

“A Center Inside” Supplemental Materials A

Audio Notes Transcript

1. The SPP’s second site is the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Greenville, Illinois, a joint facility with male-only medium security and female-only minimum security. We will focus primarily on the ERDCC site, as our current partnership has centered on that location to date, though plans had been in place to offer services to FCI through one of the Spring 2020 offerings for the Prison Arts and Education Program. Unfortunately, SLU ceased all program offerings in March 2020 when the university switched to remote and online learning conditions due to preventative measures surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. This decision was largely made by the SPP administration to ensure the safety of the prison residents, a high-risk population due to facility resources and living conditions.

2. The inclusion of prison staff in program offerings is a unique feature of the SPP. According to Manthripragada (2018), there are sometimes “restrictions placed on prisoners by the occasional guard who holds a grudge against prison education” (p. 77). Guards who resent the academic opportunities offered to incarcerated students may intentionally create obstacles for students seeking an education (for example, preventing students from getting to the library or class). By offering prison staff equal access to higher education, the SPP aims to minimize potential tensions that could arise between residents and staff.

3. Because prison staff would not experience this same exclusion, given their access to computers and the Internet either through personal or community devices, our partnership currently focuses solely on incarcerated students.

4. Mail screening is also a matter of importance when considering restorative justice. Many of the writing projects our students work on are academic, but some assignments are more reflective or personal, potentially covering subjects related to the students’ crimes or rehabilitation. Using mail services runs the risk of having student work censored or redacted, which would hinder both our and their efforts.

5. This allowance for educational documents is unfortunately not the same for all facilities or programs. Some facilities do not allow any materials to be brought into or taken out of the facility, so digital or synchronous alternatives would need to be considered in those cases. Additionally, while we determined that this method was best for our purposes, there are still concerns surrounding the transfer of paper documents, particularly for incarcerated writers. Supplies like paper and writing utensils as well as access to typewriters are finite resources that many writers take for granted, and most of our students did not have the ability to make photocopies or sometimes even have the time or additional materials to type or handwrite a second copy. Therefore, what they sent out of the facility was often the only copy of their work, at risk of being lost or destroyed. However, our services are offered (for the most part) as optional, and many of our students demonstrated great trust that the VICs would handle their documents with care. Even then, the

transfer of their documents meant that the students were unable to work on that particular assignment until it was returned to them, a luxury of time that some students are unable to afford. These issues are just a few that need to be considered when determining consulting logistics at other institutions.

6. After conversations with the SPP administration and reading some of the literature on prison pedagogy, we wanted to avoid terms like *prisoner* or *inmate*, which is why we generally attempt to refer to the students we serve as *incarcerated students* when just *students* does not suffice. However, we needed a term that was concise and also clearly distinguished these consultations from other asynchronous consultations we offer. We felt that *prison consultation* was an acceptable compromise as it evokes the *place* the submissions are coming from instead of *who* they are coming from.

7. To help students focus on their academics amidst their daily lives and responsibilities within the facility, the program offers only one class at a time per instructional track. At the start of the spring semester, the College Preparatory Program and the Associate of Arts Program were each offering courses that did not assign writing projects.

8. This success was also likely aided by Lynch's role as Laura's dissertation chair; knowing that this partnership was particularly important to Laura, he may have added special encouragement (for which we are grateful, if so).

9. Although UWS administrators do not generally consult with students on a regular basis due to administrative responsibilities, we both participated as consultants for the UWS-SPP partnership. Alex consulted in both productive classes (discussed below), and Laura consulted for the first (abstaining for the second as she was the instructor).

10. Laura consulted with SLU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to determine whether IRB approval was required before proceeding with the survey. While the protection of human subjects is always important, incarcerated subjects are categorized as a vulnerable population requiring additional protection and consideration. According to IRB's study criteria, because our questions were focused on UWS and UWS's services, our survey falls under the categories of quality improvement and program evaluation, not human subject research. Those interested in conducting primary research in any way related to incarcerated subjects should first seek assistance from their institution's IRB.

11. Some students react negatively to strengths-based, positive response styles such as that used by UWS, expressing a desire for harsher or more critical feedback since their goal is to improve their work (not get what they perceive as a 'pat on the back'). However, we feel that more students need (even if they do not want) affirmation on their work as well as specific information on what they do well. For this particular student population, we felt it was more important than ever to be more affirming than critical, so these responses are unsurprising.