

INVESTING IN CALIFORNIA PRISON INMATES: AN EVALUATION OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT

MODULE OF THE PRISON EDUCATION PROJECT (PEP)

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Tyee Griffith

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ABSTRACT

California's prison system is facing a number of infrastructure changes as a result of a United States Supreme Court decision, which deemed California prisons inadequate and dangerous due to severe overcrowding. This court ruling was the impetus for the State of California and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), to implement the 2011 Public Safety Realignment Plan which aims to create a less crowded prison system that is safer, less expensive, and better equipped to rehabilitate inmates. Although the State has been successful in reducing the prison population, it has yet to identify ways to lower recidivism rates. It is vital that the CDCR identify and collaborate with local community providers, such as the Prison Education Project (PEP), to improve correctional outcomes. The purpose of this research project is to examine the impact that the Career Development module of PEP has on the student inmate participants at three California prisons. Results show that student-inmates saw PEP as beneficial in addressing important topics related to successful reentry, including jobs and educational opportunities. Future research should focus on developing cost-effective approaches to identifying those who are at the greatest risk for recidivism and provide various interventions (in-prison and post-release) to combat recidivism among this population.

Key words: California, recidivism, career development, prison education

INTRODUCTION

California's prison system is facing a number of infrastructure changes as a result of a judicial decision that came down from the United States Supreme Court, *Governor of California et al v. Plata et al*. California's prison system was deemed inadequate and dangerous due to severe overcrowding which led to "needless suffering and death" (Rogan, 2012). The court ruled that the State must reduce the number of inmates in California's 33 state prisons. This ruling came about after two class-action lawsuits were filed, in 1990 and 2001 (Rogan, 2012). These lawsuits were filed by inmates that claimed they received poor medical and mental health care within the State's prison health care system (Vicini, 2011). The evidence presented in these cases showed several shortcomings in California's prison health care system (Rogan, 2012).

These shortfalls were a result of severe overcrowding within California's 33 state prisons. At its peak in 2006, California's prisons were filled with approximately 172,000 inmates. However, these prisons were designed to hold about 80,000 individuals (Vicini, 2011). At that point, State prisons were filled at 215% over capacity. Because of overcrowding, prison inmates faced chronic and severe shortages in basic medical and mental health care services. Despite attempts by the CDCR and the legislature to reduce the prison population between 2006 and 2011, the prison population was only reduced by 10,000 inmates (Misczynski, 2012). Although there were some reductions to the prison population, it was not enough to appease the United States Supreme Court. The court ultimately ruled that the State's prison system violated the 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution which provides protection against cruel and unusual punishment.

Because of this ruling, California's prisons were placed under federal receivership and ordered to reduce overcrowded conditions (Rogan, 2012). The court mandated the State of California to reduce their inmate population size by 10,000 within six months of the decision, followed by another reduction of 30,000 over the subsequent two years. This would allow the state to comply with the court's order to reduce the prison population to 137.5% above the intended capacity (Rogan, 2012).

PUBLIC SAFETY REALIGNMENT 2011

The Supreme Court mandated an incremental deadline approach to reduce California's prison population at a feasible pace. This court ruling was the impetus for the State of California and the CDCR to implement the 2011 Public Safety Realignment Plan, also known as Assembly Bill (AB) 109 and companion AB 117 (Misczynski, 2012; American Civil Liberties Union of California [ACLU], 2012). This landmark prison Realignment legislation was created to ease the State's prison crowding and to reduce the CDCR's budget. Realignment has provided the State of California with an opportunity to create a less crowded prison system that is safer, less expensive, and better equipped to rehabilitate inmates before they are released from prison (California Department of Corrections [CDCR], 2012a).

Because of the on-going budget problems that the State of California continues to face, it is important to reexamine the mission and priorities of the corrections system (CDCR, 2012a). Realignment directs funding to county governments to manage lower-level offenders. This allows the State to focus on managing serious and violent offenders. This change also provides counties with the opportunity to focus on community-based programs that promote rehabilitation (CDCR, 2012a).

California's Realignment plan went into effect August 2011. The goal of Realignment is to shift the responsibility for certain low-level offenders, parolees, and parole violators to county governments (Legislative Analyst Office [LAO], 2012). The critical objective of Realignment is to not only ease prison crowding, but also to reduce the CDCR's budget by 18% (CDCR, 2012a). Thus far, Realignment has been successful. The prison population declined by approximately 24,000 inmates and 16,000 parolees in the last year (Misczynski, 2012; CDCR, 2012a). There are several factors that have contributed to the drastic reduction of inmates. Low-level offenders who would have been sentenced to State prison time are now being sentenced to serve time in county jail. In addition, many parole violators who would have been returned to State prison are now being sent to county jails, and parole violators that commit new low-level crimes are also being sent to county jails (Misczynski, 2012).

The rapid reduction of State prison inmates helped the CDCR meet the first population reduction target set by the federal court. According to the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), in June 2012 California's prison inmate population was approximately 135,000. Although the State believes that the Realignment transition period has been successful in providing safe and effective inmate reductions, they do not project being able to comply with the court's 2013 deadline for meeting the entire inmate reduction goal of 137.5% above design capacity (Misczynski, 2012). This projection differs from the State's 2010 perspective that they would be able to meet this deadline (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation [CDCR], 2010). New projections indicate that the prison population will be at approximately 141% above

design capacity by June 2013. There will be a need for additional measures in this plan in order to satisfy the Supreme Court's order (CDCR 2012a).

Eventually, the State of California needs to show the federal courts that it can ensure legally acceptable conditions of confinement. This will in-turn, allow the State to free itself from the federal receivership it was placed under and put an end to the numerous class-action lawsuits which costs the State millions of dollars each year (CDCR, 2012a).

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF PUBLIC SAFETY REALIGNMENT 2011

In order to comply with the Supreme Court's mandate, in 2011, California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed Assembly Bill (AB) 109 and AB 117, historic legislation geared at safely and securely monitoring adult and juvenile offenders. This legislation's mission includes providing effective rehabilitation and drug treatment services to facilitate the successful transition of parolees back into society. The governor hopes that these interventions "will enable California to close the revolving door of low-level inmates cycling in and out of state prisons" (CDCR, 2010).

In 2012, the Public Policy Institute of California released a report entitled "Corrections Realignment: One Year Later", which summarized the progress and issues that have come about as a result of this realignment strategy to reduce the inmate population (Misczynski, 2012). The report noted that the California State prison system had managed to redirect approximately 30,000 inmates into local county jails instead of State prison, which was their initial destination. In addition, the after-prison supervision of approximately 50,000 offenders has been shifted from state parole agencies to county probation agencies (Misczynski, 2012). There have also been changes to the protocols

and procedures involving sentencing and good-behavior time reductions (Misczynski, 2012).

Since many inmates have been transitioned into county jails and local probation systems, the State must be aware of potential unintended consequences that may result from this transition plan. Some of these issues were discussed in the 2012 Public Policy Institute of California report, specifically noting that county jails have already been impacted by the State's strategy. The local county jail system currently has an inmate population of 71,060 and a capacity of approximately 76,000 (Misczynski, 2012). While they are not at full capacity cumulatively, some county jails are already facing overcrowding problems (Loftstrom and Kramer, 2012; Misczynski, 2012). One way that local governments are trying to address the issue of overcrowding is through the construction of more jail facilities, but this strategy would only be a short term solution.

In fact, while the State has been able to lower the prison population dramatically, local county jails have had to increase their facility capacity by more than 7,000 beds. Collectively, county jails have spent \$45.1 million of State Realignment money to increase their inmate capacity (Megerian, 2012). This incarceration only model is in complete contrast with the intent of Realignment. Realignment money was intended to fund recidivism reducing policies, including alternatives to incarceration. While the CDCR allocates Realignment funding to the counties, it the responsibility of the counties to determine how the money is spent (ACLU, 2012).

Another potential problem that county jails may face has to do with the capacity for providing adequate health care services. State prison officials worry that county jails may face the inability to provide sufficient quality medical and mental health services to

keep up with the influx of new county jail inmates, and potentially face similar problems the State faced which led to the Supreme Court case in the first place (Misczynski, 2012). In fact, one such lawsuit was filed in December 2011, by an inmate claiming that the Fresno county jail was supplying “unconstitutionally inadequate health care” (Misczynski, 2012).

Another impact this Realignment strategy has had on the local corrections systems is the increased burden on local probation departments. The redirection of post release monitoring has shifted newly-released individuals from state parole agencies over to county probation offices. This new arrangement is called Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS) (Misczynski, 2012). Under this program, county probation officers will oversee low-level offenders released from state prisons. In addition, county probation officers will be tasked with connecting low-level offenders to appropriate services, including “drug treatment, mental health care, counseling, housing, educational programs, employment assistance”, and any other resource that will enable these newly released individuals to successfully reintegrate into society (Misczynski, 2012).

PRISON GROWTH AND FISCAL RAMIFICATIONS

The growth in the prison population made the CDCR the largest correctional system in the U.S., and the largest State agency in California. One out of every six State employees works for the department of corrections (Pew Center on the States, 2011). The State of California relies almost completely on the CDCR to improve correctional outcomes. However, State spending on corrections increased approximately 340% from 1989-2011. This equates to an average increase of about 8% per year. Today, spending

on corrections comprises twice as much of the State's budget than it did 20 years (Pew Center on the States, 2011).

Between 1852 and 1984, the State of California only had 12 prisons to accommodate its approximately 19,600 inmates. In the 16 years that followed, the State of California built an additional 21 state prison facilities at a cost of \$280 million to \$350 million per facility. These facilities were built in order to support the approximately 500% increase in the prison population (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2002). This increase in the prison population has contributed to the creation of the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC). PIC refers to the explosion of the growing corrections and detention industry in the United States (Hatt, 2011). The combination of zero tolerance school policies and increased legislation around crime has not only resulted in a substantial growth in prison industry and corrections, but it has ravaged poor urban communities of color (Martensen, 2012; Hatt, 2011).

The fiscal ramifications of the CDCR's increasing budget have affected funding for virtually every other government program (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). Over the last decade, California has drastically increased college tuition costs, cut or reduced social welfare funding, and halted public works projects. However, efforts to scale back the ever increasing corrections budget had been unsuccessful (Campbell 2012; Petersilia, 2010). In the past, the CDCR's budget was allowed to continue to grow with no accountability or fiscal responsibility. Realignment has outlined a plan to improve transparency and increase oversight and fiscal responsibility (California Department of Finance [DOF], 2013).

The State of California is currently facing a massive budget shortfall of approximately 16 billion dollars (Lin, 2012). One of the contributing factors to this budget short fall is the climbing costs of California's correctional budget. In the proposed 2012-2013 State budget, the CDCR's total funding was approximately \$10 billion dollars. This budget includes funding for California's 33 state prisons, as well as parole and probation services (California Department of Finance [DOF], 2012). The CDCR's budget has grown over \$5 billion in the last decade (CDCR, 2012a).

Although the rise in California's corrections budget has negatively affected many government programs, education has been one of the areas that has suffered significantly. While California continues to spend billions of dollars on corrections, it has fallen to number 35 out of 50 states in per pupil spending on K-12 education (ACLU, 2012). The State of California currently spends approximately \$50,000 per year to house one inmate in State prison (State of California, Legislative Analyst Office [CA LAO], 2013). However, in the 2012-2013 school year, the State of California spent approximately \$11, 246 per year to educate one K-12 student (DOF, 2012). Many argue that decreased spending on school systems and having the largest prison population in the industrialized world are factors that contribute to the construction of the school-to-prison pipeline. The school-to-prison pipeline describes the expansion of school-based policing and zero tolerance discipline practices that usher African American and Latino youth out of the educational system and into the criminal justice system (Fowler, 2011; Winn and Behizadeh, 2011).

RECIDIVISM AND REHABILITATION

Despite the CDCR's increase in spending and resources, California has one of the highest prison recidivism rates when compared to other states (Pew Center on the States, 2011). The CDCR measures recidivism by using arrests, convictions, and returns to State custody at various intervals: year one, two, and three. However, the CDCR uses returns to State custody as its primary measure of recidivism (CDCR, 2012b). The latest report from the CDCR (2012b) shows that the overall return rate of female ex-offenders to State prison facilities over a three year period is 52.9%, which is approximately 12% lower than that of males. The overall return rate of male ex-offenders to State prison facilities over a three year period is 65%, which is the 2nd highest recidivism rate out of the 50 states (ACLU, 2012). However, almost 50% of male ex-offenders re-offend within the first six months of release, and 75% re-offend after one year. This would indicate that many ex-offenders that re-offend are placed in local or county jail facilities instead of State prison facilities, and therefore are not reflected on State recidivism data.

Moreover, recidivism rates are significantly higher for people that are released after their second term of incarceration (Pew Center on the States, 2011). Most ex-offenders were re-arrested as a result of various parole violations, many of which are technical in nature (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). According to the CDCR, in 2010 more than half of inmate admissions to prison were due to parole violations, and only 29% of new admissions to prison were individuals who had not served time in prison previously (CDCR , 2010)

According to the CDCR, ninety-five percent of California's State prison inmates will be released back into society, thus the rehabilitation of offenders should be a top

priority for the CDCR because it serves society's best interest. High recidivism rates have tremendous social, economic, and political consequences for California (Trimbur, 2009). California's high recidivism rate questions the overall effectiveness of the CDCR in rehabilitating inmates. According to the 2006 Prison Commission's report titled *Confronting Confinement*, the majority of inmates do not receive the educational and rehabilitative services they need during their time in prison. Some of these services include educational and vocational training, career development, and drug rehabilitation. As a result, many freed inmates return to their communities with even more disadvantages than before they were incarcerated because they now have a criminal record (Gibbons and Katzenbach, 2006). According to an analysis conducted by the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (2009), serving time in prison was associated with a 40% reduction in earnings, reduced job tenure, reduced hourly wages, and higher unemployment (Western & Pettit, 2010).

The rehabilitative goal of Realignment is to improve access to rehabilitative programs and place at least 70% of inmates in programs that address their academic and rehabilitative needs. The CDCR believes that increasing access to rehabilitative programs in prison will reduce recidivism because inmates will be better prepared to be productive members of society once released from prison. This will ultimately help lower the long-term prison population and save the State money. This plan also calls for the establishment of reentry hubs at certain prisons to provide cognitive behavioral therapy, anger management, vocational skills training, employment training, and other resources that will prepare inmates as they get closer to their release date. This plan also designates enhanced program yards which will provide incentives for good behavior.

This plan also provides for various community-based programs that will assist during their first year of release. The goal is to provide at least 70% of parolees with various resources (substance abuse, education, employment services, etc.) (CDCR, 2012a).

ADDRESSING RECIDIVISM

Although the California legislature attempted to address the issue of prison recidivism, the policy was put on hold because of budget trouble. In 2007, the California legislature had passed the Public Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Act. This was considered historic legislation at the time because it focused on reducing overcrowded prisons and improving rehabilitative outcomes. In order to accomplish this goal, the legislation authorized the CDCR to spend an additional \$50 million on rehabilitative programs and the construction of reentry facilities. Although this was a great idea and many counties and nonprofit organizations were eager to participate, California's fiscal climate began a downturn that made this kind of bond-funded construction nearly impossible (Cate, 2012). Because of the State's economic challenges, this plan was never realized. Overall, the CDCR has had to significantly reduce educational and other rehabilitative services that were offered to incarcerated individuals due to economic challenges and shifts in correctional philosophy; however, Realignment presents the State with an opportunity to implement effective rehabilitative programming in the hopes of decreasing recidivism (CDCR, 2012a).

In the past, the CDCR has failed to collaborate with other organizations that could assist in rehabilitating inmates and lowering recidivism rates (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). However, now more than ever, it is vital that the CDCR identify and collaborate with local community providers such as the Prison Education Project

(PEP) to improve correctional outcomes. Mounting correctional costs and evidence that many tough on crime policies are ineffective have generated a growing interest in implementing policies that are based on evidence (Campbell, 2012).

In November 2011, the Office of Correctional Education (OCE) and the California Institution for Men (CIM) began a partnership with PEP's founder Dr. Renford Reese in order to expand educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals. In spring 2012, the program expanded to the Correctional Institution for Women (CIW) and the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC). The ultimate goal of PEP is to provide student-inmates with the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully reintegrate into society once they are released from prison. Successful reintegration will ultimately translate into lower recidivism rates for inmates that are released from California's prisons system and less tax dollars being spent to support California's correctional budget. The goal of PEP is to help the CDCR reduce recidivism rates by one percent over the next three years. This would translate into savings to the State of approximately \$44 million dollars (prisoneducationproject.org).

Overview of the Prison Education Project (PEP)

The Prison Education Project (PEP) is a volunteer program that ultimately seeks to expand educational opportunities for inmates at all of California's 33 state prisons and youth facilities. The founder of PEP, Dr. Renford Reese, believes that every great movement begins with college students. The philosophy of PEP is to utilize student and faculty volunteers from local colleges and universities to outreach to inmates by teaching various PEP modules. Because there are various colleges and universities within a 15-20 mile radius of each of California's State prisons, PEP seeks to collaborate with college

and university students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Ultimately, the philosophy of PEP is to encourage the CDCR to collaborate and partner with colleges and universities as a method of reducing the cost associated with prisoner rehabilitation and recidivism (prisoneducationproject.org).

In order to reduce recidivism, this project focuses on enhancing the educational services that will promote the developmental growth of the student-inmate population. This developmental growth will ultimately help the student-inmates improve their social skills, expand their problem solving and critical thinking skills, and ultimately help them build their self-efficacy. Numerous research indicates that providing these types of services have tremendous positive effects on the inmate population and overall recidivism rates. This project also seeks to provide these student-inmates with the employment training and the life skills necessary to function as productive citizens, which will in turn reduce overall recidivism rates. The (PEP) project consists of (7) educational modules: Tutoring in Pre-GED Math and Literacy, Academic Orientation, Career Development, Enrichment Course (e.g., Art, Spoken Word, Creative Writing, Study Circles), and an Interdisciplinary Certificate curriculum.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

There is a gap in research between effective prison rehabilitation programs and successful reintegration into society post-release. Although risks and needs predictors for offenders in-prison and post-release have greatly improved in recent years, more progress needs to be made in predicting recidivism, identifying the most “at-risk” populations, and other outcomes. These predictions can ultimately contribute to the CDCR’s ability to

target and partner with community programs that provide cost-efficient and effective programming that contribute to the overall rehabilitation of inmates.

The Prison Education Project (PEP) attempts to bridge this gap and facilitate a successful transition from incarceration to societal reintegration by providing rehabilitative services to incarcerated individuals. The purpose of this research project is to examine the impact that the Career Development module of PEP has on the student-inmate participants at the California Institution for Men (CIM), the California Institution for Women (CIW), and the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC). Many of the student-inmates that participate in this module have approximately less than two years on their prison sentence. Therefore, it is important to make sure that these inmates are equipped with the skills necessary to successfully reintegrate into society.

PEP's Career Development module is an eight week program that focuses on many areas of self-improvement for student-inmates. The first week, student-inmates complete self-assessment inventories in order to discover their personality type, interests, values, etc. This session provides an opportunity for the volunteers to build rapport with the student-inmates and get to know them on a more personal level. The student-inmates also get the opportunity to learn more about the volunteers. This includes information about their educational achievements, family and community background, and why they are passionate about PEP.

The second week of the Career Development module focuses on highlighting the importance of acquiring essential life skills. These skills include interpersonal and communication as well as problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making. Student-inmates also have an opportunity to learn more about stress and anger

management and overall coping skills. The importance of financial literacy is also discussed. Student-inmates are advised of the importance of securing their social security cards, driver's license and other forms of identification upon release from prison.

The third and fourth week of the Career Development module focuses on introducing student inmates to various college majors, the process of applying to college, and information about financial aid. Volunteers have the opportunity to talk about their college experience and share how they chose their college major(s). Volunteers also talk about the importance of educational training and introduce student-inmates to various certificates of achievement programs and degree programs offered at local community colleges. This session also serves to dispel various myths about who qualifies for financial aid and the requirements for meeting eligibility for federal aid.

The fifth, sixth and seventh week of the Career Development module focuses on helping student-inmates develop a resume, search for felon friendly jobs, and refine their interviewing skills. Volunteers assist student-inmates with developing a resume, so that the transition from prison back into the community is smooth. Student-inmates are given a resume template which allows them to complete their own resume. Student-inmates are encouraged to include all jobs that they have had, both inside of prison and outside. Volunteers also provide student inmates with information on felony friendly organizations and career fields. All of these things are tied back into the student-inmate's self-assessment and interests.

Student-inmates also learn about the various restrictions for convicted felons in certain career fields (health, real estate, government jobs, etc.). Student-inmates are also given information on tax credits that employers could qualify for by hiring ex-offenders

and information about the Certificate of Rehabilitation. Student-inmates also find out about one stop job centers and how to do employment searches. The Career Development's seventh week is focused on building student-inmates interviewing skills. Volunteers talk about various interview strategies and proven practices. Volunteers also discuss ways of addressing questions surrounding their conviction and time in prison. Student-inmates are taught how to effectively address the question and quickly move forward in discussing ways that they could be an asset to the company. Student-inmates also are provided with the opportunity to do mock interviews in order to polish their interviewing skills.

The eighth and final week of the Career Development module is focused on overcoming challenges. Student-inmates discuss and identify foreseeable challenges they may face upon being released. Volunteers help to identify additional unforeseen obstacles that may face post release from prison. This exercise attempts to help student-inmates not only recognize expected challenges, but also brainstorm on strategies and resources that can be used to combat or address that challenge. This exercise attempts to help students perfect their parole plan so, they can refer back to if they are faced with challenges that could jeopardize their success. It also helps student-inmates put together short-term and long-term goals along with action plans to accomplish these goals.

The ultimate purpose of the Career Development module is to not only increase the confidence level of student-inmates and to improve their life chances after they are released from prison, but it is also intended to provide valuable knowledge that many of them would not have received elsewhere. PEP is the first program of its kind to be implemented in California; thus, this evaluation will provide valuable information about

the impact that PEP's Career Development curriculum has on student-inmates. It will give student-inmates the opportunity to provide feedback on the effectiveness and overall structure of the Career Development module. Findings from this evaluation will enable the program to modify or enhance certain programmatic aspects to meet the overall Career Development needs of student-inmates.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis of this research project is that inmates that participate in PEP's Career Development module will have more of an understanding of what it takes to obtain a job once released from prison. This module will also help student-inmates become more familiar with the process of applying to college and for financial aid. Ultimately, the information that they have learned in the Career Development module will contribute to their ability to successfully integrate back into society once they are released from prison.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research project is an evaluation of the Career Development module of the Prison Education Project (PEP). This project seeks to answer the following questions: **(1)** Does PEP's Career Development workshops help student-inmates understand the extensive process of gaining permanent employment once they are released from prison? **(2)** Does PEP's Career Development workshops help student-inmates become familiar with the process of applying to college and financial aid? **(3)** Will student-inmates be able to use the information that they learned in the PEP Career Development workshops once they are paroled? **(4)** What are student-inmates overall thoughts about the Career Development sessions.

Chapter Two of this project is the literature review section which will begin by examining the intersection of race, ideology, and crime and how it has contributed to the culture of mass incarceration. This section will also examine the paradigm shift toward more punitive laws and less rehabilitative services for incarcerated individuals and its devastating effects. This section will also highlight California's Prison Realignment strategy and the overall effects of this shift in policy. This literature review will also serve to highlight the demographic characteristics of inmates in California's prison system and discuss factors that have served to increase the prison population. Finally, this literature review will examine various prison education programs and their effects on overall recidivism rates.

Chapter Three will present the research methodology. This section will describe the procedure and results of this qualitative and quantitative study. This mixed methodological approach combines survey data with first person experiences and observations. Quantitative data were collected through the use of surveys which student-inmates completed after attending at least six out of eight Career Development sessions. The researcher provides an ethnographic report by volunteering to facilitate the Career Development sessions at three California State Prison facilities: CIM, CIW, and CRC.

Chapter Four of this research project will present the summary of research results. This chapter provides an analysis of participant survey responses and themes identified from the open-ended question of the survey. This section will also analyze the first person ethnographic report based on field research.

Chapter Five will present recommendations to the State, CDCR, and PEP. This section also discusses recommendations for further research in prisoner rehabilitation and

recidivism. In addition, this section highlights the exponential growth of PEP and opportunities for program implementation at other correctional facilities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

THE INTERSECTION OF RACE, CRIME, IDEOLOGY, AND POLICY

Politicized crime policies in California and the rest of the country have created a zero-sum view that harsher sanctions on offenders are good for public safety (Campbell, 2012; Simon, 2007). Many of these laws have been passed with no thought to their cumulative impact. The culmination of these failed policies has created a culture of mass incarceration in California and the rest of the country which has become normalized in American culture (Campbell, 2012).

California voters from San Francisco to San Diego have consistently put their support behind tough on crime candidates, tough on crime ballot initiatives, and tough on crime sentencing laws (Joseph and Saavedra, 2009). Although the tough on crime approach might appease public fear and protect politicians from accusations of being soft on crime, it has led to the creation of policies that ultimately do little to improve overall public safety (Campbell, 2012).

Not only have many of these policies been proven to be ineffective, they have cost the State billions of dollars (Campbell, 2012). Because of these failed policies, California's correctional system became known as the most expensive, overcrowded and least effective prison system in America (Medina, 2011). California's difficulty in addressing the prison system's multiple challenges was intensified by an inmate

population that until recently had been growing at an unsustainable pace (CDCR, 2012a). As the prison problem continued to grow in California and the State's budget became increasingly imbalanced, the social inequality that was produced by mass incarceration continued to ravage poor communities of color (Western and Pettit, 2010).

Racialization of Crime

One factor that serves to promote the need for tough on crime legislation is the media's portrayal of certain communities. Media has the ability to shape the public's perception of crime and the people that commit them. Research supports the link between the use of racial propaganda as a driving force for the development of tough on crime approaches (Brewer and Heitzeg, 2008). The media commonly portrays young African American and Latino men as offenders of white victims (Tonry, 2010). Often time, when people are asked to describe typical violent criminals and drug dealers, they describe young African American and Latino males (Beckett and Sasson, 2004; Reeves and Campbell, 1994; Entman, 1992).

Morin (2008) examined factors that have increased incarceration rates of poor African American and Latino communities in state and federal prisons. Through the examination of several data sources and the exploration of various literatures, Morin (2008) hypothesized that racialization of crime and the use of fear around crime is correlated to the increase numbers of people of color in correctional institutions. Morin (2008) also theorized that policy formation using fear of crime as a driving force can deter any attempts to reform these types of legislation, even if they have been proven to be ineffective.

The role of the media has been found to impact policy formulation geared at lowering crime rates. A consequence of utilizing the public's fear of crime is that it may lead to inaccurate perceptions of criminals. Media portrayals of criminals focus predominately on people of color, which in turn, influence the production of disproportionately high incarceration rates among minority communities (Morin, 2008; Simon, 2007; Western, 2006; Beckett and Sasson, 2004). Although current mass media regularly portrays criminals as young African American and Latino men, the origins of the racialization of crime concept was developed by the Republican Party's "Southern Strategy" in the 1960's.

According to Kevin Phillips (1969), liberalism and the Democratic Party lost the support of poor whites in the South as the Civil Rights Movement progressed in the 1960's. This gave conservative ideology access to poor whites. Phillips (1969) asserted that Republican candidates departed from their party's historic support for civil rights in order to achieve political dominance in the South and strengthen their appeal to white working-class voters across the country. Republican strategists chose to manipulate racial animosity and anxiety in order to win law and order votes (Tonry, 2010; Phillips, 1969). The Republican Party was able to successfully link financially secure conservatives with middle-to-lower income conservatives by pursuing law and order policies. This effective strategy served to realign the political electorate (Percival, 2010).

The ability to blame street crime and other social ills on a racial underclass helped conservative Republicans increase anti-minority hostilities among lower income conservatives and enact punitive crime policies that resulted in the imprisonment of more African Americans and Latinos. This ultimately served to invoke greater Republican

support at the ballot box (Percival, 2010; Weaver, 2007; Edsall and Edsall, 1992).

Although the "Southern Strategy" is no longer an official Republican Party platform, its conservative ideology continues to shape approaches to crime and punishment in California and the rest of the country (Tonry, 2010).

In a study conducted by Percival (2010), the State of California was used as a case study model. This case study sought to determine if political ideology affected incarceration rates in ways that were detrimental to racial and ethnic minorities. The State of California was used as a case study because of its significant variation of racial and ethnic diversity as well as political ideological characteristics at the local level (Percival, 2010). This study predicted that political pressures from conservative Republicans influence criminal justice policy at the local level of government; therefore, it can be assumed that more conservative counties would have higher incarceration rates in State prison of African Americans and Latinos than liberal counties (Percival, 2010).

Percival (2010) began the study by reviewing literature that demonstrated the link between ideological orientations and the distribution of policies across states (Percival 2010; Erikson, Wright, and McIver, (1992). Percival (2010) also reviewed literature that demonstrated a relationship between ideological conservatism and governments' rate of incarceration. The findings suggest that on average, conservative states have higher rates of incarceration than liberal states (Jacobs and Carmichael, 2001; Greenberg and West, 2001; Bowers and Waltman, 1993). According to Tonry (1999) the variation in incarceration rates between conservative and liberal states reflect the long-standing differences on matters of crime and punishment between the two ideologies.

According to Percival (2010), conservatives tend to respond to criminal activity by enacting policies that focus on deterrence and incapacitation. Beckett and Western (2001) assert that conservatives use deterrence and incapacitation based policies as a means of controlling marginalized underclass citizens. In contrast liberals tend to view criminal activity and crime as a function of societal impairments to success that need to be corrected. Liberals place more concern on crime prevention policies rather than incapacitation (Percival, 2010; Scheingold, 1984).

Percival (2010) also reviewed literature and research that addressed the “racial threat” theory. The “racial threat” theory posits that the growth of the minority population threatens the economic and political interests of the majority population (Key, 1949). Blalock (1967) asserted that minority groups are repressed by the majority because of the perceived threat of economic and political competition. Several research studies have found a substantial link between the “racial threat” effect on public policy issues and institutional settings (Percival, 2010; Tolbert and Grummel, 2003; Johnson, 2001; Hero and Tolbert, 1996). Therefore, there were reasons to predict that racial hostilities would be more apparent in more diverse environments and that these hostilities would serve to influence criminal justice policy making (Percival, 2010).

Data were collected from state agencies and published reports from 56 of California’s 58 counties in order to test the hypothesis. The results revealed that county ideology had a positive and significant relationship with incarceration. The results ultimately revealed that regardless of an individual’s racial or ethnic group membership, individuals were more likely to be placed in state prison from counties with conservative ideological orientations (Percival, 2010). This study also revealed that as predicted,

county diversity is positively associated with an increase in the probability of African Americans being incarcerated (Percival, 2010).

This research served to advance our knowledge of how political ideology found within states influence the distribution of punitive crime policies across different racial and ethnic groups. Secondly, this research provides a comprehensive examination of factors that contribute to minority incarceration rates at the local level of government (Percival, 2010). Although some researchers believe that political ideology and increased amounts of diversity increase the probability of Latinos and African Americans being incarcerated, other researchers believe that biological inferiority or a subculture of violence contribute to higher incarceration rates for minorities (Gabbidon and Green, 2005).

In the early 1900s, racially biased explanations such as biological inferiority or racial deficiencies were used to explain criminology among African Americans (Gabbidon and Greene, 2005). During the 1960s explanations used to explain the link between African Americans and criminology focused on a “subculture of violence” and deficiencies in the African American family structure (e.g. absent fathers) were popular theories (Barkan, 2009; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967; Moynihan, 1965). Today, scholars continue this debate. Some researchers consider the evidence of an African American subculture of violence to be weak and unsubstantiated while it remains popular with others (Barkan, 2009).

Sociologist William J. Wilson (1987) argues that social and economic changes that have created impoverished conditions in urban areas are to blame for the increase in crime among African Americans. Wilson (1987) asserts that the loss of hundreds of

thousands of manufacturing and other jobs in urban areas left behind a trail of increasing poverty for residents, mostly African American. This circumstance trapped African Americans in a continuing cycle of concentrated disadvantage. Because of the simultaneous effects of extreme poverty, poor schools, racial and ethnic discrimination, housing segregation, members of the concentrated disadvantaged commit crime out of frustration, anger, or economic need (Barkan, 2009; Phillips, 1997; and Wilson, 1995; Massey, 1995; Bernard, 1990).

Although researchers continue to debate about racially politicized policies in California and the rest of the country, it is clear that mass incarceration disproportionately affects impoverished communities of color. Despite the reason, the demographic makeup of California's correctional system and correctional systems across the U.S. is unacceptable, and it needs to be addressed through culturally competent laws, policies, and practices (Lutze, Johnson, Clear, Latessa, and Slate, 2012). The culture of mass incarceration was achieved by capitalizing on public fears and political control. Ultimately, mass incarceration, which is not fiscally sustainable, has cost the State of California billions of dollars in correctional expenses while failing to address prison recidivism and rehabilitation (Lutze, et al, 2012).

The Paradigm Shift

The paradigm shift toward more punitive laws and less rehabilitative services have led to the creation of correctional institutions whose sole purpose is neutralizing social rejects by warehousing them in violence-ridden and racially-divided institutions (Phelps, 2011). Many researchers argue that the criminal justice system lost its moral center when it became more focused on inflicting harm through punishment and

incapacitation and less concerned with the rehabilitative ideal to guide corrections (Lutze et al., 2012; Lutze, 2006; Cullen, Sundt, and Wozniak, 2001; Cullen and Gilbert, 1982). Many scholars concur that the most substantial change in the correctional system in the last 30 years is the decline in rehabilitative services (Phelps, 2011; Garland, 2001).

Between the 1950s and 1970s, correctional administration was founded on the belief that trained experts could administer personalized assessments and treatment to diagnose and treat causes of criminality (Phelps, 2011). However, beginning in the early 1970s, rehabilitation was publicly discredited by many researchers (Phelps, 2011; Ward and Maruna, 2007). In 1974, the Martinson report concluded that nothing worked in rehabilitating prison inmates. Scholars argue that this report and other reports with similar findings caused a reversal in correctional theory and a change in the institutional logic behind rehabilitative programs (Phelps, 2011). Garland (2001) also argues that during this era the public had less concern for offenders and more fear of felons because they had been portrayed as “racialized” super-predators that were unable to be reformed.

Many researchers have maintained that the criminal justice system needs to return to a more humane and treatment oriented environment (Lutze et al., 2012; Cullen, 2007). According to Rothman (1971) prisons were not invented to be holding cells, they were created to be “penitentiaries” that sought to transform the “wayward” into upstanding citizens (Cullen, Johnson, and Eck 2012). Ultimately, scholars contend that rehabilitating offenders is not only in their best interest, but it is also in the best interest of overall public safety (Cullen, Myer, & Latessa, 2009).

Most of these punitive and less rehabilitative policies have emerged out of conservative political culture. This culture places enormous faith in the ability to control

crime through incarceration. Many policy makers have clung to the misguided idea that we can "build our way out of the crime problem" by building more prisons and directing more resources to correctional institutions and directing less resources toward rehabilitative services (Pew Center on the States, 2011). This type of approach to crime and punishment is not only fiscally unsustainable, and it does nothing to address the underlining causes of crime and incarceration. Despite the massive amounts of money that have been spent on prisons, they have failed to reduce overall offender recidivism rates (Cullen, et al., 2012). These practices serve to cumulatively widen social and economic inequalities of those that already have the weakest economic opportunities (Western and Pettit, 2010). Due to the consequences of these ineffective crime deterrent policies, California has been forced to reexamine its correctional system as a whole.

California's Reformation of Punitive Crime Policies

California's Prison Realignment plan has provided the State with the opportunity to create a more effective and efficient prison system. Without the Realignment plan, California would have to either build up to nine additional prisons or house more inmates in private facilities or release offenders early in order to comply with the Supreme Court's orders (CDCR, 2012a). California's State's prison realignment strategy has required the State to review many of its overly punitive laws and practices. Realignment forced the State to review sentencing guidelines, mandatory minimum sentencing requirements, and repeat offender laws and thus created changes in California law (Misczynski, 2012)

According to the CDCR's (2012b) Prison Census Data, approximately 47% of men and women in California's prison system were sentenced to prison for a set amount

of time under the *Determinate Sentencing Law*. Because of Realignment, the State has made changes to minimum sentencing policies and protocols. This enables the State to transition inmates into other local systems. For example, prior to Realignment, an offender sentenced to a mandatory four years would have to serve four years in state prison, followed by approximately three years on parole (Misczynski, 2012).

After Realignment, this inmate would still face four years, but they may be served in a county jail facility, or the inmate could serve two years in county jail and two years on probation. Inmates released from prison would no longer be required to be supervised by State parole officials. Ultimately, Realignment has enabled judges to “split” a determinate sentence into jail time and probation time without long parole requirements. Also, the actual time a person spends in jail can be further reduced based on space and availability. Overall, an offender’s total supervised time (both in and out of jail) will be considerably shorter under Realignment (Misczynski, 2012).

Furthermore, Realignment introduced many changes in the way California law is applied. For instance, under Realignment, an individual with no prior offenses that had recently been convicted of a non-violent offense would serve their sentence in county jail or possibly outside of jail under sheriff management. Before Realignment, this individual would have been sent to State prison, and they would have also been required to be under the supervision of State parole for up to three years once released from prison. Under Realignment, individuals whose most recent crime was non-violent in nature will be supervised by county probation officers. In addition, before Realignment, any individual that violated their State parole supervision would be returned to State prison; however,

under the new Realignment plan, nearly all of these individuals will be sent to county jails (Misczynski, 2012).

DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW OF CALIFORNIA'S PRISON POPULATION

There is an overrepresentation of young impoverished and undereducated people of color in prisons across the U.S., and the State of California is no different (Lutze et al, 2012; Clear, 2007; Rank, 2004; Petersilia, 2003). The enormous growth in California's prison system has mainly been concentrated among poor Black and Latino communities. There are overwhelming proportions of young African American and Latino men and women with very low levels of education represented in California's prison population (Western and Pettit, 2010). This growth is mainly concentrated among the most disadvantaged segments of society (Wakefield and Uggen, 2010).

Race and Ethnicity

Historically, many researchers have considered the US's criminal justice system to be an institution used to control black populations (Smith, 2012; Muhammed, 2010; Manza and Uggen, 2006). Garland (2001) was the first to introduce the term "mass incarceration." Garland described mass incarceration as an abnormally high rate of imprisonment among a particular demographic population (Martensen, 2012; Western, 2006). Garland (2001) further states that imprisonment becomes massive when it no longer incarcerates individual offenders, but becomes a system that imprisons whole segments of the population. Mass incarceration affects poor uneducated, black men from urban areas more than any other subgroup of the population (Martensen, 2012).

Although African Americans have always been imprisoned at higher rates than whites,

the rate jumped for two times more likely in the nineteenth century to six to eight times more likely by the late 1960s (Western and Pettit, 2010; Percival, 2010).

Incarceration disproportionately affects racial minorities, especially African Americans (Lyons & Pettit, 2011). In 2010 African Americans were incarcerated at a rate of 5,525 per 100,000 and Latinos were incarcerated at a rate of 1,146 per 100,000. This is compared to 671 per 100,000 for non-Latino whites and 43 per 100,000 for Asians (Hayes, 2012). Unfortunately, the high incarceration rate of African American men is not just a phenomenon that occurs in California. This phenomenon occurs across the country. According to an estimate by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2010), one in three black men can expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime. According to Gopnik (2012) more than half of all African American men without a high school diploma will go to jail at some point in their life.

It has been well documented by many researchers that African Americans are up to six to eight times more likely than their white counterpart to be incarcerated (Percival, 2010; Western, 2006; Greenberg and West, 2001). Also, a third of African American men in their 20s are either on parole, probation, in prison, or in jail. Research also suggests that Latinos are over three and one-half times more likely than whites to be incarcerated. Together, African Americans and Latinos account for nearly two-thirds of the overall State prison population (Percival, 2010; Western, 2006).

Researchers have studied the effects of contemporary drug and crime control policies on social stratification, and found that these policies help sustain a historic pattern of white economic and political dominance over African Americans and Latinos (Tonry, 2010). Social stratification is described as a system in which groups of people

are divided into layers according to their social class (relative power, property, and prestige). In the U.S., whites are socially stratified to be at the top of the hierarchy, Asians are underneath whites, Latinos are underneath Asians, and African Americans are socialized to be at the bottom of the hierarchy. Ultimately, stratification is a way of ranking large groups of people in a hierarchy that shows their relative privilege (Henslin, 2007).

Many researchers argue that for the last quarter of a century many urban police leaders, and state, and federal policy makers adopted and supported policies and practices that contributed to racial disparities. They claim that there are several powerful forces that have contributed to the culture of American race relations. The first is the psychology of race which has been characterized and stereotyped by the belief and reinforcement of the idea of black criminals, the unconscious preference for whiteness over blackness, and the lack of empathy for black offenders and their families among whites (Tonry, 2010; Barkan 2009; Sabol, Minton and Harrison, 2007). Various sources of literature on the psychology of race relations show an inherent insensitivity to the interests of black people which became a theme of crime and drug control policy (Tonry, 2010). Literature also points to the “implicit bias” that is associated with blacks and whites. Many people, including black people, often associate black with things that are unpleasant or dangerous and white with things that are pleasant and safe. Unfortunately these reactions are near instantaneous and unconscious; however, they influence what people think and their actions (Tonry, 2010).

There is no dispute that poor young men of color are overrepresented in California's prison population. According to the CDCR's (2012b) prison census data,

African American males comprise 29% of the overall male inmate population, and Latino males comprise 41% of the overall male inmate population. In total, African American and Latino men represent approximately 70% of the male inmate population in California.

Gender

According to the CDCR's (2012b) Prison Census Data, men account for approximately 95% of the prison population and similar proportions exist in local jails (CDCR, 2012b). Criminologists point to several socialization factors that are believed to account for high crime rates among men. Boys are socialized to be active, assertive, dominant, and masculine, and all of these characteristics are conducive to criminal behavior. (Barkan, 2009).

Although women only constitute 5% of the prison population, in recent decades women have been the fastest growing sector of the prison population (Western and Pettit, 2010; Brewer and Heitzeg, 2008). Over the last three decades, the number of women in prison increased three times faster than that of men. This rapid rise in the number of women in prison is a direct result of the changes in sentencing guidelines rather than from changes in criminal patterns (Hagan and Foster, 2012; Steffensmeier, Zhong, Ackerman, Schwartz, and Agha, 2006).

While men are more likely to be incarcerated than women, the growth in women's incarceration rates has outpaced that of men in recent years (Wakefield and Uggen, 2010). California has the largest number of female inmates out of the fifty states, and houses the two largest female prisons in the world (California Prisons Focus, 2007). The

vast majority (66%) of women in prison was convicted of property or drug related crimes which are considered crimes of survival (California Prisons Focus, 2007).

There are also a disproportionate number of women of color represented in California's prison system. Approximately 28% of the female inmate population is African American and approximately 32% is comprised of Latina women. In total, African American and Latina women comprise approximately 60% of the female inmate population in California. In 2010, African American women were incarcerated at a rate of 342 per 100,000, compared to 57 for Latinas, 66 for non-Latina whites, and 5 for Asians (Hayes, 2012). Based on these statistics, it is clear that most of the prison growth among women in California's prisons have been concentrated in the African American community and Latino community. African American women are approximately three times more likely to be incarcerated than Latinas and six times more likely to be incarcerated than white women (California Prisons Focus, 2007). Today, African American women are the fastest growing inmate population in the U.S. prison system (Nagel, 2011).

Age

Age also serves to intensify the effects of incarceration. Incarceration is highly concentrated among those in their twenties and thirties (Western and Pettit, 2010). According to the CDCR's (2012b) Prison Census Data, approximately 56% of female inmates are between 20-39 years old. Similarly, approximately 55% of male inmates are between 20-39 years old. The median age of both female and male inmates in the California State prison system is 38 years old. It is widely acknowledged by researchers that as offender's age, their rate of criminal behavior declines (Serverson, Veeh, Bruns,

and Lee, 2012). Findings from research conducted by Nagin, Farrington, and Moffitt (1995) Farrington (1986), and Hirshi and Gottfredons (1983) all suggest that criminal behavior peaks in the late teens and early twenties and begins to taper off from that point forward.

Education

California's prison growth is not only concentrated among African American and Latino communities, but it is also concentrated among those with low education levels. The significant growth of incarceration among the least educated reflects class inequalities in California's prison system (Western and Pettit, 2010). Although high school drop-outs only account for approximately 20% of the overall population, they account for approximately 54% of the State's prison inmates and approximately 38% of local jail inmates (Levin, 2009). According to the CDCR's Office of Correctional Education (OCE), the average California inmate reads at an eighth grade level (2009). Scholars argue that these types of statistics can be traced back to the school-to-prison pipeline (Winn and Behizadeh, 2011).

The "school-to-prison pipeline" is defined as the trend through which large numbers of disadvantaged youth encounter limited access to educational opportunities, which then serves as a precursor to entering the criminal justice system (Kim, Losen, and Hewitt, 2010). Arum and Beattie (1999) found consistent evidence that students who attend schools with limited resources and more students per teacher ratio faced an elevated risk of incarceration (Arum and LaFree, 2008). According to Hatt (2011), there is a correlation between the U.S. having one of the most inequitably funded school systems and the largest prison population in the industrialized world. Ultimately, the

school-to-prison pipeline describes school discipline policies, patterns of school socialization, and the low educational attainment levels of prison inmates (Hatt, 2011). This nation has been plagued with a social phenomenon that helps to explain why many low income African American and Latino youth end up in prison cells rather than a college classrooms (Hatt, 2011; Kim, Losen, and Hewitt, 2010).

While some researchers have argued that schools can provide opportunities for students to dramatically change the likelihood of juvenile delinquency and crime (Arum and LaFree, 2008; Sampson and Laub, 1993; Jessor, Donovan, and Costa, 1991). Other researchers claim that educational resources have little to no effect on student outcomes (Arum and LaFree, 2008; Hanushek, 1998; Jencks et al., 1972; Coleman et al., 1966). Some researchers have gone on to further state that criminal behavior patterns are firmly established during childhood and deviants choose to live deviant lifestyles as adults (Arum and LaFree, 2008; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990).

Nonetheless, many researchers believe that educational equity is a moral imperative in a society in which educational attainment is a crucial determinant of life chances (Levin, 2009; Hanushek, 2002). According to Levin (2009), inadequate education not only negatively affects the poorly educated, but it also affects society as a whole. Society is negatively affected due to lost productivity, lower tax revenues, and higher costs of public services for the undereducated. Therefore, Levin (2009) argues that greater educational investments should be made among at-risk communities and individuals because the economic payoff to the public exceeds the cost of mass incarceration and the overburdening of social services.

Several researchers have concluded that there is a direct correlation between education and crime. A higher level of educational attainment is linked to lower criminal activity (Levin, 2009; Farrington, 2003; Lochner and Moretti, 2004; Bernberg and Krohn, 2003; Grogger, 1998). Higher educational attainment is tied to greater opportunities to legitimate earnings and lower tendencies to engage in criminal behavior. This is also made apparent when examining drop-out rates among incarcerated individuals. Obtaining a high school diploma can help develop the cognitive and non-cognitive abilities that are imperative to being successful in adulthood (Levin, 2009; Heckman, Stixrud, and Urzua, 2006). Also, additional educational attainment increases employment and earnings potential of recipients which in turn generate growth in tax revenues and decreases crime rates, the need for public assistance and dependence on the public health system (Levin, 2009).

The U.S. has one of the most inequitably funded school systems with a 10-to-1 funding ratio between the highest and the lowest funded districts (Hatt, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2006). In general, poor children of color have the least amount of access to quality childcare, educational resources, healthcare, affordable housing, and good nutrition. These are also the same children that are sent to the poorest schools while wealthy children, who typically have access to all the things poor children do not have, attend the wealthiest schools. These schools have smaller class sizes, up-to-date curriculum, and proper heating and cooling (Hatt, 2011; Kozol, 2005, 1991; Oakes, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2003). Additionally, many of the poor and under resourced schools are located in urban areas and have been re-segregated as “majority minority” (Hatt, 2011; Kozol, 2005; Anyon, 1997).

In addition to attending poor, under resourced and under-funded schools, low income Black and Latino youth are more likely than white students to attend schools in older buildings with fewer resources (Hatt, 2011; Kozol, 2005, 1991). Low income Black and Latino youth are also more likely than white students to attend over-crowded schools (Hatt, 2011; NCES, 2000). Often times, low income Black and Latino students are taught by less qualified teachers, are inappropriately placed in special education classes, and are unfairly tracked into lower level classes (Hatt, 2011; Finn, 2009; Harry and Klinger, 2006; Oakes, 2005; McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001).

These obstacles continue to contribute to the high number of low income students of color that disproportionately leave high school before receiving a diploma (Hart, 2011; Lee and Burkam, 2003). Statistically, only 53% of Latino and 50% of Black students graduate from high school, compared to 75% of white students (Hart, 2011; Swanson, 2006). However, when graduation rates are broken down by race, ethnicity, and gender, graduation rates for Black male students are as low as 43% and graduation rates for Latino males were as low as 48% (Levin, 2009). Not obtaining a high school diploma increases the chances that these youth will end up unemployed, living in poverty, and caught in the prison system (Hatt, 2011; Orfield, 2004).

Although these youths have been labeled as “drop-outs,” the reality is that failing school systems have pushed these students out (Hatt, 2011; Valenzuela, 1999; Fine, 1991). Policies such as *Zero Tolerance*, which was introduced in the 1990s, served to increase the number of students that received school suspensions. The number of students that are suspended from school has doubled since the 1970s (Hatt, 2011). Many infractions such as skipping school, breaking school rules, and fighting are now being

handled by law enforcement instead of on-site conflict management or intervention strategies (Winn and Behizadeh, 2011).

According to the California Children's Defense Fund (2012) over 700,000 suspensions were given to children attending public schools in the 2010-2011 school year. Moreover, there is an increase in the number of suspensions, expulsions, and other exclusionary practices in schools attended primarily by children of color. A report by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (2011) found that Black children in California receive out of school suspensions at a rate of 171 per 1,000 students, which is over two times the average rate for the State as a whole (Children's Defense Fund-California [CDFC], 2012). Black and Latino students have consistently been overrepresented in office referrals, corporal punish, and school expulsions. They are also suspended at rates two to three times higher than other students (Hatt, 2011; Skiba, 2000). According to a study by Nicholson-Crotty et al. (2009), "patterns of racial disparity exist even when controlling for poverty, urbanization, and other relevant factors."

According to a study by the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University (2005), a youth that has a history of school disciplinary referrals were 23.4 times more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system. They determined that this was the single greatest predictor of future involvement with the justice system. Students of color are being pushed out of high school and dropping out at an alarming rate. This limits their job options and contributes to the school-prison nexus (Winn and Behizadeh, 2011). Zero Tolerance policies have served to strengthen the link between schools and prisons. These policies increased the presence of school police officers and other security

devices and in turn made schools feel more like prisons. Recent statistics indicated that nearly all urban schools use some type of security and surveillance program (Welch and Payne, 2010; Dinkes, Kemp, and Baum, 2009). These policies and practices created a direct linkage for these students to enter the criminal justice system (Hatt, 2011; Casella, 2001).

Studies have found that suspensions can contribute to a student's academic and social disengagement, which in turn increase the likelihood of eventual drop-out or push-out. Although little to no evidence exists to suggest that suspensions and expulsions benefits students or their peers, evidence does suggest that exclusionary practices such as suspensions and expulsions increase student shame, alienation, and rejection (CDFCA, 2012). Ultimately, the California Children's Defense Fund (2012) concluded that harsh school discipline policies not only negatively impact students, but they also negatively impact schools and the success of the education system as a whole. According to the CDFCA, schools that frequently use out of school suspensions and expulsions as the primary way to discipline students also have lower student achievement scores (2011).

Many school systems have gotten in the habit of punishing students by removing them from the classroom and school setting instead of addressing the root cause of student misbehavior. Because the reason for the misbehavior is not dealt with, it does nothing to prevent future negative interactions between students and school staff and administrators (CDFCA, 2011). The key link between inequitable school policies and prisons is low-quality education or lack of educational resources (Winn and Behizadeh, 2011).

Since the 1980's federal and state funding has made a shift from funding K-12 education to funding corrections. Today, approximately four to five billion dollars more is spent on corrections than K-12 education. The corrections budget grew by approximately 900% while per pupil funding only grew by 26% (Hatt, 2011; Karp, Lowe, and Miner, 1998; Miller, 1997; NCES, 1994). Also, between 1980 and 2000, state spending on corrections grew six times faster than spending on higher education (Hatt, 2011; Zeiderber and Schiralki, 2002). Because schooling experiences are considered one of the strongest predictors of delinquency and there are high social and economic costs associated with drop-outs, it would be in state and local government's best interest to invest more money in education as a prevention method (Hatt, 2011).

PRISONER REHABILITATION

Because of the social and economic cost surrounding prisoner reentry, it continues to be one of the most critical social problems facing California and the rest of the country (Mears and Mestre, 2012). As a result of mass incarceration, approximately 1.6 million individuals are currently in state and federal prisons. These numbers do not include individuals in local and county jails (Mears and Mestre, 2012; West, 2010). Out of the 1.6 million that are incarcerated, approximately 730,000 inmates are released each year (Mears and Mestre, 2012; West, Sabol, and Greenman, 2010); however, statistics suggest that more than two thirds will be rearrested within three years of release (Mears and Mestre, 2012; Langan and Levin, 2002).

Since ex-offenders face many challenges upon release from prison, these adverse effects increase the likelihood of recidivating back to prison (Mears and Mestre, 2012; Lattimore, Steffey, and Visher, 2010; Clear, 2007). Research suggests that there are

diverse and complicated factors that contribute to prison recidivism (Mears and Mestre, 2012; Kubrin and Stewar, 2006). This issue should not only create a cause for concern for ex-offenders and their families, but also for the communities they are released to (Mears and Mestre, 2012; Lattimore, Steffey, and Visher, 2010; Clear, 2007).

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics in (2011), more than half of all State incarcerated prisoners reported an annual income of less than \$10,000 prior to arrest. Poor employment histories, a lack of job skills, and poor education diminish the prospects for stable employment and decent wages (Visher and Travis, 2003). The overwhelming majority of those in prisons and jails were either unemployed or employed in minimum wage jobs at the time of their commitment offense (Brewer and Heitzeg, 2008). Low education and a poor employment history in the U.S. have been nationally recognized as viable links to incarceration for both men and women (Western and Pettit, 2010). The mass incarceration of poor Black and Latino communities create economic and social penalties for people that already have the weakest economic opportunities (Western and Pettit, 2010).

Mass incarceration in America has served to produce a new group of “social outcasts.” Group members are joined by their shared experiences of incarceration, crime, poverty, racial minority, and low education. Unfortunately, the men and women that are a part of this group have little to no access to the social mobility available to mainstream America. The social and economic disadvantages of incarceration is not only sustained over the life course, but it is transmitted from one generation to the next (Western and Pettit, 2010). The majority of male and female inmates in the California prison system range in age 20-39, with 38 being the median age (CDCR, 2012b). Because these are key

years of early adulthood, incarceration negatively impacts the individual's life and the lives of their children and family that they need to support (Western and Pettit, 2010). Ex-offenders have traditionally been destined for low-paying and low-skilled jobs (Alemagno and Dickie, 2005; Dale, 1976).

Spending time in prison adversely impacts one's participation in the legitimate labor market. It also serves to negatively affect the accumulation of work experience and wage growth. Ultimately, incarceration negatively impacts wage trajectories of ex-inmates regardless of lost work experience (Lyons and Pettit, 2011; Western, 2002). Researchers generally predict that because many employers express distaste for hiring ex-offenders, the stigmatization of having a criminal record negatively impacts post-release employment options (Lyons and Pettit, 2011; Pager, 2003; Holzer, 1996). Additionally, if ex-offenders lack the necessary contacts for conventional employment, they may remain embedded in criminal networks (Lyons and Pettit, 2011; Hagan, 1993).

Many studies have been conducted in order to determine the factors that increase employment opportunities for ex-offenders. Most researchers believe that the ex-offender that improves their skills, develops a positive attitude toward employment, and increases their self-esteem will increase their employment opportunities after release (Gerber and Fritsch, 1995). The ability to obtain and maintain gainful employment is a factor that majorly affects prison recidivism (Alemagno and Dickie, 2005; Kirchner et al., 1979). According to Holland (1978), the majority of crimes are committed for economic gain; therefore, being out of work can increase the motivation to commit crimes.

According to researchers, providing educational programs to prison inmates promote pro-social attitudes and encourage a disposition that completely contrasts the

anti-social norms of prison life (Gaes, 2008). However, in the early 1970's, the rehabilitation of inmates was publicly discredited and became a "dirty word" (Phelps, 2011). According to Phelps (2011), the paradigm shift in prison rehabilitative services came as a result of the 1974 Martinson report, which concluded that nothing works for rehabilitating prison inmates. Because Martinson was well respected as a criminologist, his report was regarded as one of the most politically important studies of the past century (Miller, 1989). Many believe that this reversal in correctional theory decimated prison rehabilitation programming (Phelps, 2011; Garland, 2001).

Despite limitations to Martinson's analysis and the fact that he published a second study in 1979 that tempered his claim that nothing works to rehabilitate offenders, his original claim that "nothing works" became enshrined as public policy wisdom (Cullen, Johnson, and Eck, 2012). Despite research linking education and other rehabilitative programs to reduced recidivism, prison rehabilitation programs have often been attacked by politicized tough on crime policies and public resentment. These attacks served to drastically cut state and federal funding for rehabilitation programs (Palmer, 2012; Gorgol and Sponsler, 2011).

Media and political portrayals of unrepentant criminals committed to a life of crime caused a social and political shift in the prisoner rehabilitation (Palmer, 2012). This shift contributed to lawmakers passing the *1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act*. One of the provisions of this law overturned a section of the Higher Education Act of 1965 which permitted inmates to receive federal Pell Grants for postsecondary education while incarcerated. After this law passed, many postsecondary education programs in prisons across the United States closed (Palmer, 2012;

Winterfield, Cogeshall, Burke-Storer, Correa, and Tidd, 2009). Laws like these have served to diminish the social and economic opportunities of those that already have the greatest need for supportive services (Palmer, 2012).

Research that links reduced recidivism with education has been promising, and compared with their counterparts, individuals that complete some form of postsecondary training, certificate, or degree were significantly less likely to reoffend than those that did not (Palmer, 2012; Ward, 2009; Chappell, 2004). Participating in these types of programs has also been shown to have tremendous psychological benefits for prison inmates. Program participants often report a greater sense of self-worth and confidence (Palmer, 2012; Winterfield et al., 2009). They also report a great ability to critically think about their actions and avoid conflict inside and outside of prison (Palmer, 2012; Gorgol and Sponsler, 2011). Some research even suggests that prison staff and administrators have reported that inmates that participate in prison education were less likely to engage in conflict. These same inmates also displayed more calm and reasonable behavior when compared to the population that does not participate in these types of programs (Palmer, 2012; Ward, 2009).

According to Esperian (2010), educating inmates not only reduces recidivism rates, but it also reduces the costs associated with the long term warehousing of inmates. In 2010, Esperian conducted a study on the prison education program offered by the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). The results of Esperian's study indicate that only 6% of male inmates in the program who achieved a college education recidivated once released from prison. This is compared to the 70% of inmates from the general prison population who recidivated once released from prison.

In 2000, the Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council evaluated the Texas Prison Education System in order to determine if their programming improved the education levels of inmates, enhanced their employment prospects, and contributed to lower overall recidivism rates. This study tracked the prison educational experiences and post-prison employment and recidivism of approximately 32,000 inmates between 1997-1999. The study revealed that ex-offenders with higher education levels were more likely to obtain employment, had higher wages, and had lower recidivism rates (Fabelo, 2002).

Many researchers would agree that there is no one rehabilitative intervention that is likely to eliminate criminal thinking and behaviors. This in part is due to institutionalized and social forces that breed and reinforce criminality: inadequate educational systems, poverty, lack of affordable housing, unemployment and underemployment and the inaccessibility to adequate mental and health care (Serverson, Bruns, and Veeh, 2011; Mellow and Greifinger, 2006). There is however, consensus on what is most likely to reduce criminal behavior. Many researchers would agree that a concerted and dynamic approach to rehabilitation that provides offenders with tangible support to educational, housing, and employment opportunities while provoking systemic and attitudinal changes can serve to reduce criminal behavior (Serverson, Bruns, and Veeh, 2011).

One of the goals of California's Realignment plan is to improve access to rehabilitation. The CDCR plans to improve access to rehabilitation by placing at least 70% of the population, all levels of supervision, in programs consistent with their academic and rehabilitative needs (CDCR, 2012a). The CDCR's long-term prison plan is to overall reduce recidivism by better preparing inmates, through rehabilitative services,

to be productive members of society. The department seeks to establish reentry hubs at certain prisons in order to provide concentrated resources to better prepare inmates that will be released soon. The department also plans to build various community-based programs to assist parolees during their first year of release, and approximately 70% of all parolees that need employment and educational services will be served (CDCR, 2012a). During this transition period, the CDCR should review existing rehabilitation based programs to collaborate with. This will ultimately translate into savings for the department and the State.

Under Realignment, the female inmate population is declining by a greater proportion than male inmates. Due to this decline, the Valley State Prison for Women will be turned into a male facility by July 2013. Because approximately 70% of the current female inmate population is classified as non-violent offenders, the budget provides for the expansion of Alternative Custody for Women. This will allow the CDCR to place non-violent offenders in community-based programs geared at reducing recidivism among the population (CDCR, 2012b).

Because of the rapid growth in the number of incarcerated women, many programs have emerged that are sensitive to gender differences (Alemagno and Dickie, 2005; Morash, Bynum, & Koons, 1998). Incarcerated women have unique needs that differ from those of men. Women have higher rates of victimization from sexual and physical abuse and are often responsible for taking care of children. Female offenders are also more likely than their male counterpart to have mental illness issues, drug addictions, and to be unemployed before incarceration (Alemagno and Dickie, 2005; Leeclair, 1990). Research has found that the most successful programs for women are

the ones that include partnerships between justice, education, and community agencies. Providing these women with basic techniques and resources to find employment once they are released from prison will ultimately lower recidivism rates among this population (Alemagno and Dickie, 2005; Keogh, 2003; Filella-Guiu & Blanch-Plana, 2002).

According to Torre and Fine (2005), providing inmates with educational opportunities while in prison contributes to the inmate being able to successfully reintegrate back into their communities upon release. Torre and Fine (2005) conducted a four-year study on a college in prison program at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York, a maximum security prison for women. The findings of this research revealed that this college in prison program radically reduced recidivism rates. This research also supports the notion that there are far reaching implications that surpass those that benefit the inmates themselves (Torre and Fine, 2005). Interviews with the women enrolled in this postsecondary education program suggest that success themes not only include employment after release, but also doing a job they enjoyed as opposed to having a job “to pay the bills” (Palmer, 2012). These results were also found to be true among male student-inmates that participated in Hall and Killacky’s (2008) interviews (Palmer, 2012).

Research on Minnesota’s Comprehensive Offender Reentry Plan (MCORP), a program designed to use evidence-based practices and programming in order to provide a seamless transition from prison to the community, found that there was a significant reduction in rearrests, reconvictions, and incarceration rates among the MCORP participants when compared to the control group. Overall, the study found that by

participating in MCORP, individuals lowered their risk of re-arrest for a new offense by 37%. Participants also had a decreased risk of reconviction for a new crime by 43%. MCORP also reduced the risk of re-incarceration for a new felony offense by 57%. Although this study did find that individuals that participated in treatment in prison as well as in the community, once released, had much better recidivism outcomes than those that did not, only 11% of offenders participated in both prison and community based treatment. Although this intervention was successful in reducing recidivism rates, the results suggest there is room for improvement (Duwe, 2011).

Not all program evaluations have yielded positive findings (Severson, Veeh, Bruns, and Lee, 2012). A study of the Community Orientation and Reintegration (COR) program in Pennsylvania, a program very similar to MCORP, found that their program participants had an increased rate of re-arrest than non-participants (Severson, et al., 2012). Smith and Suttle (2008) argue that there were several variables that contributed to these negative outcomes. According to Smith and Suttle (2008), the abbreviated length of the program, the multiple levels of interventions within a short amount of time, and the lack of fidelity in the delivery of the interventions all contributed to the program's negative outcomes.

The effectiveness of many treatment and rehabilitative programs that are used in prison may be questionable because they are not based on solid science. The main reason for this type of poor quality of treatment is that nobody is held accountable for the use of ineffective programs (Cullen, Johnson, Eck, 2012). The ultimate goal of correctional education programs is to promote change in inmates' behavior (Gordon & Weldon, 2010). However, very few reentry programs have been identified that produce reliable

and consistent positive outcomes that are not only sustained over time, but that are also effective at more than one site (Severson, et al., 2012; Byrne, 2009). Research also suggests that the amount of the intervention delivered (i.e., dosage and duration) as well as the type of intervention are also important factors in determining the success of reentry programs (Severson, et al., 2012; Visher, 2007; Wilson, 2007).

Ultimately, in order for reentry programs to be successful and effective, they need to be tailored made specifically to match the risks and needs of the target population. Otherwise, an intervention could potentially produce unintended consequences that could serve to harm the participant (Severson, et al, 2012; Wilson, 2011; Wilson and Zozula, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The combined use of qualitative and quantitative field research methods intended to determine if PEP's Career Development module provides educational and career services that promote developmental growth of the student-inmate population. The ultimate goal of this program is to help student-inmates improve their social interactions skills, expand on their problem solving skills, and strengthen their critical thinking abilities. By being able to understand the process of searching for felon-friendly jobs, applying for employment opportunities, and applying for college and financial aid, student-inmates will ultimately increase the likelihood of successfully reintegrating back into society once released from prison.

Research Design

There was a mixed methodological approach used for this research project. Facilitating the Career Development sessions for the Prison Education Project provided the opportunity to conduct research using first person experiences and observations and provide an ethnographic report. These data were then analyzed in conjunction with survey data results. The purpose of this analysis was to determine if the student-inmates view the Career Development module of PEP as a valuable program that would help them understand what it takes to get a job once released from prison, help them apply for college and financial aid, and provide them with important information that will benefit them once they are released from prison. In essence, increasing self-efficacy may in turn reduce prison recidivism. Because each research method has particular strengths and weaknesses, the use of different research methods to test the same findings was extremely helpful.

Ethnography is a report on social life that focuses on detailed description rather than explanation. These data were obtained from fieldwork notes. This research technique was used to reveal the personal experiences of the student-inmates. This method allowed for understanding of the inmate culture and behavior. The ethnography allowed for the study of inmates in their current setting. This type of research was extremely beneficial because it allowed the researcher to see through the eyes of the inmates in order to interpret events, actions, norms, and values. Some researchers believe that in order to fully understand the world that you live in, one must immerse oneself within that structure. So, to better understand the population, participant observation data were used for this research project.

Participant observation research takes general observation to another level. The researcher does not just merely observe, but they find a meaningful way to participate as an “outsider” in order to gain the trust of the population being studied. The researcher became a participant observer by volunteering to facilitate the Career Development module of PEP. This experience provided an in-depth view of the inmate student population in these particular settings. The settings were the California Institution for Men (CIM), the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC), and the California Institution for Women (CIW). The goal of the observations was to gain insight on how the module is being implemented and the reactions of the student-inmates at each facility.

And finally, primary quantitative data were collected through the use of surveys, which were completed by student-inmates upon completion of the module. This approach provided an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the Career Development module of the PEP program by examining the value that PEP provides. This analysis is focusing on measuring the sense of empowerment and level of self-efficacy perceived by the student-inmates based on their involvement with PEP. The content of the presentations and the handouts were evaluated in terms of their effectiveness in developing cognitive life skills. Inmates that attended six out of the eight workshops were asked to voluntarily participate in filling out a survey during the last Career Development session. The respondents were fully informed about this research project and its intent. Additionally, they were informed that their identities were protected and their answers recorded in anonymity.

Procedure and Selection of Participants

This research project seeks to examine the impact of PEP's Career Development module on inmates in the California Institution for Men (CIM), the California Institution for Women (CIW), and the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC). The Career Development sessions were facilitated by graduate students from Cal Poly Pomona and community volunteers with extensive work and entrepreneurial experience. All Career Development volunteers attended a two hour training conducted by Cal Poly Pomona Career Counselor Patricia Duran. At this training, volunteers received a Career Development book of reference and information on how to administer a condensed version of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test.

Volunteers facilitated Career Development sessions at CIM, CIW, and CRC. These institutions were selected because of their close proximity to Cal Poly Pomona. This allowed for the use of established networks at the university and helped strengthen the bridge between the educational and correctional institutions. In addition, the short distance between the university and the prisons made it convenient for students interested in volunteering for the project and allowed for successful volunteer recruitment efforts. Overall, the selection of these three institutions was very beneficial to the intervention. It allowed for a better understanding of the structure and cultural norms at each of the prisons, since each is unique in its own way.

The California Institution for Men (CIM) was the first minimum security institution that was built in the United States and third prison built in California. CIM was built in 1941 in order to relieve overcrowded conditions in San Quentin State Prison and Folsom State Prison (cdcr.ca.gov). Today, CIM houses approximately 5,185

inmates; although the design capacity of the facility is 3,160 inmates. CIM has a total of 2,227 staff members and costs the State of California \$166.5 million dollars annually (cdcr.ca.gov). CIM consists of 4 facilities; facility A, facility B, facility C, and facility D.

Most of the PEP modules at CIM were taught at facility A. Facility A at CIM consists of eight dormitory housing units. Each housing unit has a capacity of approximately 140 inmates. There is an inmate population of approximately 960 medium level inmates at Facility A. CIM's facility A houses the largest Level I inmate population in the California prison system. Level I inmates live in open dormitories and have the lowest security perimeter. An inmate's level is determined by various factors including: age, crime committed, prior incarceration, gang affiliation, and history of violence (cdcr.ca.gov). Inmates in facility A found out about PEP through information sessions that were conducted by Dr. Renford Reese and other PEP volunteers. After the information sessions, inmates had the opportunity to sign up for various PEP modules.

The California Institution for Women (CIW) opened in 1952 and was the only prison facility that housed female felons until 1987. CIW was designed with a campus-like atmosphere in keeping with the 1950's progressive notion of rehabilitation. CIW has since increased security in order to meet the challenges of today. Today, CIW houses approximately 2,000 female inmates of all custody levels; however, the facility's capacity is approximately 1,356. CIW has approximately 1000 staff members and this facility costs the State of California approximately \$77.6 million dollars annually (cdcr.ca.gov). Female inmates at CIW found about PEP and all of the modules offered at the facility through collaborative efforts with the education department. Several PEP team members

conducted various information sessions to inform the inmates about all the benefits the different PEP modules offer.

The California Rehabilitation Center (CRC) originally opened in 1928 as the Lake Norconian Club, a luxury hotel. President Franklin D. Roosevelt turned the resort into a naval hospital in 1941. The hospital was closed in 1957, and in 1962 the federal government donated the facility to the State to use for a narcotics center. During the 1980's, the facility began to house felons as well as civil narcotic addicts in order to ease prison overcrowding (cdcr.ca.gov). Today, CRC is a medium Level II facility that houses felons as well as civil addicts. CRC is one of the oldest and most costly prisons to operate in California. Because the facility was created in the 1920's, the building's medical facilities are extremely limited and it would take an estimated \$40 million to make the necessary improvements to meet standards for basic care. There are approximately 1,300 staff members at CRC. There are roughly 4,900 inmates; however, the prison's design capacity is 2,500. This facility cost the State of California \$148 million annually in operation and medical costs (cdcr.ca.gov). Inmates were introduced to PEP through various information sessions conducted by Dr. Reese and other PEP volunteers.

Instrumentation

Data for this project was collected through multiple tools. One data collection instrument was a participant survey administered to the student-inmates. The survey consisted of four different questions, three close-ended questions and one open-ended question. This survey was used for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory purposes. Survey research is the best method available for this type of research because it attempts

to measure the attitude of the student-inmate population. The close-ended questions consisted of yes or no responses and the open-ended question allowed for additional feedback and insight into the Career Development module. The survey consisted of the following questions:

1. Did the Career Development workshops help you understand what it takes to get job?
2. Did the Career Development workshops help you become familiar with the process of applying to college and financial aid?
3. Will you be able to use the information that you learned in the workshops when you are paroled?
4. Please briefly discuss your thoughts about the Career Development sessions.

All responses to the open-ended questions were gathered to highlight common words, lines, or phrases. From this information, coding categories were created to establish common themes and patterns. Once these themes and patterns were established, the information was used to develop a list of finalized coding categories. Code notes identified the code labels and their meanings. Aside from the data collected in the surveys, additional information was obtained through participant observer field notes. After each Career Development session, the session was documented. Field notes included student-inmate behaviors, other volunteer perspectives, level of student-inmate engagement, responses to various interventions, and classroom participation. These field observation notes were to determine whether or not the student-inmates were interested and engaged during the sessions. It was also important to experience and document what it is like for a volunteer facilitating the PEP modules. This data speaks to the

effectiveness of the program in reaching its intended audience and having them embrace the program's concepts.

Treatment of Data

Responses to survey questions have been transcribed into a password protected electronic file. All of this information was also explained in detail in the informed consent form that all respondents signed prior to the completion of the survey. Upon receipt of the consent form participants received the survey. The survey did not ask for any identifying information of the subject and maintained the subject's anonymity. Completed consent forms and surveys are kept separate to maintain anonymity.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Survey Results

A total of 146 surveys were returned and included for analysis. Of the 146 total, 65 surveys were collected from the California Institution for Women (CIW), 61 surveys were collected from the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC), and 20 were collected from the California Institution for Men (CIM). Although there were only 20 surveys collected at CIM, there were a total of 43 student-inmates that participated in the module. However, after the 7th week of the module, class was cancelled for two weeks due to quarantine and staffing issues. When the class reconvened, only 20 student-inmates attended.

Of the survey data collected from CIW, all participants (100%, n=65) responded "Yes" to the first question which asked whether or not they felt that the Career Development module helped them understand what it takes to get a job once released from prison. All of the participants (100%, n=65) responded "Yes" to the second

question which asked participants if the module helped them become familiar with the process of applying to college and for financial aid. All of the respondents (100%, n=65) responded “Yes” to question number three which asked participants if they would be able to use the information they learned in the module once they are released from prison.

Of the survey data collected from CIM, all the participants (100%, n=20) responded “Yes” to the first question which asked whether or not they felt that the Career Development module helped them understand what it takes to get a job once released from prison. All of the participants (100%, n=20) responded “Yes” to the second question which asked participants if the module helped them become familiar with the process of applying to college and for financial aid. All of the respondents (100%, n=20) responded “Yes” to question number three which asked participants if they would be able to use the information they learned in the module once they are released from prison.

Of the survey data collected at CRC, nearly all participants (97%, n=59) responded “Yes” to the first question which asked whether or not they felt that the Career Development module helped them understand what it takes to get a job once released from prison. All but one of the participants (98%, n=60) responded “Yes” to the second question which asked participants if the module helped them become familiar with the process of applying to college and for financial aid. And all but one of the respondents (98%, n=60) responded “Yes” to question number three which asked participants if they would be able to use the information they learned in the module once they are released from prison.

Open-ended Question Responses

It is noteworthy to mention that every survey participant included additional opinions and feedback on the open-ended question on the survey. Upon reviewing the responses, six general themes were developed. These themes were as follows: (1) jobs/careers, (2) education, (3) program promotion/recruitment, (4) participant confidence/self-efficacy, (5) recommendations for program expansion, and (6) program staff. In addition, recommendations for improvement of the program were also included for analysis. These themes were found throughout the data collected from the three prison facilities.

Data results from CIM showed that half of participants (50%, n=10) specifically noted that PEP increased their skills and opportunities to obtain a job upon release and helped them identify new potential career paths. Two participants noted the discovery of their own interests about starting their own business as a result of being involved with this project. Half of the participants (50%, n=10) included recommendations for continuing and expanding the project. Fifty percent (n=10) of participants stated that the module positively impacted their ability to advocate for themselves and improved their outlook on life. Seven of the 20 (35%) of participant responses specifically noted that the staff was extremely beneficial to the success of the program. In addition, over one third of participant responses (35%, n=7) mentioned that the career development module positively impacted their ability to access educational and financial aid resources. One participant specifically mentioned that they were able to receive help in applying for the Pell Grant and creating an email address. Of the 20 participant responses, 4 (20%) stated that they wanted to promote the program to other inmates, including the sharing of information received in the class to other inmates. Opportunities for program

improvements were provided by 3 participant responders, all stating that they wanted more information on other opportunities, both in prison and in the community. One participant stated that they felt it would be beneficial to elicit participants to identify other needs and interests not discussed in the module; however, the respondent did not indicate or identify these needs and interests.

Survey data results from the 65 surveys collected at CIW showed that nearly half (n=31, 48%) of all participant responders gave feedback about increasing the project. Over 40% of responders (45%, n=29) mentioned the effectiveness of the staff. About 40% of responders (n=26) mentioned that PEP positively impacted their knowledge of what it will take to attain and maintain employment and increased their career development skills. Over one third of respondents (32%, n=21) stated that PEP had positively impacted their levels of self-awareness, and positive outlook on their potential. More than a quarter of respondents (28%, n=18) noted benefits to educational opportunity and increased access to financial aid as a result of being a participant of PEP. In addition, about a quarter of participants (n=16, ≈25%) mentioned that they would be willing to promote the program to other inmates and the importance of having the program available to future inmates. Two of the participant responders stated that they wanted to increase the amount of mock interviews to address the needs of inmates that have been in prison for very long spans of time.

Of the 61 completed surveys collected from CRC, more than half of respondents (54%, n=33) stated that PEP positively impacted job attainment and career development skills. The next most common identified theme was increases in self-confidence and student-inmate's perceived outlook of their own potential, represented in over half (51%,

n=31) of all responses. This was followed by the over one third of respondents (34%, n=21) stating that they recommended the continuing and expansion of PEP. Almost one third (28%, n=17) of respondents stated that participating in the career development module increased their access to educational and financial aid resources. Eighteen percent (n=11) of respondents specifically noted the positive impact the staff had on the success of the module. And about 13% (n=8) of respondents stated that they were interested in participating in any program promotion activities to continue the program and recruit new inmate participants.

Some participant respondents at CRC also offered suggestions on how to improve the module. Two participants stated that they felt that some of the speakers were to “wordy” with their responses, making it difficult for some to understand the responses. Two respondents noted that there should be more time allocated for inmate questions, with one respondent suggesting that student inmates be allowed to write questions to place in a designated area. These questions would then be answered at the beginning of class. Another respondent stated the need to have resources available provided in counties other than Los Angeles County.

Another student-inmate revealed an interest in receiving career information on professions such as law and engineering. He stated that this is especially of interest for student-inmates that had begun their college careers prior to incarceration. One student inmate felt it would be beneficial to have parts of the program more tailored for inmates preparing for release in the near future. Another student inmate stated the need for providing more local job opportunities. And finally, one student-inmate suggested that it

would be beneficial to begin a mentoring program as a way of keeping program graduates engaged and maintaining student retention rates.

Table 1 shows the identified themes, listed in order of frequency reported by the respondents at each facility. The column labeled *n* shows the survey totals and how many survey respondents identified this theme in their open-ended responses. The % column shows the frequency percentage of the responses containing the corresponding theme.

Table 1

Frequency of Thematic Representation among Prison Facilities (n=146)

Facility and Theme Title	<i>N</i>	%
CIM		
Total	20	
Jobs/Careers	10	50
Recommendations for Program Expansion	10	50
Participant Confidence/Self-Efficacy	10	50
Program Staff	7	35
Education	7	35
Program Promotion/Recruitment	4	20
CIW		
Total	65	
Recommendations for Program Expansion	31	48
Program Staff	29	45
Jobs/Careers	26	40
Participant Confidence/Self-Efficacy	21	32
Education	18	28
Program Promotion/Recruitment	16	25
CRC		
Total	61	
Jobs/Careers	33	54
Participant Confidence/Self-Efficacy	31	51
Recommendations for Program Expansion	21	34
Education	17	28
Program Staff	11	18
Program Promotion/Recruitment	8	13

Ethnographic report

This portion of the data results is based on participant observer notes. Upon the completion of each session, the researcher would make notes and document the conversations and observations that took place. It also allowed for the recording of any follow up activities that took place. Examples of follow-up activities include bringing in employment or college information, information on how to request a replacement social security card, birth certificates, and other information needed by the student-inmates. I would also provide applications for educational opportunities and grants and scholarships. The data results for this ethnographic report will be divided into 6 themes. These were the themes that were identified in the coding process for the open-ended question responses on the participant surveys. These themes were utilized due to their cohesion with the project objectives. They are an effective measurement tool to evaluate the overall effectiveness of PEP. These themes are as follows: (1) jobs/careers, (2) education, (3) program promotion/recruitment, (4) participant confidence/self-efficacy, (5) recommendations for program expansion, and (6) program staff. In addition, structural and organizational facts about the prison facilities will also be included to provide contextual information and additional details relevant to the program evaluation.

While each of the prisons had its own distinguishable characteristics, the facilities did share some similarities. The vast majority of the student-inmates ranged from ages of 20-40, Black or Latino race, and had never been to college. These demographics are comparable to the general demographics found throughout the U.S. prison system. In

addition, the primary support staff that worked with PEP volunteers was from the educational department at each of the prisons.

The Career Development module sessions were conducted in the same order in all three facilities. The facilities used to hold the sessions were also quite similar. PEP volunteers facilitated each module through the utilization of a classroom setting. This setting consisted of tables, chairs, and a white board to write on. The student-inmates were typically given hand-outs with various information and note pads and pens to take notes.

Jobs/Careers

While some of the participants came with some career path ideas, most participants were unaware of their career options and sought direction and support from PEP volunteers. The participants were eager to engage in the career development exercises. There was a high level of interest in all the module activities. For example, many of the student-inmates had never received information on building a strong resume by including any job experience that was acquired while incarcerated and outside of prison. One of the many concerns that the student inmates had was related to gaps in the job history. PEP volunteers were able to not only explain how to utilize their experiences in prison to build a resume, but they also learned how to address questions potential employers may have related to their criminal history.

Some of the student-inmates discovered an interest in opening up their own business. One of the PEP volunteers with his own business was able to share his experiences and provide some guidance on achieving their entrepreneurial goals. For student-inmates that had previously been employed in vocational professions, their

concerns focused more on re-certifications and re-entry into their field of specialty. For instance, one student inmate from CIM, who was going to be released in less than six months, asked for information on renewing his contractor's license.

Education

Most of the student-inmates were seeking direction on their journey of discovering potential career paths. This is one of the reasons why the module includes the administration of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment (MBTI). Aside from identifying potential career options, the MBTI assessment also challenged student inmates to consider stepping out of their "comfort zones" and explore uncharted employment opportunities. The MBTI is used to identify psychological preferences, interests, needs, values, and motivation. During the second session at CIM, one of the discussion topics addressed facing fears of trying new things in the work force or exploring college majors. The PEP volunteers shared their own experiences in trying new things and stepping out of one's norms in hopes to relate to the student-inmates and their concerns.

During the third session at CIW, the session started with volunteers talking about college majors, financial aid, and the process of applying for college. The researcher was able to get information books from Mt. San Antonio Community college. These books have information about college majors, certificate programs, and vocational degrees. At the end of the first session at CIM, one inmate expecting to be paroled in eight weeks, requested information about Mt. SAC's American Sign Language Program based on findings from the MBTI assessment. Initially, this inmate was unsure about whether or not he would be a good fit for this profession. His interest in this field continued

throughout the module sessions. He was able to apply the session activities while trying to understand the process he would be facing upon entering this field.

Upon learning about the different levels of education through the “educational roadmap” activity, some of the students seemed to have come to the realization that they have several educational opportunities available to them. Some of the participants could not fathom the idea of attending a four year university. This was true even among student-inmates that had earned an Associate’s degree while incarcerated. This group of inmates does not have the opportunity to earn anything higher than an Associate’s degree and felt very discouraged about their educational opportunities once released. Some had no idea that they can receive a professional certificate for skills they already possessed. Prior to the sessions, some student-inmates did not realize that they could receive job training and a degree to prepare them to directly enter the workforce upon graduation. By discovering their skills and interests, student-inmates were able to connect the benefits of education directly to success in the job market.

In addition, there were also some inmates that followed-up with the researcher, who is also a full time employee at Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC), in order to complete their college application process. The process began during the sessions when the volunteers provided information on the local colleges that are available to student-inmates upon release. Once student-inmates decided on what majors they wanted to pursue, they determined which college would be best suited for them. Some of the student-inmates decided that Mt. SAC was the best choice for them. Because the researcher is an employee at Mt. SAC, they were able to serve as a liaison for the student-inmates and the college. Some of the student inmates that had been released decided to

follow through with their plans to attend college and met with the researcher for further assistance.

These accomplishments are in complete contrast to what many student-inmates heard from other “educators” while going through the K-12 school system. During the sessions, some of the student-inmates shared some experiences that discouraged them from pursuing higher education. One student-inmate at CRC shared that he was told he probably wouldn’t succeed in college. Another student-inmate that dropped out of high school shared that he was intimidated to even ask for help about going to college. These students mentioned that programs like PEP provided them with not only guidance, but the realization that education is still an option for them.

Many of the student-inmates had either completed their GED or were planning to obtain their GED while incarcerated. In efforts to maximize student GED completion rates, PEP provides a GED tutoring component. This was designed to further collaborate with the prison and to reinforce the preparatory steps needed to help student-inmates obtain a GED.

Program Promotion/Recruitment

Student-inmates expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to be part of a program like PEP. Conversely, PEP facilitators shared their appreciation for being able to volunteer for PEP and provide support and information to student-inmates preparing to be released. There is also a high level of anticipation for the next series of PEP module sessions. Unfortunately, due to staff and facility restraints, PEP staff was unable to accommodate the large number of inmates that signed up to attend the sessions. As a result, the education department staff at each of the facilities developed a waiting list.

This list was utilized when spots for the sessions opened up due to participant drop rates. It also serves as a recruitment tool for upcoming PEP sessions. The high level of interest from the inmates also shows the prison administration staff that recruitment efforts were successful.

Several student-inmates also expressed their feelings about how beneficial it would be for other inmates to be able to attend the sessions. One student-inmate at CIW stated that she shared some of her PEP classroom experiences with other inmates. Another inmate at CRC stated that he was helping an inmate prepare for release by putting together a resume using the tools he learned in the PEP session. One idea that came from one of the student-inmates at CRC was the development of a peer mentoring component to the PEP intervention. This could be used to not only benefit new PEP student-inmates, but also to maintain PEP graduates that are engaged in the program. The fact that student-inmates want to contribute ideas to improve program outcomes shows that student-inmates became invested in the program, which would allow the program to succeed and thrive. If this program continues to show success, volunteer recruitment would also be positively impacted. Internship and employment networking opportunities are some of the benefits that PEP volunteers receive. Participation as a PEP volunteer also provided an insider perspective on one of the largest public administration institutions in not only the state, but the entire nation.

Participant Confidence/Self-Efficacy

All of the career development module sessions had a high participant rate of soon-to-be-released student-inmates. At CIM, based on self-reported data, about 75% of participants that attended the career development module were anticipating being

released within the next two years. At CIW, most student-inmates were being released from prison within the next 3-8 months. An overwhelming majority of participants at CRC were expecting to be released within the next 1-2 years.

Making this module relevant and interesting to the student-inmates was extremely important to the overall project objectives of PEP. While learning about available education opportunities and employment resources is important for student-inmates to be successful upon reentering the community, it is equally important for student-inmates to feel confident while navigating through the different systems. Increasing participant self-efficacy should be a priority to any reentry program. Participant self-efficacy is represented through various ways, including being able to ask for help, finding the appropriate person or department to ask for help, and following through with any established short and long term plans. This was an explicit portion of the last career development module session. During the last session, session facilitators reviewed the topics covered during the previous seven weeks. Participants were quizzed on these different topics to measure information retention.

In addition, participants were allowed time to express some of their concerns regarding their post-incarceration release. This allowed for facilitators to provide any helpful information. It also gave other student-inmates a chance to share their own knowledge on how to deal with identified concerns. Student-inmates realized that their fellow inmates also possessed a wealth of knowledge and provided them with an additional resource to help them prepare for their release. It also gave student inmates an opportunity to teach other what they have learned. Some of the participants shared that they have been sharing the lessons discussed during the sessions with other inmates that

were unable to attend the sessions. One student-inmate at CIW felt that it would be wrong of her to withhold this information because of how valuable she perceived it to be. Another student-inmate at CIM stated that by teaching other inmates about these topics, they would be doing their own part in keeping these types of programs going.

Student-inmates expressed an increase in their confidence about being able to compose a strong resume. They were also given opportunities to demonstrate some of the skills acquired in the sessions. One of these activities was the mock interview exercise. Student-inmates were able to practice answering difficult interview questions regarding their record of incarceration. Job interviewing was one of the top concerns among student-inmates at all three facilities. Many student-inmates expressed apprehension about their abilities to execute a successful job interview. In fact, one CIW student-inmate noted specifically how important she viewed the mock interviews activity. She stated this was especially helpful for inmates that have spent long spans of time incarcerated. Another student-inmate from CRC stated during the session that he not only received tips on how to improve answering interview questions, but it helped him gain some confidence by being able to practice in a comfortable setting.

Recommendations for Program Expansion

While PEP appeared to have had a positive effect on the student-inmates' probabilities for successful reentry, gaps in needed services were also identified. These needs were identified as the module sessions progressed. As the student-inmates became comfortable with the PEP volunteers, they began to request specific help and identify new needs. Some of these needs included housing, drug rehabilitation services, and family issues. While PEP volunteers were able to provide resources, including agency

phone numbers and contact persons, the case management approach to these issues has been shown to be more effective compared to passive referrals services. A PEP volunteer noted, “As the PEP program progresses I see a real need for more personalized individual case management. Especially for the student-inmates that have less than six months on their sentence. These student-inmates are in desperate need of more one-on-one services that are not currently offered.”

Another PEP volunteer stated that they had a conversation with a student-inmate at CIM about how this program can be expanded. They came to a consensus on certain program services that could be included, such as “housing, drug rehabilitation if necessary, vocational training, financial aid, helping them to obtain birth certificates, social security cards, and other forms of identification. I truly believe that this type of approach could cut the prison recidivism rate in half.”

First-hand accounts also support the idea that there is a need for a more holistic approach to reducing recidivism through effective rehabilitation. One PEP volunteer stated, “Upon my arrival, I witnessed a prisoner being released with no type of social services in place to help that individual. He was not met by family or resources to make sure that he does not re-offend. I can definitely see how this type of situation contributes to California’s high recidivism rate.” This seemed to be a common occurrence, as was shared by some of the inmates that were serving their second or third prison term. One inmate at CRC shared during one of the sessions that most of his family was out of state, so connecting with familial ties is extremely difficult. Research has shown that community and family ties are linked to successful reentry experiences. Increased

services tailored to individual needs would best serve inmates and the communities they are released back into.

Program Staff

In order to fully understand the findings from the data collected using participant observer field notes, it is vital to understand the context. Each of the facilities had organizational differences that impacted the implementation of the project.

Understanding the specific characteristics of each facility also provides context for the information given to describe the volunteer experience. Entering the facilities differed somewhat. Generally, at CRC and CIW there was a staff member from the education department waiting to escort us into the facility. At CIM, there were times that it was more challenging to enter the facility due to the lack of staff to escort the group.

In order to mitigate this situation, some volunteers were able to obtain the necessary identification and credentials, a “brown card”, to enter the facilities without staff escort. The researcher for this project was one of the volunteers that went through the necessary trainings required to obtain the “brown card”, along with three other volunteers. Protocols to obtain clearance also required a background check and required volunteers to attend an orientation to learn the rules and regulations of the prison facilities. It was a priority to the volunteers to eliminate as many barriers as possible and maintain consistency for the program implementation.

One of the primary goals for the first session was to establish a rapport with the student inmates. It was important to express our genuine interest in this project and share our motivations for being a part of PEP. It was even more important to understand what the student-inmates hoped to get out of the sessions. There were several priorities

established by the student-inmates. These priorities were to be addressed throughout the module in efforts to frame the intervention to be client-centered. One PEP volunteer offered the following observation after Session three at CIW, “The inmates were very engaged in the conversation and asked great questions. I could tell that they really appreciated my honesty and candor. As the inmates opened up and shared some of their stories and struggles, I realized that we connected in many ways. I’m glad I can be a part of this project.”

There were also efforts made to ensure that all participants feel included and receive the same level of attention. Some of the session participants were not native English speakers. Fortunately, Spanish speaking volunteers were able to translate the material and provide the module in Spanish. Bilingual speaking facilitators helped the program reach other sub-segments within the prison culture, particularly those student-inmates that also faced linguistic barriers to successful reentry.

Summary

The combined use of qualitative and quantitative field research methods intend to determine if PEP’s Career Development module provides educational and career services that promote developmental growth of the student-inmate population. Facilitating the Career Development sessions for the Prison Education Project provided the opportunity to conduct research using first person experiences and observations and provide an ethnographic report. These data were then analyzed in conjunction with survey data results. Overall, results show that student-inmates definitely saw PEP as beneficial with regarding to addressing vital topics related to successful reentry. The student-inmates expressed that they saw PEP as a tool to increase their job and career opportunities.

Survey results also showed that student-inmates thought that PEP prepared them with the skills and information needed to access College and financial aid resources. In addition, survey results showed that student-inmates felt that the information was relevant to their post-release needs and they would be able to apply this information upon reentering the community.

Findings from the open-ended question on the participant survey identified six general themes. These themes were as follows: (1) jobs/careers, (2) education, (3) program promotion/recruitment, (4) participant confidence/self-efficacy, (5) recommendations for program expansion, and (6) program staff. Data results from CIM showed that half of participants (50%, n=10) specifically noted that PEP increased their skills and opportunities to obtain a job upon release and helped them identify new potential career paths. Similar findings were identified from the CRC surveys, with more than half of respondents (54%, n=33) stated that PEP positively impacted job attainment and career development skills. Survey data results from the 65 surveys collected at CIW showed that nearly half (n=31, 48%) of all participant responders gave feedback about increasing the project. Data results were also obtained and reported through an ethnography report.

The same six thematic results were identified throughout the post-session narratives. Student-inmate and PEP volunteers offered observations and suggestions to include in the ethnography report. Results showed that several recorded experiences related back to the themes identified in the survey data results. In addition, documentation of participant behaviors and verbal input provided additional support for

program evaluation. Comparable findings between the quantitative and qualitative research designs are useful for results validation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the ongoing problems in the California corrections system, it is imperative that the State develop additional means for not only reducing the number of inmates, but also ensuring that there are transitional resources in place to address issues of recidivism. It will be vital for state and local officials to identify and collaborate with local community service providers such as PEP to gain the necessary tools and resources to be effective. Although the survey results and participant observation shows that thus far PEP has been successful in meeting the program objectives, there is definitely room for improvement. Based on survey responses, participant observation, and best practices PEP should make the following changes.

Although PEP provides education while in prison, services should be expanded to serve student-inmates once they are released from prison. Currently, 5 student-inmates that participated in PEP while in prison have transitioned into the Reintegration Academy. The Reintegration Academy is a post-release ten week reentry program that immerses ex-offenders in academic orientation, life skills, and career development. The hope is that this number will continue to grow as the inside-outside approach to rehabilitation continues to grow. This Reentry program is unique because it is currently housed at Mt. San Antonio College. Previously it was housed at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. The theory behind this type of setting is that walking on a college campus and consuming its energy can be just as transformative as a lecture or workshop.

Thorough reentry programming should consist of two phases, one that addresses the inmate while incarcerated and the other programming and services should be continued through the inmates release from prison. While most of the student-inmates felt that the Career Development module was helpful in helping them understand what it takes to get a job once released from prison, the process for applying for college and financial aid, and the process of searching for felon-friendly jobs, resume building, and interview skills, in the future it will be essential to provide more case management for inmates that have less than six months left on their sentence. These student-inmates expressed the need for more one-on-one management. Also, many student-inmates indicated that the sessions should be expanded in order for topics to be explored further and in order to address other student-inmate needs that are not discussed in the module. Student-inmates also indicated that they would like more discussion time and more time to ask questions.

In the future, it will be important for PEP to collaborate with other reentry programs that focus on drug rehabilitation, housing, counseling, and other services so that student-inmates can smoothly transition into those services. PEP should also collaborate with programs outside of Los Angeles County because many student inmates come from different counties. Another recommendation for PEP is to begin working with local and county jails. Because Realignment has shifted lower-level offenders into local and county jails, it will be imperative to help these institutions not fall into the same predicament as the State.

Because PEP utilizes many student-volunteers to administer various modules, it will become imperative for participating colleges and universities to offer students field

research or community service credits for their participation in the program. Because this volunteer experience is very enriching and contributes to the developmental growth of college students, it serves to expand their knowledge of social issues.

Future research should focus on creating more accurate information about the full range of factors that contribute to high prison recidivism. Factors such as familial ties, inmate preparedness, community resources, and linkages into necessary services should all be examined. This should also include looking at individual facilities in order to determine if the prison is operating in a way that is conducive to prisoner rehabilitation. Research should also be done to identify cost-effective approaches to identifying those who are at the greatest risk for recidivism and provide various interventions (in-prison and post-release) to combat recidivism among inmates that have the greatest risk factors.

CONCLUSION

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is facing quite a few changes to their policies and procedures. These changes come as a result of legal intervention geared at reducing overcrowding within all 33 State prison facilities and lowering recidivism rates in the State. While some of the steps CDCR has taken have been successful in lowering the inmate population, it is now even more important to prepare these inmates with the necessary skills to reintegrate back into their communities and become productive and contributing members of society. The Prison Education Project, the first program of its kind in California, seeks to prepare these soon-to-be released individuals in the areas of career development and exploration of higher learning opportunities. PEP attempts to bridge the gap between prison release and successful reentry.

This evaluation of the Career Development module of PEP has not only provided insight into the effectiveness of this intervention, but also identified tools and resources that are helpful to inmates with regard expanding their educational horizons and increasing their knowledge about obtaining gainful employment upon release. Ultimately it would be in the CDCR's best interest to collaborate with PEP in order to provide additional educational resources within California's State prisons.

Since the inception of PEP at CIM in 2011, the program has grown exponentially. PEP is currently operating in six facilities: CIM, CIW, CRC, Ventura Youth Correctional Facility, Old Folsom Men facility, and Old Folsom Women's facility. The numbers of student volunteers and universities that participate in PEP have also grown exponentially. In 2011, there were only 36 student volunteers from one university, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, participating in PEP. Today, there are over 120 volunteers from seven different universities: California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, California State University, Fullerton, Pitzer College, California State University, San Bernardino, California State University, Channel Island, Occidental College, and Sacramento State University. As PEP continues to grow, it will be important for the CDCR to collaborate and partner with PEP to provide additional educational services in prison facilities across California.

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