

A Volume in Educational Leadership for Social Justice

Education-Based Incarceration and Recidivism

The Ultimate Social Justice Crime-Fighting Tool

Edited by Brian D. Fitch and Anthony H. Normore



With Foreword by Sheriff Leroy D. Baca

Education-Based Incarceration and Recidivism

**The Ultimate Social Justice
Crime-Fighting Tool**



A Volume in
Educational Leadership for Social Justice

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SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

Jeffrey S. Brooks

I am pleased to serve as series editor for this book series, *Educational Leadership for Social Justice*, with Information Age Publishing. The idea for this series grew out of the work of a committed group of leadership for scholars associated with the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Leadership for Social Justice Special Interest Group (SIG). This group existed for many years before being officially affiliated with AERA, and has benefitted greatly from the ongoing leadership, support, and counsel of Dr. Catherine Marshall (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill). It is also important to acknowledge the contributions of the SIG's first president, Dr. Ernestine Enomoto (University of Hawaii at Manoa), whose wisdom, stewardship, and guidance helped ease a transition into AERA's more formal organizational structures. This organizational change was at times difficult to reconcile with scholars who largely identified as nontraditional thinkers and push toward innovation rather than accept the status quo. As the second chair of the SIG, I appreciate all of Ernestine's hard work and friendship.

I am particularly indebted to my colleagues on the SIG's first publications committee, which I chaired from 2005-2007: Dr. Denise Armstrong, Brock University; Dr. Ira Bogotch, Florida Atlantic University; Dr. Sandra Harris, Lamar University; Dr. Whitney Sherman, Virginia Commonwealth University, and; Dr. George Theoharis, Syracuse University. This committee was a joy to work with and I am pleased we have found many more ways to collaborate as we seek to provide publication opportunities for scholarship in the area of leadership for social justice.

Education-Based Incarceration and Recidivism:

The Ultimate Social Justice Crime-Fighting Tool, pp. vii-viii

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This book, by Brian D. Fitch and Anthony H. Normore, the sixth in the series, breaks new ground by connecting many ideas to educational leadership that have traditionally been discussed as part of leaders' context. We are excited to help provide a forum for this important work in the ongoing conversation about equity and excellence in education, and the role(s) that leadership can assume in educational organizations.

Again, welcome to this fourth book in this Information Age Publishing series, *Educational Leadership for Social Justice*. You can learn more about the series at our website: <http://www.infoagepub.com/series/Educational-Leadership-for-Social-Justice>. I invite you to contribute your own work on equity and influence to the series. We look forward to you joining the conversation.

PROLOGUE

Brian D. Fitch and Anthony H. Normore

Education-Based Incarceration and Recidivism: The Ultimate Social Justice Crime-Fighting Tool takes a penetrating look at the needs and challenges of society's disenfranchised—the denizens of our streets, the emotionally and physically incarcerated, our children in juvenile hall and in unsettled homes. We believe that it is incumbent to encourage public awareness of the causes that underlie the destructive cycles plaguing these populations, including the abuse and neglect that cycle through generations. When effectively addressed through education the economic burden on society is lightened and an advocacy to increase understanding engenders a humane response. In our efforts to connect educational-based incarceration to leadership and social justice, several issues come to mind, beginning with the universal understanding that definitions of social justice are based on a variety of factors, like political orientation, religious background, and political and social philosophy. Consequently, a general definition of social justice is hard to arrive at and even harder to implement. However, an increased body of researchers in educational leadership, ethics law, sociology, criminal justice, and public health agree that social justice is concerned with equal justice, not just in the courts, but in all aspects of society whereby everyone, from the poorest person on the margins of society to the wealthiest deserves an even playing field.

With this in mind, we build on a relatively new and emerging body of research in education—namely interdisciplinary research focused on education-based incarceration programs, corrections education, and its relation to social justice. Of particular interest to the editors and contributors of this volume is the fact that school systems may at times fail to recognize

that inmates in county jails and prisons are relatives of our school children. Hence, collaboratively designed education programs among those who serve the needs of both the children and their inmate relatives could lead to safer communities and productive lives. Camp (2007) asserted that researchers, policymakers, and educational program administrators in the field of corrections must remember that the purpose of education is rehabilitation intended to enhance social order and public safety and that “one could surmise that it is necessary that the proper design of pre-release materials be provided to the offenders for the purposes of helping them become law-abiding citizens and preventing them from recidivating” (p. 51). Camp suggested that jails and prisons should increase opportunities for offenders to be released as law-abiding citizens. Hence, it would behoove researchers, policy makers, and educational program administrators to examine curricula for adult offenders to see if they provide information that aid offenders in becoming law-abiding citizens. Such research would provide “opportunities for correctional facilities to learn how to maximize their correctional training or rehabilitative functions” (p. 196) while simultaneously providing educationally sound programs to marginalized populations in support of social and restorative justice.

Because this book provides an evidence-based research foundation for reducing recidivism, enhancing jail security, and increasing public safety, it should be of great interest to anyone interested in equal justice, lowering recidivism and reducing crime, including law enforcement and correctional institutions nationwide, as well as educational institutions interested in programs that promote education for the greater good, public safety, public health, and correctional reform. This collection of chapters is based on the collaborative efforts of a multicultural member taskforce with vested interests in education-based incarceration. The contributors represent a myriad of disciplines including law enforcement, criminal justice, corrections education, and university departments of educational leadership, special education, political science, psychology, assessment and evaluation.

The book is comprised of 11 chapters and organized into four parts. Each part focuses on a specific theme. Part I contains three chapters around “The Culture and Politics of Corrections: A Social Justice Phenomenon.” In Chapter 1, Brian D. Fitch and Rakel Delevi examine the case for education-based incarceration. These authors explore why evidence-based incarceration is not only a viable, but highly cost effective method for reducing crime and recidivism. They discuss the social, institutional, and human capital outcomes of investing in correctional education. Chapter 2 focuses on the history and politics of correctional education. Amy Widestrom, David Werner and Sylvester “Bud” Pues

document the history of education in jails and prisons, the theories of education that work in the carceral environment, and the politics that drive the debate around providing education to those incarcerated. Chapter 3 is presented by Brian D. Fitch, Jeff Mulhaussen, and Brian Mattson. These authors conceptualize how education-based technologies may be integrated with other technology in the justice system to help agencies determine what educational content and technical approaches work for different inmate populations to achieve a variety of individual and system outcomes. The chapter concludes with a presentation of disruptive technologies that are being explored through the education-based incarceration initiative and the benefits these innovations afford incarcerated individuals.

Part II is comprised of four chapters with focus on the “Human Side of Education-Based Incarceration: Understanding Recidivism.” David Werner, Amy Widestrom, and Sylvester Pues extend their work in Chapter 4 by examining the characteristics of the prisoner-student and the environment and influences shaping their educative experience while incarcerated, includes an examination of the specific accommodations that must be made to offer an education program in a jail or prison environment. The authors give special consideration to the educational needs and problems of the jail inmate, where wide variations in length of stay exacerbate the considerable problems of prison education. Raquel Warley confronts the impact of correctional staff attitudes on inmate education in Chapter 5 and asserts that the impact of correctional staff attitudes on inmate education begins with a “top-down” approach, that is, from the department director’s attitude and commitment to the positive value of the education program in changing inmates lives—both within the institution and after discharge. Chapter 6 is presented by Brian D. Fitch, Jeff Mulhaussen, and Brian Mattson. These authors conceptualize how education-based technologies may be integrated with other technology in the justice system to help agencies determine what educational content and technical approaches work for different inmate populations to achieve a variety of individual and system outcomes. The chapter concludes with a presentation of disruptive technologies that are being explored through the education-based incarceration initiative and the benefits these innovations afford incarcerated individuals. Chapter 7 takes a in-depth look at the reentry process linking inmates to community services. Presented by Jessica Nolan Daugherty, Laura Abrams, and Gary Greene, this chapter examines the parallels to the transition of youth with disabilities to a quality adult life. Relating reentry to the experience of transitioning youth with disabilities, the authors emphasize the importance of interagency collaboration, wrap-around services, and connection to community-based

organizations. The chapter also highlights model transition programs that utilize many of these practices.

Chapters 8, 9, and 10 are presented in Part III which discuss “Promising and Proven ‘Best Practices’: Global Perspectives.” Chapter 8 focuses on teaching strategies and practices for correctional education programs. Sara A. Millman Silva, Kimberly B. Hughes, Selene Kurland, June Kizu, and Sylvester Pues provide an overview of the current tapestry of programs that are endeavoring to modify behavior in order to reduce patterns of repeated incarceration. Chapter 9 examines an international and comparative survey of best practices in correctional education. Arthur Jones, Richard Gordon, and Richard Haesly describe a systematic analysis of the most demonstrably successful correctional education programs presently in use in a number of countries worldwide. The comparative nature of this international survey reveals a high degree of similarity and a number of common features of successful programs, whether pursued in Norway, South Korea, Australia, Switzerland, or elsewhere. Chapter 10 is presented by M. C. Esposito, Anthony H. Normore and Arthur Jones who examine best practices for maximizing benefits of correctional educational programs and synthesizes the types of educational programs currently implemented within the correctional setting (e.g., basic skills, vocational and post secondary), reviews the effectiveness of such programs, identifies key factors increasing the likelihood such programs are effective, and summarizes best practices specific to education-based incarceration.

Part VI concludes the book with Chapter 11. Anthony H. Normore, Brian D. Fitch, and Sarah Camp offer reflections of the collective essays and suggest recommendations that may be validated by documenting and verifying results, thus making education-based incarceration an evidence-based system. With the scientific research assembled, findings are crafted in a way for the continued validation of education-based incarceration guiding principles. In the words of Leroy Baca, “the cycle of refinement will drive future policy formulation and management decisions and eventually anchoring EBI throughout the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation” (2010, p. 58).

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FOREWORD

Leroy D. Baca

Education-based incarceration (EBI) is a component of the criminal justice system focused on deterring and mitigating crime by investing in its offenders through education and rehabilitation. By providing substantive and intellectual education in jails, and being supportive rather than punitive, the likelihood that offenders will recidivate and return to custody is significantly reduced, while increasing community success and stability. Correctional institutions have operated as warehouses for too long, simply locking up offenders without any real effort to rehabilitate or educate. The results have been unacceptably high rates of recidivism throughout the nation, with a national average of more than 68%. This means that for every 10 people released from custody, 7 individuals will be rearrested, reconvicted, and resentenced for a new crime within 3 years.

EBI is not soft on crime. Holding lawbreakers accountable for their actions is the main priority of EBI, and incarceration is still the chief means of imposing accountability for acts that threaten public safety. The investment made through EBI is a legitimate, evidence-based endeavor to enhance public safety. Indeed, studies on correctional education have consistently supported links between education, lower levels of recidivism, and higher levels of employment.

As sheriff of Los Angeles County, I understand firsthand the importance of education and the need for education-based incarceration in our jails and prisons. More than a decade ago, I created the Inmate Services Bureau to oversee the development and implementation of traditional education, vocational training, and life skills programs to the inmates in each of our eight custody facilities. I have witnessed personally the trans-

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The Ultimate Social Justice Crime-Fighting Tool*, pp. xv-xvi
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xv

formational power of education and the ways it has changed the lives of numerous inmates over the years. The education-based incarceration unit of the sheriff's department represents the next step in creating, implementing, and assessing evidence-based programs. Changing the ways correctional institutions operate requires us to think differently about the purpose, structures, and values of the current system.

This book *Education-Based Incarceration and Recidivism: The Ultimate Social Justice Crime-Fighting Tool*, edited by Brian D. Fitch and Anthony H. Normore, is groundbreaking in its contribution to the body of theory, research, and practice on inmate incarceration, recidivism, and social justice education. The book is crafted from the professional experiences, intellectual engagements, and moral commitments of the editors and contributing authors. It is based on foundation of equal and social justice concerning a multitude of lenses used to view and attempt to understand the factors that contribute to incarceration, the relationship between crime and education, and the programs and support structures necessary to assist inmates in preparation for reentry into a more just and harmonious society.

Fitch and Normore have presented us with a significant work in the fields of social and criminal justice and educational learning. As readers of this book we embark on a journey that requires us to engage in thinking about the history of EBI programs and how these programs can contribute to the design and implementation of future programs. In the words of Jonathan Sacks (2007), the editors and the contributing authors have demonstrated that, "Difference does not diminish; it enlarges the sphere of human possibilities" (p. 209).

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This book could not be made possible without the support of Sheriff Leroy D. Baca at the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department who relentlessly demonstrates his belief that when implemented properly, education taps the unlimited capacity for growth and desire for a productive life shared by all members of society, including those who are incarcerated. Sincere gratitude also goes to each of the authors who contributed to this book. Their time, efforts, and patience to help produce the finished product are most appreciated. We also thank our friend and colleague, Dr. Jeffrey S. Brooks, series editor of the Information Age Publishing series, *Educational Leadership for Social Justice*, and the executive members of the Leadership for Social Justice Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association for their support and encouragement throughout the development process. Finally, we offer many thanks to Information Age Publishing for the ongoing diligence throughout the publication process. Our hope is that this book and the chapters therein will serve as catalysts for further discourse about research on education-based incarceration, corrections education, and recidivism within the context of social justice. Please feel free to make contact with any of the authors. Their contact information is provided accordingly. On behalf of all contributors, thank you.

CONTENTS

Series Editor Preface
Jeffrey S. Brooks vii

Prologue
Brian D. Fitch and Anthony H. Normore ix

Foreword
Leroy D. Baca xv

Acknowledgments xvii

**PART I: THE CULTURE AND POLITICS OF CORRECTIONS:
A SOCIAL JUSTICE PHEMONENON**

1. A Review of Evidence: The Case for Education-Based
Incarceration
Brian D. Fitch and Rakel Delevi 3

2. History and Politics of Correctional Education
Amy Widestrom, David Werner, and Sylvester “Bud” Pues 21

3. Assessing Educational Need to Individualize Learning
in an Incarcerated Setting
Brian Mattson, M. C. Esposito, and Carolyn Eggleston 41

**PART II: THE HUMAN SIDE OF EDUCATION-BASED
INCARCERATION: UNDERSTANDING RECIDIVISM**

4. Prison Education: The Inmate as Student
David R. Werner, Amy Widestrom, and Sylvester “Bud” Pues 61

5. Impact of Correctional Staff Attitudes on Inmate Education
Raquel Warley 81

vi CONTENTS

6. Disruptive Innovation: The Role of Technology in Advancing Educational Achievement Among Inmate Populations
Brian D. Fitch, Brian Mattson, and Jeff Mulhaussen 103

7. The Reentry Process—Linking Inmates to Community Services: Parallels to the Transition of Youth With Disabilities to a Quality Adult Life
Jessica Nolan Daugherty, Laura S. Abrams, and Gary Greene 119

**PART III: PROMISING AND PROVEN
“BEST PRACTICES”: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES**

8. Maximizing Benefits of Correctional Educational Programs: Best Practices
M. C. Esposito, Anthony H. Normore, and Arthur A. Jones 141

9. International and Comparative Survey of Best Practices in Correctional Education
Arthur A. Jones, Richard Gordon, and Richard Haesly 161

10. Teaching Strategies and Practices for Correctional Education
Sara A. M. Silva, Kimberly B. Hughes, Selene Kurland, June Kizu, and Sylvester “Bud” Pues 179

**PART IV: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE
OF CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION**

11. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations
Anthony H. Normore, Brian D. Fitch, and Sarah Camp 199

About the Authors 209

PART I

**THE CULTURE AND POLITICS OF CORRECTIONS:
A SOCIAL JUSTICE PHEMONENON**
