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Submission Type: Paper/Panel Presentation

Track: Education and/or Criminal Justice

Title of Paper: **Correctional Learning and Transformation: Allies and Barriers**

Abstract:

Experiential learning gained through hands-on activities, role-plays, real world problem solving is much more beneficial to the individual than other types of learning based on the presumption that the learner is simply a vacant receptacle awaiting the pouring of knowledge by any means possible. While this rationale might be helpful when dealing with young or inexperienced minds, it certainly has many drawbacks when applied to the correctional population which has tremendous life experiences ranging from home to the courts to prison. That pipeline is littered with its own unique challenges, peaks and valleys. The inmates acclimate to the prison processes and way of life, some healthy, some toxic habits, solely for survival. To address this problem, CDCR has embarked on an innovative approach to improving corrections to resemble the Norwegian model with its core belief of investing in human relationships leads to healthier individuals and more secure institutions. Constructivism is a learning theory that emphasizes the active role of learners in building their own understanding. To help achieve this model of healthy incarceration, we need to educate the inmates on creating a sense of community and trust by focusing on principles of affirmation, communication, co-operation and creative conflict resolution. Therefore, this presentation will focus on strengthening the bridge between inmates and their custodians taking the positive programming routes to become constructive members of society.

Key Words: creative conflict resolution; constructivism; transformation; experiential.

Authors:

Chandrika M. Kelso, J.D., M.F.S., Ph.D.
Professor, College of Law and Public Service
National University
9388 Lightwave Ave, San Diego, CA 92123
Phone: [858-642-8671](tel:858-642-8671)/ckelso@nu.edu

James Larson, J.D.
Professor, College of Law and Public Service
National University
9388 Lightwave Ave, San Diego, CA 92123
Phone: [858-642-8499](tel:858-642-8499)/jl Larson@nu.edu

SC24012

Saul E. Lankster, II, M.Ed., J.D.

Assistant Professor, College of Law and Public Service
National University

Phone: (310) 528 2585/ slankster@nu.edu