

## Essay 5

pg 1

Corrolate connections of SEL and prison reform alternatives.

Prison reform as I would believe it to be should include the courts and judges to be precise in following the rule of law as it is written. They have too much discretion as to how they interpret criminal law. Once you have been sentenced, its nearly impossible to gain relief of any kind unless its a procedural error. Judges do not like to second guess their counterparts. Legislation will never change sentencing guidelines that have been in place since 1868 and amended countless times that has placed an on burden on the defendant. Lets consider the following: Innocent until proven guilty. Now: its guilty until proven innocent.

The only solution to prison reform would be the re-instatement of gain time awards points. You will serve more than 65% of sentence but less than 85% if the inmate participates in programs for vocational training and sustainable life skill sets, GED and continuing education.

On the flip side of this reform there must be equal attention paid to daily operating staff and administration to support reform.

## Essay 5

Pg 2

This is the fatal flaw that dooms all types of reform. But there is one more flaw that must be considered and that is the inmate themselves. I refer to inmates in this way because we are state property. Nothing but a number to be herd and controlled with the least amount of expenditure or corrections. This connection between two different themes may seem obscure to the uninitiated. The courts sets the mood or tone, prison staff motivates this mood or tone with unforgiving attitude-behavior. Although some individuals should be held in consistent punishment mode, there remains little variance to the population in general.

In the advancement of our world there were created unforeseen consequences. Many peoples were exposed to destructive strategies early in live, including prison staff. Such as negative talk, screaming, blaming and so on. These responses required little cognitive control but are often effective at getting rid of negative feelings and providing temporary gratification. They fail to take in long term consequences and derail us from achieving our goals. Negative emotional states, anxiety, anger, sadness, and stress are associated with unhealthy behaviors such as poor diet, excessive drinking, smoking, physical inactivity, social isolation, and depression.

## Essay 5

pg. 3

These are just some of the contributing factors to our ever expanding prison population and the degradation involving prison alternatives to reform or corrections.

What we do know is that human life everywhere is a collection of or associated life. The individual an expression of a social life surrounding him and prison. Society is an expression of individual character. For any individual to learn and any change or discipline, we need a solid understanding of that change and a strong foundation in its practical application to provide stability to build and grow. We need to restructure learning to promote unconventional thinking and fresh approaches to problems solving by incorporating project base learning and design thinking, IRA, identify, intercede, resource, and assessment.

There are 5 identified areas of concern.

- ① defining a problem
- ② understanding the human needs involved
- ③ reframing the problem in human terms
- ④ think boldly about solutions
- ⑤ hands on approach to experimentation and testing.

## Essay 5

pg. 4

SEL, social and emotional learning will connect prison reform with understanding man's social life before we can understand its special phases such as crime.<sup>2</sup>

Alternatives to prison reform are limited in scope of daily operating procedure. There are prisoners who will never change who they are as a person. Their world consists of me, myself, and I. They have no long term projections in terms of life in the free world. Recidivism is not something that can be eliminated but can be mitigated. The only way to achieve any type of reform to prison society is to embrace SEL and IRA training. Prison staff must adapt the overall attitude that the mood and tone of the prison is strongly influenced by their participation in the inmates rate of change. If we acquire emotional skills, they will enable us to become better learners, decision makers, friends, parents, and partners. Better at maintaining our health and well being, problem solvers at life's ups and downs and achieve our dreams and goals.

<sup>2</sup> Stanford University psychology professor James Gross defines it as "the process by which individuals influences which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions".