

**Recommendations for Higher Education
Requirements for Correctional Staff**

Approved by: Dr Susan Hilal - Advisor

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**Recommendations for Higher Education
Requirements for Correctional Staff**

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By
Brett J. Buteyn
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Abstract

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CORRECTIONAL STAFF

Brett Buteyn

Under the Supervision of Dr. Susan Hilal

Purpose

Currently only a handful of corrections departments in the United States require education for entry level employees. The purpose behind this paper is to provide corrections with justification for requiring education beyond high school and the benefits this requirement will provide for the individual and the organization.

Methods

All research and information collected for this paper came from secondary sources. The information consist of peer reviewed journals, text books, and analysis of current education standards for professions outside of corrections. The data collected from these sources was used to suggest expectations for corrections. The requirements mandated by The Federal Bureau of Prisons and the Michigan Department of Corrections will be used to develop recommendations for correctional education requirements for those with no higher learning requirements. Social Cognitive learning theory will be the basis for adult education practices and the benefits to be experienced within correctional culture.

Findings

Requiring education will result in benefits to individual correctional staff and the organization as a whole. The findings proffer candidates complete college level course work in psychology,

sociology, criminal justice or social work to improve understanding of ethics, empathy, critical thinking, leadership skills, improved job satisfaction, and problem solving skills will be experienced by individuals. The organization will profit from reduced officer complaints and use of force.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION-DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

For the public at large the perception of the correctional officer has been shaped by the media. The public media often creates an image of a cynical and stupid guards “employing sadism as an art form” valuing strength and the ability to employ brute force (Freeman, 2001). These guards are in turn perceived as supervised by immoral and dishonest wardens disinterested in even basic human rights (Freeman, 2001).

This negative perception has adverse consequences for the field of corrections. Those who pursue their college degrees in criminal justice are not interested in pursuing a career in the field of corrections, but instead enter the field of law enforcement (Freeman, 2001). According to Freeman (2001) this is due to a high school diploma being the only educational requirement for entry into the field. Those pursuing a degree feel their effort and degree will be wasted inside the walls of a prison. This is also exacerbated by the idea that the values of the veteran officer is so foreign and based on immoral and unethical terms that they will be excluded and disliked for their educated views (Freeman, 2001).

This is not the only hindrance faced by corrections today. Traditionally, corrections possess the perceived and legitimate image of a low paying job, stress, burnout, isolation, and poor coping skills (Kohan & Mazmanian, 2003; Smith, 2010). The militaristic environment contributes to staff resistance to change as well as preference towards tradition and the way things have always been done (Lerch, Viglione, Eley, James-Andrews, & Taxman, 2011).

The impetus for change is to affect an organizational culture from having no entry level requirements to the status of a profession requiring specialized skills based on ongoing education

(Mayo, 2006). Educated correctional staff will be able to interact within diverse environments with advanced skill sets to improve internal organization communication and understanding, offender interactions, and positively affect media and public perception.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to make recommendations for increasing the entry level education requirements for correctional staff in Wisconsin. As the roles of correctional officer change from that of custodial to those of rehabilitative, so does the requirement of correctional staff to understand the behaviors and motivation behind those they supervise. This can only come through additional education. In looking at a closely related field, law enforcement, studies have found higher education amongst law enforcement officer reduces their likelihood to use excessive force (Rydberg & Terrill, 2010). Police department who have high education requirements for officer have better officer behavior and performance, less use of sick time, better minority acceptance and interaction, fewer complaints, along with greater job satisfaction and promotional ambition (Mayo, 2011). This paper will make recommendation for additional education. Specifically, the expansion of academy training to include college level courses in psychology, sociology and communications, along with an intensive field training program during the new officers' first year at the institution.

Significance and Implications

Law enforcement historically did not keep up with other service occupations requiring higher education (Mayo, 2006). Similarly, corrections lags behind the law enforcement community to implement higher education requirements. Law enforcement requires skills

involving psychology, sociology, and counseling as does the corrections field (Mayo, 2006). These skills can be explored, developed, and implemented through advanced education.

According to the Police Association for College Education (PACE), college education produces effective quality police practices (Mayo, 2006). A study conducted by the Florida Criminal Justice State and Training Commission (CJSTC) demonstrated that officers who obtain higher education are able to effectively address complex problems utilizing proactive problem solving skills (Mayo, 2006). Some educated officer traits observed in Multnomah County, Oregon are greater knowledge of procedures and practices, appreciation for their role in the criminal justice system, better psychological makeup, a broader range of interpersonal communication skills, and personal values consistent with organizational goals (Mayo, 2006).

Progression from an occupation to a profession must occur if the efficacy of the mission and values of the Department of Corrections are to be met. This can only occur through education. The fields of engineering, medicine, education, and law enforcement have moved through this process realizing they all require additional education to be effective (Conelly & Rosenberg, 2009). With the changing roles and additional complexities regarding use of force, treatment and rehabilitation in corrections, specialized knowledge and skills are required to produce the desired results.

Method of Approach

The method of approach for this paper will be through the use of inductive reasoning to apply the evidence collected from research regarding higher education benefits to the field of corrections. This will be based upon a thorough review and analysis of secondary data consisting of related empirical, theoretical, and statistical findings. The subsequent findings in

the literature on law enforcement, as well as other professions requiring ongoing education and professional certification, will be applied to corrections to move beyond an occupation to a profession. Through the application of social cognitive theory, the impact of education on the individual and organization will be explored. Through the use of social psychological theories, comparisons will be made between educated law enforcement personnel and the positive impact educated correctional staff will have on organizational behavior.

Contribution to the Field

The results of this paper will be used by corrections administration and correctional staff as evidence to support the need for higher education requirements in the corrections field to reduce complaints, have less use of force incidents, fewer disciplinary problems, and reduced absenteeism. Correctional departments will be able to use the results to support their current educational requirements.

SECTION II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review is broken down into five parts. The first part looks at historical recommendations for higher education requirements in the law enforcement community and how it compares to corrections. The second part reviews the educational requirements for state correctional facilities in general along with focus on Wisconsin and Michigan. The third part looks at the benefits higher education provides in occupational skills for the individual. The fourth section looks at problems experienced by organizations that ongoing learning will address. The role of correctional officers has changed from 30 years ago to today and will be reviewed in part five.

Historical Recommendations

The need for education has been increasing for anyone wanting to become involved in a skilled profession. The need has been similar for medical and educational fields as it has been for the field of criminal justice. While law enforcement has garnered most of the attention of studies touting the need for education in criminal justice, little attention has been paid to the corrections field. The research using law enforcement can be applied to corrections, as well as the remainder of the criminal justice field.

August Vollmer was the first advocate for educational requirements or at least education specific to police to be provided. Vollmer and Schneider (1917) identified an increase in hiring requirements led to better qualified candidates whose tenure with departments was far longer than previous generations. Both acknowledged the increasing technology requirements for modern policing led to additional training requirements for law enforcement personnel. Signal alarms, bike patrols, fingerprint records and criminal record keeping was requiring additional

skills beyond that of an uneducated person. Vollmer and Schneider (1917) identified expertise in laws and regulations, first aid, civilized treatment of prisoners and tactful communication with the public as paramount. Vollmer and Schneider (1917) stated that those tasked with enforcing the laws of in the interest of public good must have some basic knowledge not only of laws, but also of the also what causes people to commit criminal acts. To this end Vollmer and Schneider employed physics, chemistry, psychology, and medical personnel to instruct in their school for police training (Vollmer & Schneider, 1917).

The Presidents Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice came to similar conclusions in 1967 as well as the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals did again in 1973. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice proffered the need for higher quality law enforcement personnel was dependant on establishing a "high standard of education for policemen" (as cited by Decker & Huckabee, 2002, p 790). The ultimate goal established for law enforcement personnel to possess a four year or baccalaureate degrees. The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals came to the dismal conclusion that while recommendations had been with proliferating criminal justice higher education programs, the traditional requirement of only a higher school education for employment remained the same (Decker & Huckabee, 2002).

There is a substantial amount of empirical studies that have been conducted regarding higher education needs for police officers. However, little data exists in relation to corrections and the impact educational requirements may have on their job duties and success. While there is a difference in research, the duties police officers and corrections officers perform are similar. General police duties entail enforcing laws, apprehending offenders, preventing crime and preserve the peace (Schmallegger, 2009). The duties of law enforcement officers involve

operational strategies necessary for their achievement such as preventative patrols, responding to nonemergency incidents, emergency response, criminal investigation, the use of problem solving skills, and support services to maintain human resources and record keeping (Schmallegger, 2009). The Alaska Department of Corrections (2012) describes the correctional officer duties in detail. Correctional officers physically patrol the buildings and ground of correctional facilities enforcing rules and policies to manage offenders' behaviors. Direct observation of offenders provides correctional officers with necessary information to respond to subtle changes in behavior preventing disturbances or criminal activity. Corrections officers also provide emergency response to medical emergencies, accidents, fires, fights, and riots providing protection for staff, the public and offenders. Finally, corrections officer are responsible for gathering and documenting information essential to record keeping with the Department of Corrections. Due to the similarities in duties performed the results of law enforcement studies would have similar results for the field of corrections.

Review of current educational requirements

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections currently has minimal requirements for entry level officer working inside state correctional facilities. Applicants are required to be 18 years of age, have a valid driver's license, with a high school diploma or an equivalent certificate (Wisc.Jobs, 2012). Additionally each candidate is required to pass a background investigation and physical fitness test (Wisc.Jobs, 2012). Specialized candidate skills require excellent observation and memory skills, appropriate verbal and written use of the English language, ability to understand the meaning of materials read, suitable decision making skills, along with an aptitude for behavioral skills guiding their interaction with others (Wisc.Jobs, 2012). No formal or higher education requirements are currently in place.

Promotion within the Wisconsin Department of Corrections requires the same job skills as entry level officers with only a few exceptions. Entry level supervisors require knowledge of correctional institutions, operations, rules and regulations along with procedural operations (Wisc.Jobs, 2012). Specialized knowledge of supervisory techniques, methods of supervising inmates, crowd control, along with written and oral communications are required (Wisc.Jobs, 2012). No educational incentives or requirements? are currently in place.

The Michigan Department of Corrections (2011) has established themselves ahead of their colleagues in the other forty nine states by mandating educational requirements for those submitting applications for employment. Their hiring requirements include a minimum of 15 college credits in criminal justice, social work, counseling, psychology, or sociology; or 30 college credits in any academic area; or a bachelor degree in any area. These requirements must be met before submitting an application for employment. Michigan has the highest recruitment requirements of all state run corrections programs. Michigan's requirements are progressive moving their department in the direction all corrections must go.

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (2011) differs from Michigan in their requirements to be a correctional officer. Like Michigan, Minnesota is looking for applicants over the age of 20 based upon the required years of education or experience for applicants. The Minnesota DOC requires experience in full time employment or at least military experience for their minimum requirements. Beyond this Minnesota will accept any one of the following options: successful completion of an internship in their DOC; at least a year of full time correctional experience; a two year degree; or a four year degree.

Corrections Compendium (2007) conducted a survey of correctional facilities in the United States and Canada to determine educational requirements. Michigan and North Dakota were the only departments requiring any education beyond a General Education Diploma (GED) or high school diploma. North Dakota allows waivers for educational requirements for a minimum of two years experience in law enforcement or a security related field. Hawaii, South Carolina, and Virginia will waive GED education requirements for work experience. The rest of the state corrections require only a GED or high school diploma eligibility to be hired.

In contrast with the state requirements, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (2012) requires all entry level correctional officers to have completed nine semester hours of course work or equivalent hours of experience in law enforcement positions such as sheriff deputy, police officer, or security officer position. To move up a grade level applicants are required to have a four year degree in any field of study prior to application for employment, or equivalent job experience in law enforcement, teaching or supervising others, counseling or in commissioned sales. These minimal requirements permit the Federal Bureau of Prisons to hire candidates with life experience and the ability to communicate well.

The State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections Correctional Officer Preservice Program (2012) supplies the new correctional officer with only basic skills to begin their career. The course is based upon 280 hours of instruction in fields directly related to job duties within correctional facilities. Currently, Wisconsin corrections training utilizes 19 hours of instruction for new recruits in the proper use of verbal communications and its impact on coworkers and inmates, effective job stress coping mechanisms, building positive work environments, and finally exploring new perspectives about correctional staff's impact on the offenders and their own safety. The rest of the hours are spent introducing the new staff to policies and procedures,

firearms, Principles of Subject Control (POSC), first aid, and Emergency Response Unit (ERU) response and force techniques. As show here little time is spent preparing the correctional officer for the diverse social and ethnic groups they will encounter. Coping skills for addressing ethical and moral dilemmas that will be found in the organization's subculture are barely touched upon.

Purpose of higher education

With the push for college educated law enforcement personnel, education itself must be analyzed to determine what desired effects will benefit the departments requiring additional education prior to applying the value obtained to corrections as a whole. Researchers have focused primarily on the monetary value to be obtained from higher education, while there are broader socioeconomic and social returns to be experienced by the individual and society as a whole (Hill, Hoffman, & Rex, 2005). The greater efficiency and productivity provided by higher educated individuals contributes to the greater good of society as a whole (Hill, Hoffman, & Rex, 2005).

Nelis (2010) proffers the basis for a good education program will broaden an individual's perspectives, inspire inquisitiveness and imagination, cultivate belief in an individual's own intelligence and develop self motivation for task analysis and completion. Nelis asserts spoken and verbal skills are developed as well as a strong ethical sense of self and their environment.

Critical thinking skills are developed and refined in higher education. According to Abu-Dabat (2011, p.28) critical thinking skills are a blend of complex skills applied to life problems consisting of "clarity, credibility, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, significance and

fairness” . Saiz and Rivas (2010) further define critical thinking as a method of searching for information through the use of reasoning, problem solving and decision making to achieve the preferred results in the most efficient and effective way possible. Through doing problem solving and developing solutions to the problems presented can the necessary skills be developed and cultivated (Saiz & Rivas, 2010). Education requires the development of critical thinking skills through studies, exams and debates to determine the meaning and significance of what is heard and observed to accept, reject or suspend a decision until all facts have been evaluated (Abu-Daba, 2011). Critical thinkers conduct focused and thoughtful rulings about what to accept based on observations, experience, and written or verbal arguments (Abu-Daba, 2011). According to Abu-Dabat (2011) this makes good students, but good citizens making well informed decision, like those required by educators and those in the criminal justice workforce.

Research conducted shows that entry level applicants in job markets today lack critical thinking and problem solving or applied skills required to be successful (Casner-Lotto, Barrington, & Partnership, 2006). Critical thinking is closely intertwined with and a precursor to the development of problem solving skills needed by criminal justice entities to come up with effective and efficient solutions to scenarios they face.

Multicultural diversity is enhanced by educational strategies and structures requiring interaction between members of different cultures or ethnic groups (Sanner, Baldwin, Cannella, Charles & Parker, 2010). While this interaction creates educational learning benefits the informal interaction outside the classroom was found to have the greatest benefit impacting cultural awareness, sensitivity and the ability to connect effectively with diverse populations. Sanner et. al., 2010). Studies reviewed by Sanner et al (2010) confirmed the positive impact informal interactions had upon students. Their findings proffer racial and cultural understanding

is the keystone required to succeed in the exceedingly diverse workplace of the twenty first century.

Building upon the ability to think critically, along with cultural diversity, is the ability to employ empathy when interacting with those served in a profession. Empathy is not a specific skill identified as taught within the criminal justice field. However the nursing profession identifies the need for empathy and development of these skills. Brunero, Lamont, and Coates (2010) identify multiple definitions of empathy. Empathy is the ability to distinguish the feelings and the meaning behind their actions and reciprocate the perceived emotions back to the individual being evaluated. Furthermore empathy is recognizing and understanding the other individual's frame of reference correctly both emotionally and meaningfully, becoming one with the individual in this thought and meaning without the loss of oneself (Brunero, Lamont, & Coates, 2010). Empathy is broken into two separate domains consisting of the cognitive and affective. Brunero, Lamont, and Coates (2010) define the cognitive domain as experiencing inner feelings while being able to see the world through another's eyes, while the affective domain requires amalgamating with the others emotional experience. To subsist in fast moving multicultural societies, empathy must be learned for success (Brunero, Lamant, and Coates, 2010).

The complex skills needed by correctional staff to effectively implement cultural understanding, empathy, critical thinking, and problem solving are the result of exposing employees or students to ongoing education to broaden their intervention skills. Hill, Hoffman and Rex (2005) identify social interaction as the mechanism for erudition and development of a knowledge bank and increased learning. As previously identified, diversity, empathy, critical thinking and problems solving skills are the direct result of this social interaction expanding an

individual's cognitive thinking skills. Hill, Hoffman, and Rex (2005) identify increasing knowledge, educations and complex skills increase the value of the work force translating into increased productivity for an organization.

Competencies developed through higher education

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC, 2006) established a list of core competencies required for correctional leaders today. Ethics and values, interpersonal relationships, oral and written communications, motivating others, managing conflict, collaborations, managing change, along with problem solving and decisions making skills are necessary for those in leadership positions. Developing these core competencies will develop personal character traits of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship (NIC, 2006).

Organizations who implement educational requirements or ongoing learning during employment will realize multiple benefits to the organization as a whole. Law enforcement organizations within the United States possess the power to affect the future of those they come in contact with through loss of liberty or personal property. Ongoing education has the ability to improve ethics, attitude, job satisfaction, corruption resulting in lower use force and complaints filed against them. Studies reviewed here will address each of these areas supporting their claims.

Ethics is defined as the study of the beliefs of good conduct and moral values of a culture or society (Ortmeier & Meese, 2004). Ortmeier and Meese (2004) further define ethical behavior as conduct that adheres to accepted beliefs of morality and appropriate conduct. Ethics is not a universal belief consistent among all cultures but varies from one culture to another. Ethics and ethical behavior is dependent upon the accepted moral conduct of a culture or

subculture (Ortmeier & Meese, 2004). With the influx of diversity within the culture of the United States law enforcement must understand other cultures and their impact on the ethical decisions they will be required to make.

Ethical decision making requires thought in greater depth than the principles established by the American Correctional Association Code of Ethics (ACA, 2012). ACA has created a model code of ethics for correctional facilities to implement for certification, but to fully implement their ideals requires higher self awareness and understanding. Ethics involves the understanding of metaethics concerning how moral judgments are made about life while normative ethics involve discerning between specific acts and what is right and wrong (Ortmeier and Meese, 2004). While ethical decision making is something learned in stages from childhood on but is increased and broadened through education (Moll, 2006; Walker, 2011). Walker (2011) studied the impact of ethics courses and found increased positive changes in the student's awareness of their own value and belief structure as well as open mindedness allowing them to view problems from a 360 point of view allowing them to apply new knowledge to ethical problems they face in the performance of their duties.

Educated police officers utilize lower levels of use of force and officer misconduct (Rydberg & Terrill, 2010). Officer with a two and four year degree used less verbal use of force than those with only a high school degree while officers with a four year degree used significantly less physical force than those with lower levels of education (Paoline & Terrell, 2007). Officer misconduct resulting in discipline or termination for criminal and drug usage was lower with educated and well trained officers (Kane & White, 2009). No significant difference was found between officers educated before or after hiring only that a combination of education and training significantly reduced officer misconduct in both arena's (Kane & White, 2009).

While arguments exist for both classroom and on the job education this was one of the first confirming the need for both in the making of an officer (Kane & White, 2009). Findings by Rydberg and Terrill (2010) affirmed the benefit of college education plays in significantly reducing police use of force. McElvain and Kposowa (2008) studied 186 officer involved shootings in southern California and found college graduate officers were 41 percent less likely to fire their weapon in the line of duty than those with less education. As evidenced here education level generally lowers their propensity for using force.

Corrections staff are required to counsel offenders and physically control inmates on a regular basis (Wisc.Jobs, 2012). While staff are educated in principles of subject control and professional communications skills without understanding the impact their use can have officers are susceptible to abuse of the power entrusted to them (State of Wisconsin, 2012). Ongoing examples exist for abuse of this power by correctional staff.

Leadership training has been found to address all of these issues but is no longer just for managers, but for entry level employees as well. Dugan and Komives (2007) found that leadership is developed through higher education. Their findings establish that self-efficacy, civic involvement, as well as distinctive positive personal qualities are developed when leadership courses are taught. The Multi-Institutional Study for Leadership found significant increases in leadership development for those attending one time leadership courses over those who attended no leadership training (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Additionally results demonstrated an increase in leadership efficacy or the perception of an individual to lead and influence a group effectively (Dugan & Komives, 2007).

Problems solving and decision making skills are identified by NIC (2006) are necessary competencies due to the every changing environment, tools, technology and personnel encountered in the corrections environment. The correct response to problems is critical in how other coworkers will respond and support their decision as well as their impact on the organization as a whole.

Changing role of correctional officers

The role of the correctional officer has become a complex undertaking with developments on the past 30 years. The expectation to move from custodial incarceration models to a role requiring human service components preparing offenders for reentry into society (King, 2009). No longer referring to correctional staff as guards, but given names such as correctional officer or correctional service officer, demonstrates changing views regarding the purpose of imprisonment. Correctional staff have been called peacekeepers requiring high levels of skills in conflict resolution (King, 2009). According to the House of Commons Justice Committee (2009) the work of correctional staff is not just common sense but is based upon experience and knowledge attained.

The Howard League for Penal Reform suggests corrections follow the model of the nursing profession or that of social workers (HCJC, 2009). Nursing and social workers are not allowed to work without education or professional training no less should be required of correctional staff. To be able to understand offenders behavior correctional staff require education in law, criminology, sociology, psychology, mental wellbeing, and ethics suggesting a complete overhaul of the correctional officer role is needed to provide the necessary changes the system demands (HCJC, 2009). Specific skills required include intricate oral and written

communication skills, negotiating skills, along with an understanding of the bigger picture (HCJC, 2009).

Conclusion

Correctional officers are experiencing extensive change in the role they play supervising offenders. Examples provided by other states and the Federal Department of Corrections provide models of educational requirements. With the addition of specific skills necessary for the supervision of offenders, correctional officers require additional education to develop these competencies for success within their career. Correctional staff competency will enhance the success of the offender for reintegration back into the community.

SECTION III: Theory

Theory must be understood before it can be applied. The first section details the origins and basic tenets of social learning theory. The second section explains how social learning theory became social cognitive theory. The final section applies social cognitive theory to the adult learning process and the impact the theory will have on corrections organizations through culture modification.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) began their study of observational learning theories based upon the idea individuals replicate behaviors they observed. By studying school children exposed to violence against a doll, they were able to determine those exposed were likely to react violently when left alone with the same doll. Through this process they developed three models of learning. Live models consist of watching a person perform a behavior. Verbal instruction model, like classroom learning, consists of detailing behavior through description. Thirdly the symbolic model involves individuals demonstrating behaviors via media sources such as television and movies. Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) also found the mental state of the individual was critical in learning taking place not just dependant on external influences

From this start Bandura developed social learning theory by combining behavior theory and cognitive theories to explain behaviors and causes of behavior within individuals (Funder, 2010). According to Bandura (1969) social learning theory states people are able to learn from one another from observation of their attitudes and behaviors and the impact the consequences those behaviors and attitude have either positive or negative. Bandura (1969) states this is the result of observing modeled behaviors, storing this information, and then using this way of behaving to determine how they will act in a similar situation.

Bandura (1969) defined the basic tenets required for social learning theory modeling to effectively take place. The first involves the amount of attention an individual pay towards the behaviors of others around them. Attention can be limited by how interesting the behaviors or incident is to the individual, while the individuals interest is limited by their personal emotion or arousal invested in the behaviors. Second modeling requires retention of the behavior observed. Retention is based upon mental codification of images and observations along with mental rehearsal up to physically acting out behaviors for future implementation. Third in the process is reproduction closely related to retention. In reproduction the individual observes themselves reenact the behaviors they observed and coded mentally. Finally motivation to repeat the behaviors must be high. Motivation involves reasons to replicate the behaviors from past experience, perceived encouragement to act, and finally the mentally coded reinforced behavior. Bandura cautions that while learning takes place, it does not automatically translate into behavioral changes, instead implementation is dependent upon the individual choosing to make a change (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) found the decision to implement what was learned was dependent upon self efficacy, or their perception of their own abilities to achieve their goals.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory was developed by Bandura through further study and development of his social learning theory. Bandura (1999) realized individuals were not just machine recording and reproducing information, but actively involved in choosing their direction in life. Cognitive processes, or the process of thinking, do not just provide new thoughts. but provide influences over future decisions and behaviors (Bandura, 1999). Individuals develop thoughts and a chosen course of action, determine the practical value of the option available,

arrange and implement the chosen option, and then evaluate the impact of their decision and make necessary adjustments as required (Bandura, 1999). Bandura (1999) further defines social cognitive theory as an interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental influencing each other bidirectionally.

Merriam and Caffarella (2007) reviewed behavior theories, their three basic assumptions and behavioral theories application in adult education. First, behavior is observed by others and changes observed in behavior are the result of learning. Second, an individual's environment determines behavior, not the characteristics of the individual. Third, the principles of continuity can only be explained by how closely two events are in relationship to each other and positive reinforcement applied after the event dictate whether the behavior will be repeated. Cognitive theorists proffer that learning is not based upon the environment but instead is the result of an individual's interpretation of environmental problems and forming solutions for them. Through the use of critical thinking skills and problem solving a cognitive learner progresses through the problem solving process until a solution is found and applied.

Combining behavioral and cognitive theories provides social learning theories championed by Albert Bandura. Wood and Bandura (1989) states learning does not have to be based on direct experiences of the individual student, but can be learned through a student's observation of the results of another person's behaviors and consequences. This is the basis of observational learning requiring concentration, memorization, practicing behaviors, and enthusiasm for change (Merriam &Caffarella, 2007). Their focus is on the implications modeling and mentoring has for the learning process. Modeling involves behavioral production process which involves taking abstract behavioral concepts and applying them to real life situations (Wood & Bandura, 1989). This is the basis for education influencing behaviors in organizations.

According to Bandura social cognitive theories support the idea of self efficacy or the belief of an individual in their ability to coordinate and carry out required courses of action to attain goals established (Liao, Liu, & Loi, 2010). Self efficacy is a primary motivator for employees to set goals that challenge their abilities and to maintain their goals as well and the determination to attain them in the face of adversity (Liao, Liu, & Loi, 2010).

Theory application

Social cognitive learning theory is an integral part of occupational and higher educational learning for correctional staff. Chiou and Yang (2006) found that modeling by instructors was critical in development of roles within occupations. The development of roles was necessary for the expansion of occupational stereotypes affecting student's ability to learn, potential career growth and overall life decision making. If the teachers become role models their morals, behavior, profession experience, values and beliefs will be emulated by the students and put into practice. The appropriate selection of instructors to accomplish this goal is another topic entirely and will be left for additional research in the future.

While social cognitive theory is applied to educational experiences, once education has been attained social cognitive theories can be applied to affect culture change within the Department of Corrections. Bandura (2002) identifies three means by which this is accomplished. First is personal means dependant on an individual personal influence on his environment and others. The individual correctional officer has the ability to apply theory and learned techniques to mold their environment and fellow correctional officers. Second is by means of influencing others to act as the individual would want by influencing another to act for them. Leadership is the ability to influence others to act as the leader wishes them to or to act in

their place. Correctional staff will recognize success in influencing others through leadership efficacy, developed during leadership training (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Finally the means desired through educational attainment is a group of people all working together to attain their common goals. Establishing educational requirements for correctional staff will allow the Department of Correction to attain their common goals in a consistent manner.

According to social cognitive theory the system of self is controlled by social organization. To affect cultural change within the Department of Corrections, the role of the individual must be changed in order for social cognitive theories to affect change within the organization and therefore modify the organizational culture for the better. The current Department of Corrections organizational culture utilizes social learning theory to initiate new officers into the prison system adapting their style to outdated models. Through modeling of desired behaviors by seasoned correctional officers, new officers develop a concept of desired behaviors based on their observation of other officers and outcome of their behavior. Effective role models provided by correctional educators and educated correctional officers will ensure moral, ethical and professional skills will be emulated by the correctional officer working within the Department of Corrections to meet the goals of the Department. Social cognitive learning theory proffers this will in turn provide role models for other correctional staff to emulate effecting cultural change department wide.

The National Institute for Corrections (NIC, 2011) identified the need for organizational cultural change within corrections will benefit correctional staff as well as the offenders they supervise. NIC proffers a process of transition from prison to the community is necessary for successful reintegration of offenders into the community. According to NIC this requires specialized skills and knowledge for both security and non-security staff to affect the overall

cultural change from strictly a custodial view to one integrating offenders in the process. Correctional staff will need to become role models for offenders providing a favorable impression to affect change through social learning mod

SECTION IV: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As long as crime exists there will be a need for correctional institutions to house convicted offenders. In the past correctional staff were simply required to supervise the offenders with little or no regard for the well being of those entrusted to their care. In modern times the role of the correctional officer is changing requiring their involvement to prepare offenders for their return to society. The skills necessary to accomplish these goals requires correctional staff to develop competencies for success to be realized.

Recommendations

The need for education in corrections was recognized early on in the development of law enforcement in the United States. August Volmer began the process by outlining the needs met by education and the impact it would have. This was again echoed in recent years in the 1970's that education was needed to properly trained to be able to deal with changing job requirements and technologies of modern times.

The purpose of education must be recognized for the goals and mission of corrections to be met. Critical thinking skills are developed through study skills, observation, testing and analysis of problems during the pursuit of education. This not only makes educated officers better employees but improves their involvement in their respective communities. Coursework in cultural diversity provides individuals exposure to cultures they would not have experienced prior to employment, tempering culture shock and enhancing their ability to communicate and empathize with ethnic groups outside their current life experience. Correction's requires the development of empathy to succeed in today's high paced multi cultural societies and multicultural subcultures within the organization.

Occupational skill competency in ethics, interpersonal relationships, communications, conflict management, motivating others, managing change, problem solving, and decision making must be achieved by correctional staff to be successful with their career field. Without occupational skills correctional staff will not provide effective verbal or written communications for report writing or interaction with administration, fellow staff or inmates. The ability to motivate others, manage conflict, deal successfully with change, and develop collaborative efforts will suffer from an inability to recognize a bigger picture relating to the goals and mission of the Department of Corrections. Attainment of core competencies will develop personal character traits of respect, trustworthiness, responsibility, a sense of fairness and caring about fellow human beings.

Social cognitive learning theory defines the educational of future correctional staff starting during the educational process prior to employment and continuing into the correctional setting. Cognitive learning theories do not require an individual to only experience an event to learn effectively but to learn vicariously through others positive or negative experiences. Properly chosen educators provide examples of concentration, memorization, proper behavioral practices and an enthusiasm for new ideas will provide the basis for change needed within the Department of Corrections. Applying abstract behavioral processes learned by students from their instructor mentors to real life situations upon employment will provide the impetus for organizational change. Successful application of these learned behaviors will build confidence providing the positive reinforcement needed for the desired behaviors to repeat themselves. Self efficacy is needed to face the adversity faced within a corrections setting, to develop goals and stay on track to meet these goals.

Correctional staff recognizing and employing social cognitive learning theories will appreciate the possibilities they have for effecting change within the population they supervise. Providing models for offenders different from those they experienced in the past can provide positive reinforcement needed by the offenders to make appropriate problem solving and decision making to reduce behavior problems and possibly reduce recidivism.

To meet the changing needs of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, the hiring process must be modified. The current practice of requiring only a high school education or equivalent certificate and 18 years old must be raised to address the changing role of correctional staff. Following the models provided by the Michigan and Minnesota Department of Corrections, a minimum requirement of 20 years of age prior to employment must be implemented. The age requirement provides the applicant attend school or find employment prior to employment within corrections. This requirement allows for additional life experience and employment experience contributing to decision making and problem solving skills.

In harmony with increased age requirements, minimal educational requirements need to be employed. Candidates for positions need not have an associate degree for entry level positions, but should be required to have at least 15 college credits in a degree in criminal justice, social work or psychology; or 30 college credits or a bachelor degree in any field will be accepted instead. Candidates will demonstrate educational experience in psychology, sociology, and constitutional law application. This will provide a firm foundation to understand the mental processes that cause human behaviors and effective behavior management skills.

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections needs to implement ongoing educational requirements for promotional opportunities. The Federal Bureau of Prisons provides the model

to emulate as they require a four year degree prior to promotion. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections should require a minimum of a two year associate degree obtained prior to consideration for promotion. Requiring ongoing education will demonstrate an individual's commitment to self enhancement and a commitment to their profession and organization. Equivalent years of law enforcement experience, supervisory experience, or sales experience can be considered. This will provide the candidates experience in educating and influencing others to meet organizational goals and objectives.

The Wisconsin Corrections Training Center's focus currently addresses procedural job duties for new correctional staff. Mandatory education prior to participation in the hiring process, will allow the academy to focus only on procedural job duties and benefit from the foundation provided by their pre employment education. . Verbal communication skills and written competencies will be developed through the education process. The ability to develop collaboration and effective working environments are cultivated through education. By developing these competencies prior to employment the Department of Corrections will be able to focus on exploring the impact the correctional staff will have on offenders and their ability to enhance the offenders success within the community after their release from correctional institutions. This has been recognized as the emerging changing role of correctional staff.

Conclusion

The role of correctional officers today has changed from the historical custodial role to the modern role influencing rehabilitation among the offenders.. August Vollmer was a visionary ahead of his time laying the foundation for education within the field of law enforcement. With changing technologies within corrections the need for additional education

mirrors the vision proffered by August Vollmer. Vollmer and Schneider (1917) affirmed those who were responsible for the enforcement of laws in the interest of public good, such as corrections, ensuring offenders complete their imposed sentence not only need to be well informed in the legal system and legislation, but must have an understanding of what causes people to commit crime and behave the way they do. This knowledge can come from moral and ethical dilemmas faced daily within correctional institutions. Strong personal ethics and communication skills are required for correctional officers to utilize effective critical thinking and decision making skills.

Nelis (2010) suggests a good education program will challenge an individual's perspective on their environment, motivate them to be inquisitive, increase an individual's confidence in their decision making skills, and increase their ability to analyze and complete tasks. Education develops verbal skills and a strong sense of self and ethics. Correctional officers must develop an understanding of cultural diversity for occupational success. Formal classroom interaction and learning about other cultures will provide correctional officers the ability to effectively interact with members of other ethnic groups. Informal interaction learned prior to employment in an educational setting will build a strong foundation of racial and cultural understanding essential to their occupational effectiveness.

Corrections staff require cultural understanding, critical thinking, and problem solving developed through ongoing education beyond a high school education to expand their intervention skills. The development of cognitive thinking skills for correctional staff will lead to an increase in perceived and empirically documented work force value along with individual and organizational productivity.

The model of educational requirements and benefits experienced by other professions is needed for corrections to meet the challenges of the twenty first century. Nursing, social workers, and law enforcement provide empirical data demonstrating the effectiveness and necessity of education in psychology, sociology, law, and ethics. The process of overhauling the current correctional culture will be difficult. Following the models and data provided allows corrections the ability not to reinvent the process, but simply follow the path laid by others to experience similar positive results throughout the organization.

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