

**WVAdultEd Instructor Handbook  
2017-2018**

## **Section 15**

# **Teaching Adults in a Correctional Facility**



The West Virginia Adult Education (WVAdultEd) Program is funded by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, enacted August 7, 1998 as Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

WVAdultEd is administered through the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development, Building 6, Room 230, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0330.

The *WVAdultEd Instructor Handbook* is produced by the WVAdultEd Professional Development Program, whose fiscal agent is the Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) 3, 501 22nd Street, Dunbar, West Virginia 25064-1711.

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## Teaching Adults in a Correctional Facility

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# OFFICE OF DIVERSION AND TRANSITION PROGRAMS

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## **What is the Office of Diversion and Transition Programs (ODTP)?**

The Department of Education's Office of Diversion and Transition Programs (ODTP) provides educational services to over 6,000 juveniles and adults in residential and other state operated facilities. The State Department of Education and State Board of education have assumed an important role in protecting the constitutional rights of this population by providing programs and services that help change their lives.

In October 2016, the Office of Institutional Education Programs became the Office of Diversion and Transition Programs. This office is responsible for diverting youth and adults from further penetration into the residential or correctional system. Educating students to be successful in life and to break the cycle of incarceration.

The role of an adult educator is to transition the students to their next educational environment. For adults, the primary transition should be the workforce or additional education that will lead to the workforce.

ODTP programs are divided into four regions. Please see the website located at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/odtp/OIEP%20Field%20Staff.html>.

## **ODTP Vision**

Through education, transform the lives of students in institutions in order to foster responsible, productive citizens, thus creating safer communities.

## **ODTP Mission**

To prepare juveniles and adults for successful transition to school or employment and to life in their communities as responsible and productive citizens.

This is done by:

- offering innovative, research-based educational opportunities, best practices and approaches
- teaching the content, skills and attitudes for success in school, community and the workplace
- providing the appropriate academic, social and vocational skills development and transitional services
- collaborating with others vested in achieving the same outcomes
- employing and encouraging dedicated, quality staff throughout the organization

- acting as a role model and mentor for students to learn positive attitudes and behaviors and high standards of ethical and moral conduct
- being accountable and fostering performance improvement
- reducing recidivism through education
- advocating the value of each individual's re-entry into the community
- promoting successful reintegration into school, community and the workplace
- encouraging participation in educational opportunities
- supporting all aspects of classroom operations to ensure a quality environment for teaching and learning

### **How does the Simulated Workplace Adult Education classroom operate in state prisons/correctional facilities?**

In an effort to further develop employability skills with incarcerated adults, ODTP implements components of the West Virginia Department of Education Office of Career and Technical Education (CTE) Simulated Workplace Model in adult education classrooms. Adult education programs in state prisons/correctional facilities were restructured to include business simulation representing a workplace environment. The Simulated Workplace Adult Education classroom is a prerequisite for CTE centers within correctional facilities.

The structure of a Simulated Workplace Adult Education classroom may include the following:

#### **1. Initial Two Weeks of Program Entry**

- Mock interview (CTE recruitment/screening tool)
- Policy review (see below)
- Goal setting activities
- Assessments and career exploration

#### **2. Organizational Structure – Student led with the following support personnel**

- Enrollment Specialist: Performs initial enrollment into the program
- Technical Support Person: Assists in the development of student portfolios and the use of online software and learning management systems to develop academic and soft skills.
- Content Area Specialist: Leads small group and peer tutoring activities in math and the language arts – writing.
- Placement Specialist: Utilizes assessments, career exploration, and goal setting activities to facilitate the development of a career pathway.

**3. Timeclocks** - Contextualized Activities

- Wage assignments (pay scale incentives for increasing FFLs, passing portions of the TASC, and passing all parts of the TASC assessment)
- Pay check simulation (tax calculation and effect of absences on pay checks)
- Budgeting activities (contextualized activities developed for real life situations and TASC related)

**4. Drug Testing** - Current service agreements for drug testing from CTE Simulated Workplace

**5. Policies**

- Attendance
- Dress code
- Workplace harassment
- Acceptable technology use
- Weapon free workplace
- Tobacco free workplace

**6. Pre-Shift/Class Meetings**

- Technology support updates
- Upcoming pre-tests and tests
- Content Area Specialist Updates
- CTE bridges explored

## PRISON TERMINOLOGY

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Below is a list of terms an instructor may hear daily:

<b>BIU</b>	Behavior Improvement Unit (for inmates who don't play well with others)
<b>Board</b>	Parole Board
<b>Cell</b>	The individual living spaces inside each pod
<b>Contraband</b>	Anything an inmate possesses that is against prison rules
<b>Count</b>	The various times during the day that the inmate population is counted (to ensure they are still there)
<b>Dorm</b>	A housing unit in some prisons
<b>Flex Count</b>	An impromptu count where inmates are counted wherever they happen to be at the time of the count
<b>Emergency Count</b>	Impromptu count where inmates are counted wherever they happen to be at the time of the count
<b>House</b>	Another name for cell
<b>IRPP</b>	Individual Re-entry Program Plan
<b>Inmate</b>	What a resident of a correctional facility is called
<b>Lay-in</b>	When an inmate has a medical excuse to not work or attend classes
<b>Lockdown</b>	When the institution stops inmate movement and nobody is allowed out of his cell
<b>Lockup</b>	The same as SEG
<b>LOP</b>	Loss of Privileges
<b>Movement</b>	The daily transfer of inmates; location changes
<b>OIS</b>	Offender Information System
<b>OTC</b>	Out-to-Court
<b>Outcount</b>	When an inmate is counted in a place other than in his cell
<b>Parole Board</b>	A group of appointees who meets to see if an inmate will be granted early release
<b>Pod</b>	The name of the housing units in newer prisons
<b>Rec</b>	Recreation
<b>SEG</b>	Segregation status (inmates separated from the rest of the population, usually for disciplinary reasons)
<b>Set-up</b>	Parole Board term which means an inmate will be reviewed at a later point than the initial parole date
<b>Shakedown</b>	A mass search for contraband conducted by security personnel
<b>SPU</b>	Special Programs Unit (for emotionally disturbed inmates, usually)



## TEACHING ADULTS IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Since mankind first conceived the idea of confining the seriously social maladaptive personality in secure detention facilities, conflicts have existed between the people who command and the people who must obey. This causes indifference toward each other by both parties and has placed a major barrier to the possibility of rehabilitation of inmates.

Working within the confines of a correctional facility, one undoubtedly encounters difficult students. They may come to us angry and blaming. They may be in drug and alcohol rehabilitation and come to us uninterested, unmotivated, and resistant to being in a school setting. They may be referred or mandated to our programs and come to us emotionally disturbed and/or excessively demanding. Instructors have a specific educational task and are not counselors or social workers. Nevertheless, because we represent the establishment and authority to the student who may be ordered to attend our class, we may become the object of rage. The following ideas may help:

- Stay calm and don't meet hostility with hostility. An angry response from the instructor will only aggravate a bad situation.
- Don't give troubled people grounds for angry reactions. Don't ask intrusive questions or use emotionally charged words.
- Don't invite a gripe session or argue with students. Allowing students to complain or argue will only increase dissatisfaction.
- When working with difficult students, the instructor's sense of competence and self-esteem are vulnerable. "Did I say the wrong thing? Did I cause this flare up?" This self-doubt can become overwhelming unless the following facts are kept in mind.
- Failure is part of the job. We instructors want students to do well, to enjoy the class, to learn, and to get the high school equivalency diploma. But instructors win some and lose some.
- Rejection is a given. In spite of instructors' best efforts, some students will reject that help.

In an institutional setting, meet with other instructors, administrators, and counselors. Talk over the episode with someone who can help analyze what happened and help decide on a strategy for the next time.

### Occupational Hazards

Men or women in confinement usually continue their lifestyle by preying on institution employees. They develop intricate and sophisticated systems of deception, oftentimes, for no other reason than the pleasure it provides them. These people must gratify their senses, and the method they create to receive this gratification is called a set-up. It is a slow, subtle process of manipulation used by prisoners to control the actions of prison employees.

People heading for prison bring their survival trade of manipulation with them and adapt it to the prison environment where authorities erroneously conclude that conditions of close observation will temporarily hold back the tide of crime. However, to the strongly motivated felon, prison is the place where the art of manipulation is perfected. To violators, prisons are a challenge where manipulation of employees is a pastime, a source of pleasure and pride, a battle of wits, a means of achieving rank or status in the prison population, and a place to hone the process for later application to the public, upon re-entering the free society.

The process is subtle, the victim unsuspecting; it is covert, but undetected until the damage is done.

The correctional educator must not be easily provoked or manipulated into situations that distract because to do so might jeopardize personal safety or the safety of others, and it would lessen the example to be set.

Correctional educators must realize that people who interact have an influence on each other. Not only does the instructor have an influence on the inmate, but the opposite may happen. To guard against any negative outcomes of these interactions, the department has rules to assure positive outcomes. Employees must also live by additional rules in this confined society. These rules were wisely created to direct interactions with wisdom.

An employee's actions and those actions alone will determine the opinions that are formed of the staff members by the inmates. Whether the instructor likes it or not, the critical eye of the inmate is a full-time companion. However, if the instructor realizes from the beginning that success in this field is only achieved through accomplishment, progress, and dignity, then they can calculate their efforts to make this possible. The onlooker will see an employee who is friendly, self-assured, self-reliant, and who displays a commanding confidence without the slightest hint of gruffness or conceit. The inmate will observe staff members to see how they can be of help—either in a gullible, defeating way, or in a positive, constructive manner for which they were hired. The constructive employee will combine friendliness, courtesy, firmness, sympathy, and calm efficiency, will learn to react in a friendly, tactful manner, and will meet any situation with cool-headed composure.

The correctional educator is given the responsibility of rebuilding, retraining, and restoring. It takes enthusiasm, dedication, and a desire to work. This employee is charged with the task of correcting, rectifying, altering, and adjusting; but more than this, he or she assists the inmate in bringing problems to the surface and then aids in the development of habits that are designed to be socially beneficial and that will restore self-respect.

**Advice for those entering a Corrections Facility or Regional Jail:**

- Familiarize yourself with the location of the Education Department.
- Familiarize yourself with the layout of the entire institution.
- Learn where the housing units are located, and what they are called.

- Learn the facility’s terminology (pod, dorm, LOP, BIU, SEG, count, etc.).
- Introduce yourself to the administration of the correctional facility.
- Introduce yourself to as many correctional officers as you can.
- Introduce yourself to as many counselors as possible.
- Locate the facility’s Operations Office.
- READ the facility’s Policies and Procedures Manual.
- READ the Office of Institutional Education’s Policies and Procedures Manual.
- Learn the procedure for scheduling students for class.

## Survival Techniques for Correctional Educators

Correctional educators should try to follow these techniques.

Do:	Don’t:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be firm but fair.</li> <li>• Be consistent.</li> <li>• Be objective.</li> <li>• Demonstrate self-confidence.</li> <li>• Exhibit a positive attitude toward inmates.</li> <li>• Suggest rather than order.</li> <li>• Avoid favoritism.</li> <li>• Look after the interests of your students.</li> <li>• Instruct and counsel.</li> <li>• Recognize change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don’t strive to be popular among inmates.</li> <li>• Don’t exhibit prejudice.</li> <li>• Don’t discuss other inmates.</li> <li>• Don’t become overly familiar with inmates.</li> <li>• Don’t fear certain inmates.</li> <li>• Don’t demonstrate indifference toward inmates.</li> </ul>

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR CORRECTIONAL EDUCATORS

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Correctional Educators who teach AdultEd have two kinds of professional development requirements they must meet. They must follow the same WVAdultEd pre-service and in-service requirements that other instructors follow as outlined in [Section 2](#). In addition, they must meet the following ODTP requirements:

Attend the WVDE ODTP Staff Development Conference yearly	15 Hours minimum
ODTP Pre-Service	3 Hours
WV DOC or Regional Jail Facility Pre-Service	40 Hours
Additional Office of Diversion & Transition Annual In-Service	As requested

## MATERIALS OF INTEREST TO THE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATOR

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### Books

Allen, Bud and Diana Bosta. *Games Criminals Play and How You Can Profit From Knowing Them*. Sacramento, CA: Rae John Publishers, 1981.

American Correctional Association (ACA). *Causes, Preventive Measures and Methods of Controlling Riots & Disturbances in Correctional Institutions*. Washington, D.C.: St. Mary's Press, 1990.

### Videos

*Con Games Behind Bars*. New Orleans, LA.: LA Educational Media.

*Supervision of Inmates*. Glendale, CA.: Aims Instructional Media, Inc.

### Internet Resources

#### West Virginia Department of Education Office of Institutional Education Programs

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/institutional/>

The homepage for the Office of Institutional Education offers a total overview of its regions, schools, and calendars, as well as an abundance of resources for teachers in the areas of technology and special education.

#### Tech-niques Newsletter Archive

<https://sites.google.com/a/wvde.k12.wv.us/oiep-principal-e-book/tech-niques-1>

This section under Principal's e-Book contains archived editions of Office of Institutional Education's online newsletter, which is published the third week of every month. This newsletter features stories on institutional happenings, new personnel, and employee recognition.

### **The Correctional Education Association**

<http://www.ceanational.org/index2.htm>

The Correctional Education Association (CEA), founded in 1945, is a non-profit, professional association serving educators and administrators who provide services to students in correctional settings. The CEA is the largest affiliate of the American Correctional Association. The CEA web site offers many areas of interest, such as the history of correctional education, professional development opportunities, and more. Check out the Special Interest Group (SIG) Online Forums at: <http://www.ceanational.org/phorum/>

### **Northwest LINCS Correctional Education Collection**

[http://www.nwlincs.org/correctional\\_education/sitemap.html](http://www.nwlincs.org/correctional_education/sitemap.html)

This site is a comprehensive collection of resources for basic skills and literacy programs in correctional education. The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) provided initial support for the Northwest LINCS Special Collections through the LINCS grant project (2001 through 2005). The Northwest LINCS site is now being maintained by volunteers from Montana, Oregon, Indiana, and Wyoming.

# PRISON LITERACY PROGRAMS

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ERIC Digest #159

Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

ED383859

Sandra Kerka

1995

*"It costs the government half a million bucks to keep me in jail and \$450 to teach me to read and write"* (ex-cited in Porporino and Robinson 1992, p. 92). The literacy demands of the workplace and society in general are growing in complexity, and recurring linked cycles of poverty and low literacy levels put some people at increasing disadvantage. The prison population includes disproportionate numbers of the poor; those released from prisons are often unable to find employment, partly due to a lack of job and/or literacy skills, and are often re-incarcerated (Paul 1991). Add to that the high cost of imprisonment and the huge increase in the prison population, and it seems clear that mastery of literacy skills may be a preventive and proactive way to address the problem. However, correctional educators contend with multiple problems in delivering literacy programs to inmates. This Digest sets the context of prison literacy programs, outlines some of the constraints, and describes what factors work.

## Context of Prison Literacy

Literacy skills are important in prisons in several ways: inmates often must fill out forms to make requests, letters are a vital link with the outside world, some prison jobs require literacy skills, and reading is one way to pass time behind bars (Paul 1991). The way literacy is defined is critical to achieving an accurate picture of prisoners' skills. The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) defines literacy as a broad range of skills; it is not a simple condition one either has or does not have, but a continuum on which individuals have varying degrees of skill in interpreting prose, documents, and numbers.

The NALS (Haigler et al. 1994) included interviews with some 1,100 inmates from federal and state prisons in order to depict the state of the prison population and compare it to the general population. Of the 5 levels measured, 7 in 10 inmates performed on the lowest 2 levels, on the average substantially lower than the general population. Only 51% of prisoners completed high school compared to 76% of the general population. Differences in literacy proficiencies were related to racial/ethnic status, educational attainment, and disability. Similarly, Newman et al. (1993) suggest that, by a 12th-grade standard, 75% of inmates are illiterate and that prisoners have a higher proportion of learning disabilities than the general population (including 75-90% of juvenile offenders). Other studies found that 65-70% of inmates (Sperazi 1990) and over 70% of inmates (Sacramento County 1994) did not complete high school. Even those with a high school diploma have lower proficiencies (Haigler et al. 1994). However, some evidence exists to mitigate this bleak picture. In some areas, Haigler et al. found that prisoners with less than a high school education were more proficient than their out-of-prison counterparts. In Australia, Black et al. (1990) interviewed 200 inmates, finding they generally did less well on the prose, document, and quantitative scales, but on some literacy items did as well or better than the non-prison population. They concluded that it is difficult to make comparisons with the general population because prisoners are on average younger and disproportionately represent certain groups. They suggest that, because low-literate prisoners often must seek help with literacy tasks from authorities and are subject to various assessments, their literacy problems are more visible than those of the general population.

Acknowledging that low literacy in prisons is a serious problem, Black et al. advocate looking at literacy as a range or continuum and in context.

## **Constraints on Correctional Education**

Between 1980 and 1992, the prison population increased 160% (Jenkins 1994). Besides the problems caused by overcrowding, correctional educators must contend with inadequate funding, equipment, and materials (Paul 1991). Many prisoners are likely to have had negative early schooling experiences and may lack self-confidence or have poor attitudes about education (ibid.). The prison educator's challenge is compounded by the uniqueness of prison culture: routines such as lock-downs and head counts, inmates' hearings or meetings with lawyers, all disrupt regular classes (Shethar 1993). Tutors and students are sometimes locked in a room and monitored by guards. Peer pressure may discourage attendance or achievement (Haigler et al. 1994). In addition, the prison environment is not likely to be rich in verbal and sensory stimuli (Paul 1991).

A more serious constraint is conflicting beliefs about the goals and purposes of corrections: security, control, punishment, or rehabilitation? Even in institutions where the philosophy is more rehabilitative than punitive, education is secondary to security (Shethar 1993). Part of this debate is the issue of whether prison literacy should be mandatory or voluntary. The federal prison system began mandatory literacy in 1982, and in 1991 raised the achievement standard from 8th to 12th grade (Jenkins 1994). The program has had some success in terms of adult education (AdultEd) completion, but only a small part of the prison population is in federal institutions (5%); 65% are in state and 25% in county/local jails (Laubach Literacy Action 1994). Mandatory education is resented by some (Thomas 1992) and it sits uneasily with the largely voluntary nature of adult education (Jenkins 1994). However, Thomas found that the least educated prisoners favored mandatory programs, and Ryan and McCabe (1993) conclude that there is little significant difference in achievement between mandatory and voluntary instruction.

Another problem faced by prison educators is the use of recidivism as an outcome measure. Sometimes ABE does have a demonstrable effect on reducing the rate of re-imprisonment (Porporino and Robinson 1992). But Sacramento County's (1994) literacy program caused no significant reduction despite academic gains. Problems with recidivism as an evaluation measure include the following: (1) a universal definition is lacking; (2) it is indirect-it measures law enforcement activity, not education; and (3) it is too simplistic (ibid.), similar to using retention as the primary yardstick of adult education success. The effects of literacy programs are influenced by factors beyond educators' control: "One can argue that literacy programs do not change an economic system that requires unemployment and a working class and that the ability to read does not change a social structure that reinforces inequalities" (Shethar 1993, p. 368).

## **What Works**

Examples in the literature demonstrate that programs based on current thinking about literacy and sound adult education practices can be effective. Successful prison literacy programs are learner centered, recognizing different learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and multiple literacies (Newman et al. 1993). They are participatory; instead of taking a "deficit" perspective, educators recognize and use learner strengths to help them shape their own learning. For example, Boudin (1993) drew upon women inmates' oral tradition by having them write and perform a play. Literacy should be put into meaningful contexts that address learner needs. Boudin used concerns about AIDS in prison as the organizing issue for instruction. Engaging topics motivate and sustain learner interest; using literature written by prisoners provides relevant subject matter,

as well as writing models (Paul 1991). Family literacy programs enable inmates to view themselves and be seen in roles other than that of prisoners.

Literacy programs should be tailored to the prison culture. The Principles of the Alphabet (PALS) computer-assisted instruction program worked in a prison for several reasons: it was advertised as a "reading lab"; learners were paired according to race, ethnicity, or the prison "pecking order"; PALS relieves tedium and teaches a skill that satisfies short-term self-interest; and computer disks afforded inmates a rare opportunity for privacy (Sperazi 1990). Honeycutt's (1995) interviews with reading program learners showed that adult education practices may need to be modified: inmates preferred teachers to facilitate after they taught skills; they liked less formal classroom arrangements, but wanted well-organized and structured instruction.

Incentives are important motivators, whether programs are mandatory or voluntary: sentence reductions, parole consideration, preferential prison employment, pay for school attendance, and grants for higher education are typical rewards for participation and achievement (Jenkins 1994; Thomas 1992). Lack of funding and staff can be offset by using community and peer tutors. Community tutors provide links to the outside world and can help ease the transition back to society (Paul 1991). Peer tutors can build their own self-esteem, serve as role models, and relate directly to learners' experience of incarceration (Boudin 1993). Model literacy programs include post-release services that support the view of literacy as a continuum and reinforce skills that can quickly be lost. A range of evaluation criteria (Newman et al. 1993) offers multiple ways to assess program effectiveness: (1) instructional (attendance, test scores, duration, objectives achieved); (2) behavioral (decreased violence and disruption, better relations with inmates, staff); and (3) post-release (employment rates and success, continuing education). Other measures include community service, length of time arrest/drug free, or improved social skills. The Correctional Education Association (1994) provides a handbook of literacy assessment and instructional techniques that work best in a correctional setting.

Perhaps the best program outcomes are those most difficult to measure. Instead of viewing literacy as the inculcation of basic skills, embedding it in a broader perspective of education might address the hopelessness and powerlessness that may be both the cause and effect of inmates' actions before, during, and after incarceration.

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Developed with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under Contract No. RR93002001.

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