was not a lot offered." Both of these women were sorry to see the college courses disappear because they gave inmate students more to

aspire to. Time after time I was told that if an inmate came in with a GED or high school diploma, then educational opportunities were severely limited.

I was told of long waiting lists for correctional programs that were available. Do inmates want correctional education programs, yes they do. And their reasons for wanting them vary. For some respondents it was about improved job prospects when they get out one said, "Here you either sit and do nothing all day long or you further your education in whatever way they allow you to. Some people choose not to. When I walk out of here I'm going to be a woman with 18 felonies on my record. Here they're offering me a cosmetology class where I can walk out a certified beautician."

Another: "I'm happy to be where I'm at (re: attaining her GED). Having a GED I have more self-esteem, more goals than I did have (before)."

Some respondents spoke about the fact that at first they attended correctional education classes "to get out of the pot" (the room) or to get by "You have to take the programs serious. If you're in it just because you have nothing better to do it's not going to work for you. Ever since I have been accepted it has made being here okay. Okay, not wake up and think another wasted day in prison. Now I can make it through another day, it's one day closer to becoming a cosmetologist. You can base a little bit more dreams on a goal."

Is it alright to use education programs as a means to keep order? One of my respondents saw this as a benefit of correctional education programs she said "You have less people fighting. You have less people acting out. You have less

discriminatory acts. You have so many less things when you're offering people an education." So while it's possible to use education in prison as a tool for exclusion, it is also possible to bring different people together. Lara stated that one thing she was learning in her classes was tolerance because you have to deal with all kinds of people. And as Katherine said, "We all don't get along, we're not all friends."

Adult student inmates make sense of their education the same way any adult in an education class does. They too question what they are going to get out of class, because like all adult learners they become vested in their learning experience. Lady told me how excelling in classes provided her with a high that replaced the one she use to get from taking drugs.

In every case my respondents spoke highly of their teachers. They held all program teachers in high regards. They saw them as caring individuals who saw them as human beings and treated them humanely. The contracted teacher was held up on the same pedestal as the ex-inmate teacher. My respondents stated that when they saw an ex-inmate teaching a class or workshop in prison, it gave them hope for themselves. It was gratifying for them to see someone who had once been in their situation come back and teach them. Inmates are more likely to buy into programs taught by ex-offenders because they feel that those teachers know where they are at and where they are coming from, and they trust that they would not be trying to bullshit them. As Alex stated, "The one who knows how to help

you the best is one that's been there. Cause if you ain't been there then how in the hell can you teach it except for by the book rules."

My respondents all felt they had good relationships with their correctional education teachers. They described them as being "there because they loved their job, they loved teaching and they didn't mind the fact that they were teaching inmates." Every respondent spoke of a teacher (or a staff member) in a correctional education program that encouraged them, as one respondent told me, "They could see more than I saw and they were very encouraging. I owe every one of them a lot."

In my estimation, respondents admired qualities in their teachers that young students look for in their adult teachers: fairness, clarity, confidence in their abilities as students and compassion, "She's very fair, speaks what's on her mind and she lets it be known what she expects. I like that. I really respect her. She's putting effort into this."

Interestingly enough when I asked my respondents what advice they would give me as a possible future teacher, I noticed that their advice echoed the qualities they saw and admired in the teachers they'd had in their correctional education programs, not teachers in their K-12 experience.

Sense of Self

As I stated earlier, the women were very candid with and gave me much to think about. Alex associated prostitution with the incidents that in her mind led

her to it. She told me that for young girls who were ending up as prostitutes "Just give them love and show them that they don't have to go out there and do that."

Nancy's situation gave me pause to think. Should we still incarcerate people who committed crimes but became good citizens prior to being incarcerated? The crime she committed took place in 1978 and she was incarcerated in 1990 by which time she said she, "basically, was straightening out my life when all this caught up with me."

Katherine wondered if she had graduated high school and gone to college whether she'd be sitting there (in prison) today. She admitted that it was hard for her to have her son see her in prison but that in some ways it was a good thing because he now knows that "Everything I've ever lectured him about in life – don't do this, don't do that- now he knows why. It's not just a bunch of talk."

For those who defined themselves as Christians it was interesting to note how they posited both positive and negative experiences in their faith. Lara told me that God had been part of her life before she'd gone to prison but that she "fell away and I'm trying to get back where I'm right with God." Leslie saw her incarceration and all her previous experiences with drugs as a test from God, she told me that "I'm being tested by God. This is just another test." She attributed the dissipation of her mental illness with her closeness to God. And Lady (49) felt that through her belief in God she and her family would be fine after her release. Belief in God and thoughts of their family were perhaps the greatest motivators these women had while incarcerated.

Does the maxim "Knowledge Is Power" hold in a prison setting? Davidson argues that it can, if and only if a "radical reformulation of the prisoners' identity as prisoner-educator legitimates their practices, potentially effaces the stigmatization of prisoners as passive objects ("inmates"), and reconstitutes them as active and knowing subjects" (Davidson, 2000). And those responsible for this reconstitution are the prisoners and their educators.

This maxim certainly held true for my respondents. Each of them valued the knowledge they gained from correctional education classes. These women internalized the praise and encouragement of their teachers. Nancy's story is a prime example of this. Notice how she spoke of how the staff member's support and encouragement was pivotal to her transformation. That staff member embodied acceptance, encouragement, and belief in her abilities, which she had lacked before.

My respondents felt that the more they learned, the more they understood, the better they were becoming. Many of the respondents spoke about how sobriety and knowledge provided them with the power to transform themselves. Three of the ten respondents were helping co-teach a class. In each case they told me that had I or anyone else told them at the beginning of their incarceration that they would eventually be co-teaching classes, they would not have believed it. One said "I'm loving it, I love it. In my mind I never thought I'd get there. Comprehending this stuff, I got it. I was really scared of it." Regarding her change another said "I think I was always this person, I was just underneath all the drugs

and the alcohol and the perception that I was lower than whatever. But that's not the case anymore."

I wish I had videotaped the interviews so that I could show it and have people see the way they sat a little straighter and smiled radiantly when speaking of the newfound confidence in themselves. These women were the drivers of their education. I have no doubt about that or the fact that they saw their teachers as the catalyst of their change. I believe that these women's experience in correctional education programs is a prime example of Davidson's idea of the radical reformulation of the prisoner as student, then as educator.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

My friends ask me what I have learned from working on this thesis. I always pause before answering this question because my answer will not fit a thirty second sound bite. I do not believe that I have given the same answer twice because the answer to this question is rather complicated. I will begin by answering Foucault's points on prisons, inmates, and society. I will then define my stance on the ongoing debate regarding the role of the prison and some policy recommendations. Finally I will end with what I came to see as a K-12 teacher who also happens to be an anthropology student.

Was Foucault correct in his first point that prisons do not diminish crime rate? Crime occurs for any number of factors too lengthy to get into here. But prisons can help diminish repeat offenses through well structured, pro-active correctional education programs that offer offenders cognitive, educational, and vocational skills that they would be able to put to positive and productive use, once they have been released, as the 2001 Three State Recidivism study (Steurer, Smith, & Tracy, 2001) attests. But this is not to say that only by equipping inmates with socially acceptable skills and then letting them out will solve the problem. In order to help ex-offenders succeed we must provide them with support once they have left the prison. So in a sense, prisons can impact the crime rate, at least when it comes to repeat offenders.

With regards to Foucault's six points on the failure of prisons (refer back to page 10 of this work if necessary) I disagree with his second and fifth points that detention and later parole cause recidivism. Neither detention nor parole causes recidivism. My respondents who were recidivists were so because upon their release from jail or prison earlier in their lives went back to their old dysfunctional support networks. In order to affect recidivism we must help ex-offenders change their environment and their peer groups. We cannot ignore the power or influence of the peer group over the individual. I believe that this is one area that proponents of rehabilitation failed to address. From my respondents I garnered that the type of community that an ex-offender is released to has a tremendous impact on his/her welfare and plays a determinate role as to whether or not s/he will re-offend.

I hope that this thesis I have written shows that we can not accept Foucault's views ipso facto. While prisons have the capacity to produce delinquents, they also have the potential to produce future law-abiding citizens through effective correctional education programs and communal support. Earlier (on page 11) I argued against Foucault's fourth point that prisons foster a sense of brother or sisterhood amongst inmates. Finally, Foucault's sixth point, that prison indirectly produces delinquents by throwing their families into destitution has some bearing to it; laws have been changing such that inmates' families are not held responsible for victim restitution.

The idea that the prison can be a place of reform and rehabilitation is not an oxymoron. My respondents' stories and experiences give a first hand account of how correctional education programs transformed them as individuals. Prison need not be a bad, scary place. Prisons can offer some individuals programs that may lead them to positive opportunities upon their release. In this sense prisons have the capacity to be correctional facilities instead of penitentiaries.

Do rehabilitation programs in prisons work? For the majority of programs that are offered the overwhelming answer is yes. And if we persist in using recidivism as the only viable standard then when we look at the numbers we will see that inmates who do not participate in correctional educational programs are much more likely to become recidivists than those who do participate in programs. The following is an example from New York's Sing Sing State Penitentiary where some inmates have the opportunity to participate in a program entitled Rehabilitation Through the Arts, the following is a transcript of a conversation between the radio broadcaster and the superintendent of the prison that was aired on National Public Radio on May 21, 2005:

> SIMON: Inmates have to apply to be accepted in the Rehabilitation Through the Arts drama program and may be more motivated than many other prisoners, but Superintendent Fischer believes the success of the program can be seen in statistics.
>
> Mr. FISCHER: The average for non-participants is expected that anywhere from 50 to 60 percent of the people who leave prison come back. We're talking about something probably less than 10 percent. But there's the old argument that many people believe, that we should simply lock somebody up, give them the old story--bread and water and a Bible and forget about them. It doesn't work;

> 99.9 percent of the inmates will return to the community. So the question now becomes do you want them to return after doing five, six years of pushing brooms and not growing up, or do you want them to return with some skills and some socialization and some growth and some maturity? We want to make a change.

My primary policy recommendation is that Pell Grants for offenders be reinstituted. We must provide inmates with the opportunity to pursue higher education in prison and support them in continuing once they are out. This simple act can help change an ex-offender's environment and peer group such that they can find a new community that they can become vested in and said community would in turn endow them with the social capital they lacked earlier in their lives. What would this mean for people like my respondents? It would mean their continuing with their education upon release because they would be aided by members of their community in getting housing, work with flexible hours to continue their education, and on going support via counseling or mentoring.

This point leads me to my second policy recommendation. Consider changing the structure of parole for ex-offenders. Instead of overburdening one individual with the responsibility of keeping tabs on ex-offenders, we ought to consider creating support networks. Let us imagine ex-offenders meeting in groups with their parole office or mentor, pastor etc. and discussing the happenings in their lives, problems they were encountering with family, friends, or co-workers? Ex-offenders could help each other by listening and perhaps brainstorming and advising each other. Such a program could help us move

beyond the infantile system we have now, where we require them to do, instead of providing them with options and allowing them to be the drivers of their fate. Also, such programs would give ex-offenders the opportunity to continue using and expanding their communication, teaching, and learning skills. Such programs would require minimum financial resources they could be run in community provided space by trained volunteers.

I know that it has been said before, but I shall say it again: in order to help inmates say out of prison once they leave, we **must** provide them with support once they are on the outside. We can not just give them bus fare, put them out, and wish them luck. This is the recipe for recidivism. Without a plan, without support, ex-inmates will (and do) return to what they know. They will (and do) go back to their old haunts and habits. Herein lies the route back to prison, not parole as Foucault suggested. We absolutely must find a way to change this part of our penal system.

I have looked at my respondents lives, their growing up and going to school and I am left wondering. At what point did schools stop being one room school houses whose sole purpose was to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic and became these gigantic, bureaucratic institutions? Social services can play a critical role in the life of children in dysfunctional homes. Teachers and counselors can be the first line of defense for children living in difficult situations. Yet, schools should not be seen as the one and only place for helping with these situations. My respondents early childhood showed the failure of their schools to

adequately intervene on their behalf, but school was not the only institution to do this, neither family, neighbors, pastors, nor other community members intervened for them either. And it did not matter if they came from rural or urban communities. Ironically, in the end, incarceration, correctional education programs, and supportive staff provided these women with a way to recreate themselves. These women bought into the programs not for the programs own sake, but for the nurturing, encouragement, and support they felt they got from teachers and staff. What made correctional educational programs worthwhile for these women was good teaching. Herein lays the secret ingredient for the success or failure of any educational program.

I can only speculate as to why these women chose to share their lives with me. On the surface there are the simple answers such as a) they wanted a break from their regular routine or b) they thought that by talking to me changes would be made in the correctional education programs at CCCF. Was it their age? Nancy pointed out to me that age and maturity do not necessarily correlate. So it could be that these women felt they were mature enough to impart some of their hard won knowledge on me. Some of the women were brash and outspoken but not all of them were, some were shy and needed to be drawn out of their shells. Perhaps what made them able to share was the fact that it was the first time in their lives they felt self-secure. Here was a moment for them to recount the story of their lives without apology. Maybe what motivated these women to participate is

intricately tied into the processes of transformation they had gone or were going through.

Earlier I wrote that my goal was to add the voice of the female inmate to the discussions concerning incarceration and rehabilitation. As you can see by their words these women believe that they are actors in their lives. They believe that the correctional education programs in which they have participated in have empowered them and that sense of empowerment is enabling them to move forward with their education and their lives. These women come to the discussion table having experience that no one else has. They live the punishment of incarceration by trying to rehabilitate themselves through correctional education programs.

In my acknowledgements I thank these women for allowing me to interview them, but really it goes beyond that. Ten women allowed one stranger a glimpse into their lives. While there may have been a desire for some social acceptability bias on their behalf, these women were open and candid with me about their lives. They spoke to me of how God, family, poverty, education, incarceration, alcohol and drugs shaped their lives. Each interview opened up a whole new world previously unknown to me I hope this work did the same for you, the reader.

References

Anstiss, B. (2003). The Effectiveness of Correctional Treatment The Effectiveness of Correctional Treatment: Just How Effective Is Correctional Treatment At Reducing Re-Offending? *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*.

Block, & Weisz. (2004, July 6 2004). Choosing Prisoners Over Pupils. *The Washington Post*, p. 19-19.

Bourgois, P. (1995). *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Charter, A. (1996). Integrating traditional aboriginal teaching and learning approaches in post-secondary. *Issues in the North, 40*, 55-64.

Davidson, H. S. (2000). Control and Democracy in Adult Correctional Education. In Wilson, A.L. & Hayes, E.R. (Eds.), *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* (pp. 392-407).

DuGuid, S. (2000). *Can Prisons Work*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ellis, C. G. (2000). *Interview with Ruth Perkins*. In Salem, Oregon (Ed.).

Ellis, C. G. (2000). *Interview with Shannon DeLateur*. In Salem, Oregon (Ed.).

Ellis, C. G. (2000). *Interview with Diane Muchunze*. In Salem, Oregon (Ed.).

Ellis, C. G. (2004). *Interviews with Inmates at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility*. In Wilsonville, Oregon (Ed.).

Finn, P. (1998, 1998/03/01). *Successful Job Placement for Ex-Offenders: The Center for Employment Opportunities*, 2004, from http://www.nicic.org/pubs/1998/serial636.pdf.

Foucault. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Random House.

Gegeo, D. (1999). Adult Education, language, change, and issues of identity and authenticity in Kwara'ae. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 30*(1), 22-36.

Gerber, J., & Fritsch, E. (1995). Adult academic and vocational correctional education programs: A review of recent research. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 22*, 119-142.

Gibbons, D. (1987). *The Limits of Punishment as Social Policy*. San Francisco: National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

Haigler, et al. (1994). *Literacy Behind Prison Walls: Profiles of the Prison Population from the National Adult Literacy Survey*. Washington D.C: US Department of Education.

Harlow, C. W. (2003). *Education and Correctional Populations*: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Jolin, et al. (1997). *An Evaluation of the WICS-Lifeskills Program for Women at the Columbia River Correctional Institution*. Portland: Portland State University.

Karpowitz, D., & Kenner, M. (). *Education as Crime Prevention: The Case for Reinstating Pell Grant Eligibility for the Incarcerated.* , Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson.

Kirsch, et al. (1993). *Adult Literacy in America*. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Education.

Lab, S., & Whitehead, J. (1990). From "Nothing Works" to the "Appropriate Works": The latest stop on the search for the secular grail. *Criminology, 28*, 405-417.

Langan, P. A., & Levin, D. J. (2002, 2002/06/02). *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994*, 2004, from http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/rpr94.htm.

Lin, A. (2000). *Reform in the Making*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Martinson, R. (1974). What works? Questions and answers about prison reform. *The Public Interest, 10*, 22.

Mendoza-Denton, N. (1999). Sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology of US Latinos. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 28*, 375-395.

Morris, N., & Rothman, D. (Eds.). (1998). *The Oxford History of the Prison*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Morris, N. (1977). *The Future of Imprisonment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

National Institute for Literacy. (2001). *Correctional Education Facts*, from http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/facts/correctional.html.

Radio, N. P. (Writer) (2005). Profile: Sing Sing prisoners participating in Rehabilitation Through the Arts put on plays, *Weekend Edition*.

Oregon Department of Corrections. (2004, 2005/06/15). *Quick Facts*, 2004.

Legislature, O. (1996). *Oregon Constitution*. In anonymous (Ed.).

Legislature, O. (1999). *Oregon Constitution*. In anonymous (Ed.).

Pew Research Center for the People and Press. (2003,). The 2004 Political Landscape Evenly Divided and Increasingly Polarized.

Rhodes, L. A. (2001). Toward an Anthropology of Prisons. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 30*, 65-83.

Ryan, T. (1987). *Correctional Education: A State of the Art Analysis*. Washington D.C: US Department of Justice.

Steurer, e. (2001). *Three State Recidivism Study*. Landham: Correctional Education Association.

Sullivan, L. E. (1990). *The Prison Reform Movement: Forlorn Hope*. Boston: Twayne Publishers.

Tennant, M. & Pogson, P. (1995). Learning and Change in the Adult Years: A Developmental Perspective. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The Center on Crime, C. &. C., Open Society Institute. (1997, 2003/11/26). *Education as Crime Prevention: Providing Education to Prisoners*, 2005, from http://www.prisonsucks.com/scans/research_brief__2.pdf.

Ubah, C. B. (2004). Abolition of Pell Grants for Higher Education of Prisoners: Examining Antecedents and Consequences. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 32*(2), 73-85.

Young, M. (2004, 2005/10/01). *US Surpasses Russia as world leader in rate of incarceration*, 2004, from http://www.sentencingproject.org/.

Appendix A: Programs offered by Oregon's Dept. of Corrections

PROGRAM NAME	TYPE OF PROGRAM	PROGRAM GOALS
Functional Literacy	Adult Basic Skills Development	This program targets inmates with very limited functional skills and/or limited English language development. It is designed to develop reading, writing, computing, communication, problem solving, and other skills necessary to function in a work setting. **Outcome:** Upon completion, inmates could qualify for some entry level employment as well as begin
GED	Adult Basic Skills Development	This is a continuation of the functional literacy program and leads to the receipt of a GED certificate. **Outcomes:** Upon completion, these inmates will have passed five exams demonstrating satisfactory skill achievement in writing, social studies, science, literature and the arts, and math. Inmates at this level can perform tasks that involve oral and written instruction in both familiar and unfamiliar situations. These inmates can comprehend some college textbooks and apprenticeship manuals.
ESL	Adult Basic Skills Development	This program targets inmates who are non-native English speakers with low or no English skills. The program focuses on improving English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). **Outcomes:** Upon completion, inmates can satisfy basic survival needs and some limited social demands; can follow simple oral and very basic written instructions. Continuation of the functional literacy program leads to the receipt of a GED certificate.
Special Education	Adult Basic Skills Development	This program is a supplemental program for students with disabilities. Students are assessed to determine specific program needs, as well as identifying those who may need special accommodations for testing, jobs, and independent living. Students are referred for special assessment according to previous test results, self-referral, staff/teacher recommendation, and special education history.
Breaking Barriers	Cognitive Skills	This program is designed to create an awareness in participants that life changes are possible. Tools are provided to develop creative thinking and enhance interpersonal skills. This is an intensive 20-hour facilitated video series that provides a foundation for behavioral change to begin.
Cognitive Self-Change	Cognitive Skills	These programs are designed to specifically confront faulty thinking errors. Thinking errors are addressed by focusing on the distorted thinking used to support unhealthy thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The program is presented in two phases, a 45-60 hour initial intensive phase followed by two-hour weekly meetings.
Pathfinders	Cognitive Skills	This program is presented in a series of nine modules which include: team building, communication, problem solving, values and motivation, anger, time and stress management, and life planning. Each module incorporates

		self-assessment tools, discussions, and a variety of other teaching methodologies that actively engage inmates in the learning process, and is carefully built to engender respect for self and others, allowing the inmates to experience success, and get positive reinforcement for responsible, sensible behavior. This experience manifests itself through improved institutional conduct, and ultimately, lower rates of recidivism.
Social Thinking Skills	Cognitive Skills	Social Thinking Skills is a research based program designed for high-risk adults and juveniles with problem solving skills. The program involves competency skill building components in a nine-step program, which focuses on the consequences of not thinking before taking action and evaluating solutions to problems.
Women In Communit y Service	Cognitive Skills	Women in Community Service (WICS) is a program for women nearing release. These programs emphasize basic life and employability skills. Through the involvement of program staff and volunteers, this program offers assistance to women utilizing a mentorship model in making a smooth transition back to the community. Women must give 40 hours of community service upon returning to the community.
Occupation Preparation	Workforce Development	This program targets inmates who have obtained a high school diploma or GED certificate, but do not meet minimum skill requirements for job placement or training. Outcomes: Upon completing this program, inmates will be able to meet proficiency requirements for identified institutional jobs and/or professional/technical programs.
Work-Based Education	2000 Job Training Programs - 21	Auto Mechanics, Custodial Tech – 1, Barber/Hair Design Custodial Tech – 2, Books on Tape, Custodial Tech Procedures Cabinet Making, Furniture Refinishing, CADD/CAM, Horticulture Carpentry/Cabinet Making, Intarsia, Clerical Basics, Organic Gardening, Computer Repair and Assembly, Professional Cooking, Construction Technology, Tape Player Repair
	2004 Job Training Programs - 6	Automotive Tech, Construction Tech, Building Construction Technology, Hair design, Eyeglass Recycling, Computer Tech-MOUS

APPENDIX B: **Programs offered at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility**

Education

- General Education (GED)
- Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- Destinations Computer Lab

Work-Based Education

- Hair Design (medium only)
- Computer Technology
- Eye-Glass Recycling (minimum only)

Work Programs

- Sewing (minimum only)
- Off-Site Work Crews (minimum only)
- Institution Work (kitchen, orderlies, custodial, maintenance, landscaping, etc.)

Oregon Corrections Enterprises (OCE)

- DMV Call Center (medium only)
- Printshop (medium only)

Cognitive-based Programs

- Breaking Barriers
- Thinking for Change

Alcohol & Drug Treatment

- Group Treatment
- Turning Point (also cognitive, mental health, parenting and family & transition-based)

- InFocus (also cognitive, mental health, parenting and family & transition-based)
- Alcohol & Drug Education Workshops
- Many Roads One Journey (16 step program)
- Self-Help Programs (AA, NA)

Mental Health

- Basic Mental Health Services
- Crisis Management Program
- HIV/HEP C Pre and Post Test Counseling
- Risk Reduction Classes (Smart Start Packages)
- Connections

Parenting & Family Programs

- Parenting I
- Parenting II (therapeutic visiting)
- Girl Scouts Beyond Bars
- Early Head Start Program
- Family Literacy Program
- Prenatal Education & Doula Support System

Activities

- Creative Writing
- YOGA
- Quilting
- Meditation (religious services)
- Write Around Portland (WRAP)
- Playwriting

- All the World's a Stage (theatre group)
- Non-violent Communication
- LifeTrac
- Canine Companions For Independence
- Choir (religious services)
- Religious Services
    - Women's Christian Fellowship
    - Prison Fellowship
    - Jehovah's Witness
    - Women's Aglow
    - Latter Day Saints
    - 7th Day Adventists
    - Catholic Services
    - New Beginnings
    - Native American Sweats and Smudges
    - Freedom In the Son (FITS)
    - Worship Services
    - Praise Chapel Services
    - Grace Community Assemblies of God Services
    - Christian Science
    - Shelter In the Storm
    - Living Enrichment Center
    - Buddhist Meditation
    - Powerhouse Temple Church of God in Christ

Transition Programs

- Women in Community Services (WICS) Life Skills (minimum only)
- Pathfinders