

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A PRISON EDUCATION
SHOULD EDUCATION BE COMPULSORY IN PRISON?**

**A SUCCESSFUL AND ONGOING HOSPITALITY PROGRAM
DELIVERED TO WOMEN IN CUSTODY FOR THE
NSW DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES**

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Abstract

I would like to present a paper on Education and Corrective Services with the focus for my paper being on the overwhelming success of a specifically designed hospitality program that I developed, implemented and continue to deliver for two independent jails to women in custody. Also I wish to discuss how I managed to successfully maintain motivation amongst inmates, keeping the program ongoing and in high demand.

Three years ago I was asked to design a small 36 hour Hospitality program for women in custody that would introduce inmates to the industry and equip them with basic industry skills as well as assist them with meal preparation for their family on their release. What began as a pilot program quickly became a high demand and popular course. The program was so successful, inmates were granted their parole and released before they could actually get into the course. A few weeks in the program, unexpected results were beginning to show. Attendance was 100%, motivation for the program hit an all time high, self confidence, self esteem and self respect reached levels amongst the inmates that were unprecedented and unexpected by education staff.

The purpose of my paper is to share with other teachers, trainers and education officers the key to my success and how it was possible to generate interest, motivate and change the attitudes of so many women in custody. The following are topics I would like to address and discuss in detail:

- The program and its purpose
- Management and delivery including teaching strategies
- Unexpected outcomes
- Resource management
- Feedback from inmates

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Introduction

Incarceration and education? Learning in many different forms needs to take place in our prisons. Education doesn't necessarily have to take the mode and style of a formal learning environment.

Since delivering in Corrective Services, I have discovered that informal and unorthodox methods of delivery were highly successful in reaching a more diverse audience and generating interest and motivation. As a result of the success from the Hospitality program, enthusiasm and curiosity increased the demand for continued cooking classes, new programs and further study in the Tourism and Hospitality sector.

The Program and its Purpose

The Hospitality program is a small 36 hour course including three stand alone modules. The course consists of one food preparation and two hygiene modules. All three modules are accredited and if further study in food and hospitality is pursued at a TAFE college or any other Registered Training Organization (RTO), credits for these modules will be awarded and students will receive recognition for competencies achieved.

3403 Statement of Attainment in Food and Hospitality

Competency	Module	Hours
THHBKA01B	Organize and Prepare Food	24
THHGHS01B	Workplace Hygiene	6
THHBCC11B	Implement Food Hygiene Procedures	6

The course can be offered over combinations of hours per day and hours per week. It is recommended that a minimum of 3 hours be spent per lesson on any one day. Assessment for the course is done strictly by practical means. The final lesson is the assessment and takes the form of a Five Star, Hotel standard buffet lunch/dinner catering for a minimum of 30 guests.

As reward for the successful completion of the course, inmates are permitted to invite one inmate friend to enjoy the final lesson. This strategy has proven to be highly successful as other inmates are introduced to the program and can see first hand what they can successfully achieve.

The purpose of the program is to introduce inmates to the dynamic hospitality industry equipping them with industry relevant skills, attitudes and confidence to successfully perform duties required to work at an operational level within the industry. To make the program achievable and worthwhile for those inmates who are not keen on working in the industry, but are interested in learning how to cook, the program was developed and designed to organize, cook and serve

attractive nutritious food that must be presented and prepared to industry standards as well as being achievable and easy to prepare for the family meal.

Management and Delivery Including Teaching Strategies

Attendance at all lessons is crucial for success. As the program covers many areas, techniques and a wide range of skills, any form of absence on the program affects the outcome for students. Tardiness, time out for medication, appointments or phone calls is addressed early in the program.

To address these issues, inmates rearrange their routine around the program. This is voluntary, and all inmates willingly make changes to accommodate the day(s) they are in cooking class. It's been my observation in numerous classes that inmates don't want to miss a single moment. If by chance they do miss time, I am always approached and requested to make up the lost time. I never see this as a disruption, but a genuine request for the desire to learn. I always accommodate their request whether on the next cooking day or at the end of the effected lesson. This strategy demonstrates my dedication and flexibility.

All lessons are supported by written material and frequently I have students with reading difficulties. To address this requirement, I have developed and modified my teaching style to accommodate and address this issue. All lessons, although supported with recipes can be successfully produced without being able to read. I manage this by selecting teaching material that is prepared in logical sequence, familiar and when demonstrated is easy to follow. This strategy is verified on the day of the assessment. Inmates must prepare, cook, serve and set up a function room to accommodate 30 guests to a five star hotel standard. On this day the class must prepare a buffet table selection offering a diverse range of hot food, salads and a selection of desserts. The entire menu is produced without recipes. Students automatically know what they need to do and get on with it producing a standard of food and service equal to five star quality.

Attitude, experience and delivery style of the teacher also plays a key role in the success of the course. Applying the fundamental rules of good leadership in any classroom situation works brilliantly, applying these same rules within corrective services has a much greater impact.

- Maintain Absolute Integrity
- Demonstrate Confidence and Expertise
- Declare Your Expectations
- Show Uncommon Commitment
- Expect Positive Results
- Take Care of Your People
- Put Duty Before Self
- Get Out in Front

Maintain Absolute Integrity

Trust, being non judgmental or showing any form of bias goes a long way with these women. I tend to listen more than I speak. When inside the confines of the prison, I'm relaxed, confident and enjoy the time I have with the women in my class.

Demonstrate Confidence and Expertise

Demonstrating confidence, expertise and professionalism as well as transferring skills and information is the pathway to greater student participation. Interesting and enjoyable learning comes from a teacher that knows their stuff. When students trust that you know what you are doing, they can't help but want to return to class time after time. Their choice then becomes the desire to want to learn, instilling or restoring self confidence and self esteem.

Declare Your Expectations

When beginning a new course, I discuss with the class planning, goal setting and communication. The program is planned out for the following weeks with input from all class members. Goals are set to achieve high standards in all class production. As a team leader I communicate with all students equally, fairly and honestly. I am consistent when giving instruction and am always sensitive to the vast array of complex and diverse personalities. Although each and every inmate is treated equally, I am sensitive to the needs and requirements of individuals.

Show Uncommon Commitment

Delivering the Hospitality Program and achieving such high standards and results from inmates, required dedication and commitment on my part. All equipment, food, linen, glassware, cutlery, flowers and candles need to be brought into the facility then removed. The logistics involved in bringing this course into corrective services is a mammoth task. As a result of the successful outcomes of this program, many more opportunities for further development of other Tourism and Hospitality courses are now being delivered at two independent correctional centers for women in custody.

Expect Positive Results

To expect positive results, you must maintain a positive attitude. In class I expect only the best from my students. Whether I'm teaching at my home College or in jail, I will only accept the best. On many occasions, I have requested that inmates in my classes make a second attempt and start again. It's not surprising that students are more than happy to try again, as they too want to do their best work. The positive feedback I hear when they get it right is truly

amazing. Self esteem and self confidence increases, the results are instantly recognizable.

Take Care of the Interests of Your People

I always enjoy talking to the inmates in my classes. I treat them as individuals never interested in the reasons why and how they managed to find themselves in prison. I take the time to listen to their stories and with that I find that there is always something interesting to learn about each and every one. By listening and treating them with respect and dignity I am rewarded with their trust, willingness and eagerness to participate and do well in my classes.

Put Duty Before Self

Dedication and hard work have made the Hospitality Program what it is. When teaching my focus is entirely on the women in my class and how to best deliver the program, making it interesting, challenging and worthwhile. Today I enjoy an exciting international career that still allows me to travel world wide. As prosperous as my life has been, I never take it for granted. Working in corrective services realigns my life and requires that I put back into the community what I have been so fortunate to receive.

Get Out in Front

As a dedicated and committed teacher working with women in custody, getting out in front is truly one of the most powerful of all leadership principles. The work that I do in corrective services is driven by role modeling and working alongside the women in my classes. A hands on approach and getting in amongst it, earns respect and co-operation from every member of the class.

Resource Management

The Hospitality program is now being successfully delivered at both Emu Plains and Dillwynia Correctional Centers for women in custody. Classes are held in fully operational commercial kitchens where students are introduced to commercial plant and instructed on the safe use and operation of all equipment. As neither of these kitchens are set up for classroom instruction and each lesson explores different techniques and skills requiring a wide selection of specific equipment, all the necessary utensils and small equipment required for each lesson must be brought into the facility then removed on completion of the class. Knives used for instruction and student practice are the property of the each correctional centre and kept in a locked safe or housed in the centers armory. Custodial officers on duty take responsibility for issuing, collection and storage of knives.

The proposal for the course listed all commodities required for each lesson working on a per inmate basis. All food and related items are purchased by Western Sydney Institute of TAFE Nepean Campus and on completion of the course, TAFE invoices the correctional centre for reimbursement of costs. On the day of each lesson, food and equipment are delivered to the centre.

As this program is delivered by demonstration and student practice method, all students work independently to produce their own work. Each student is allocated commodities, work and stove space to do their own food preparation and cooking, allowing inmates to take full responsibility for their own product. This has been instrumental in reinforcing pride of work.

On completion of the lesson, inmates are permitted to enjoy as much of their own food as they like while still in class. They are also allowed one small container of their own food which is always taken away with them.

Unexpected Outcomes

The combination of delivery style, methods of teaching and classroom management has had unprecedented outcomes in such a short space of time. This program that began as a pilot, quickly developed into an extremely popular and well liked course.

A few weeks into the program, unexpected results were beginning to show. Attendance was 100%, motivation for the program hit an all time high, self confidence, self esteem and self respect were highly noticeable amongst all inmates. Women came out of their insular shell to participate, communicate and develop rapport with me and other inmates. Tolerance for others increased, problem solving, decision making and analytical thinking took on new significance. The desire to accomplish and achieve good results is always high. Since this program has been in operation, the interest generated from inmates has been fundamental in the development and delivery of other courses offered by Western Sydney Institute of TAFE.

One Correctional Centre has seen the increase of inmates enrolling into hospitality traineeships.

Business Management is now offered and requires students to develop operational plans. As both courses run parallel with one another, the assessment event from the Food and Hospitality program allows for management students to fulfill their assessment criteria by demonstrating management and operation of an event. Now management students event manage all Food and Hospitality functions.

One other Correctional Centre is in the process of planning a small Food and Beverage course which is intended to introduce inmates into this sector of the Hospitality industry. The program compliments the hospitality course and allows students to organize and run the dining room equal to service offered in hotels and restaurants.

Feedback from Inmates

The Hospitality program has developed into one of the most successful and popular programs introduced and offered into two independent jails for women in custody. Although the program is designed to introduce inmates into the dynamic hospitality industry and equipping them with introductory skills necessary for employment, there have also been many intrinsic, more valuable outcomes. Starting a program, completing it, enjoying it and in the process doing it well, is rewarded with a superior feeling of satisfaction, elevated self esteem, self confidence and self worth. The sense of satisfaction and being rewarded for work well done is evident in the feedback and comments made from the women in all my classes.

Following are comments made to me by past and present members of my classes. Most comments reflect their success in the program, others reflect changes in attitudes and self respect.

Fiona: Did I really do this? Aren't I clever. (Comment made when she assessed her production after a pastry lesson).

Cindy: I'm so excited, I can hardly wait to take this home tonight. All my friends won't believe that I made this myself (comment made after finishing off a Strawberry Cream Gateaux)

Donna: I want to be a chef when I get out of here. Can you please get me information on courses offered at TAFE that I can do.

Elaine: I bought some perfume on my first shopping trip, do you like it?

Susan: I want to color my hair. What color do you suggest I put on my buy up? Do you think that blonde would look nice on me?

Jessica: "This is the best class I have ever been in. Can I do it again?"

Sarah: Is there another course I can do after this one? Something that gives me more skills, I want to learn more.

Deidre: I have been practicing my recipes for the girls in my house. They just love my cooking.

Lisa: On my shopping trip next week I want to buy some make-up, will you show me how to put it on?

Susan: I ironed my apron this morning so I look nice for your class.

Summary

Education and training of any kind enriches our lives, opens up numerous possibilities for employment and makes us feel better about ourselves. The hospitality program is a wonderful example of what education is all about and what can be achieved.

The purpose of this program was to achieve competencies needed for sustainable employment. This goal was achieved then quickly moved on to exceed well beyond what was expected. After completion of the course, some inmates move on to do other courses or enroll into traineeships that are delivered within corrective services by other TAFE teachers.

Offering opportunities to learn, experience simulated work situations and participate in a co-operative working environment would certainly have to support the justification of compulsory education within our prisons.