TECHNOLOGY IN ADULT EDUCATION VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2021

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE OF JUSTICE

DIGITAL LITERACY AND ACCESS IN OUR JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Presented by Jeffrey Abramowitz, JD
Questions and Answers
Today’s challenge is a lesson in:

Building bridges to connect individuals with justice involvement on their journey and helping them see and realize their future.

Education is all a matter of building bridges.

— Ralph Ellison —
My journey, My bridge, My new glasses ...
Building the bridge begins with understanding the challenge…

Just the Facts
Incarceration is just one piece of the much larger system of correctional control. The U.S. justice system controls almost 7 million people, more than half of whom are on probation.

The Whole Pie
113 MILLION

People have an immediate family member who have been incarcerated.

(1/2 of the Adults in the US)
70-100 MILLION

People in the US with a criminal history.

(It starts with an allegation or charge)
A person without data is just another person with an opinion. - Albert Einstein

636,000 CITIZENS ARE RELEASED EACH YEAR (More since COVID19)

MORE THAN 2/3 OF THOSE RELEASED WILL BE REARRESTED WITHIN 3 YEARS. ½ WILL GO BACK TO PRISON!
1 in 3 American workers have limited or no digital skills!

National Skills Coalition April 21, 2020
Low literacy levels cost the US economy $2.2 trillion per/year in GNP

National Data

- 781 Million people in the world are either illiterate (cannot read a single word), or functionally illiterate (with a basic or below a basic ability to read)

- 54% of US adult population @130 Million people lack proficiency in literacy (6th grade level)

- 22,000,000 in the US without a high school diploma (63% of all US jobs require at least a high school diploma)

Impact: Correlation to personal income, employment, health…
Why education/skill development and a career pathway matter!

Low skilled adults are 8X more likely to be incarcerated

Providing “ANY” form of educational programming in prison provided a 43% “BETTER” chance of not going back

By 2021, 63% of all US jobs will require education beyond high school
Equipping Individuals for Life Beyond Bars

94% of those behind bars will someday be released (many without the necessary skills to obtain employment)

Students who participate in job training behind the walls, score higher in literacy and numeracy

Only 23% of inmates participate in job training behind the walls
The State of Digital Literacy inside of our prisons and jails.

Digital Literacy Reduces Recidivism (10/6/2015 Brookings)
Impact of Digital Literacy

- Digital literacy skills for life, employment
- A gateway for engaging disenfranchised learners (prior negative experiences)
- On demand and independent learning
- Brings people together and creates relationships
- Improved mental and physical health
- Easier to track progress of individuals with challenges (learning disabilities)
- Creates a safer and healthier prison environment
America spends more on its prison systems than it does on public schools.

Pennsylvania ranks 13th

Spending per student: $15,417
Spending per inmate: $42,727
There are over 44,000 barriers to employment, education, housing, loan borrowing and licensing, among many other categories. (70% of these are employment related)

The unemployment rate for formerly incarcerated people stands at:

27%
That is higher than peak unemployment during the great depression!

(8.4% today)

“Laying the Groundwork: How States Can Improve Access to Continued Education for People in the Criminal Justice System”
Building that bridge starts with a strong foundation (starting at the beginning)

* Basic match and reading support
  Supplies/materials
* High school equivalency
* Digital literacy
* Upskilling
* Career & technical training leading to a desired career pathway

Choose wisely – occupational licensing, high demand industry sectors!
COVID 19 Behind & Beyond the Walls
(The bridge is down to one lane proceed carefully, but you need to proceed!)

The COVID Pivot:
Inside/outside
The Impact of COVID on Adult Education in Corrections and Reentry


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<th>STATE</th>
<th>TOTAL CASES</th>
<th>PER 10,000 PRISONERS</th>
<th>NEW CASES OVER TIME</th>
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397,422

A State-by-State Look at Coronavirus in Prisons

The Marshall Project is collecting data on COVID-19 infections in state and federal prisons. See how the virus has affected correctional facilities where you live.
What happened behind & beyond the prison walls over the past year????
High Priority Industry Sectors (Reentry Friendly?)

Seeing into the future!
The beams/supports of our bridge

- Transitional Housing
- Education
- Skill Training/Employment
- Medical & Addiction Support
- Basic Needs: Identification, clothing, transportation
- Legal Support
SUCCESS IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION

Tools that are helping people cross the bridge!

• Digital Literacy/Competency

• What can be done:
  • Blended learning programs
  • Virtual computer centers/classrooms
  • In cell technology
  • Prison clouds
  • Look to our international partners
The Talent Pool Building The Bridge

Thinking outside the cell

1- Innovations in teaching
   ◦ Blended learning
   ◦ Better materials
   ◦ Incentives
   ◦ Virtual learning tools
   ◦ Digital literacy supports

2- Inside Out Connectors

3- Peer tutoring/mentoring at work

4- Integrated Educational Training

5- Post secondary supports – Pell Grant (tools)
Education and Skill Development – The Support Wires

Restoring Education and Learning Act (REAL Act)

Active Employer Engagement in Education & Training

Upskilling

TRAINING (Skills/licensing/ITA)
Bridge supports that can keep traffic running!

- Adult Literacy Agencies
- Career One Stops
- Community Colleges
- Apprenticeships
- Employers/Unions/WDB
Resources

LINCS Correctional & Reentry Community of Practice
- https://lincs.ed.gov/
Career Pathways Sample (PA)
https://www.paadultedresources.org/sector-strategies/


Steve Steurer
"How to Unlock the Power of Prison Education"

"Apprenticeship and the Justice System: Adapting a Proven Training Model to Serve People in Prison"

"U.S. Skills Map: State and County Indicators of Adult Literacy and Numeracy"

"Laying the Groundwork: How States Can Improve Access to Continued Education for People in the Criminal Justice System"

"Reconnecting Justice: Pathways to Effective Reentry through Education and Training"

"Reentry Education Framework: Guidelines for Providing High-Quality Education for Adults Involved in the Criminal Justice System"


SHRM- Getting Talent Back to Work
www.gettingtalentbacktowork.org
Google Reentry Career Preparedness Program
https://grow.google/reentry/

IBM Skills Build Initiative
https://skillsbuild.org/

Do’s & Don’ts of Virtual Education in Prison