

A REVIEW OF THE EFFECT OF LITERACY EDUCATION ON THE REHABILITATION
AND RECIDIVISM RATES OF FORMERLY INCARCERATED CRIMINALS

By

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CERTIFICATION OF PROJECT WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled *The Effect of Literacy Education on the Rehabilitation and Recidivism Rates of Formerly Incarcerated Criminals* by Brea Erny, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Literacy: Birth to Grade 6, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.



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Abstract

This is a professional development project that examines research regarding the effects of literacy education programs within incarceration facilities on the rehabilitation and recidivism rates of inmates. This project also reveals the factors that affect the success of such programs. The findings indicate that literacy education programs within incarceration facilities have positive implications on rehabilitation and post-release life as well as decrease the recidivism rates of the inmates. In addition, the findings indicate that positive relationships between teachers and inmates, incentives as motivation for program completion, and the age and race of inmates affect programs' success. Based on these findings, the researcher develops a professional development workshop as well as coaching follow-ups for literacy education teachers within a federal prison.

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Chapter One Introduction

Statement of Problem or Issue

Literacy is everywhere. While the majority of literacy education takes place within a school setting, it can be found in infinite situations. It can even be found within incarceration facilities and it can open doors to opportunities for literacy professionals seeking employment outside of school districts in today's struggling economies. Various incarceration systems present in the United States and in other countries are responsible for housing thousands of criminals. For example, the United States Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP, 2012), alone, is currently responsible for approximately 217,000 federal offenders. In nearly all incarceration facilities, there are some form of educational programs, many of which have a heavy focus on literacy skills. While the programs may be implemented differently, several appear to be grounded in the same principles with similar goals. For the purpose of this study, the programs will be referred to as educational programs. In addition, vocational programs, which are work or industry-related placement programs, will be touched upon. This study will target the effects of the education programs on inmates' recidivism—repeated offenses—and rehabilitation. The research questions for this study are:

1. What does research say are the effects of literacy education, during incarceration, on the rehabilitation of inmates?
2. What does research say are the effects of literacy education, during incarceration, on the recidivism rates of former inmates?
3. What factors affect the success of literacy education programs within incarceration facilities?

The questions listed above will be addressed through an extensive literature review of relevant empirical studies. The findings will be shared through a professional development workshop for current and future literacy professionals.

Background

Austin H. MacCormick (1893-1979), the founder of the Correctional Education Association (CEA) and assistant director of the United States BOP in the 1930's stated, "60% of all American prisoners have not gone beyond the sixth grade level; 25% are virtually illiterate, and 10% are completely illiterate" (as cited in Wilson, 1933, p.26). Such statistics indicate there was a need for literacy education programs within incarceration facilities. Since the 1930's, educational programs have played a crucial role in American incarceration facilities. In the United States Federal Prison system, inmates without a high school diploma or General Education Development Diploma (GED) are required to take at least one Literacy course, while other inmates are urged to take the courses (Harer, 1995). English Language Learner (ELL) inmates within the Federal Prison system are required to take English as a second language (BOP, 2012). Clearly there is literacy education present within incarceration facilities.

Due to the current atmosphere surrounding education and the struggling economy, the researcher, Brea Erny, was spending hours searching through sources on the Internet in hopes of finding more avenues to take in the teaching profession, aside from school districts. With graduation in sight and an unyielding drive to make a difference in any kind of learner's life, the researcher started thinking about nontraditional realms of education.

With a background in Literacy Education, the researcher was compelled to learn more about education programs within incarceration facilities and their effects on the lives of the inmates. She has always believed that people can accomplish anything with the proper education

and that education positively affects people's lives as well as society. Therefore, some form of literacy education can likely have a positive impact on the reentry into society by adult learners in custody within incarceration facilities.

After receiving a Masters Degree in Literacy Education, Birth-Sixth Grade, the researcher will be applying for a teaching position within a Federal Prison. This project will further develop her knowledge and improve her understanding of the impact in which the literacy education programs have on the inmates as well as provide insight to other literacy educators seeking positions outside of a school district.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defined Literacy as foundational reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills that one requires in order to function in society. The literacy education programs occur in various incarceration facilities, which are locations responsible for the custody and care of adult (eighteen years and older) criminals (e.g. federal prisons, prisons in other countries, state prisons, and county jails). Vocational programs, which are industry and work programs, can also take place in such facilities and are usually aligned with the education programs. This project will detail the impact of these programs on inmate rehabilitation, or reentry into society after being incarcerated and it will examine the programs' effects on recidivism rates, which are repeated offense rates. Lastly, it will identify factors that affect literacy education programs within incarceration facilities.

Rationale and Theoretical Stance

This study is for the professional development of the researcher as well as other literacy professionals. This topic, the effects of literacy education on the rehabilitation and recidivism of the formerly incarcerated and the factors that affect programs, is important because a main goal in education is to shape students into life long learners. Therefore, education should not desist

because a person is in custody for a criminal act. Incarcerated adults enrolled in education programs may need as much instruction and guidance as children in school districts. As teachers and literacy professionals, it is important to recognize nontraditional students and the nontraditional teaching settings in which they can be taught. Learning does not end when an individual reaches the peak of his or her academic school career; therefore, teaching opportunities are not limited to school districts and higher education settings.

This topic is also important for all members of society, not solely literacy professionals, because it examines the possible positive implications of having education programs within incarceration systems. Releasing educated and disciplined people back into society is likely to result in less disruption of communities than releasing uneducated, formerly incarcerated people back into society after they have fulfilled time-sentence.

As a Master's Candidate, the researcher has gained an understanding of various learning and reading theories. She has aligned this project with the Constructivist Theory (1922) and Sharan Merriam's (2001, 2008) Adult Learning Theory.

The researcher defines the Constructivist theory as a learning theory that emphasizes using prior knowledge to construct new knowledge. The theory suggests that knowledge can only be constructed if the learner is actively engaged. This can be compared to inmates' construction of knowledge in educational programs. Because of the unique setting and pupils, there must be something motivating the inmates in order for them to be actively engaged in their learning, which will ultimately allow them to construct new knowledge. Once the inmates are actively engaged, whether from incentives or self-motivation, they will be able to use their prior knowledge to construct new knowledge and build skills that will help them function in society.

John Dewey (1922) was an early American Constructivist that greatly influenced education. He stressed the importance of individuals and teachers' part in their lives. He articulated that with an education, people could become functioning, successful participants in society. It appears that the goal of education, grounded in literacy, within incarceration facilities is also to produce individuals who will be equipped with basic education skills and who will be able to function and participate in society upon release. John Dewey (1922) affirmed,

If a pupil learns things from books simply in connection with school lessons and for the sake of reciting what he [sic] has learned when called upon, then knowledge will have effect upon *some* conduct—namely upon that of reproducing statements at the demand of others. There is nothing surprising that such 'knowledge' should not have much influence in the life out of school. (p. 413)

This means that literacy education should have a clear and present reason or purpose based on the learners and context in which the learners are being taught and that in some cases motivation is necessary to ensure they are participating and learning. In this case, the learners are incarcerated individuals and the purpose for their education is to help them become functioning members of society.

Inmates are apt to construct dissimilar knowledge when taking part in such education, especially literacy-based knowledge, because they all have very different backgrounds and experiences and many of them are prone to having low levels of prior academic knowledge. Due to the fact that the learners in this project are adult learners, Sharan Merriam's (2001, 2008) Adult Learning Theory is also used to support the study. Merriam (2001) uses the term "andragogy" as an umbrella term for the science of self-directed adult learning, which is relevant

to this study because, as stated above, the inmate-students are adults. Merriam (2008) concluded that,

Recognition that adult learning is more than cognitive processing, that it is a multidimensional phenomenon, and that it takes place in various contexts has not only enhanced our understanding of *how* adults learn but expanded our thinking as to which instructional strategies might be employed to foster adult learning. (p. 97)

Such contexts can include incarceration facilities because they house a great deal of adult learners. Merriam (2008) also details that recent research supports the concept of processing and creating new knowledge based on prior knowledge and experiences of the adult learners. This idea goes hand-in-hand with the Constructivist Theory.

The effects of education within incarceration facilities on inmate rehabilitation and recidivism will be examined in the following extensive literature review of available empirical research.

Chapter Two Literature Review

The literature review examines empirical research to find what the effects of literacy education are on the rehabilitation and on the recidivism rates of former inmates. It also aims to identify the factors that affect the programs. One section of the review is an examination of research that depicts the effects of educational programs, within incarceration facilities, on the recidivism rates of post-release inmates. Within this section there are three subcategories, *Age, race and recidivism*, *Incentives for participating in educational programs and recidivism* and *Relationship between inmates and prison staff*. The other section of the review is an examination of research that portrays the effects of educational programs, within incarceration facilities, on rehabilitation and inmates' post-release lives. Within this section there are two subcategories, *Post-release life and employment* and *Age, race and rehabilitation*. Through these categories, the literature review reveals themes of: motivation as a factor in effective programs; age and race playing a role in the determination of those who will recidivate; literacy education within incarceration facilities, in general, resulting in lower recidivism rates; and the programs resulting in greater success of post-release employment for the participants. There is also an underlying theme that indicates positive relationships between teachers within incarceration facilities and the inmate students help the programs to function more successfully.

Education Programs and Recidivism

The following studies provide research-based evidence on the effects of literacy education on the recidivism or repeated offenses of formerly incarcerated inmates.

Harer's (1994) study examined prisoners released from the BOP in January to June of 1987 through the automated Interstate Identification Index (Triple-I) for 21 US states and through searches in the FBI's National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) for the remaining

states. The study intended to “update our understanding of recidivism among Federal prison releasees by examining the association between pre-prison, prison, and post-release characteristics and experience and recidivism rates” (p. 1). Harer indicated that inmates with higher education prior to incarceration as well as those participating to achieve higher education levels during incarceration, recidivated much less. Clements’ (2004) study indicated that if inmates participated in art education within the prisons prior to participating in the literacy classes, they were more likely to be more engaged and ultimately recidivated less. Harer (1994) also noted that the more inmates to participate in the education programs in the first term of their sentence, the lower their chances for repeated offenses. Esperian (2010) revealed, “The general population recidivism rate for released felons is approximately 70%. This figure is reduced to 6% for those who achieve a college education” (p. 325). Harer’s (1994) study also found that “recidivism rates were inversely related to educational program participation while in prison. The more educational programs successfully completed for each 6 months confined, the lower the recidivism rate” (p. 4). The study also indicated the longer the inmate participated in the programs, the lower the recidivism rate.

Harer (1995) conducted another study that tested the hypothesis that inmates involved in educational programs and other normalizing programs would likely have a lower probability of recidivism. Some normalizing factors he identified in the study are: Industry and work programs, educational programs, an application of a human relations approach when working with inmates, and guidelines for sanctioning misconduct. The study found a great deal of evidence supporting the idea that participation in education programs reduces recidivism and all normalizing programs and experiences in the prisons result in pro-social behavior. Do these trends remain true in other countries?

Sile and Liepa (2012) detailed a study that was conducted in the Ilguciema prison in Latvia. The researchers aimed to answer the question of the possible development of inmates' emotional responsiveness to learning during their incarceration and involvement in prison education programs. They found that inmates develop knowledge and skills necessary to function in society once released if they have participated in the educational programs. They, too, revealed that if more inmates were placed in such programs, their integration back into communities would be more accepted and would occur much easier. Such results mirror much of the American research available on this topic.

The current prison population, which has dramatically increased in recent years in the United States, drove Nally, Lockwood, Knutson, and Ho (2012) to explore the educational demands and educational effects within an Indiana correctional facility. The researchers investigated whether or not the educational programs in the facility had an impact on recidivism rates of the inmates and indicated that most educational programs' success within incarceration facilities are measured by recidivism. This study involved a "study group" and a "comparison group" (p. 73). Each group consisted of over 1,000 offenders; the study group consisted of offenders receiving federal funding for education participation and the comparison group consisted of those not participating in education. The findings revealed that less than half of the participants in the study group (29.7%) were recidivists or repeat offenders, however, over half of the participants in the comparison group (67.8%) were recidivists. In conclusion, "this study's results indicate that correctional education may serve as an important mechanism in reducing the recidivism rate among released offenders, which, in turn, will significantly reduce incarceration costs that are associated with recidivist offenders" (p. 82).

Sherman et al.'s (1998) study analyzed over 500 prevention programs to establish what prison programs or aspects of them “work” or do not work and what is “promising” in preventing crime or repeated crimes. The researchers found that the teaching of “social competency skills” and “thinking skills” (p. 1) worked to keep crimes from being committed or recommitted by students in schools that were at high risk for crime. It also worked for those who were already incarcerated. The study also found that repeated offenses were reduced when convicted offenders were enrolled in any kind of rehabilitation programs with risk-focused treatments and/or vocational or educational programs. On the other hand, the study found that unstructured rehabilitation programs did not work when attempting to prevent repeated offenses.

Incentives for participating in educational programs and recidivism. While the above results indicated that education dramatically decreased recidivism rates, there is a common theme amongst research (General Accounting Office, 1993,; Kandel, Ayllon, & Roberts, 1976), which suggests it can be difficult to motivate the inmates to complete the programs. Various incentives are available within incarceration facilities with the hope of inspiring the inmates to participate in and complete the education.

Kandel, Ayllon, and Roberts (1976) completed an early study, which examined the effects of added incentives on already functioning educational programs for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in a US state prison. The researchers used two participants for the study: Two African American men. It is important to note that this study may have been conducted with bias and stereotyping toward the participants for their race, considering the time period in which it was conducted as well as the minuscule sample size. However, the findings are worth mentioning and are relevant for the purposes of this current project. The participants were chosen because of their low I.Q. levels and lack of interest as well as effort to participate and

complete the prison's required education. Both inmates had been in prison for about a year when the experiment began and showed "no signs of rehabilitation" (p. 324). They were placed in an enriched version of the education programs in which they were administered skill level tests and unit tests for ELA and Math. The tests and skill levels were aligned with a points system. The faster the inmates completed and passed the tests or skill levels, the more points they were given. The points could be used to purchase or exchange various items (incentives) such as privileges, extra phone calls, cosmetic goods, extra visiting hours, and "trading stamps with which the inmates could purchase items for themselves and their families" (p. 326). The results revealed that, with the inclusion of the incentives, the two inmates completed and passed a great deal more tests in ELA and Math than before. Both men increased more than two complete grade levels in both subjects. The researchers also detailed staff observations indicating the inmates spent longer periods of time studying and they displayed less hostile behavior. This study showed a clear depiction of increased dedication and success, by two troublesome inmates, in the education program because of added incentives. However, the sample for this study is extremely small and it would likely be beneficial for further research to be conducted on a larger scale.

Similarly, the General Accounting Office (1993) detailed the use and usefulness of prison literacy and vocational programs within four Federal Correction Institutions (FCI). It focused on the issue of incentives as a factor in the completion of the various educational programs. Surveys, interviews, and questionnaires about prison conditions and prison life were presented to BOP education officials and randomly selected inmates. This research report found that if incentives were increased based on the wants and needs of the prisoners, they would be more likely to participate and put effort into the programs as well as complete the educational and vocational programs once enrolled in them. Some of the incentives listed in the study were:

Getting out in “good time” (p. 41), receiving pay per hour in the classes, gaining assurance of employment upon release, and earning additional visitation hours. This report recommended that the BOP Director be required to broaden incentives for participation in education programs and that pay raises should not be granted to those who participated in vocational programs if they had not completed basic literacy requirements.

Relationship between inmates and prison educators and staff. Garland and McCarty (2011) examined the perceptions of prison educators and officials on supervision and organizational operations within various federal prisons. Their findings indicated that teachers’ attitudes and perceptions toward the organizations were mixed. Furthermore, they revealed that “efficacy with inmates, a work environment variable, had the strongest independent effect on both perceptions of the quality of supervision and organizational operations” (p. 301) because interaction and experiences with the inmates on a daily basis weigh heavily on teachers’ feelings and opinions. The study also found that negative teacher-inmate relationships had a tendency to result in job dissatisfaction for the teachers as well as the inmates participating in the programs. Lastly, they indicated when the teachers and inmates had healthy relationships, the inmates were more likely to succeed in the programs and their attitudes about education were more positive.

Esperian (2010) was compelled to conduct a qualitative study on the effects of prison education programs on recidivism rates because such programs had employed him for ten years at the state level. He sought to find out if the programs had positive implications on the prisoners’ lives and rehabilitation. Esperian recorded various responses that covered a wide span of inmate education topics and issues from “individuals who have worked or who are working directly with prisoners and prison programs” (p. 324) in Nevada. The researcher found that the majority of the individuals supported education programs within incarceration facilities. The

study also indicated that “education, in the long run, saves the state money” and “the effect of education on recidivism has been well demonstrated, and even small reductions in reoffending can have a significant impact when spread across large numbers of participants” (p. 332). The researcher reported that the work he had dedicated so much of his life to, did, and continues to, have positive implication on recidivism rates and the lives of former inmates.

Age, race and recidivism. A few of the studies found age and race to be partial factors affecting recidivism rates. Harer (1994) found that the recidivism rates of those participating in educational programs were lower based on age. The older the inmate at release, the less likely they were to repeat offenses. In a later study, Harer (1995) found that this remained true. He also found that “blacks” were the most likely to recidivate, followed by American Indians and “whites” (Harer, 1994, p.11). Sile and Liepa (2012) had inmate participants self-evaluate their basic reading skills as well as math skills. The researchers assessed the inmates’ self-evaluations and found that Latvians were more skilled than any other ethnicity in self-assessment and self-evaluations capabilities. They found this was due to the fact that Latvian education places a heavy focus on self-assessment skills and indicated that those who participated or would be participating in the prison’s education programs would be gaining such skills. This study indicated that, regardless of race, if inmates receive education during incarceration, they would be able function afterward and would be less likely to repeat offenses. These studies indicate race and age have some effect on programs and recidivism rates, but the effects may not be significant; they are, however, worth noting.

Education Programs and Rehabilitation

The following studies provide evidence about the effects of literacy education within incarceration facilities on the rehabilitation or reentry into society by the inmates. Specific

effects on the post-release employment of the inmates will also be discussed using the findings from the studies.

Post-release life and employment. Nally, Lockwood, Knutson, and Ho's (2012) study showed significant results in regards to rehabilitation and employment. The researchers found that released offenders who had an education lower than a high school diploma or general education diploma (GED) had lower income rates. Those who had participated in correctional education programs also received higher quarterly income. Harer (1994) suggested that the inmates who were able to arrange post-release employment prior to the end of their sentences, recidivated less and became more successful in the workplace than those who did not have employment prospects upon release. Harer's (1995) study indicated that stable employment prior to incarceration as well as employment upon release, resulted in more successful rehabilitation as well as lower recidivism rates.

Smith and Silverman (1994) conducted a comprehensive study on the education program, INVEST, in the Hillsborough, Florida County Jail because of concerns they had about the many functionally illiterate inmates confined in county, state, and federal incarceration facilities. INVEST is a grant program specifically designed to increase literacy competency and motivate inmates' willingness to learn. The study examined the program's short-term objectives for increasing literacy competency as well as its implications on post-release employment. There were 200 out of the 2,500 inmates participating in literacy and GED classes daily. Those participants had either been court-ordered or volunteered and all of them had been required to take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) as a pre-test to the program. Sixty inmates, who tested below a 10th grade level and/or did not have a high school diploma, were selected as the participants in the study.

Data were collected for the study through the TABE pre- and post-tests, interviews, and depression and self-esteem inventories. The interviews questioned the participants' attitudes toward education, school experiences, success and failure, and understanding and attitudes toward the relationship between education and employment. The researchers found significant gains in knowledge by the participants after six weeks of instruction. They stabilized their self-esteem levels, and they increased positivity in their attitudes toward education. The study also indicated that the program had positive effects on short-term post-release employment as well as inmate attitudes toward employment. However, further research needed to be done on the long-term effects.

Similarly, Saylor and Gaes (1996) collected data on 7,000 federally incarcerated inmates in the first year of their release through telephone interviews with the inmates' probation officers. The study assessed and analyzed the influence of work experience and vocational program participation on the inmates' "post-release outcomes" (p. 1). The researchers also analyzed data from the Post-Release Employment Project (PREP), which was used to evaluate the impact of work experience and vocational or educational programs on inmate behavior, from 1983 to 1987. The study found that prison programs could positively affect the short-term outcomes of post-release employment and post-release arrest. Education programs in prisons can also positively affect the long-term outcomes of recommitment or repeated offenses. Whitney's (2009) study indicated that when education programs, followed by rehabilitation, increase the number of degree-holding inmates, the inmates are able to function in society and successfully enter the job market. While Esperian (2010) acknowledged, "Undoubtedly, some individuals—murderers rapists, child molesters—are either unwilling or unable to live and work as honest, hard working brokers within the framework of society" (p. 331), his study also indicated the

number of inmates “beyond rehabilitation” (p. 331) is significantly lower than those with a chance for successful rehabilitation in the long run. The inclusion of education during incarceration for those who are not “beyond rehabilitation” can make the rehabilitation more successful.

Smith, Bechtel, Patrick, Smith, and Wilson-Gentry (2006) examined the effects of the in-state prison program, Prison Industries Enhancement Certification Program (PIECP), on recidivism and participation in post-release employment. The researchers compared post-release employment of participants involved in PIECP to the post-release employment of inmates who had participated in traditional industries work (TI) or other than work (OTW) activities; the participants were chosen based on gender, race, crime, and location. Smith et al. (2006) found that inmates who worked in PIECP jobs were more successful in post-release employment and “they became tax-paying citizens quicker and remain in that status longer than TI and OTW releasees” (p. 8). In conclusion, this study revealed that vocational or work programs as well as educational programs such as PIECP had positive implications on prisoners’ post-release life and society.

Schlesinger (2005) also examined the effectiveness of education programs on rehabilitation and post-release employment, but from the inmates’ perspectives. The study involved 15 male inmates from a maximum-security prison who were voluntarily interviewed about their participation in correctional education. Two of the inmates indicated that they were in the program because of their desire to learn. However, the interviews revealed that “peer pressure” (p. 238) from other inmates affected inmate willingness to participate because, as one of the interviewees indicated:

People try to look at you negative if you don't kick it [associate] with them, saying you acting stuck up, or you been broke in by the system. These are jailhouse talk, you been broke in by the system, they brainwashing you. We up here kicking it, you should be kicking it like us. You got time, you ain't got to do that just yet. You got ten years or twenty years, you got time to do. You got plenty of time to do your homework.

(Schlesinger, 2005, p. 239)

Such attitudes made it difficult for participating inmates to feel positive or proud about their decision to participate in education while incarcerated. Although, some of the participants revealed an understanding that without such education, they would not be able to get a "nice job" (p. 239) upon release. The study found that,

Offender subjects in this study not only accepted the link between adult basic education and employment, but also outspokenly understood the extended premise that adequate employment and income to successfully stay out of prison have a direct casual link with a high school equivalency credential. (p. 246)

Overall, the study found that education can have positive implications on the post-release lifestyles of inmates and that most inmates have an understanding of such implications, especially the impacts on their future employment opportunities. Anders and Noblit's (2011) also found that, when asked, prisoners indicated participation in classes helped them avoid taking part in misconduct. The education programs kept them out of the yards or pods and in class or studying for class and they understood that this was in their best interest while serving and for their post-release lifestyles.

Age, race and rehabilitation. Camp, Gaes, Langan, and Saylor's (2003) study aimed to answer the question of, whether or not prison management creates environments that effect

inmate misconduct, independent of individuals' characteristics. Data were collected through the Federal BOP's electronic records of inmates incarcerated in June 2001. Such records were organized based on their ages and races. The BOP categories for race are: White, black, and other. Based on this criterion, the study revealed that race did not have a significant effect on the likelihood of misconduct during or after release; African Americans were found to be slightly more likely to partake in misconduct than the other two categories. The study *did* find that the older the inmates, the less likely they were to partake in any sort of misconduct. The researchers also found that inmates with more serious criminal histories (e.g. murder and rape) had a higher likelihood of engaging in misconduct and less of a chance for successful rehabilitation. Overall, the study suggested that prison environments could have an effect on misconduct and rehabilitation; age, race, crime, and experiences while incarcerated played roles in this conclusion.

Shippen, Houchins, Crites, Derzis, and Patterson's (2010) study assessed the reading skills of inmates incarcerated in a medium security federal prison in Alabama through the administration of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests Revised (WRMT-R, 1998). Data were analyzed based on race and age. The results show that European Americans scored the highest in each of the three subtests, followed by African Americans and then Hispanics. The results also show in almost every subtest that the older the inmates, the higher they scored no matter their race. Since the younger inmates (18-24 years old) performed worse among each race, the researchers found it would be beneficial to enroll them in the prison's educational programs in their first term. According to the researchers, from this enrollment the inmates will likely be able to function successfully in society after release as well as have lower recidivism rates.

This literature review aimed to address the effects of literacy education programs on

inmate recidivism rates and rehabilitation as well as to reveal some of the factors that affect the success of the programs. The above literature has been extensively analyzed and organized to answer the researcher's questions. The common findings indicate that participation in education programs, specifically literacy education, has positive implications on the rehabilitation and recidivism rates of the inmates. The research reveals that education lowers recidivism and that education results in more successful rehabilitation and post-release employment opportunities. Research also indicates the factors that affect programs' successes are positive relationships between teachers and inmates, motivation, and age and race of the inmates.

Below is a review of literature that provides research-supported evidence about the importance of professional development (PD) for educators, effective forms of professional development, and best practices of it in order to benefit the teachers as adult learners as well as their students. The studies suggest effective forms of PD as well as what it means for PD to be effective.

Professional Development

Fishman, Marx, Best, and Tal (2003) aimed to link teacher and student learning to the PD the teachers were receiving. They developed a model that takes into consideration the relationship between teacher knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes and changes in student learning based on assessments and daily experiences in the classrooms. The study also intended to have teachers begin PD experiences by asking themselves what they want their students to ultimately learn. The study's goal was not to introduce this new model and steps to take as being the best or only way to design professional development for teachers, but to provide one effective resource for conducting or approaching PD. The researchers found that PD is likely to be the most effective if it is customized for the situations, teachers and students for whom it will impact and

that research should constantly be conducted to benefit such teachers and students. The study stressed that the importance of PD for educators is that it ultimately helps students learn or learn better.

Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon's (2001) study examined the effects of PD aspects on teacher learning. The study used a national sample of over 1,000 teachers and analyzed responses in a "Teacher Activity Survey" as a part of "Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act" (ESEA) (p. 918). The findings indicated there are three "core features" (p. 917) of PD that positively effect teachers, which include: Focus on content knowledge, opportunities during the PD for active learning, and consistency with other learning activities. Along with these core features, three "structural features" (p. 920) were also identified: the form of the activity, teacher participation, and duration of the PD session or activity. The researchers discussed two forms of PD (i.e., the workshop and the reform format) because the forms can have a great impact on teacher learning. Workshops are the most traditional form of PD as well as the most common; they usually take place during out-of-school or after-teaching hours. Reform PD is a newer form and is a coaching or mentoring style of PD; this takes place both during-teaching hours and after. Teachers responding to this study indicated the reform style is more appealing and helpful to them as educators.

Dunst and Raab (2010) also conducted a research study that supports a reform-style or coaching-style of PD using 255 teachers as participants from 26 US States. The participants attended conference presentations, 2-3 day workshops, and or weeklong institute training or on-site training in their classrooms, in order to provide the researchers with self-ratings on the effectiveness of the PD. The conferences and workshops are more traditional forms, generally involving lectures. The institutes training and on-site training are modern forms of PD involving

coaching or mentoring. After the teachers completed the various forms of PD, the researchers found that "...on-site training in the participants' classrooms is judged as being more beneficial than all the other types of training" (p. 248) based on the teachers' self-ratings. While a few limitations affected this study, a particularly noteworthy limitation was that the participants and trainees might have different experiences, prior knowledge, and "understanding of the classroom model," which were likely to have some influence on the teachers' opinions (p. 249).

Role of a Literacy Specialist and Professional Development. Not only the form, but the individuals or groups presenting PD can vary based on the educational setting or context as well. Bean, Swan, and Knaub's (2003) study suggested that, specifically, reading specialists or literacy professionals, aside from educating students, devote much of their time to coaching or providing assistance to other teachers in order to improve reading or literacy programs. Such teachers actually become the students, in a way, to those literacy professionals during their provided PD. Therefore, the literacy professionals, in any setting, can likely benefit from understanding best practices for teaching adult learners as well as whatever age group of students they are also teaching. The study examined surveys provided to principals in various school districts, which indicated that 97% of the reading or literacy specialists, if present in their schools, were "important" to their schools and their reading programs (p. 447). The study stated that literacy professionals "on average were involved more than several times a month in the following leadership roles: planning with teachers, selecting reading material, working with allied professionals, coordinating the reading program, developing curriculum, coteaching, and participating in school-based study teams" (p. 447). Overall, the study found reading specialists to play important roles as teachers in their educational settings, but that they must also serve as coaches to other teachers, leadership figures with the ability to provide PD to educational staff

and teachers, and collaborators to improve reading programs.

This literature review aimed to address the importance of professional development to teachers and literacy professionals in various settings and contexts. It also addressed different forms of PD and the most effective forms for educating teachers as adult learners so that they can best educate their students.

Overall, this chapter analyzed and synthesized relevant empirical studies, which aimed to answer the research questions as well as provide research based evidence to support the PD activities that will be presented by the researcher. The next chapter explains the process in which this research was collected and analyzed.

Chapter Three Methodology

Relevant empirical studies were collected in order to address the guiding research questions of the project. The collection was conducted through the search of multiple databases and electronic search engines to locate useful, substantial, and topical research appropriate for this project.

The databases accessed include EBSCOHOST, ERIC, Educational Research Complete, ProQuest, Google Scholar, Science Direct and Sage. The researcher also accessed the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) (2012) website to locate resources. Specific journals were then vigorously searched through for data collection of peer-reviewed resources. These journals include *The Prison Journal*, *Journal of Rehabilitation*, *Justice Quarterly*, *Corrections Management Quarterly*, *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *Office of Research and Evaluation*, *Criminal Justice Review*, *Behavior Research & Therapy*, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *Adult Learning*, *American Educational Research*, *The Journal of Early Intervention*, and *Teacher and Teacher Education*. To narrow the results within these journals, the researcher marked that selections needed to be peer-reviewed and based on relevancy.

Key words and phrases were also used to generate appropriate results. For example, recidivism, rehabilitation, literacy, education, corrections, prisons, incarceration, penitentiaries, professional development, literacy coaching, professional development workshops, and teacher training were all used in key-word searches within the above journals. Phrases that were used to search for data and sources consisted of: *rehabilitation and education*, *prison literacy*, *the effects of education on formerly incarcerated individuals*, *prison education and recidivism rates*, *correctional education and literacy programs*, *prisoner education within penitentiaries*, *post-*

release employment and rehabilitation, inmate education and recidivism, professional development of teachers, literacy professionals as coaches and mentors, workshop style professional development, reform style professional development, and the importance of professional development to adult learners. Certain studies were purposefully avoided from the results these searches generated. For example, if the searches generated studies that focused on youth offenders and youth learners, those studies were not included because the researcher's main focus is on adult offenders and learners. Non-empirical studies were also discarded unless they could be used in the introduction for statistics, historical data, or theory. Studies that investigated why people commit first offenses resulting in incarceration, rather than studies that indicated why people repeated offenses after incarceration and education were discarded as well. Lastly, if the searches produced empirical studies about inmate experiences during incarceration with no mention of education, work programs, or rehabilitation, they were not included in the literature review.

Once appropriate, topical, peer-reviewed, empirical studies were selected for the review, the researcher took the time to organize them, read them, and highlight portions relevant to the research questions. The research and other sources of information were placed in three electronic folders, *Empirical, Resources, Theory, and Professional Development. Findings or Results* sections were pivotal in the reading and analysis process. The studies were closely examined and common categories such as education programs, recidivism, rehabilitation, post-release life and employment, motivation, age, race, and relationships between incarceration officials and inmates emerged. After establishing the commonalities and organizing the information, the researcher identified three themes. First of all, literacy education within incarceration facilities, results in lower recidivism rates. Secondly, the programs result in greater success for rehabilitation and

post-release employment for the participants. Third and last, positive relationships between teachers and inmates, motivation, and age and race of inmates are factors that affect the programs.

Chapter Four Professional Development Project

Through reviewing and analyzing the available research, the researcher has gained significant knowledge on the topic of literacy education within incarceration facilities. She plans to implement and share the findings by creating a professional development (PD) workshop as well as in-class coaching follow-ups for teachers working in a US Federal Bureau Prison. She has chosen to conduct both forms of PD because the combination will appeal to multiple types of learners and many teachers find the coaching-style to be beneficial (Dunst & Raab, 2010). The workshop and coaching follow-ups will be based on the research evidence and best practice from the PD literature reviewed in chapter two. This PD will emphasize the importance of the literacy education programs on the lives of the inmates. One goal will be to detail the effects in which the programs have on rehabilitation and recidivism and to develop an understanding of these effects. Another goal will be to identify some factors that could affect the success of literacy education programs through interactive learning opportunities in the workshop. A last goal will be to help the teachers implement and apply the knowledge they gain in the workshop, during the coaching follow-ups.

The Workshop

The workshop will take place on a Wednesday evening in January, after classes are finished; it will run from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm. At 3:30 pm the researcher will conduct introductions and begin by showing a Power Point that will depict the impact of literacy education to all types of learners, especially those who are incarcerated, in making people life long learners (see Appendix A). The Power Point will act as a simple guide for discussions about the teachers' experiences and responses to the information and visuals. After the researcher presents this information, she will provide time for whole-group as well as small-group

discussions. During the discussions, the teachers will be asked to share some stories about inmates they have known to be successful in their rehabilitation into society. A break will follow the discussion at approximately 4:15 to 4:30 pm.

The workshop will reconvene at 4:30 pm with a focus on factors that affect the success of literacy education programs within incarceration facilities. First, the researcher will briefly discuss the importance of positive relationships between students (inmates), teachers, and staff to the effectiveness of the programs because, as Garland and McCarty (2011) state, “interactions with inmates are so fundamental to the role of teaching in prisons (as with many other prison occupations)” (p. 301).

From approximately 4:35 to 4:40 pm, the researcher will share a scenario in which it may be difficult to stay positive toward the inmates and model a way to redirect undesirable behavior and uphold a positive attitude, for the whole group. Fishman (2003) emphasizes the importance of modeling concepts for teachers during PD activities throughout his study by including it as part of the PD presentation process for each new concept. After modeling a way to stay positive, she will ask everyone to share difficult situations they have experienced teaching with their group. Each group will be required to come up with one positive way a teacher could handle each situation shared, record them on the Positive Relationship form (see Appendix B), and prepare to briefly discuss one of their scenarios and solutions with the whole group. This will take place from 4:40 to 5:00 pm.

Next, there will be a whole group activity in which everyone will compile a list of incentives that the teachers and researcher believe will likely encourage more inmates to not only join the programs voluntarily, but complete them. Such incentives will be compiled as ideas for whole-prison policies as well as individual classrooms. The researcher’s role during this time

will be to prompt ideas and record the list into a Microsoft Word document labeled Incentive Form, which can be sent to each teacher later (see Appendix C). This will take approximately twenty minutes, 5:00 to 5:20 pm. The last ten minutes of the workshop will remain open for questions and comments as well as time for each teacher to sign up for an in-class coaching day (see Appendix D).

In-Class Coaching

The researcher will visit each teacher's classroom to complete the coaching aspect of the PD within approximately three weeks following the workshop. The coaching sessions will be designed with the intent of helping teachers keep positive attitudes and relationships with their students and with the intent of helping them implement incentives discussed in the workshop. Overall, the coaching will help teachers increase the positivity and effectiveness of their literacy environments.

At the beginning of each coaching session, the researcher will meet with the teacher one-on-one, before the students arrive, to reflect and review concepts discussed in the workshop. She will remind the teacher to refer to the incentive list as well as discuss ways to stay positive. When the students arrive, she will sit in the back of the classroom so she does not disrupt or distract anyone or take away from the teacher's authority. From the back of the room, the researcher will observe and take anecdotal notes on the teacher's interactions with the students and attitude in which he or she maintains during instruction and specifically during any student disruptions that may arise. The researcher will also be looking for any inclusion or mention of incentives or areas and students that she feels could benefit from some type of motivation.

Once the students are dismissed, the researcher will meet with the teacher to hear how he or she felt the lesson went. She will provide the teacher with feedback regarding his or her ability

to stay positive as well as discuss the use or possible future use of incentives or forms of motivation. This form of coaching allows the researcher to guide the teachers before instruction and support their application of what was learned in the workshop through feedback following his or her instruction. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001) consider professional development effective if there is a change in one's teaching practices as a result. Because the coaching follow-ups will take place before, during, and after instruction, the researcher will have a better chance of helping the teachers alter or change their teaching practices. At the end of each coaching visit, she will provide each teacher with a short survey about the PD experience (see Appendix E). On the bottom of the survey, there will be room for the teachers to give a brief reflection about how they think this PD affects their students and classroom atmosphere.

The above professional development workshop and coaching follow-ups are for the PD of federal BOP teachers, literacy specialists, and the researcher.

International Reading Association Standards

Table 1 is a detailed chart, which makes connections between the International Reading Association (IRA) standards and this professional development project.

Table 1
Connection to the International Reading Association Standards

International Reading Association Standards (2010)	Ways in which the standards were met through this professional development project
<p>IRA Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge <i>Candidates understand the theoretical and evidence-based foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction.</i> 1.1 Candidates understand major theories and empirical research that describe the cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and sociocultural foundations of reading and writing development, processes, and components, including word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and read-writing connections.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate meets this standard through demonstrating the understanding of the theoretical framework of Sharan Merriam’s (2008) Adult Learning Theory and John Dewey’s (1922) contributions to the Constructivist Theory. • The candidate also meets the 1.1 strand of this standard through connections to the above theories and research conducted for the literature review.
<p>IRA Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction <i>Candidates use instructional approaches, materials, and an integrated, comprehensive, balanced curriculum to support student learning in reading and writing.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate addresses this standard in the portion of the professional development workshop in which the educators are to create strategies to use in their classrooms. • The candidate also addresses this standard during the portion of the professional development workshop where the importance of Literacy Education is heavily stressed. • Lastly, the candidate meets this standard through the coaching portion of PD because it provides teachers with support, which in-turn provides the students with support as well.
<p>IRA Standard 4: Diversity <i>Candidates create and engage their students in literacy practices that develop awareness, understanding, respect, and a valuing of differences in our society.</i> 4.1 Candidates recognize, understand, and value the forms of diversity that exist in society and their importance in learning to read and write.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate meets this standard through the extensive literature review in which the commonality of literacy education and its effects on inmate rehabilitation and return to society as functioning members is depicted and examined. • The candidate also addresses the diversity of the inmates’ backgrounds, education levels, ages, and races within the Literature Review.

International Reading Association Standards (2010)

Ways in which the standards were met through this professional development project

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the workshop the candidate addresses the relationships between the inmates and the teachers and how positive relationships, regardless of feelings, race, backgrounds, and other factors, result in better program participation and more successful rehabilitation in society.
<p>IRA Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership <i>Candidates recognize the importance of, demonstrate, and facilitate professional learning and leadership as a career-long effort and responsibility.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project, in its entirety, is for the professional development of the candidate and other literacy professionals along with those already working in incarceration facilities. The candidate shows leadership because she will be leading the professional development workshop and coaching the teachers in the process.

Chapter Five Conclusion

Overview of Study and Findings

The project focused on the topic of literacy education within incarceration facilities. The research questions were: 1. What does research say are the effects of literacy education, during incarceration, on the rehabilitation of inmates? 2. What does research say are the effects of literacy education, during incarceration, on the recidivism rates of former inmates? and 3. What factors affect the success of literacy education programs within incarceration facilities? The researcher conducted a literature review on relevant, empirical research studies to answer these questions and developed a PD workshop and coaching follow-ups, based on research, to present the findings.

The findings to the first research question include: Literacy education has positive implications on inmates and their ability to reenter society. One of the major implications literacy education has on their rehabilitation is on post-release employment. Research says that those who participate in the programs while incarcerated have an easier time obtaining employment upon release. Another implication is on their ability, in general, to live as functioning, contributing members of society. The findings to the second research question include: Inmates who participate in literacy education have lower recidivism rates. While the researcher was unable to find a study that gave a statistic for these rates on a national or international scale, every single study examined supports this conclusion. The findings to the third research question include: Factors that affect such programs' success are positive relationships between teachers and inmates, motivation or incentives for completion of the programs, and age and race of the participants. Positive relationships between staff and inmates affect the literacy-learning environment of the classrooms as well as the inmates' willingness to

participate cooperatively. The inclusion of incentives or some form of motivation also impacts the inmates' willingness to participate and complete the programs, while inspiring them to achieve success. The age and race of inmates affect the success of the programs; the older the inmate, the higher the success rate for program completion. In addition, different racial groups have different experiences and levels of success in the programs.

The answers or findings of the research questions can impact the education field. Professional development research was examined in a literature review in order for the researcher to develop the PD workshop and coaching follow-ups for Federal BOP teachers. The PD is designed to inform the teachers about this project and its findings through best practices for adult learners and research-supported forms of PD. The researcher completed this in order to impact the teachers' instruction and show the teachers the significance of this topic.

Significance of Findings

Teachers and literacy educators can benefit from the findings of this project because they are significant to the field of education. The findings reinforce the concept and importance of teaching all students, no matter the age or means in which they are being educated, to be life long learners. The findings are also significant because they clearly show research-based evidence indicating that literacy education has positive implications on prisoners. Such implications occur during and after participation in literacy education programs.

In addition, this project's findings are significant for educators, specifically literacy educators, in our current society and economy. This project presents research that supports a nontraditional avenue for educators to seek teaching opportunities and careers in a time in which the field of education is somewhat difficult to obtain employment. Many teachers are looking for opportunities to make a difference in students' lives; teaching within incarceration facilities can

provide such opportunities. Properly immersing inmates in literacy education can result in their successful reentry into society as functioning, employed individuals with lower recidivism rates. Therefore, this topic has positive implications for society as a whole. Lastly, the findings of this project are significant because they identify a few factors that affect the success of literacy education programs within incarceration facilities. If teachers, literacy educators, and incarceration facility staff understand and properly address these factors (i.e., positive relationships with inmates, motivation, and age & race), they will likely be able to create a positive and conducive literacy learning environment for the programs. In doing so, the prisoners may want to participate more and will likely complete the programs successfully.

Limitations

There are a few limitations in the research supporting this study and its findings. One of the main limitations of the findings is the lack of available empirical research studies on the topic. A major factor contributing to the lack of available research is that the ERIC Database is currently under construction and any and all sensitive material is unobtainable. Therefore, many studies the researcher intended on including in this project had to be left out. Another limitation of these findings is that there are no studies that give direct statistics on a national or international sample-size level on the difference in recidivism rates of those participating in education and those not participating. A final limitation for this topic is, while there is a great deal of research on the short-term effects of education on post-release employment, there is a lack of available research on the *long-term* effects on incarcerated individuals' post-release employment. Such limitations influenced the researcher's recommendations for future research.

Opportunities for Future Research

Based on the limitations as well as the studies examined, the researcher identified areas in which this topic may need more research. One of these areas is that of the factors contributing to successful programs such as the inclusion of incentives for motivation. The General Accounting Office (1993) as well as Kandel, Ayllon, & Roberts (1976) indicate the importance of using incentives for motivation within the programs. However, this topic could benefit from further studies taking an in-depth look at the different forms or types of incentives that are available to the inmates and the ways in which the inmates obtain them through the education programs. This topic could also benefit from having more research conducted about recidivism rates on a larger, broader scale. For example, national or international studies providing direct statistics about recidivism rates for those participating in literacy education programs verse those not participating. Lastly, literacy specialists or educators could benefit if more research was readily available on the literacy curriculum taught within incarceration facilities.

Conclusion

This project clearly presents research-based evidence about the positive implications literacy education, within different forms of incarceration facilities, has on the lives of inmates. Participation in such education programs greatly decreases the likelihood of repeated offenses or lowers the recidivism rate dramatically. Program involvement also makes the transition back into society much easier and much more successful for the individuals. Once released back into society, the former inmates have greater success in obtaining and upholding employment, which ultimately has a positive effect on society as a whole. In addition, in order to make these literacy education programs successful, there are few factors to keep in consideration. Such factors include: Positive relationships between teachers and inmate-students, motivation in the form of

various incentives to increase program enrollment and completion, and the age and race of the inmates who participate. Knowledge on this topic and project can positively affect the education field, prison systems, society as a whole, and it can help shape those individuals into life long learners.

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Appendices

Appendix A Power Point

**THE EFFECT OF LITERACY
EDUCATION ON
REHABILITATION AND
RECIDIVISM OF FORMERLY
INCARCERATED CRIMINALS**

By Brea Erny



**Literacy Education
Lowers Recidivism Rates**

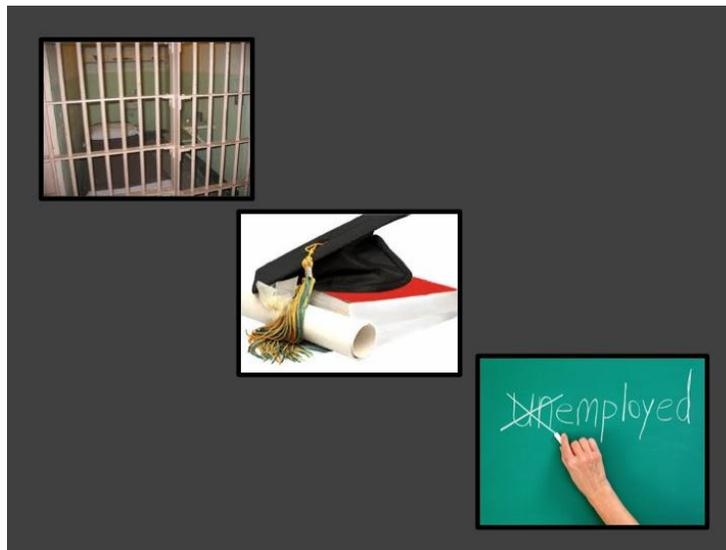
"The general population recidivism rate for released felons is approximately 70%. This figure reduced to 6% for those who achieve a college education" (Esperian, 2010, p.325). -American Study

"The more educational programs successfully completed for each 6 months confined, the lower the recidivism rate" (Harer, 1994, p. 4). -American Study

Harer (1994) stated that those participating in literacy education programs to achieve higher levels of education during incarceration, recidivate much less. -American Study

Sile and Liepa (2012) found that inmates develop knowledge and skills necessary to function in society if they have participated in educational programs. -Latvian Study

"This study's results indicate that correctional education may serve as an important mechanism in reducing the recidivism rate among released offenders, which, in turn will significantly reduce incarceration costs that are associated with recidivist offenders" (Nally, Lockwood, Knutson, & Ho, 2012, p. 82). -American Study



Literacy Education Increases Post-release Employment

Whitney (2009) indicated that when rehabilitation and education programs increase the number of degree-holding inmates, the inmates would be able to function in society and successfully enter the job market. -American Study

"Offender subjects in this study not only accepted the link between adult basic education and employment, but also outspokenly understood the extended premise that adequate employment and income to successfully stay out of prison have a direct casual link with a high school equivalency credential" (Schlesinger, 2005, p. 239). -American Study (inmate perspectives)

Smith and Silverman (1994) found that participation in education programs such as INVEST, during incarceration had positive effects on short-term post-release employment as well as inmate attitudes towards employment. -American Study

Saylor and Gayes (1996) found that prison programs could positively affect the short-term outcomes of post-release employment and post-release arrest. -American Study

Workshop Schedule

3:30 – 4:15 Introductions, power point, discussions

4:15 – 4:30 Break time

4:30 – 5:00 Positive Relationships, scenarios, staying positive

5:00 – 5:20 Incentives

5:20 – 5:30 Questions, comments, sign-up for coaching session

Appendix C Incentive Form

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Appendix E Professional Development Survey

1. Rate the effectiveness/helpfulness of this Professional Development experience (workshop and individual coaching) by circling a number on the scale provided.

Not Effective.	Moderately Effective.	Effective.	Very Effective
1	2	3	4

2. What did you find most beneficial about the workshop?

3. What did you find most beneficial about the coaching session?

4. What is something you would change about the workshop?

5. What is something you would change about the coaching session?

6. In 1-3 sentences please reflect on your overall experience. Please indicate how you think this professional development could affect your students and classroom atmosphere.

Teacher Signature _____ Date _____