

Training and further education of teachers in correctional institutions. American and European literature

Formazione iniziale e continua degli insegnanti negli istituti penitenziari. Una rassegna della letteratura americana ed europea

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Abstract

Teachers working in juvenile correctional facilities face a complex set of challenges, as not only the characteristics of the students but also the challenges of the special environment make their work difficult. The most important consideration in the operation of correctional institutions is safety, so all activities are subordinated to this, and teachers often must perform their work in these difficult circumstances without sufficient preparation. It varies from country to country whether teachers working in juvenile correctional institutions receive such training, and if so, to what extent and depth, although this is necessary, because university teacher training typically prepares future teachers for knowledge transfer. It would be important to specialise in the training of teachers who wish to work in correctional institutions within the teacher training system by incorporating several subjects that are particularly important for them.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquents; Teachers; Challenges; Teacher training.

Sintesi

Gli insegnanti che lavorano negli istituti di correzione minorili devono affrontare una serie complessa di sfide, poiché non solo le caratteristiche degli studenti, ma anche le difficoltà legate all'ambiente speciale rendono il loro lavoro difficile. La considerazione più importante nel funzionamento degli istituti di correzione è la sicurezza; quindi, tutte le attività sono subordinate a questo aspetto e gli insegnanti spesso devono svolgere il loro lavoro in queste difficili circostanze senza una preparazione adeguata. A seconda del Paese, gli insegnanti che lavorano negli istituti penitenziari minorili ricevono o meno una formazione specifica e, se sì, in che misura e con quale approfondimento, sebbene ciò sia sicuramente necessario, poiché la formazione universitaria degli insegnanti prepara tipicamente i futuri docenti al trasferimento delle conoscenze. Sarebbe importante specializzare la formazione degli insegnanti che desiderano lavorare negli istituti penitenziari all'interno del sistema di formazione degli insegnanti, incorporando diverse materie particolarmente importanti per loro.

Parole chiave: delinquenti minorenni; insegnanti; sfide; formazione degli insegnanti.

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1. Introduction

Teachers working in correctional institutions operate in a challenging environment where security issues, the diverse needs of students, insufficient resources, limited or no further training, and systemic challenges related to institutional culture and staff can all come into play (Bradshaw, 2024). Addressing these issues would require targeted professional development, better integration of educational considerations into correctional facility priorities, and policies that value and support educators working in this unique field. In our study, we present in detail the difficulties encountered by teachers working in correctional institutions and how they can be supported in their preparation and further training. Our research questions are as follows. What challenges and problems do teachers work in correctional institutions face in their work? What tools could be used to help these teachers successfully cope with these challenges? What areas of training are necessary for teachers working in correctional institutions? What subject-specific and methodological continuing education would be useful for them?

In our study, we attempt to answer these questions considering the findings and research of international literature, with a particular focus on analyzing the challenges and problems faced by teachers working in correctional institutions, as well as their nature and causes.

Our study is a narrative synthesis of the existing literature, as we are in the initial phase of our research, which examines the challenges faced by teachers working in correctional institutions, and we would like to provide a theoretical framework for this by summarizing the relevant research.

We examine the relevant international literature on the subject, primarily presenting the findings of American and European researchers, as research on this topic is clearly most prominent in the United States and Europe, where most of the relevant research has been conducted.

2. Theoretical framework

Juvenile justice systems have evolved from purely social or judicial models to include restorative justice and children's rights, influenced by international human rights standards (Day, 2023; Haines & Case, 2015). Recent reforms in Europe and the U.S. extend juvenile justice to young adults – up to age 21 (in the Netherlands up to the age 23) – based on neuroscientific and sociological evidence about brain development and the transition to adulthood (Dünkel, 2022).

The European Convention on Human Rights guarantees that “no person shall be denied the right to education” (Article 2). This universal right includes access to education and intellectual development without discrimination (Council of Europe, 2025; Kilkelly, 2024). The educational purpose within juvenile justice is closely guided by four core principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: non-discrimination (Article 2), the best interests of the child (Article 3), the right to life, survival, and development (Article 6), and respect for the views of the child (Article 12) (Henkes, 2000).

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (commonly known as the Beijing Rules) emphasize the importance of education in the rehabilitation and development of juvenile delinquents. The Beijing Rules state that

Member States should create conditions that ensure a meaningful life for juveniles, fostering personal development and education free from crime and delinquency (United Nations, 1985). Rule 26.2 mandates that every juvenile deprived of liberty shall have the right to receive education suited to their needs and abilities, and wherever possible, this education should be provided outside the detention facility. The Rules advocate for the integration of educational services into juvenile justice systems, recognizing education as a key factor in reintegration and social inclusion (United Nations, 1985).

The United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of Their Liberty (Havana Rules) state that all juveniles of school age have the right to an education appropriate to their needs and abilities, with the aim of preparing them for reintegration into society (United Nations, 1990). This education should, as far as possible, be provided in community schools and by qualified teachers within the framework of programs integrated into the national education system, so that continuity is ensured after release. In addition, juveniles above the compulsory school age who wish to continue their studies should be encouraged and supported to do so (United Nations, 1990).

The Mandela Rules, formally known as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (revised in 2015), affirm that all prisoners, including juveniles, have the right to education. Rule 104 emphasizes that education should be accessible to all prisoners, with special attention given to the needs of young and illiterate inmates. It further states that education for juveniles should be compulsory and similar to that provided in the community, ensuring continuity upon release (United Nations, 2015).

The educational goals of the Beijing Rules, Havana Rules, and Mandela Rules converge on the principle of using education as a transformative tool for juvenile offenders. The Beijing Rules aim to promote personal development and reintegration into society by ensuring that education supports the overall well-being and future prospects of juveniles in conflict with the law. The Havana Rules emphasize preparing juveniles for successful reintegration and reducing recidivism through structured, accessible, and nationally integrated educational programs. Meanwhile, the Mandela Rules focus on ensuring rehabilitation and reintegration, particularly for young and illiterate prisoners, by mandating compulsory education equivalent to that in the community. Collectively, these frameworks underscore education as a fundamental right and a rehabilitative mechanism essential to the social reintegration of juvenile offenders.

Correctional institutions provide a wide range of reintegration support activities – including educational programs, vocational training, psychological counseling, life skills development, and community-based reintegration planning – to equip juveniles with the tools necessary for a successful return to society and to reduce the risk of reoffending (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021). Within the wide range of reintegration support activities provided by correctional institutions, education has the greatest long-term impact on juveniles. Academic performance is an important predictor of subsequent criminality and recidivism (Maguin & Loeber, 1996), as without adequate schooling, knowledge, skills, and abilities, juveniles face numerous social and economic difficulties after their release (Scott et al., 2002). Although it is difficult to establish a clear causal relationship, researchers have long argued (Gagnon et al., 2012; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Kamil, 2003;) that teachers' subject knowledge and methodological training are critical factors in promoting student performance, and that this is especially true for teachers who work with juvenile offenders serving sentences in correctional facilities, who very often struggle with learning, mental, and behavioral problems.

3. The double challenge faced by teachers working in correctional institutions

Teachers working in juvenile correctional institutions face complex challenges in their profession because, in addition to the unique circumstances and abilities of their students, the environment in which they teach is also unique (Larkin & Hannon, 2020; Valente & Caravita, 2021).

Juvenile offenders represent an educationally disadvantaged population, with a significant proportion of them struggling with learning difficulties as well as emotional, behavioral, and mental disorders, and often being victims of abuse (Gemignani, 1994; Montross & Montross, 1997). During their school years, these young people often have negative school experiences, including poor academic performance, truancy, dropout, and expulsion. Wang and colleagues (2005) conducted a survey among teachers working in juvenile institutions and compared the educational deficiencies of juvenile offenders with those of a representative sample of the normal population. Their results showed that, compared to their peers, delinquent students achieved lower academic averages, attended school less, were absent more often, repeated grades more frequently, and were subject to disciplinary measures more often. Foley (2001) came to a similar conclusion after conducting comprehensive research into the educational characteristics of young offenders, finding that these young people are more likely to experience failure at school, lag behind their peers in intellectual ability, have poorer academic results, and struggle with significant deficits in reading, mathematics, and language. According to a national survey (Quinn et al., 2005), approximately one-third of young people serving sentences have some form of learning disability, while other estimates put the rate higher, ranging from 40 to 70% (Bullis et al., 2002). Due to the widespread nature of learning difficulties in this population, experts describe juvenile correctional facilities as systems in which a significant proportion of young people pursuing their studies are unable to write, read, and count like their peers (Nelson, 2000). In addition to learning problems, young people in juvenile detention centres very often struggle with serious emotional regulation disorders, with an incidence rate six times higher than that of young people with such disorders in traditional public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Behavioral problems related to emotional regulation disorders accompany and hinder students throughout their school years. For example, students with emotional regulation disorders generally have persistent difficulties in forming relationships and have poor social skills (Wagner et al., 2005). According to the Spanish researcher Gil-Madrona, educational success in juvenile correctional institutes is measured not only by academic achievement but also by improvements in self-esteem, social skills, and future aspirations (Gil-Madrona et al., 2024). Educators often act as mediators between institutional constraints and the personal needs of detained youth, helping to reduce the emotional and behavioral impact of incarceration (Gil-Madrona et al., 2024).

Given the high proportion of young people with emotional regulation disorders studying in correctional institutions, mental health statistics for these students are particularly important. Approximately one-quarter of students with emotional regulation disorders have experienced physical or sexual abuse, and 50% have been emotionally abused (Oseroff et al., 1999). In addition, approximately 45% have problems related to drug use (Loeber et al., 2002; McClelland et al., 2004). In addition, more than 65% of juvenile offenders struggle with some form of mental disorder (Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2000; Cocozza & Skowrya, 2000).

The complex nature of the assistance required for these students due to learning, emotional

regulation, and mental health issues can overwhelm staff and exceed the capacity of resources within the correctional facility (Cuellar et al., 2008). The problems of juveniles serving their sentences in correctional facilities pose a serious challenge to teachers and security staff, who do not necessarily have the tools, skills, and knowledge necessary to provide support. and the special nature of the environment in which these professionals must work further exacerbates the situation.

The implementation of successful educational programs in these settings is hampered not only by the difficulties faced by young people with problems, but also by the specific characteristics of correctional facilities, where security is considered paramount (EDJJ-National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice), 2010; Houchins et al., 2010)

According to Day (2023), staff and correctional facility teachers in England view risk as a central aspect of their work with young people. This aligns with broader research highlighting the persistence of a risk-oriented culture (Hampson, 2018) and a continued hesitancy among practitioners to shift away from risk-based approaches (Case & Bateman, 2020). In correctional institutions, security considerations take precedence over everything else, which can result in educational efforts being pushed into the background and this shift in emphasis may reduce the capacity of correctional facilities to promote appropriate educational measures for young people serving their sentences (EDJJ, 2010). Another challenge for teachers in correctional facilities is to bring opportunities for education and learning into settings that are primarily designed for strict security (Cogswell et al., 1994). Juvenile detention centers often lack the necessary educational materials, with outdated technology posing a particular problem (Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2000), although it is not clear whether the lack of resources is related to security problems, inadequate financial support, or other factors.

It is obvious that many teachers suppose they lack the resources necessary to educate their students (Cogswell et al., 1994). For teachers to be able to teach young people effectively in correctional institutions, they must be allowed to use appropriate teaching materials and aids in the institution that also meet security requirements. In addition, it is also important to consider how teaching aids and materials can be adapted to the reformatory environment, as safety considerations pose a serious problem in the teaching process. Teachers also face the challenge of encouraging learning in such a closed, strict system that is less supportive of conformity (Davidson, 1995). As Gehring (1988) put it, “teachers in correctional institutions must maintain an island of sanity in a storm of psychosis” (p. 165).

The classroom here is a unique environment compared to normal schools for several reasons, as the structure of the system differs greatly from that of traditional educational institutions. While the former can be characterized as an authoritarian, often militaristic system (Geraci, 2002), the traditional school organizational structure emphasizes strengthening interpersonal relationships between stakeholders and focuses on the development of the target group of young people (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000).

Schools operating in penal institutions generally function in a culture that relies more on intimidation, supervision, threats of separation, and additional punishment than on proactive and positive strategies to foster prosocial actions (Gagnon et al., 2008). Conflicts between educational and security staff can be a serious source of tension. Teachers who manage student behavior using an individualized, behavior-based approach may come into conflict with security staff who prioritize maintaining strict order (Meisel et al., 1998). An additional problem is that correctional facilities also struggle with curriculum and policy issues (Gagnon et al., 2009), and high teacher turnover and limited funding are also often

problematic (Houchins et al., 2006), making it even more difficult for educators to respond effectively to the educational needs of juveniles.

4. Problems and difficulties encountered in teaching

Teachers working in correctional institutions often receive no training before they start teaching in these closed, special institutions (Larkin & Hannon, 2020). Their training is currently sporadic, and even if such training is available, its length and quality vary from country to country, with some cases of a complete lack of preparation, but also one-day or multi-day training courses (DelliCarpini, 2008; Eggleston, 1991).

There is no coherent framework to prepare teachers for the difficulties of working with young people in correctional institutions. Traditional teacher training focuses on content knowledge and teaching methods and does little to prepare future teachers for teaching in special environments such as closed institutions, correctional institutes, and prisons. Although teachers begin their work in reform schools with a high level of subject knowledge, they are not aware of the difficulties arising from the specific characteristics of the location and the target group, nor are they familiar with the daily routine (Jurich et al., 2001). For example, if students do not graduate as special education teachers, they do not have information about strategies for dealing with students with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Issues related to behavior management and anger management are also missing from these traditional training programs, yet proficiency in these areas is crucial for educators who will be working in correctional facilities, as coping with such situations is a daily challenge in their work (Jurich et al., 2001). Many teachers still lack even the most fundamental education and knowledge about proactive and effective behavioral strategies (Oliver & Reschly, 2010), so it is not unexpected that teachers working in correctional facilities stated that student conduct was one of their most challenging stress factors (Houchins et al., 2004). This may explain why, in one study, approximately 40% of teachers working in correctional facilities reported that one to three students had been physically injured in their classrooms in the past two years (Houchins et al., 2004). At the same time, teachers participating in the study also stated that problems related to behavior management are linked to the lack of a system-wide plan for dealing with inappropriate behavior and encouraging appropriate behavior among students (Houchins et al., 2006). In European juvenile justice systems, educators increasingly face the challenge of addressing cultural diversity and systemic exclusion, which complicates efforts to provide fair and effective education (Valente & Caravita, 2021).

Another problem for teachers is intellectual isolation, as the physical isolation of correctional institutions and security concerns tend to isolate teachers from their colleagues in public education and adult education, thus depriving them of professional dialogue and opportunities for information exchange (Jurich et al., 2001). Sallée and Chantraine (2020) in France underlined the intense tensions experienced by teachers who find themselves pushed to the margins of their professional space, especially when working with minors.

Professional collaboration and the formation of professional working groups are serious challenges in correctional institutions, where teachers often work alone without the support of other colleagues (DelliCarpini, 2008; Fink, 1990; Gagnon et al., 2012).

The lack of homogeneous groups based on grade level does not make the teachers' situation any easier, as students in reform schools are not necessarily at the same level of knowledge

in each grade, and in fact, there are very different levels of knowledge within a single class, which clearly has a negative impact on the achievement of educational goals. In addition, some of the students are unmotivated, and many have little or no interest in learning. Teachers are not prepared to teach such heterogeneous groups and tend to seek quick, less professionally sound strategies to capture students' attention; for example, showing films is a common practice in these classes (Jurich et al., 2001). The situation is further complicated by the fact that the juvenile population in correctional facilities is constantly changing and in flux; it cannot be considered static, as juveniles are often transferred and typically receive short sentences (Mathur & Shoenfeld, 2010). The average time spent by juveniles in correctional education ranges from nine months to one year (Gagnon et al., 2009), and it is during this short period that educators must creatively provide quality education to this highly complex and unique target group, which poses challenges for professionals even in traditional school settings.

According to the research of De Koning and Striedinger (2009), staff shortages and recruitment challenges have been reported in several countries across Europe, such as Italy, Poland, and the United Kingdom. In Poland, low teacher salaries are cited as a key reason why qualified educators are reluctant to work in correctional settings (De Koning & Striedinger, 2009).

The primacy of security considerations also poses a problem, as the pursuit of security takes precedence over the importance of learning support and education: periodic closures, inspections, roll calls, and other characteristics of reform schools require a much higher level of flexibility and creativity from teachers than in normal schools (Jurich et al., 2001).

The situation is not made any easier by the fact that it is difficult to obtain data on the professional work carried out in reform schools. Larkin and Hannon (2020) found that data on teachers working in these institutions is not available from ministries of education, as the regulation of these teachers' duties typically falls under the remit of ministries of justice. Even basic information about teachers' employment, qualifications, and other professional requirements is largely unavailable. Most countries do not classify juvenile correctional institutions as educational institutions; they are part of the justice system, even though this seems to contradict the primary goals of these institutions, which are to support reintegration and focus on education (Larkin & Hannon, 2020).

Research on the training of teachers in correctional institutions is rather sporadic, probably because these often-troubled students are neglected by the system. The work of teachers in correctional institutions is less of a focus of research, and there is a lack of empirical evidence that governments are committed to ensuring that young people serving sentences in correctional institutions receive high-quality education from well-trained teachers and thus receive the education they are entitled to (Larkin & Hannon, 2020). At the same time, Larkin and Hannon (2020) note that it is also possible that these teachers are doing a good job, but that research is not being conducted due to time constraints or other logistical limitations. In addition, the issue of the preparedness of teachers in correctional institutions is generally marginalized in education policy initiatives, with no relevant initiatives, programs, or best practices appearing, thus reinforcing the marginal nature of this area of education (Larkin & Hannon, 2020).

5. Possible responses to emerging problems and challenges

According to research findings (Jurich et al., 2001; Wade et al., 2013; Wright, 2005), there

is a need to improve the training, recruitment, selection, and continuing education system for teachers working in correctional institutions in several areas.

It would be worthwhile incorporating special training into the teacher training system for prospective prison and correctional facility teachers, thereby supporting the academic recognition of this field (Wade et al., 2013). Such training would provide a qualification that would entitle these professionals to teach in these special institutions after specialization. Wright (2005) shares a similar view but warns that such teacher training should include additional information and courses, rather than offering prospective teachers an alternative, less rigorous option that is easier to complete.

It would be important to develop an appropriate recruitment and selection system, because practice shows that many teachers in correctional institutions start teaching in closed institutions more by chance than as a result of deliberate professional decisions, and a lack of genuine motivation does not make it easy for these teachers to cope with the situation awaiting them in correctional institutions (Wright, 2005). For teachers in correctional institutions to be prepared for the challenges that await them, it is important to familiarize them with the work they can expect. Before they start work, it is advisable to provide them with comprehensive information so that they are aware of the complexity of the task ahead and the difficulties caused by safety regulations (Jurich et al., 2001).

Drawing on research conducted in Belgium, Hurkmans and Gillijns (2012) emphasize the importance of providing psychological support to teachers working in correctional institutions. This need is particularly pressing given that these educators often conduct lessons alone with incarcerated youth. Such support aims to shield novice teachers from feelings of isolation by offering moral encouragement and practical guidance on navigating the complex and often unpredictable needs and expectations of their students.

In addition, mentoring would be essential, so that experienced mentor teachers with insight into the field could help newly hired colleagues. If new teachers can work alongside experienced mentor teachers, in pairs, teachers starting their careers in correctional institutions can learn a lot from their experienced colleagues (Jurich et al., 2001).

Since intellectual isolation is also a problem, it would be important to connect these colleagues with other teachers in order to support networking and team building. Correctional teachers could exchange experiences and strategies through cooperation and communication with teachers working in the public education system, and through the exchange of information, they could become aware that they face many similar problems in both environments (Jurich et al., 2001). Team building within the institution can also be a key and useful tool for reducing teachers' feelings of isolation and increasing collegial and professional support (DelliCarpini, 2008). Through the exchange of information resulting from relationship building and team building, teachers working in the institution could share their experiences, best practices, and creative ideas with each other, thus helping each other in their challenging work in this unique environment (Jurich et al., 2001). A recurring theme in the literature is the application of adult learning principles in planning the professional development of teachers working in correctional institutions, as the stressful nature of the work requires that professional training also focus on developing teachers' stress management skills (Larkin & Hannon, 2020).

Countries adopt different strategies to address the challenges associated with teaching in correctional settings. In Italy, for example, educators in correctional institutions benefit from more flexible working hours compared to their counterparts in traditional schools. Teaching time is organized on a weekly basis and is broadly defined to encompass a range

of activities with inmates, including counseling and tutoring (De Koning & Striedinger, 2009). In Poland, teachers working in correctional institutions receive additional allowances to compensate for the demanding nature of their work (De Koning & Striedinger, 2009).

Researchers emphasize the importance of relevant, continuous, content-related professional development that encourages reflective practice (Behan, 2007; DelliCarpini, 2008; Mathur et al., 2009). DelliCarpini (2008) emphasizes that during the training and subsequent work of teachers in correctional institutions, they should be allowed to make independent decisions, collaborate with each other, try out new methods, or modify existing ones.

Hurkmans and Gillijns (2012) highlight the importance of adopting an individualized approach to teacher training, recognizing that just as incarcerated youth differ in their needs and experiences, so too do new educators. While some teachers enter the classroom with prior training and relevant experience that better equip them for the challenges of correctional education, others may require more intensive support. Consequently, a uniform set of mentoring or training activities is unlikely to meet the diverse needs of all novice teachers.

The use of information and communication tools can be useful in the training of teachers and in their communication with their colleagues in public education. Shippen et al. (2014) also confirmed the importance of using technology (webinars, virtual classrooms, and distance learning support), as correctional facilities are typically located in less central areas, often far from each other.

6. Areas of necessary training for teachers working in correctional institutions

Looking at the circumstances that make the pedagogical work of teachers in correctional institutions difficult, we can conclude that they should receive multidisciplinary training that would prepare them to successfully cope with the problems that arise in their work. In their research, Clare and colleagues (1996) recommended courses for teachers in correctional institutions that cover psychology, counseling, sociology (focusing on criminal behavior), drug addiction, multiculturalism, and learning styles. As part of their comprehensive research, Jurich and colleagues (2001) asked correctional teachers in focus group discussions and questionnaires what they would need in their training. During the focus group discussions, respondents highlighted five topics, including the philosophy of reform school education (What does it mean to be a reform school teacher?); the development of communication skills (How can effective communication be maintained in such a special, closed environment?); the rules of human behavior (e.g., criminal behavior, burnout); teaching techniques (e.g., teaching heterogeneous groups, teaching adults with learning difficulties); and the topic of defining a successful teacher (in relation to the mission of correctional education) (Jurich et al., 2001). In the second part of their research, which used a questionnaire method, they assessed what kind of training and workshops teachers at correctional institutions would need. The list provided by the teachers ranked the development of learning styles first, followed by burnout prevention, creating and maintaining a safe learning environment, developing communication skills, managing change and instability, and theories of criminal behavior (Jurich et al., 2001).

The literature on the training of correctional teachers (Annamma, 2015; Larkin & Hannon,

2020; Wolford et al., 1996) summarizes the areas in which these professionals need to be trained in three interrelated topics: knowledge of the environment, knowledge of how to meet the special learning needs of students, and knowledge subject-specific pedagogy (Larkin & Hannon, 2020). Therefore, in order for teachers to be successful as teachers in correctional institutions, it is important that they participate in continuing education that prepares them for the special challenges of their profession in these three areas.

The first topic identified, environment-specific knowledge, refers to the limitations, rules, and customs of correctional institutions, such as physical space, security protocols, access to technical equipment, and adapting to dynamic changes in the student population (transfers, releases). The scientific literature (Larkin & Hannon, 2020; Wolford et al., 1996) consistently emphasizes that the physically restrictive nature of correctional facilities strongly influences the educational process and also discusses how teachers and students can navigate this space. It is important to be familiar with institution-specific procedural requirements, such as security requirements and cooperation with security personnel, which sometimes require teachers to adapt (Wolford et al., 1996).

The second topic covers the range of knowledge required to meet the learning needs of students. The literature emphasizes the fact that a significant proportion of young people in correctional institutions have special educational needs (Larkin & Hannon, 2020; Quinn et al., 2005; Bullis et al., 2002). Teachers who have studied special education report feeling better prepared to teach young people in correctional facilities (Annamma, 2015).

In contrast, teachers who received little or no training of this kind experienced deficiencies in their teaching skills, as classroom observations and teacher reports have shown (Annamma, 2015; Shippen et al., 2014). Gagnon et al. (2012) stated that since students in correctional settings often fail in traditional schools and struggle with mental health issues and behavioral disorders, teacher training should take an interdisciplinary approach that includes knowledge about mental health and student behavior. This research suggests that teachers need to be trained not only in planning educational processes, but also in managing students (McGee & Wolford, 1998). Teachers in correctional institutions who were unable to cope adequately with the behavior of students stated that they spent less time teaching and more time monitoring students and regulating their behavior (Jurich et al., 2001). It should be noted that the literature lacked research of cognitive approaches to behavior regulation issues (e.g., Shanker & Barker, 2017).

The third topic concerns knowledge of culturally sensitive and subject-specific pedagogy. Given the high proportion of students of color, especially African American boys, in reform schools, research highlights that teacher training should also cover topics related to teaching students from minority and marginalized backgrounds (Annamma, 2015; Gaskew, 2015; Larkin & Hannon, 2020). It is widely recognized in the research that teachers' opinions about learners affect their pedagogical practices (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1994). According to Gaskew (2015), traditional teaching strategies may not be suitable for African American learners in reform schools, arguing that they need to be consciously involved in learning processes in a specific way and that the use of generalised teaching approaches is detrimental to student success (Gaskew, 2015). Annamma (2015) also explained that educators working in reform schools who held this generalised view were often not able to connect with their pupils, partly due to cultural dissonance. Their students' poor abilities, their lack of special education knowledge, and the socioeconomic differences between them and their students prevented them from teaching successfully (Annamma, 2015). Teachers' lack of preparation in the area of cultural sensitivity, or more precisely, sociocultural awareness, influenced how they assessed, validated, and prioritized their

students' needs. According to one example in the report, when some students had learning challenges, their teachers suspected that they were attempting to manipulate them, when in fact they were *only* struggling because of their learning disabilities (Annamma, 2015).

We can see, therefore, that teachers working in correctional institutions face a complex set of challenges in their work, and in order to successfully cope with these challenges, it is essential to provide them with appropriate education and training.

7. Special issues of preparation, education, and continuing education

Numerous researchers have explored what is needed for the successful preparation of teachers working in correctional institutions in general, as well as from a subject-specific and methodological perspective.

Dunlap and colleagues (2000) summarize what effective continuing education for teachers in correctional institutions would look like. According to their findings, training should target a multidisciplinary audience and is successful when it is implemented in a way that promotes cooperation among participants; uses interesting case studies; supports the development of dynamic skills that can be used in everyday life; and addresses several issues related to positive behavior management (Dunlap et al., 2000).

Correctional teachers face many additional challenges, and preparation for these can take the form of subject-specific and methodological training.

Regarding subject-specific training, Gagnon et al. (2012) conclude that teachers working in correctional institutions need more in-depth pedagogical and content knowledge, as teaching in this special environment poses unique challenges due to the characteristics of the target group and the environment. Accordingly, teachers need specific training in effective teaching methods, as prisons have particular logistical restrictions within correctional facilities. For example, the teaching of biology, chemistry, and physics is different from that in traditional schools, as access to resources is limited and demonstrations are often not possible due to safety concerns related to experiments and the specific characteristics of the physical space. Surprisingly, the literature completely lacked any description of the challenges faced by teachers working in correctional facilities due to these special circumstances, especially in the case of science subjects (Gagnon et al., 2012). From a subject-specific perspective, there are several possible solutions for content-focused continuing education. One solution could be for reform schools to collaborate with local schools in continuing education, i.e., reform schoolteachers could also participate in continuing education courses organized by the school or school district. Another solution could be continuing education through online certification programs. Finally, organizing nationwide training for reform schoolteachers could also be considered (Gagnon et al., 2012), although this approach would involve coordination at the national level and funding for related travel costs (O'Rourke et al., 2008).

In addition to subject-specific training, it is essential to provide methodological training, as traditional classroom management approaches are prioritized as prerequisites for successful teaching strategies and learning in correctional education. The supervision of students – even in a highly controlled environment – is a recurring theme in the literature on classroom management. However, research does not address the training and training teachers who are able to educate pupils in methods of self-regulation and democratic involvement in education, even though there is a great need for this. Developing these skills is crucial

because they are not only important in correctional institutions but will also be important for reintegration into society after release (Larkin & Hannon, 2020).

When educating young people in correctional facilities, it is worth considering the guidelines that apply to students who are at risk or have learning disabilities. The section on *at-risk students* in the U.S. Department of Education Guiding Principles Report summarizes the factors that need to be considered for teachers working in correctional facilities to be successful (Grant et al., 2008). These includes making sure youth get all the support and tools they require to perform well; recognizing that behavioral and educational objectives are equally important; acknowledging the importance of teacher-student relationships based on mutual respect; ongoing evaluation of teaching; decision-making in response to student demand; and giving up-to-date, helpful feedback on student development (U.S. Department of Education and Justice, 2014).

Swanson (2001) drew attention to eight teaching characteristics that are relevant for young people with learning disabilities, and since young people with these disabilities are overrepresented in reform schools, the application of these characteristics is also recommended here. According to Swanson (2001), it is crucial to sequence teaching units; provide step-by-step guidance; practice/repeat/provide feedback on critical points; ask questions; individualize; break down the curriculum into smaller parts and link it to prior knowledge; technology integration, and small group instruction. Jolivet et al. (2008) also emphasizes the need for individualization, arguing that the education of students in correctional facilities should be tailored to the current functional skill level of each student, which can pose a serious challenge for educators.

Furthermore, we cannot ignore the fact that, due to the short sentences of juveniles and transfers between institutions, it is crucial to maximize the effectiveness of education. Methods for increasing the effectiveness of education include consistent and regular reinforcement for the successful completion of academic tasks, actively responding to students' needs, and supporting teachers in making effective use of the time available to them and maximizing young people's involvement in learning (Greenwood et al., 1984).

Frontal classroom and small group teaching, cooperative and structured social activities, and the appropriate use of individual learning all serve to increase the effectiveness of education (Jolivet et al., 2008). At the same time, it is important to emphasize that efficient education is not merely a question of selecting the *best* teaching method. Billingsley et al. (2009) contrasted three methods of teaching mathematics to high school students with emotional and behavioral disorders (E/BD): teacher-led instruction, computer-based instruction, and a combination of the two methods. Their results supported the importance of using these methods with students with emotional and behavioral disorders, and there was no single method that produced the best results for all students, so a combination of different methods may be appropriate.

8. Conclusion

Due to the specific characteristics of the students and the special nature of the environment, the work of teachers working in juvenile correctional institutions appears to be more difficult and inherently more complex than that of teachers working in traditional school environments. Young people serving their sentences are vulnerable and, in many respects, often disadvantaged, so the task of teachers is more complex than simply imparting knowledge. Empathy, compassion, and a proactive attitude are key for these teachers, but

they often must do their job in tough conditions, following strict security rules, without enough training. They face numerous difficulties in their work, such as the institutional focus on security above all else, the lack of heterogeneous groups, students' learning, mental, and behavioral problems, and intellectual isolation. In addition, teachers working in correctional institutions often do not consider their work to be successful. They deal with young people who are already struggling with problems under difficult circumstances, and their opportunities for further training are limited, which can affect their professional advancement and future pedagogical development compared to their colleagues working in the traditional education system. The situation is further complicated by the fact that they often work in isolation, with little professional cooperation within correctional schools.

Based on the results of the review, several recommendations can be made regarding this topic. It would be important to support as much research as possible in this area to understand the current situation regarding the training of teachers working in juvenile correctional institutions. It would also be useful if states supported the collection of data on this topic. It would be worthwhile to specialise the training of teachers who wish to work in correctional institutions within the teacher training system, incorporating more subjects that are particularly important for them, as well as providing them with continuous further training and support from mentor teachers to help them overcome obstacles in their profession more successfully. Finally, emphasis should be placed on the recruitment, selection, and thorough preparation of prospective reformatory teachers for their work, thereby ensuring that they do not enter this career path by chance, but with sufficient motivation, which in the long term would contribute to more effective work and a reduction in staff turnover.

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