



Envisioning a Human-First Future for Correctional Education

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Humans Are Best Suited to Support Incarcerated Learners

Employment is one of the strongest predictors of success after release (Harvard University, 2019). For incarcerated individuals to achieve real employability, they need meaningful learning and workforce development opportunities while still incarcerated. And here's what we know for certain: teaching and learning are inherently human endeavors.

The people who choose to work in correctional education do so because they want to help others. They want to spend their time building connections, offering encouragement, and supporting transformation. They don't want to be buried in paperwork or wrestling with administrative tasks that pull them away from the people who need their attention most.

Incarcerated learners need more positive human interaction—not less of it. Motivation and engagement come from those who see incarcerated learners as individuals and hold high expectations for their potential (Wouden, 2025). Despite all the technological advances at our disposal, it's ultimately connection and community that drive participation and lasting success.

The Reality of Our Current Environment

The harsh reality is that persistent staffing shortages mean there simply aren't enough people to support the nearly 2 million incarcerated individuals in this country (Prison Policy Initiative, 2025). The result? Long waitlists for programming, with only 17% of those incarcerated able to access education programs and 10% able to access job training (Wang, 2022).

Meanwhile, the administrative burden is overwhelming. Staff spend countless hours managing cases, coordinating services, ensuring compliance with regulations, and handling complaints. Budgets are tightening, security concerns are real, and the environment is uniquely challenging in ways that traditional education settings never face.

The outcome is predictable: only a small percentage of highly motivated individuals can access and take advantage of opportunities that effectively prepare them for employment.

Correctional Settings Deserve Tailored Solutions

Correctional facilities are unlike any other learning environment. In essence, they are "one-room schoolhouses" with limited resources and little to no access to modern teaching tools. Educators must navigate constantly changing schedules, serve exceptionally high rates of students with disabilities (Bixby et al., 2022), and reach hundreds or even thousands of learners with minimal staff.

Working with hundreds of jurisdictions and correctional educators, we've witnessed these challenges firsthand. We've sat beside them as they taught and watched them toil through endless administrative tasks. This experience has made one thing clear: traditional technology solutions simply weren't designed for the unique constraints of correctional environments.

The complexity deepens when you consider that every facility operates differently. State and local legislative requirements vary dramatically across jurisdictions, and what works brilliantly in one



context may fail completely in another. This reality demands a fundamentally different approach—one where technology is carefully shaped around each facility's specific needs, constraints, and goals rather than forcing facilities to adapt to generic solutions.

Reclaiming Time for the Work That Transforms Lives

We don't believe facilities need automation for automation's sake. Instead, we're focused on augmenting existing processes, improving efficiency, and helping staff reclaim the bandwidth they need to focus on work only humans can do—like building relationships, offering encouragement, and supporting real change.

When correctional staff, incarcerated learners, and technology work together effectively, facilities can achieve significant outcomes that support employment readiness at scale.

Consider the efficiencies these tools could create. A context-aware portfolio system that assembles and presents a learner's achievements differently based on the needs of parole boards, employers, or re-entry specialists. A progress tool that analyzes learner outputs against objectives, surfacing signals of improvement and flagging areas for further development—giving staff the insights and time needed to deliver meaningful feedback and guidance. Or, a digital instruction assistant that helps educators quickly convert their hard-earned expertise into high-quality digital programming.

Partnership Through AI Transformation

While artificial intelligence (AI) is quickly transforming how people work across every industry, many organizations are struggling to equip their teams to use these innovations effectively. Implementing AI successfully requires significant expertise. There are security and compliance risks to address, technologies to evaluate and deploy, and complex concepts like context windows, hallucinations, and bias mitigation to navigate.

At Orijin, we understand that meaningful AI implementation requires guided onboarding and ongoing support. This is the experience and expertise we bring to our facility partners every day.

What has always set Orijin apart isn't just our platform—it's our approach to partnership. While others may offer access to learning content, we deliver high-touch, personalized support. Our team doesn't simply roll out technology; we walk alongside staff through operational change and cultural transformation.

Because we understand the power of this partnership model, we're uniquely positioned to guide facilities through this next wave of AI technology transformation. While new and emerging AI tools have tremendous potential to improve how correctional facilities operate, the sensitive nature of the correctional environment means any transformation must be approached with extraordinary care. That's precisely why this next wave of transformation requires a true partnership.

AI Designed Specifically for Correctional Education

We are building the next generation of correctional education technology. This technology is centered on AI solutions that support facilities by taking on key operational tasks, allowing staff to reclaim time and focus on work that truly transforms lives.

Our AI solutions—built using today's advanced generative AI and machine learning technology—are tuned to correctional language and workflows, customized for each facility's unique context, and highly adaptive to facility and individual needs.

At their foundation, these solutions are based on a set of core principles. Namely, our AI solutions are:

- **Personalized** to a facility's workflows
- **Responsive** to staff needs
- **Supported** by a trusted partner



Further, our AI solutions will operate with a “human in the loop.” They do not make decisions on behalf of staff nor replace them—they augment workflows and create the capacity staff need to focus on rehabilitation and reentry.

Like all of Orijin’s solutions, our AI is built with correctional-grade security from the ground up, recognizing that protecting sensitive learner and facility data isn’t just a compliance requirement—it’s fundamental to maintaining safety and trust. We employ enterprise-level encryption, strict access controls, and data governance frameworks that ensure facility data never contributes to public or open AI models.

The Power and Potential to Change Corrections for Good

The future of correctional education lies not in choosing between human connection and technological innovation, but in thoughtfully combining both. Humans are irreplaceable in the work of education, motivation, and transformation. Technology’s role is to handle the administrative burden and operational complexity that currently prevents staff from focusing on what they do best.

By partnering with facilities to implement AI solutions designed specifically for correctional environments—solutions that are personalized, responsive, and properly supported—we can create systems where the nearly 2 million incarcerated individuals in the U.S. have access to the education and workforce development they need for successful reentry.

The path forward requires authentic partnership, tailored solutions, and an unwavering commitment to keeping human connection at the center of correctional education. When we get this right, we don’t just transform individual lives—we create positive change that reverberates through entire systems and communities.



References

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