

**Title of Session:** Alt/Correctional Ed Forum - NCJRS

**Moderator:** BJ Berquist

**Guest Speaker:** Jennifer Drake

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**BJ:** Welcome to the Alternative/Correctional Ed Forum!

**JenniferD1:** Good evening everyone! My name is Jennifer and I represent the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. You can look at our site at <http://www.ncjrs.org>.

**VennyS . o O** ( Session after session!!! )

**JenniferD1:** NCJRS is an information clearinghouse for the Office of Justice Programs. We provide TONS of on-line resources for people in the criminal justice field.

**VennyS:** think Long life TI :

**BJ:** Could you all please introduce yourselves so Jennifer has an idea of her audience?

**JenniferD1:** Yes, please and then I will tell you a little bit about my background as well.

**BJ:** I'm an art teacher in a residential male juvenile correctional facility

**KatieBr:** Katie, EdM Candidate, Technology in Education, Harvard University, used to teach business computer skills to low-income adults

**BJ** hands the virtual floor over to Jennifer

**JenniferD1:** Welcome! I have 17 years of correctional experience, mostly case management. I now work as an information analyst for NCJRS and help to do research for people in the criminal justice field. Does anyone have any questions that maybe I can help you with?

**VennyS:** I'm Su, Cheng-chao from Taipei, Taiwan, who teach and work in students' affair office.

**BJ:** thanks, Katie and Venny. Jennifer, the big topic right now is transitions

**BJ . o O** ( from incarceration back into the community )

**JenniferD1:** You mean reentry?

**BJ** nods

**BJ:** I'd like to learn more about how the community works with the institutions and how the institutions can work with the communities

**JenniferD1:** You are right. A very hot topic! There is a great Web site put out by the Office of Justice Programs that provides comprehensive information on reentry. Give me one second and I will provide the link for you.

**BJ:** thanks, Jennifer

**BJ:** Katie, I would assume that you would be looking at something like this from the community end...establishing community centers, working with libraries?

**KatieBr:** I'd like to learn more about the personal process of transition

**DanMF** joined the room.

**JenniferD1:** <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/reentry> is the site. There is also a comprehensive list of publications on the NCJRS web site about reentry.

**BJ:** Hi, Dan. Welcome

**BJ:** click on the url to open a new window

**DanMF:** Hi

**BJ:** Dan, are you here for the Alt/Correctional Ed Forum?

**JenniferD1:** If you go to the NCJRS Web site, click on corrections and go to the pull down list, you will see a subtopic for reentry. All publications listed are available online.

**DanMF:** Actually, I am just snooping around a bit...

**BJ** looks at the reentry site

**JenniferD1:** Katie, when you ask about the personal process of transition, do you mean the psychological impact of returning to society?

**BJ:** Dan, this topic also concerns you as a high school teacher

**BJ:** many of the juveniles in corrections return to public schools

**BJ:** what can institutions do to facilitate this reentry?

**KatieBr:** yes, and how to help facilitate the process and help each person maximize their potential to get on another path in life

**BJ:** the million dollar question, Katie!

**DanMF:** Yes... that is correct BJ

**JenniferD1:** There is a publication on the NCJRS Web site called Offenders Views of Reentry: Implications for Processes, Programs and Services that you may find interesting.

**JenniferD1:** I believe correctional organizations are starting to realize that preparing offenders for reentry is a responsibility that they must assume.

**JenniferD1:** The Reentry initiative sponsored by OJP has three areas of focus. One of which is preparation within the correctional facilities. There are several agencies that have received funding to initiate innovative programs.

**BJ:** it has to be a team effort though

**JenniferD1:** absolutely! No one sector can do it alone. You need to have corrections, parole and probation, law enforcement, and social services all working together.

**BJ:** Dan, are you informed when a child returns to school from an institution?

**DanMF:** Yes... we will get a report usually from the special ed department

**JenniferD1:** How do you find them handling the transition? Do they receive special services?

**JenniferD1:** Venny, how is reentry handled in Taiwan?

**DanMF:** Well, Jennifer... we have a police officer in our school with whom the students meets.. and is monitored

**JenniferD1:** Interesting.... is that the only type of services they receive? Are most of them considered special ed?

**BJ:** a large number of our juveniles are special ed

**DanMF:** yes... the people I know of are designated as special ed because they usually are diagnosed as having a mental illness like bi polar or schizophrenia. The ones I know are on medicine

**BJ . o O ( and mental health )**

**JenniferD1:** Hmm... I would have assumed most are special ed because of behavior disorders... understanding of course that bi-polar and schizophrenia have behavior problems.

**BJ:** lots of learning difficulties too. Reading and math are the priority suBJects

**DanMF:** Yes.. Jennifer... the behavior disorder is also common.. I think they call it oppositional 'something'

**KatieBr:** oppositional defiant disorder?

**JenniferD1:** It always amazed me the low educational level of inmates. So many cannot read or write. Then with the oppositional defiant disorder for most of them on top of that, it is no wonder they end up incarcerated.

**DanMF:** What's sad is that most teachers don't know anything about these disorders, so their impression is that they are just misbehaving when really there is a distinct mental illness at issue.

**KatieBr:** Is there ever any professional development related to mental illness?

**BJ:** reentry is actually closing the barn door ...these problems are apparent when the kids are in first grade!

**JenniferD1:** I totally agree. Unfortunately, many teachers may make the situation worse because of their lack of understanding...

**BJ:** we have had a lot of pd on mental health issues, but I don't think most schools do

**DanMF:** the professional development is usually for people in the social work field, not teachers but it should be

**KatieBr:** Do you think your colleagues would be interested in pd from social workers?

**VennyS . o O ( pd? )**

**KatieBr:** professional development

**JenniferD1:** I was going to ask the same thing Venny but think it is professional development. : )

**DanMF:** Some would... others wouldn't find as much value, simply because, again, there is an alienating stigma attached to these kind of students. So many teachers (who of course have never had mental illness issues) can't relate

**JenniferD1:** Dan, do you see a lot of these students return to incarceration?

**JenniferD1:** And, if so, what do you think could be done to make a difference?

**DanMF:** I don't really follow it much, actually.. I may hear a few stories from the Deans... but I can't really say with certainty what percentage return...

**JenniferD1:** Do you know how many drop out?

**BJ:** Jennifer, do you have stats on recidivism?

**BJ . o O ( don't forget the great recidivism study CEA did )**

**DanMF:** Jennifer, I think more of an awareness on the teacher's part would help-professional development and such... but here's another common mantra of teachers-- that they have so many different "hats" to put on in their job, that many just see this responsibility of dealing with these kind of students as a 'hat' that they would rather not put on. I think it is intrinsically interesting so I put on the 'hat' ... No I don't know the drop out numbers

**JenniferD1:** Actually, yes. There was a publication recently released by the Bureau of Justice

**DanMF:** Thanks everybody for the conversation.. This was really interesting.

**KatieBr:** Thank you, Dan

**BJ:** thanks for joining us, Dan

**JenniferD1:** whoops.. Statistics called Recidivism of Offenders Released in 1994.

**BJ:** another thing that public school teachers have to deal with is large classes...our classes average 10-12

**JenniferD1:** Bye Dan. Thanks

**DanMF** left the room.

**BJ:** there is a more current study, Jennifer...let me see if I can find it

**BJ** . o O ( it points out the importance of education to recidivism )

**JenniferD1**: Yes, there is one about Recidivism of Sex Offenders... Also, the Correctional Education Association did a great document about a Three State Study of Recidivism

**JenniferD1**: Is one of those the one you were thinking of?

**JenniferD1**: From research I have compiled, it is very clear that education is one of the most important factors in reducing recidivism rates.

**BJ**: Yes, Jennifer. Here's a link to a pdf file

**BJ**: <http://www.ceanational.org/documents/EdReducesCrime.pdf>

**JenniferD1**: Great document! I refer customers to it frequently. We get quite a few requests for information about education and recidivism.

**KatieBr**: **BJ**, from your experience, what about education helps reduce recidivism rates?

**KatieBr**: Is it the greater job opportunities, or the confidence gained from having someone (teacher, mentor) believing that they can do better for themselves?

**BJ**: I think that being able to read eliminates a lot of problems

**BJ**: all of the above, Katie

**JenniferD1**: Just a reminder that NCJRS has staff that can answer questions and compile research materials just by e-mailing us at <http://askncjrs.ncjrs.org>

**JenniferD1**: Also, so many jobs require a GED or High School diploma. Job opportunities are severely limited without an education. Being unemployed only encourages individuals to return to crime.

**BJ** agrees with Jennifer.

**JenniferD1**: I think self esteem is the greatest factor. I have seen guys get their GED and just be so proud of themselves. They have finally accomplished something very positive. It is very empowering.

**BJ**: I think the same thing is true of all learning...

**BJ**: often, the school in a correctional facility is the first positive [educational] experience that a child has had

**KatieBr**: It is a shame that we don't catch kids at an earlier age so we don't have to go back and rehabilitate them

**JenniferD1**: I agree!!

**BJ** agrees with Katie

**KatieBr**: This has been a very interesting conversation

**JenniferD1**: I have enjoyed chatting with you!

**KatieBr**: Thank you, Jennifer, **BJ** and everyone!

**KatieBr**: Good night!

**JenniferD1**: Thank you! Have a great evening.

**BJ**: Thanks, Jennifer!

**BJ**: thanks for joining the discussion, Katie

**JenniferD1**: Thank you! I enjoyed myself very much.