

Correctional Education Association LINCS Special Collections – Correctional Education

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Introduction

One of the many services provided by the Correctional Education Association (CEA) is an internet-based collection of correctional education resources. CEA provides this service in cooperation with the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). Before explaining this service here is some background information about CEA and NIFL.

CEA background

CEA is an international professional education association whose membership is primarily in North America. The members represent educators, librarians, and counsellors who provide education and information services in prisons, jails, community, and juvenile correctional facilities. CEA originated as a committee in the American Correctional Association and became an association in 1946. It is an independently incorporated non-profit organization headquartered in the state of Maryland right outside of the city of Washington, D.C. CEA provides professional development and advocacy for correctional education. CEA publishes a quarterly scholarly journal and a quarterly newsletter. Annually, CEA produces a directory that contains information about its members and important resources. CEA holds annual conferences in the summer and late winter. It is divided into nine regions, each containing several American states and/or Canadian provinces. Each region conducts an annual conference and some of the states and provinces conduct meetings as well.

NIFL background

NIFL is a federal organization that shares information about literacy and supports the development of high-quality literacy services so all Americans can develop essential basic skills.

NIFL was created by The National Literacy Act of 1991 as the result of a bipartisan Congressional coalition that acted on the literacy field's request for a federal office focused solely on literacy. Reauthorized under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the NIFL serves as a focal point for public and private activities that support the development of high-quality regional, state, and national literacy services. NIFL's goal is to ensure that all Americans with literacy needs have access to services that can help them gain the basic skills necessary for success in the workplace, family, and community in the 21st century. NIFL is administered by an interagency group comprised of the United States Secretaries of Education, Labour, and Health and Human Services. A 10-member advisory board, appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the United States Senate, includes prominent individuals from a wide range of groups with a stake in literacy:

academic and non-profit institutions; business, industry, and labour; and private foundations.

LINCS overview

In an effort to compile, catalogue, and disseminate quality literacy information online, NIFL created the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) program. This program allows anyone in the world the opportunity to access literacy information in any one of the following LINCS collection areas: Assessment; Correctional Education; English As A Second Language; Equipped for the Future; Family Literacy; Health and Literacy; Literacy and Learning Disabilities; Policy and Legislation; Science and Numeracy; Technology Training; and Workforce Education.

NIFL partners with various organizations to locate and catalogue resources for each LINCS collection; CEA is responsible for the content within the Correctional Education collection. CEA applied for and was awarded a competitive three-year grant that will end on September 30, 2003. CEA is currently seeking ways to support the continuation of the website. NIFL developed the website which provides a platform for cataloguing web resources and subsequent searching of the special collections. The overall effort produces a virtual library of quality literacy resources that can be accessed anytime, anywhere.

CEA manages the content of the Correctional Education Collection. The Core Knowledge Group (CKG) guides our content selection. The CKG serves as an advisory board and provides us with information on topic areas ensuring that the Collection is well rounded and representative of the diverse interests in the field of Correctional Education. The current CKG is comprised of representatives from the following areas: Professional Development & Training; International; Administrators; Female Offenders; Juvenile Offenders; Special Education; and Literacy Instruction. The CKG meets twice a year in conjunction with CEA conferences. Meetings focus on the present status of resources and future areas of interest.

In addition to the guidance from the CKG, the Collection uses Selection Criteria as a basis to ensure only quality materials are placed online. NIFL has general selection criteria and the CEA has refined criteria specific to the Correctional Education Collection. The general NIFL criteria stress uniqueness and innovation and also require statements of authorship, dates, citations, ease of reading, and ease of obtaining the materials. CEA further refines the criteria to relate specifically to correctional education issues. The specific selection criteria for the Correctional Education Collection describe the topic areas and the nature of the resources eligible for inclusion in the Collection. All of the selection criteria are posted on the NIFL site at HYPERLINK "http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/selection_criteria_1.html"