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Increasing Post-Incarceration Education Within Juvenile Detention
Centers

Michela Peterson

A Capstone project for the Bachelor of Science in Human
Development and Family Science

Introduction

Juvenile offenders often lack support for developing post-incarceration plans such as college or career options, which can lead to higher recidivism and escalation to becoming long-term, adult offenders. While some juvenile detention centers have on site schools, the curriculum neglects discussing future goals and career planning. In order to address this problem, I created a three day presentation for incarcerated youth at the Napa County Juvenile Detention Center in Napa, California about college majors and careers that do not require higher education.

Needs Statement

Adolescents incarcerated in juvenile detention centers do not receive adequate information about trade or vocational programs available upon release. Without receiving this information, they may be at risk of becoming repeat offenders after they reach adulthood. Adolescents who are released and enter back into schools are often underprepared or behind in school, which also could lead to recidivism. Drakeford (2002, p. 139) found a “correlation between low education attainment, low literacy levels, and high levels of crime and recidivism”. This same study found that an average of 70% of the incarcerated population is illiterate and 70% did not finish high school. Drakeford also found that 40-70% of inmates have learning disabilities that could contribute to these high percentages. Therefore, incarcerated youth would benefit from information on vocational and trade programs.

Offering incarcerated juveniles with information on vocation careers or trade careers that do not necessarily require further education can help the adolescents gain confidence in their plans for release. Actually being able to provide the training while juveniles are in detention centers would ensure that they have the training to get jobs and careers after they are released. There would be little reason as to why they couldn't find a job and the counties could even

develop a partnership to help place juveniles in jobs after release. According to Ameen and Lee (2012), offering vocational training to juveniles in corrections could lower the rate of recidivism.

I plan on creating college and career plans with juvenile offenders by providing them with information on college courses and careers that do not require college education if that is the route they choose.

Theory

Erikson's theory of psychosocial stages of development maintains that a person's personality is developed by eight stages, in a predetermined order, that happen from infancy to adulthood (McLeod, 2018). The fifth stage of Erikson's developmental theory, identity versus role confusion is where adolescents (aged 12 to 18) are looking to find their identity and sense of self by exploring their values, beliefs, and goals. This is also the time when adolescents are using their experiences and aspirations to "find themselves" (Orenstein GA, Lewis L., 2020).

Adolescents use this time to develop their own identity that will help them figure out their place in society and what type of person they will be. According to Erikson, they will develop their personal values, beliefs, and find a direction in life. When an adolescent is unable to establish their own identity, it can lead to role confusion (McLeod S.A., 2018). According to McLeod (2018), this role confusion can develop into an identity crisis and the adolescent will start experimenting with different lifestyles. When adolescents are incarcerated, Erikson's stage five can become even more confusing and difficult to develop their own identity because many people will see their identity as "criminal" and it's possible that the adolescent will start to see that as their identity as well. There are many reasons as to why adolescents end up in juvenile custody, some of which include their environment and family. Growing up with parents who have been in the system or living in neighborhoods where crime is seen as normal can lead

adolescents to believe it is okay. These environments often lead to role confusion because they believe they should be similar to their environment and family but also are aware that those decisions lead to jail time and often prison. It's important to give these adolescents all the information available to help them develop their own identity instead of simply following in another's footsteps. This is important because educating adolescents before they become legal adults and can enter the prison system will help reduce prison populations and allow adolescents with past offenses to explore all their options in life, including college and career paths.

Consideration of Diversity

My project will be conducted at Napa County Juvenile Detention Center in Napa, California. While the composition of the adolescents within the detention center is changing often, the demographic makeup of Napa ages 0-17 is 51.6% Hispanic/Latinx, 37.7% White, 6.2% Asian American, 2.8% Multiracial, 1.4% Black/African American, 0.2% American Indian, and 0.1% Pacific Islander. (KidsData.org, 2020). I was unable to find the exact demographics of the juvenile detention center in Napa. A California population overview of three juvenile justice facilities and one camp that included 747 juveniles had a demographic breakdown of 57.7% Hispanic/Latinx, 29.7% Black/African American, 7.8% White, 3.6% other, and 1.2% Asian (CDCR.CA, 2020). My project is specifically addressing adolescents within the detention center because it discusses plans for after release. It would be possible to use this project to educate adolescents who have not entered the criminal system by omitting the discussions on careers that will hire convicted offenders. This project will educate adolescents on possible college paths as well as careers that do not require higher education. This curriculum would be helpful to any adolescent who is unsure of their path after high school. It is also important to acknowledge that not every adolescent will be proficient in English to accomplish this project because many

adolescents practice English as a second language, or that not every juvenile will be released before or after the age of 18. This program would not be beneficial to offenders who have life sentences because they will remain within the criminal justice system and not have the opportunities that those who are released around the age of 18 will have.

Learning Outcomes

- Provide Juvenile Hall youth with a presentation on careers achievable without a college degree and as well as discussing college options.

Participants will be able to

- identify at least one college major that interests them.
 - Measured by a small writing project*
- identify careers that do not require a college degree.
 - Measured by a multichoice quiz*
- create two career and education plans for after-release
 - Measured by a short response*

*All assignments/quizzes will be online (google survey forms)

Method

Day 1

I first introduce myself and explain to the juvenile offenders why I am presenting during their school time. I tell them that I will be discussing feasible options for college after release as well as career opportunities that do not require higher education. I ask them if they know of any college majors they are interested in or would like to know more about. After about five minutes, I show a presentation on different college types such as public universities, community colleges, trade schools, and more. I also discuss the differences between the types of colleges and what

sort of degrees and certificates you can earn at each. During the presentation I also go over different college majors and what sort of careers are generally associated with those majors. I then ask them to write a short paragraph about at least one college major that interests them and what makes them want to learn more about that subject. See Appendix A.

Day 2

Today, I would do a quick review of what college majors we discussed last time and the types of colleges to keep the information fresh in their minds. I then explain that not all careers require college degrees or higher education. I ask them to try to think of a career that interests them. After three minutes, I ask for a couple volunteers to say what their career of choice is. I then discuss if that career requires a degree or not and if someone discusses a career I am not sure of the qualifications for I will be able to show them how to search for the information online through screen sharing. I then offer careers that do not require college degrees through a presentation that includes firefighting, restaurant cook, plumber, phlebotomist, and more. I also discuss that some careers do not require a college degree but do require specialized training. I then have them take a short multiple choice quiz where they will be given a career and they have to choose whether it requires a degree, special training, or no degree. See Appendix B.

Day 3

On the last day together, I review both college options and career paths that do not require higher education. I spend ten to fifteen minutes answering questions they have and reinforcing what we discussed before. I then have them brainstorm what college majors and careers they would like to learn more about and work in pairs to help them develop the ideas and

find realistic goals. After five minutes, I have them complete a short writing assignment where they create a concrete plan for after they are released from the juvenile detention center. They have to create at least two plans: one for college that includes what type of college they would like to attend and one for a career that does not require college and if that career requires special training, to indicate that. See Appendix C. I will end the lesson by asking for two volunteers to share out one plan they have for after release.

Results

Unable to execute due to COVID-19

Discussion

Unable to execute due to COVID-19

References

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Appendix A

College Majors

* Required

Name a college major that interests you *

Appendix B

Career Quiz

Which careers do not require a college degree?

Bus Driver *

☐ No Degree

☐ Certificate/Special Training

☐ College Degree

Firefighter *

☐ No Degree

☐ Certificate/Special Training

☐ College Degree

Insurance Sales Agent *

☐ No Degree

☐ Certificate/ Special Training

☐ College Degree

Patrol Officer *

☐ No Degree

☐ Certificate/Special Training

☐ College Degree

Restaurant Cook *

☐ No Degree

☐ Certificate/Special Training

☐ College Degree

Plumber *

☐ No Degree

☐ Certificate/ Special Training

☐ College Degree

Esthetician/Skincare Specialist *

☐ No Degree

☐ Certificate/Special Training

☐ College Degree

Appendix B cont.

Flight Attendant *

- ☐ No Degree
- ☐ Certificate/Special Training
- ☐ College Degree

Medical Assistant

- ☐ No Degree
- ☐ Certificate/Special Training
- ☐ College Degree

Phlebotomist

- ☐ No Degree
- ☐ Certificate/Special Training
- ☐ College Degree

Appendix C

Future Plans

Create a post-incarceration plan

* Required

Create a plan that involves college. This includes what type of college and a major *

Create a plan that involves a career that does not require a degree. If the career needs specialized training or a certificate, indicate that *

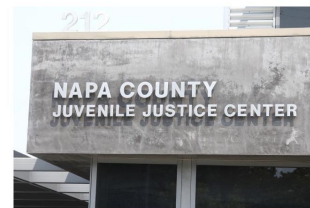
Capstone Presentation

Increasing Post-Incarceration Education within Juvenile Detention Centers

Michela Peterson
HDFS

Needs Statement

- Lack of post-incarceration planning within juvenile detention centers
- Reduce recidivism rates
- Drakeford (2002, pg. 139) found a “correlations between low education attainment, low literacy levels, and high levels of crime and recidivism”
- Personally seen the problem



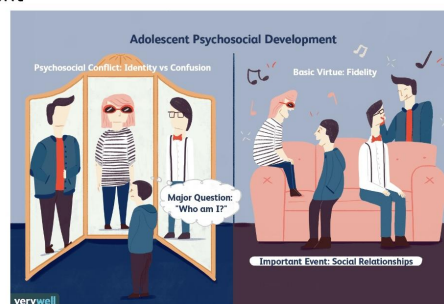
Theory

Erikson's psychosocial stages of development

- Stage 5: Identity vs. Role Confusion

Exploring

- Beliefs
- Values
- Goals



Juvenile offenders see their identity as criminals

Day 1

- Introduction and overview
- Discussion on college majors
- Presentation on majors and types of colleges

Activity: Short writing assignment on college majors



Types of Colleges

- Public University
 - (UCs, CSUs)
- Private University
 - (Stanford, Harvard, Princeton)
- Community College
 - (NVC, DVC, SCC)
- For-Profit Colleges
 - (Academy of Art University (SF))
 - Vocational/Technical Colleges
 - (DeVry)

CSU The California State University

Day 2

- Review of college types and majors
- Discussion of interests
- Presentation on careers without higher education

Activity: Multichoice quiz

Jobs That Don't Require a Degree

Air Traffic Controller
 Computer Programmer
 Commercial Pilot
 Dental Hygienist
 Agricultural Manager

Elevator Installer
 Radiation Therapist
 Computer Support Specialist
 Real Estate Agent
 Executive Assistant

Day 3

- Review of colleges and careers
- Open discussion about what they learned and what they are interested in pursuing post-incarceration

Activity: Create post-incarceration plan



Learning Outcome 1

Participants will be able to identify one college major that interests them

- Short writing assignment

College Majors

* Required

Name a college major that interests you *

Learning Outcome 2

Participants will be able to identify careers that do not require a college degree

- Multichoice Quiz

Career Quiz

Which careers do not require a college degree?

* Required

Bus Driver *

☐ No Degree
☐ Certificate/Special Training
☐ College Degree

Flight Attendant *

☐ No Degree
☐ Certificate/Special Training
☐ College Degree

Firefighter *

☐ No Degree
☐ Certificate/Special Training
☐ College Degree

Medical Assistant

☐ No Degree
☐ Certificate/Special Training
☐ College Degree

Phlebotomist

☐ No Degree
☐ Certificate/Special Training
☐ College Degree

Learning Outcome 3

Participants will be able to create one career plan and one college plan for after release

- Writing Assignment

Future Plans

Create a post-incarceration plan

* Required

Create a plan that involves college. This includes what type of college and a major *

Create a plan that involves a career that does not require a degree. If the career needs specialized training or a certificate, indicate that *

Results

-Unable to execute due to COVID-19

Discussion

-Unable to execute due to COVID-19

Thank You
Questions?

Michela Peterson