



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

Making a Difference in Criminology: Past, Present, and Future

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**Prepared for presentation at the 2018 Southern
Criminal Justice Association Conference
Pensacola, FL**



Presentation Outline

I. Introduction

II. Making a Difference Movement

III. Challenges to Making a Difference

IV. Effectively Making a Difference through Researcher
and Policymaker/Practitioner Partnerships

V. Conclusion



I – Introduction

- Early applied purpose of criminology at the University of Chicago.
- John D. Rockefeller grants to improve the slums thereby reducing labor unrest (culture conflict).
- Subsequent 50 year focus on offender and crime’s causes (i.e., Sutherland, Merton, Cohen, Miller, and Cloward and Ohlin).
- 1970’s – Shift to critique of criminal justice and alternative reforms of diversion and deinstitutionalization rather than the belief that the criminal justice system operated with “disinterested professionalism.”
- 1980’s – Nothing works: get tough with reduced reliance on probation and parole to flat or determinant sentencing, three strikes, zero tolerance, and mass incarceration.
- 2000 – Beginning of the “making a difference” evidence-based efforts reflecting the broadly held belief that the criminal justice system reforms of both the 1970’s and 1980’s did not work.
- Tracing the making a difference movement and best practice.



II – Making a Difference Movement

- Since 2000 – numerous initiatives aimed at elevating research evidence’s role in policy and practice (i.e. Criminology and Public Policy, Policy Consortium of ASC, ACJS, and CJS Doctoral Programs).
- Yet, important questions remain with different perspectives held by individual criminologists.
- Fundamental question: causality versus best available research evidence in policy and practice (i.e. Tittle 2004, Wellford 2009, Mears 2013, Blomberg et.al. 2013).
- What emerged among numerous criminologists has been the broadly based acceptance that both functions can and should be embraced simultaneously for longer and shorter term benefits to criminology as a science and criminal justice policy and practice.
- Regarding the use of best available research in policy and practice the goal is to target the problem in order to provide (1) direct intervention, and (2) more effective amelioration of the alterable conditions resulting from the problem rather than elimination of the problems uncertain causes.



II – Making a Difference Movement Cont.

- An example of direct intervention and targeting the problem's alterable conditions is increasing educational achievement among incarcerated delinquent youth.
- While no direct causal relationship has been established between educational achievement during incarceration and post-release recidivism, best available research documents that incarcerated delinquent youth who experience marked educational achievement are more likely to return to school following release and, if they remain in school, their likelihood of recidivism is substantially reduced.
- Employing best available research to juvenile justice education policy and practice that increases the likelihood of educational achievement for incarcerated delinquents is clearly preferable to waiting until causal certainty is established.
- Importantly, however, as a growing number of criminologists work to share their research on various crime and justice policy and practice questions – there are significant challenges that extend beyond questions of causality.



III – Challenges to making a Difference

- Role of politics and fiscal costs in making a difference efforts.
- Researchers need to recognize and anticipate how politics and fiscal constraints can shape and/or influence how research will or will not be used in the policy and practice process.
- However, even with researchers' best efforts to plan and anticipate for politics and fiscal constraints in making a policy and practice difference – their best efforts can be derailed.



III – Challenges to making a Difference Cont.

- An example of effectiveness in making a difference through research derailed by political and fiscal constraints.
- From 1998 to 2010, I served as Principal Investigator for the Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program (JJEED).
- JJEED developed in response to a 1983 class-action lawsuit on behalf of a 14-year-old Florida boy known as Bobby M. and three other children.
- The lawsuit's resulting consent decree required Florida to provide incarcerated delinquent youth special, vocational, and alternative educational services equivalent to or better than those in public schools.
- Responsibility for complying with the Bobby M. consent decree was shared by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE).
- FDOE and FDJJ selected Florida State University's College of Criminology and Criminal Justice to implement Florida's compliance system, namely JJEED.
- JJEED operated with 4 interrelated functions for Florida's residential, day treatment, and detention education programs (i.e., quality assurance, technical assistance, research, and policy) all of which were aimed at continuous research based quality improvement.



III – Challenges to making a Difference Cont.

- During its 12 years of operations, JJEEP became recognized as an exemplary program with the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention providing funding to JJEEP to assist other states in implementing research based education services for incarcerated delinquents.
- Yet, and despite its demonstrated success over 12 years, in 2010 the Florida legislature ended JJEEP and returned to its pre-Bobby M. juvenile justice education practices namely no QA, TA, or research-based policy and practice.
- In response to state budget short falls from the 2008 financial crisis, and the simultaneous national high stakes testing on student achievement in public schools – Florida chose to focus on students in public schools thereby leaving behind incarcerated delinquents.
- The question is – what can researchers do in their efforts to make a difference to more effectively respond to these political and fiscal contingencies?



IV – Making a Difference Through Research-Practitioner Partnerships

- What are these partnerships? Researcher and policymaker/practitioner partnerships involve collaborative efforts to conceptualize, plan, and implement rigorous research and evaluations that directly inform policy and practice.
- NIJ funded several studies to identify some of the salient characteristics of these partnerships and subsequently funded 29 partnership projects across the country.
- Among the salient characteristics of effective partnerships included: open communication, collaboration and planning, implementation and evaluation culminating in reciprocity and exchange.
- Researcher and policymaker/practitioner partnerships are emerging as a “best practice” for the making a difference movement.
- 3 Partnership Examples



IV – Making a Difference Through Research- Practitioner Partnerships

Example 1: Palm Beach County, Florida and FSU

- 25 year history.
- Conducted numerous studies (i.e., weed & seed, youth violence, jail forecasting, drug court) with three major studies currently underway (i.e., DUI homicide survivor services, school delinquency and safety intervention, jail risk assessment validation).
- Through the ongoing partnership, Palm Beach County has built infrastructure for institutionalized research-driven criminal justice policy and practice.
- We continue to build and expand our partnership with collaborative planning between Palm Beach County's criminal justice system and FSU.
- It is important to note that the partnership has not always gone smoothly (discuss change in leadership).



IV – Making a Difference Through Research-Practitioner Partnerships Cont.

Example 2: Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) and FSU

- 2012 Funded by NIJ.
- Developed a cohort of 250,000 inmates released from Florida prisons between 2004 and 2011.
- Conducted three major recidivism studies employing the 250,000 inmate cohort, namely the employment and recidivism outcomes of substance abuse treatment, work-based programs, and post-release supervision.
- Resulted in numerous policy and practice changes (i.e., substance abuse treatment close to release, expanded work release programs, and plans to increase post release supervision).
- The partnership currently continues with multiple projects underway.
- Again, as in the case with Palm Beach county, our partnership with FDC has undergone adjustments with leadership changes but has continued with excellent reciprocal benefits.



IV – Making a Difference Through Research-Practitioner Partnerships Cont.

Example 3: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) and FSU

- 2014 Funded by NIJ.
- 3 research and policy studies.
- (1) civil citation, (2) family visitation, and (3) school to prison pipeline through school-based arrests.
- Following these three studies, civil citation was legislatively expanded, a series of steps taken to improve family visitation, and to reduce school arrests and juvenile probation officers were assigned to four major hotspot high schools in the state.
- Importantly, the FDJJ partnership has also changed (in a positive direction) over the years as a result of leadership change.



IV – Making a Difference Through Research- Practitioner Partnerships Cont.

- In sum, these three partnerships have resulted in both direct and indirect policy and practice outcomes.
- Moreover, these partnerships have led to numerous peer reviewed publications in criminology's major research journals and provided data for a series of master's theses and Ph.D. dissertations.
- It is important to recognize that these partnerships evolve over time with potential problems arising that must be acknowledged with open discussion and give and take from both sides for ultimate resolution.



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**IV – Peer Reviewed Publications from
FSU, Palm Beach County, FDC and DJJ
Researcher and Policymaker/Practitioner
Partnerships by Journal**

<u>Journal</u>	<u>Number of Articles</u>
<i>Justice Quarterly</i>	6
<i>Crime and Delinquency</i>	6
<i>Journal of Criminal Justice</i>	6
<i>Criminology</i>	5
<i>Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency</i>	5
<i>International Journal of Criminology and Sociology</i>	3
<i>Criminology & Public Policy</i>	2
<i>Journal of Experimental Criminology</i>	2
<i>Justice Research and Policy</i>	2
<i>Journal of Quantitative Criminology</i>	2
<i>Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology</i>	1
<i>Journal of Offender Rehabilitation</i>	1
<i>Criminal Justice and Behavior</i>	1
<i>Criminal Justice Studies</i>	1
<i>Punishment and Society</i>	1
<i>Journal of Offender Monitoring</i>	1
<i>American Journal of Criminal Justice</i>	1
<i>Journal on Poverty Law & Policy</i>	1
<i>Crime, Law and Social Change</i>	1
TOTAL	48



V – Conclusion

- Over the past century, criminology has unevenly evolved as an applied and scientific discipline.
- However, it now appears that criminology is poised to effectively combine both purposes thereby simultaneously advancing criminology as a science and applied discipline that makes a crime and policy difference.
- One empirically documented “best practice” in this simultaneous pursuit is researcher and policymaker/practitioner partnerships.
- A clear example of the urgent need for these partnerships is the far too frequent occurrence of tragic school shootings (discuss motivated offenders and vulnerable targets).



V – Conclusion Cont.

- Clearly, the list of other significant crime, criminal justice, and victimization problems is long and growing and in need of research and policy collaborations.
- But now is a time of great promise given the unprecedented availability of data, sophisticated methods of data analyses, and very importantly, the growing recognition among researchers and policymakers/practitioners alike that we must and can work together to effectively confront crime.
- It is interesting to note that in a publication by Morris, Wooding, and Grant (2011), the authors concluded that the time lag in health research translation into policy was 17 years.



V – Conclusion Cont.

- While we do not have research on the time lag in the policy translation of criminological research, it could easily be as long or longer.
- However, given the more immediate policy translation of research resulting from the researcher and policy maker/practitioner partnerships, it is evident the time lag can be significantly reduced.
- In conclusion, this is a special time in the history of criminology. While the challenges of politics and fiscal constraints will remain, as this conference's title recognizes "Making a Difference About Crime and the Criminal Justice System" is a welcomed mandate for the future.
- We can make a difference!



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Thank you!