

Workshop 2

Continuing Professional Development for Prison Educators

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Probably no element of the correctional education scene is more negative, more lacking, than that of professional status. If the educational process is to play any role at all in the rehabilitation of the inmate or the change of correctional systems, it must have a professional status. This is its greatest lack and, at the same time, the resource with the greatest overall potential for a major breakthrough in penal systems. (Reagen and Stoughton, 1976, p. 27).

Note: In the U.S. prison education, and the education of confined juveniles, is called correctional education. This term will be applied throughout the paper.

Correctional educators need to focus on their own professionalization needs, as well as on the learning needs of students in their classes, so they can continue provide quality educational services in the most difficult setting for teaching. Few institutional teachers have access to the rich history and literature of their own field, so they tend to feel especially vulnerable to institutional anti-education and administrative pressures to treat education as "window dressing." Two generations of degree programs in the field of correctional education have failed.

A new and more comprehensive (third generation) program is emerging at the Center for the Study of Correctional Education at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), based on an eclectic model to address the needs for (a) correctional educators to experience University learning opportunities that will familiarize them with the parameters of their own field, (b) the connections between theirs and the related fields of education (adult, special, and vocational education; educational counseling and administration; elementary level socialization and secondary emphases on the respective content areas; and so forth), and (c) the need to be not only an informed consumer of professional assets, but also a contributor in this specialized yet still formative field of education. This paper is about the Center's initiatives to establish a masters degree in correctional education, which can lead toward either (a) an articulated Ed.D. in correctional education or (b) a joint Ph.D. program in correctional education. Potential online courses are planned to contribute to this professionalization repertoire.

Introduction: Problems Associated with the Professionalization of Correctional Education

Despite of widespread notion that resource inadequacy is the biggest constraint to the field of correctional education, the most intense impediment might actually be a lack of professional awareness. This lack has been called the correctional educator confused identity problem.

Recent studies suggest that only about eight percent of institutional teachers know the names of the field's greatest contributors or the titles of their books; far fewer have ever read the most salient books on the field (Kistler, 1995; Sauter, 1999). Many correctional educators do not know they are correctional educators. Instead they think they are simply institutional employees, or teachers in some particular content area who happen to teach in a facility. Similarly, the overwhelming majority of correctional educators do not know how the problems they face daily were approached at other times or locations—most do not even know how those problems are currently addressed throughout their own jurisdiction. Only about

60% of the approximately 30,000 North American correctional education practitioners know that the Correctional Education Association (CEA) exists, and only about 10% of them are members.

No universities in the U.S. grant terminal degrees, Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s, in correctional education, though at some universities students can fashion interdisciplinary terminal degrees in correctional education if they do not need courses or advisors with expertise in the field. Despite more than 215 years of history there have only been two definitive books on the field, and the best literature is long out of print. In addition, much of that literature is inaccessible, we believe, because it proves that (a) prisoners are people, (b) juvenile facilities and adult prisons can be managed democratically (in contrast to the authoritarian paradigm), and (c) these democratic strategies can be effective in motivating incarcerated to turn their lives around, and helping them attain that goal.

No state in the U.S. has a licensure for correctional educators. Correctional teacher preparation, to the extent that it exists (how many people do you know with degrees in correctional education?) is regulated by the confused professional identity problem. There is only one comprehensive collection of correctional education literature, and it took longer than a decade of intense effort to collect it.

In summary, correctional educators have not had access to knowledge about correctional education. Because they define correctional education as just another institutional program (and usually prioritize loyalty to the institutional administration rather than student learning), or because they define the field situationally (they see themselves as displaced teachers who will likely return to the local schools in the future—sojourners), they are not inclined to pursue that knowledge base. The result of these conditions is that there are no structural incentives for learning about correctional education. Further, anti-education influences, which are often inseparable from an anti-theory, anti-intellectual, anti-university perspective, exacerbate these negative tendencies among correctional faculty.

This analysis could proceed ad infinitum. The field of correctional education has backed itself into a situation in which it is difficult for most practitioners to avoid being highly opinionated and poorly informed. Most correctional educators are unaware of all the resources that could be brought to bear to help them solve the intense challenges they face daily.

However, this vulnerable condition of the field often leads to a wonderful effect. When practitioners are genuinely interested in addressing the challenges—interested in prioritizing student learning and intent on their own personal development—tremendous energy is released as they realize that support actually exists.

This energy is driven by practitioners' own internal and collective professional needs. It means that they do not need to feel alienated from education communities, or remain ignorant about programs and models that have been proven to work in settings similar to the ones in which they work. This realization is compelling: "I am a correctional educator, and my field has experienced more than two hundred years of struggle to improve student learning, even in these ugly, hateful places." In a flash, given this new access to relevant information, previous rejections of history transform into keen, directed interest; networking with

colleagues shifts from a peripheral to a central endeavor; and aversion to relevant theory becomes a new, driving interest.

These changes have sometimes been experienced by unlikely persons. Perhaps the only prerequisite is an open mind, or a warm heart, and access to information. Just as institutional education should be available so it can help when inmates are ready to learn, so correctional teacher education programs should be available when teachers are ready to get engaged in the best thinking and programming of the field. The only people who discount this energy are those who have not taken the time to investigate the rich themes of their own field.

Three Generations of Correctional Education Professional Development Degree Programs

Twenty years ago there were 15 correctional education preparation programs around the nation, offering degrees at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. Today only a handful remain, and there are no doctoral programs. Correctional educators who want to prepare for leadership roles through advanced degrees sometimes enroll in interdisciplinary doctoral programs, where they cannot access courses tailored for this specific field. The faculty in these programs are unfamiliar with the long history of this field or its extensive literature.

There have been two approaches to correctional education teacher preparation programs. First approach or generation programs were based on locally identified needs, negotiated by decision-makers at an institution and a nearby university. Examples of these are the correctional education/counseling program at Lehigh University (Pennsylvania), the correctional education/adult basic education program at Coppin State University (Maryland), and the correctional/elementary education program at Western Illinois University. First generation programs tended not to be replicable at other locations. Most have been terminated.

Second generation programs focused on correctional/special education. Examples of these were the correctional/special education programs at Lenoir-Rhyne College (North Carolina), the State University of New York at New Paltz, and at Slippery Rock University (Pennsylvania). Second generation programs were driven by the availability of Federal funds for special education personnel development, and were based on the notion that all confined students had educational disabilities. These programs tended to terminate when special funds became exhausted, or when the faculty moved to other assignments.

The model for third generation correctional education degree programs is rooted in the eclectic nature of the field. Students will take courses designed to attain three goals: (a) expertise in the themes of the field's core, as reflected in the history and literature of correctional and alternative education and prison reform—to facilitate problem solving through an expansive repertoire of relevant strategies, (b) expertise in the particular emphasis the student wishes to pursue (Reading, Math, English as a Second Language, Career and Technical Education, Special Education, etc.)—to extend the pattern of professionalization and access to useful strategies in that emphasis, and (c) expertise in curriculum development, professional writing, and public speaking at meetings sponsored by professional organizations—to empower them to contribute to the field, as well as enhance their informed consumption of assets contributed by others.

Attributes of the Center for the Study of Correctional Education

The planned CSUSB Correctional Education Program will be a prototypic third generation exemplar, designed to be replicated. Its curriculum will bring together the best research on useful learning experiences for incarcerated—models that have been proven to work. At present the most innovative and useful prison education models are reported in the historical literature of the correctional education field, and in the European Union. The CSUSB curriculum will draw concepts from the best programs in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Between 2,200 and 2,600 correctional educators work within a 50 mile radius of San Bernardino. In 1992 CSUSB began operations of the Center for the Study of Correctional Education. The Center has been involved in institutional education program evaluation (in the California Youth Authority, and the departments of corrections in California, New Mexico, and Florida) and has periodically provided inservice and course opportunities for incumbent correctional educators. It houses the most comprehensive collection of correctional education literature, and functions as an informal repository for the only complete set of back editions of the Journal of Correctional Education.

CSUSB has four faculty members with international reputations for excellence in the field. Together, Center directors Drs. Carolyn Eggleston and Thom Gehring have approximately sixty years of experience in the field. Dr. Eggleston is the president of the Correctional Education Association; she just finished six years as the Journal of Correctional Education editor and publisher. Dr. Eggleston is an expert in correctional/special education; her research agenda has focused on education in facilities for juveniles and females, and the professional development of incumbent correctional teachers. Dr. Gehring is the CEA historian. He is an expert in correctional education organizational structures, the field's paradigms and anomalies, and the skills and characteristics of correctional educators. Dr. Richard Ashcroft is an expert in the correctional/alternative and correctional/special education literatures. Dr. Randall Wright is an expert in Canadian correctional education, institutional teacher knowledge, and critical and postmodern correctional education. The teaching, leadership, and research generated by each of these four professors have been recognized as the standard of scholarly excellence in the field.

The Center for the Study of Correctional Education maintains formal relationships with the European Prison Education Association, the Forum for the Study of Education in Penal Systems (an international research collaborative), and the Correctional Education Association of Australia. It has formal alliances with the California Youth Authority, CEA, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the National Institute for Correctional Education (NICE, at Indiana University of Pennsylvania [IUP]). The Center has hosted correctional education visitors from Japan, Holland, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, England, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Sweden, Canada, Mexico, Denmark, and Finland, and from about half of the U.S. states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

As a result of these trends and processes, CSUSB's Center is recognized as a crucible of expertise and innovation in this field. If there is to be an improvement in correctional education leadership and direction, it may begin there. CSUSB has the human and material resources, and professional connections, to forge an effective, third generation correctional education teacher and administrator/supervisor preparation program. Such resources were never before available at a single

location, and have not been rivaled during the last sixty years.
Attributes of the Cooperating Universities

IUP offers terminal degrees in Criminology and in Education. The IUP Criminology Department has worked for years to develop a pattern of professional identity for its faculty as teachers, as well as experts in criminal and juvenile justice. The Department's focus on peacemaking fits well with the CSUSB Center's focus on prison reform and restorative justice. The IUP College of Education is dedicated to expanding its programming for targeted populations. The IUP Professional Studies in Education Department has focused on useful programs in urban, adult, and related fields of education. It developed an effective cadre of professors who have gained experience working with correctional educators. They are willing and able to help improve and consolidate the field of correctional education. IUP's NICE has implemented an electronic clearinghouse for correctional educators; its Summer Academy earned an excellent reputation, offering intensive learning experiences for innovative leaders in the field.

Claremont University is organized along the Oxford model, with centralized services but professional identity of each individual college retained. Its Ph.D. program is noted for academic excellence, has a long tradition of cooperation with California State University, and is located 30 miles from CSUSB. Claremont faculty have expressed keen interest in education that does not fit the local delivery model. Graduates of Center programs in correctional education have been welcomed to Claremont as Ph.D. students. This relationship is planned to result in a joint Ph.D. in Correctional Education program with CSUSB's Center.
Projected Elements of the New Masters Degree Program

Students will take 52 quarter units or 13 courses: 44 units of coursework in correctional education and the related disciplines, plus four units for a reworked, graduate level EDUC 306 Expository Writing course; plus one four unit course equivalent for the culminating experience—thesis or project). Of these 52 units, 36 units or nine courses or will be required of all degree Program students—three Education Core courses or 12 units (the reworked EDUC 306 Expository Writing course, the regular EDUC 603 Effective Communication in Education, and the regular 607 Introduction to Educational Research), four Program Core courses or 16 units (EDUC 674 Foundations of Institutional Education—History and Literature, EDUC 675 Educational Change in Institutional Settings, EDUC 680 Teaching the Correctional Student, and EDUC 542D Seminar in Correctional Education), and an occasional course. In addition to these 36 units or nine courses, three courses or 12 units will be in the student's area of specialization; and one will be either an elective or a service-oriented externship.

Projected Course Requirement Summary

12 units COE Core (reworked EDUC 306 Writing, 603 Communication, 607 Research),
16 units Program Core (EDUC 674 History, 675 Change, 680 Teaching, and Seminar),
4 units—Correctional Education occasional course,
12 units specialization, from a related field of education,
4 units elective or service-oriented externship,
4 units culminating activity (thesis or project), and
52 units total for degree completion.

The occasional courses on correctional education will be offered through the EDUC 542D Special Topics heading, and rotated periodically. These courses will help (a) round out the Program content, and allow (b) tenure track professors who are lifelong correctional educators to experiment with nontraditional courses, and (c) faculty who are not correctional educators to teach in the Program according to expertise and interest. Occasional courses will address topics such as Special/Correctional Education, Alternative/Correctional Education, Vocational/Correctional Education, Pedagogy and Andragogy (Adult Education) in Correctional Education, Organizational Service Delivery in Correctional Education, or in depth courses on the work of any of the major historic contributors to the field of correctional education and prison reform.

The 16 unit, four course Program Core will be taught mostly by CSUSB tenure track professors with experience in correctional education—Drs. Eggleston, Wright, Ashcroft, and Gehring. In addition, CSUSB, IUP, and Claremont professors may periodically teach at the other campuses in the alliance (the ones to which they are not normally assigned), to cross train and provide options for teaching student course requirements.

Each student will pursue a trajectory of three courses in an area of specialization relevant to correctional education, as introduced above. To the extent possible these specializations will be the same at both CSUSB and IUP, and fit into Claremont's requirements, in areas such as vocational, elementary, secondary, special, environmental, and bilingual education; curriculum and instruction, literacy and numeracy, English as a second language, educational administration, and educational counseling. There may also be additional specializations that are not offered at CSUSB, such as adult education or adult literacy, foundations of education, educational communication, and/or educational research.

Special Features of the Program

Students will move through the Correctional Education Program in cohorts to facilitate orientation sessions, study groups and cooperative learning. Each cohort will elect a student leader or representative. If they are from the San Bernardino area, these elected leaders must be members in good standing of the Tri-County Correctional Education Association; if they are from remote areas they must be members in good standing of the correctional education professional association active in that area. The first elected leader will serve on the Correctional Education Program Advisory Board; thereafter the several elected student leaders will elect a representative to serve on the Advisory Board.

The masters degree courses will be based on the report of California's Robert Presley Institute on the Skills and Characteristics of Successful, Veteran Correctional Educators, suggesting a competency-based curriculum. Course objectives will be cross referenced with (a) these skills/characteristics, as well as with standards from (b) the National Commission on Accreditation of Teacher Education, (c) the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (active in California), and (d) the Northeastern Association of Schools and Colleges (active in Pennsylvania).

Most CSUSB correctional education masters degree courses will be listed at both the graduate and undergraduate levels to allow interested vocational educators who are pursuing their undergraduate degrees to participate in the same courses, with differential workloads (an extra text, test, and/or a longer and more detailed paper

at the graduate level). In addition, CSUSB will continue to offer correctional education courses for working professionals—with classes often off campus, on weekends, and in intensive terms whenever clusters of students can have their instructional needs best met that way. Some courses will be offered in neutral locations, so students from both CSUSB and IUP can participate. Distance learning will be expanded in this program, especially digital learning, usually in conjunction with some in-class learning experiences.

The planned joint Ph.D. Program will seek a new category of the U.S. National Board Teacher Certification Standards (NBTS) Certification for correctional educators. This approach may stimulate some states to establish relevant licensures. The relationship between NBTS and the Ph.D. program will be analogous to the skills/characteristics in the masters degree program—Ph.D. courses will be aligned with NBTS standards, a procedure may be especially useful for the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Summary

CSUSB's Center for the Study of Correctional Education, in cooperation with IUP and Claremont University, plans to improve and expand professional opportunities in correctional education. Although details of these programs are still formative, our intentions are clear and relevant strategies are being worked out. Interested persons should contact Dr. Thom Gehring (U.S. phone: [909] 880-5653; e-mail: tgehring@csusb.edu) or Dr. Carolyn Eggleston (U.S. phone: [909] 880-5654 or egglesto@csusb.edu).

