

EDUCATION ON AN ISLAND: OKLAHOMA CORRECTIONAL  
EDUCATORS' VIEWS OF INTERNAL TEACHER TRAITS  
AND SUCCESSFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ON  
INCARCERATED ADULT STUDENTS  
IN AN INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

By

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Education on an Island: Oklahoma Correctional Educators' Views of Internal Teacher Traits and Successful Learning Environments on Incarcerated Adult Students in an Institutional Setting**

#### **Introduction**

“The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life” (Plato, 329 B.C., p 75). This holds true not only for mainstream society, but also for those lost in the structured yet chaotic activities of an institutional reality. Within this penal world exists an island on which the penitentiary school emerges, a respite for those living in the turmoil. The waves of negative public perception of offenders, insufficient funding for properly implemented programs, meaningless accreditation procedures, and irrelevant certification practices constantly wear away the foundation of the institutional education program. It is the correctional educator, in the trenches, who holds it all together, attempts to rebuild support for those in need, and makes opportunities out of others' mistakes.

#### **Public Perception**

American education systems teach everyone. The overriding opinion of the United States' citizenry is that everyone can learn, and those who have not will routinely be remediated (Kalantzis & Cope, 2011). The remediation process will continue until the student reaches appropriate benchmarks as measured by state and federal educational standards. This practice includes conventional students (both adults and children), slow learners, special individuals such as the mentally challenged and emotionally disturbed, and it also includes the incarcerated (Haigler, et al, 1994, xix). A great deal of the rest of the world chooses who, of their students, can

learn and to what level. Because of this philosophy, US schools appear to trail behind other educational systems in the global community.

The American culture may verbalize support for inmate programs such as education, but the actions following the speech show that people believe that offenders should be locked away and forgotten (Seabrooks, 2008). The media plays to this by reporting in such a way that the population, outside of the prisons, feels they have valid reasons to be afraid of all incarcerated adults. Not only is there a lack of consensus in society and the media on whether prisoners should have meaningful instructional time, but correctional educators, themselves, may not agree that inmates should have the advantage of a well rounded education. Regardless of how people feel, the truth is that the bulk of those who are imprisoned will eventually get out and once again become neighbors, co-workers and peers. When competing for jobs, those with felony convictions are thrust to the bottom of the stack of applicants regardless of experience or expertise, leaving them little option but to return to their criminal lifestyles (Seabrooks, 2008). An example that supports this is in a 2004 report from the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy that states about 2.1 million people in the nation are currently incarcerated; approximately 10 to 12 million will be admitted and discharged each year; and of those released, about two-thirds, will recidivate within three years. However, at least 33% of offenders who take educational programs are more successful once released than peers without this opportunity (Spangenberg, 2004, p. 1; Steuerer, 2003, p. 5). These issues and more are the reasons offenders need informed and well trained professionals taking care of their educational progress and curriculum.

### **Funding**

Federal education provisions set forth mandatory policies on attendance in public schools; Oklahoma law requires it as well. There is a legal, statistical and economic responsibility to show a return on investment to the state and federal governments who provide education programs with annual budgetary and grant funds. Large amounts of this money have been spent to study areas within Prekindergarten (PK)-12 schools and the advancement of children's education. The bottom line is that society expects graduates who are prepared to enter the workforce. They want motivated individuals capable not only of following instructions, but also

prepared in the concepts of problem solving and critical thinking. Organizations have been established so they, in turn, can create standards to make sure schools are producing the desired outcomes. Much research has been done to define the traits PK-12 teachers should possess, the kinds of learning environments that are most successful for children, and the end product that is expected to be delivered to society after graduation (Cruickshank, 2003, pp. 7-247; Thompson, Greer & Greer, 2004, pp. 1-9; Wayne & Youngs, 2003, pp. 89-122). Although the results do not always meet expectations in PK-12 systems, it appears there is a general understanding of what effective PK-12 settings look like. However, when the issues of skilled correctional educators or successful institutional classrooms arise, very little information can be found (Eggleston, 2008, p. viii).

In Oklahoma, correctional education appears to be the misfit of the education system. No one seems to know where this institutional program fits into the hierarchy. The unit is covered, briefly, under the umbrella of the Lifelong Learning section of the Oklahoma State Department of Education (ODOE). Even there the legislation that refers to correctional education, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998, also known as title II of the Workforce Investment Act, inadequately mentions corrections only twice (ODOE, 2008, pp. 2-14). The act severely restricts the amount of money local adult education programs can spend on corrections programs. It completely ignores correctional education as a separate entity, with its own clientele (both youth and adult), monetary needs, and professional development issues.

“Of the male population now incarcerated in Oklahoma, 90 percent do not have a high school diploma...” (Rolland, 2010, 14a). There are 26 prisons in Oklahoma: Four maximum security, seven medium security, and fifteen minimum security. The seven community corrections centers (CCC) and fifteen work centers that participate fall under the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC) education division (Facts at a Glance, 2011). Additionally, the DOC makes training arrangements for some county jails, halfway houses and contract private prisons. These include adult male, adult female and juvenile facilities at each level of incarceration: maximum, medium, minimum and community corrections. Each facility has a minimum of one academic educational program; however, some reformatories have CareerTech

programs in addition to their DOC education facilities. The potential to improve many peoples' lives through education is present in these institutions. With well trained educators clearing the path, large numbers of former drop-outs and public school failures can increase their educational functioning level, improve their skills and become productive individuals within their communities.

### **Accreditation**

Education programs are found in formal settings such as PK-12 schools, CareerTech centers and universities, as well as those appearing informally in the case of apprenticeships, correctional facilities, workforce mentoring programs, and internships. Oklahoma academic education programs include PK-12, collegiate, and correctional education facilities. Within these categories, PK-12 and collegiate institutions have highly regimented prescriptive processes and must be accredited by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP), ODOE, etc.

[The OCTP] guidelines outline the standards and indicators to be documented in four categories: design of professional education, candidates in professional education, professional education faculty, and the unit for professional education.

... The Legislature, [recognizes] its obligation to the children of this state to ensure their opportunity to receive an excellent education, and [recognizes] that the single most important factor affecting the quality of education is the quality of the individual teacher in the classroom.... (House bill 1549, 1995, p. 3)

Accreditation, from these entities, is often tied to federal and state funding for education programs. The standards that govern this credentialing are very specific to the needs and development of children, not to those of adults and even less to the needs of the incarcerated.

Currently, ODOE District accreditation and North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (aka. AdvancED – NCA CASI) accreditation does exist for the Oklahoma correctional school district, but is problematic due to budget and economic stressors (Dr. Robert S. Neel, EdD, Executive Director Accreditation & Standards, personal communication, July 28, 2011). Although all accreditation is voluntary, the threat of losing it is ever present and reaps harsh consequences if lost. The main reason for accreditation is to receive funding from the Federal government. With State and NCA accreditation, the correctional

education system can receive money under Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Title I grant programs. However, even though the Oklahoma correctional school district is certified by other organizations, it has not been able to meet the standards or monetary requirements for accreditation by its own professional organization, the Correctional Education Association (CEA), who concentrate their efforts specifically on incarcerated individuals needs and programs.

CEA has developed Standards on the premise that education programs in correctional institutions can be of high quality despite significant differences in institutions and program modalities. Based on this premise, correctional schools are evaluated according to the philosophy and goals they are trying to achieve, the community they serve, and actions taken to meet the needs of the staff and students participating. In order for correctional and rehabilitation organizations to provide programs that meet the needs of the student and society, the CEA believes that correctional education programs must have comprehensive policies and procedures, have qualified and well trained personnel, have adequate resources, offer appropriate programming, and focus efforts on student needs and the best interest of society. (Littlefield, 2004, p. 5)

Nationally, Oklahoma corrections was one of the first to become accredited as a public school district in order to secure state and federal funding (Oklahoma Department of Corrections, n.d., p.26). Unfortunately, the accreditation is flawed. The Oklahoma correctional school system, referred to as the Lakeside School District, incorporates all prison schools statewide. The main campus, called the Lakeside School, is located at the Oklahoma State Reformatory (OSR) in Granite, Oklahoma. According to protocol, when most public school districts are audited for compliance to the accreditation standards, each school within the district is evaluated individually to assure conformity. However, because of a lack of knowledge about correctional schools, this is not the case with the Lakeside School District. The OSR location is the only correctional school in the district with the proper structure and personnel to achieve accreditation approval. No other schools within the DOC are evaluated, nor could they pass the standards as dictated by the associations appraising them. In addition, the accreditation standards used to assess the

Lakeside School District are borrowed from public PK-12 schools; therefore, they do not address adult learning in a correctional environment. The public school standards are so different from an institutional setting that the resulting accreditation is meaningless. The end result is a correctional education system that lacks consistent agreement on the role of educators, their preparation and the professional development that is contextualized for their very unique environment.

### **Certification**

Within the State of Oklahoma, PK-12 teachers have many avenues, both traditional and alternative with subcategories dividing them, to become certified to teach children. Among these pathways are certification in specific levels of education (early childhood, elementary, middle school and high school), certification in specific subject matter (special education, math, science, etc.) or alternative certification (any area in which applicant holds a major degree plus three years experience and can pass the competency exam). Once employed, the teacher must teach in the field(s) in which s/he is certified (ODOE, 2011, p. 46). While correctional educators are required to hold a valid teaching certificate through the State of Oklahoma, they have no mandatory guidelines in terms of the subject area certifications required, nor are there recommendations as to the level at which the licensed teacher remains professionally updated, unlike the structure applied to public school teachers.

Oklahoma DOC correctional educators teach three levels of students: Literacy, Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Diploma (GED). The educators come from a variety of backgrounds, identifying individually with a certain level, subject or trade. This diversity means there is no shared view, knowledge base or philosophy about how and what to teach adult inmates. All subject matter is taught by each correctional educator regardless of certification area or field of expertise. In most teacher preparation programs, the prospective teacher is given coursework related to the level and subject of students s/he will be working with. The individual knows what level and category of student s/he will work with before beginning the certification process and is trained accordingly. For example, "Elementary school teachers share the foundation belief that content should address the developmental levels of children. Classes that train teachers to work with children address this world view" (Eggleston, 2003, p. 4).

In addition, correctional educators are required to adapt curriculum for English as a Second Language (ESL) and special education students. Most of the correctional educators within the system were trained in mainstream coursework (Hollingsworth, 2008, pp. 104-108; Moody, 2003. p. 105; Mathur, 2009, p. 169; Rutherford, Nelson & Wolford, 1985, pp. 59-71). These individuals have had little or no introduction to the needs of students with disabilities. A majority of the information correctional educators receive on inmates is self-reported. Many of the students have no idea they have a learning disability; they have never been tested or diagnosed. If the correctional educator is not trained to identify learning problems, the educational process will be frustrating not only for the student but also for the correctional educators and tutors trying to help them. PK-12 teacher education is a basic foundation for correctional educators, but they also need continuous, supplemental coursework to prepare them for the institutional environment in which they are working.

The focus of this study was on correctional educators in adult academic education programs within the Oklahoma prison system. In the DOC there is no detailed preparation program for correctional educators, no structured outline for professional development, and the accepted standards of PK-12 schools do not always apply. Because of a lack of consensus and funding, no specific and achievable independent accreditation process, and questionable certifications and professional development guidelines the necessity exists to determine and foster a common understanding of the competencies needed to be a successful correctional educator in the prison environment.

No doubt the stakes are high for all of education, specifically for a correctional system that currently spends up to \$ 27,693 per year to house one offender (Facts at a Glance, 2011). Even considering the above information, all is not lost. Scholars such as Carolyn Eggleston and Thom Gehring, of the Center for the Study of Correctional Education at California State University San Bernadino, aspire to change this significant national as well as state deficiency.

Correctional teachers do some of the most important work on the planet.

For too long that work has been accomplished in a vacuum, with individual victories going unnoticed by others. We need to develop into

the kind of teachers who can make a contribution over a sustained period, and be willing to share our successes with others. To do that we must prepare ourselves adequately, through a continued process of professional development and increased professionalism. We owe it to ourselves and to our students. (Eggleston, 2003, pg. 8)

Educators teach because they want to make a difference (Hollingsworth, 2008, pp. 104-105). The correctional educator can make a difference not only in the life of one student/inmate, but as a result of their efforts, they can make a significant difference in the state, the economy, and the society. "Inmates have fallen through the cracks of traditional education and correctional educators often represent the final opportunity for them to turn their lives around. The stakes of correctional education really are life or death for the students we teach" (Rennie, 2008, p. 190).

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem is that currently little to no information exists on effective internal teacher traits and learning environments related to successful classroom structure in the institutional environment. Correctional education does not have an established policy on types of professional development coursework novice or experienced correctional teachers should obtain. Instructors who are not familiar with their students' needs may not be effective. It is up to a skilled and flexible teacher to overcome students' apprehensions and make offenders feel successful in the classroom. In addition, correctional educators need to have a very good foundation with relationships between students and teachers to make the classroom as functional and successful as possible. If new correctional educators are fortunate, they will work with other experienced, knowledgeable and helpful prison education professionals, who will mentor them. The novice may have some guidance as to how to create effective classroom environments, how to deal with incarcerated students, how to prepare to teach them, suggested curriculum to use, and an introduction to appropriate/inappropriate behavior for inmates as well as correctional educators. Currently, however, only a lucky few have this opportunity. Many correctional educators will either successfully adapt on their own, be taken advantage of or conned, or find themselves in serious employment trouble or personal danger (Ropp, 2008, p. 69). This kind of training cannot be left to

chance. The development of master teacher competencies at appropriate levels to guide professional development is a vital priority. Without properly trained correctional educators, offenders will not receive the services they need; individual teacher performance might diminish; and the fiscal resources invested by the state and federal government will appear to be ineffective. Bereft of proper professional development structure there is no conformity between facilities and programs, cutting-edge technology is overlooked, progressive curriculum is ignored and teachers are poorly prepared to serve a population at great risk of continually being unsuccessful in society upon release from prison. Results of inadequately trained correctional educators might lead to the downfall of the overall educational process within the prison system.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to describe the components of a successful learning environment and the internal teacher traits related to successful classroom structure in the correctional environment for adult students with a wide variety of issues, problems and learning difficulties. As a result, for future research, master teacher competencies for correctional educators might be suggested to aid in guiding professional development to maintain a proficient and consistent atmosphere in correctional education facilities, to improve teacher preparation for classroom activities and curriculum development, and to increase offender/student success upon release from prison.

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the demographics of Oklahoma correctional educators?
2. What specific internal traits are needed by a correctional educator to be effective with incarcerated adult students?
3. What elements characterize a successful learning environment in an institutional setting?
4. How do teachers view themselves on the continuum between Behaviorist (Traditional) philosophical classroom practices and Constructivist (Facilitative) philosophical classroom practices?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study addresses the issues of Oklahoma Correctional Educators' perceptions of successful institutional learning environments and internal correctional teacher traits, as measured by the responses to survey ratings and open-ended questions in comparison to the literature found in various forms of public and correctional school research. The lack of literature specifically related to corrections is a hindrance to the program as a whole. Results of this study may clear a pathway to measure the quality of current educational programs, evaluation of teachers, possible changes to teacher certification for correctional educators and a fluid curriculum among facilities throughout the field. Outcomes of the study will guide further research opportunities in the areas of master teacher competencies in correctional education and organized guidelines for correctional teacher professional development.

### **Limitations of the Study**

1. Employee turn-over rate reduced the number of correctional educators available to take the survey.
2. DOC, in an effort to cut budgetary costs, is not replacing open teacher vacancies, which made for a smaller survey pool.
3. Due to the current economic situation and what appeared to be an eminent threat of loss of employment, the researcher expedited the survey data collection to keep Reduction in Force (RIF), Employee Buy-Outs, and forced retirements to a minimum. Some aspects of the survey instrument and interview process may have been changed, modified or reorganized had the researcher felt less of a time constraint.
4. The researcher and superintendent of schools were not surveyed due to potential bias of questionnaire answers that might skew data results. The principle researcher in this study is an Oklahoma correctional educator.
5. The complexity of the questions in the interview portion of the study might have lead participants to contribute answers differently. The researcher proposed multiple questions at one time as opposed to asking questions one by one.

6. The nature of the survey in which participants were given a list of 29 traits and asked to rate the levels of importance, may have suggested to the participants that some traits were more important than others.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

1. All participants answered honestly and with knowledge of needs submitted quality, usable responses to survey data.
2. Despite efforts to pilot the instrument for assurance of clarity, the definitions of the terminology used on the survey may not have been evident. Although some terms may have only one interpretation, many of the items could have various meanings with respect to different participants. The researcher did not take the time to discuss the definition of terms with the participants; therefore the correctional educators may not have known the meaning of the vocabulary.
3. The principle investigator in this study is a correctional educator working for the Oklahoma DOC. Responses to survey data could have been compromised because the participants knew the researcher.
4. The basis of the survey lists of internal teacher traits and learning environments was partially derived from public school research; therefore, the lists may be inaccurate. The prison environment is radically different from public schools. Additionally, the researchers and scholars who did write about corrections may not have spent time in prison schools.

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

#### **Conceptual Definitions**

Adult Basic Education (ABE) – In corrections, any offender whose pre-enrollment assessment indicates a total battery score between 5.9 and 8.9 grade level (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Andragogy - The methods or techniques used to teach adults (Dictionary.com, n.d).

Certified Teacher – Any educational professional who has finished the required educational coursework, taken and passed the Oklahoma competency tests, and applied to the Oklahoma Department of Education for certification.

Community Corrections Center (CCC) - also known as halfway houses, contract with the state to provide assistance to inmates who are nearing release; provide a safe, structured, supervised environment as well as employment counseling, job placement, financial management assistance, and other programs and services; help inmates gradually rebuild their ties to the community and facilitate supervising offenders' activities during this readjustment phase (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Constructivist Practices - a way of teaching and learning that intends to maximize student understanding.... Teaching that emphasizes the active role of the learner in building understanding and making sense of information (Woolfolk, 2000); learners' construction of knowledge as they attempt to make sense of their environment (McCown, Driscoll, & Roop. 1995), and learning that occurs when learners actively engage in a situation that involves collaboratively formulating questions explaining phenomenon, addressing complex issues, or resolving problems (As cited in Cruickshank, 2003, p. 247).

Correctional Teacher (CT) – a person responsible for performing professional teaching work at the elementary or secondary level in a correctional institution or facility; applies special methods and techniques in the habilitation of inmates (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Correctional Teacher I (CT I) – a person assigned to perform program delivery of educational programs to inmates at the full performance level; will have knowledge of modern principles, practices and materials in the specialized field of education; knowledge of accepted methods of teaching special children; supervise and instruct pupils; establish and maintain cooperative relationships with others; organize and present facts and opinions clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing; and develop and present a curriculum (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Correctional Teacher II (CT II) – a person assigned leadership responsibilities, performing advanced level educational work that is complex and difficult; will have knowledge of

modern principles, practices and materials in the specialized field of education; knowledge of administration principles and practices; knowledge of accepted methods of teaching adult students; evaluate critically and objectively the educational needs and achievements of the students; supervise and instruct pupils; establish and maintain cooperative relationships with others; organize and present facts and opinions clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing; and develop and present a curriculum (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Empirical - Derived from or guided by observable experience or experiment (Dictionary.com, n.d.).

General Education Development (GED) – In corrections, any offender whose pre-enrollment assessment indicates a total battery score at or above the 8.9 grade level (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Literacy – In corrections, any offender whose pre-enrollment assessment indicates a total battery score below the 5.9 grade level (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Maximum Security Prison - High security institutions have highly-secured perimeters (featuring walls or reinforced fences), multiple- and single-occupant cell housing, the highest staff-to-inmate ratio, and close control of inmate movement (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Medium Security Prison - have strengthened perimeters (often double fences with electronic detection systems), mostly cell-type housing, a wide variety of work and treatment programs, a high staff-to-inmate ratio, and great internal controls (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Minimum Security Prison - have dormitory housing, a relatively low staff-to-inmate ratio, and limited or no perimeter fencing. These institutions are work- and program-oriented; and many are located adjacent to larger institutions or on military bases, where inmates help serve the labor needs of the larger institution or base (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Pedagogy - The function or work of a teacher; teaching (Dictionary.com, n.d.).

Professional Development – training for teachers in the areas of personal or individual needs, needs of individual schools, needs of certain grade levels, needs of specific curriculum interests, and needs of the school district.

Qualitative Research - connected or concerned with, quality or qualities; descriptive data; subjective; human observations, feelings, and recording behavior; contextual; avoids truth claims; seeks understanding not answers; use with population comparisons; compare two groups side by side; use when data has already been gathered; pre-existing data is used; truth changes with peoples' perceptions that are formed by the social influences around them; understanding and learning why (Ausburn, n.d.).

Quantitative Research - the systematic scientific investigation of properties and phenomena and their relationships; develop and employ mathematical models, theories and hypotheses pertaining to natural phenomena. The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships. (Dictionary.com, n.d.)

Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) – The assessment used as a pre-enrollment assessment for every offender entering any academic or vocational program below the college level. As a follow-up, the TABE assessment is administered on a quarterly basis to all offenders in any academic program below the college level (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

Work Center (WC) – facilities that allow those inmates with non-violent crimes to work their regular jobs while being confined in jail at all other times (Dept of Corrections OPM, 2006).

### **Operational Definitions**

Successful Learning Environment – Any correctional classroom in which student/offenders obtain success according to increases in TABE test scores, GED attainment, and/or college graduation standards.

Internal Teacher Traits – Refers to characteristics, skills, traits or qualities that correctional educators believe they must possess to be successful in an institutional setting with incarcerated students.

## **Theoretical Framework**

As one walks from Central Control to the education building at most facilities, s/he will be reminded of the strong behaviorist influences that govern the movements within these fences. Visitors travel by the housing units where prisoners, behind locked gates, await a bell to be released for breakfast, just as Pavlov's dogs anticipated their cue to receive food. Supporting Maslow's theories, offenders develop games, cons, and schemes to gain items which in turn can be "bartered" to others in order to receive cigarettes and other contraband items illegal for inmates to possess. All activity is monitored and controlled by a system of procedures designed for behavior modification. Although the penal environment is very behaviorist in nature, the literature shows that the same traditional classroom methods may not be the best strategies to use in correctional settings. "Correctional classrooms follow a linear, prescriptive behaviorist format that, based upon high recidivism rates, has not demonstrated effectiveness" (Abramson, 1991, pp. 4-7). Educators must be compelled to consider alternative teaching strategies to reach their students, and it is essential that a paradigm shift for Correctional Education take place (Hollingsworth, 2008, pp. 104-108; Wright, 2008, p. xxiv).

### **Predominance of Behaviorist Methods in Correctional Education**

Ideally, correctional educators possess an in-depth knowledge of the environment, culture and habits that form their educational venue. Studies have been conducted on the types of learning environments that produce the best result in a variety of classrooms. In prisons, the overriding teaching model tends to be behaviorist in nature.

[It was] discovered that an empirical-analytical approach was the principal theoretical foundation of curriculum used in the correctional classroom. Empirical-analytical theorists understand curriculum in a limited, linear prescriptive and controlled way. A curriculum of behaviorist control fits within the status quo of most correctional facilities' cultures. (Hollingsworth, 2008, p. 106)

Inmates often have a faulty view of the world, which they will use to learn what it is they need to learn. This is a challenge for the educator. Teachers usually teach as they were taught, and considering the extreme behaviorist environment outside of the penitentiary school house, it

is easy to continue this type of instructional method inside the classroom (Cruickshank, 2003, p. 7; Hollingsworth, 2008, p. 101; Kellough, 2007, p. 63; Stronge, 2002, p. 38). Moving from poor experiences in outside school systems to the controlled penal atmosphere, offenders adapt quickly to the “medical model” of prescription and treatment within the institutional classroom (Wright, 2008, p. xxi). However, researchers agree, the behaviorist philosophy used in correctional classrooms needs to be replaced with the more reflective stance of adult education theory. Hollingsworth (2008), in the book *In The Borderlands*,

reexamines the conceptual underpinnings of correctional curricula, concluding that their behaviorist biases toward control of behavior do not meet the needs of the correctional student. [Hollingsworth] challenges the control or governance models implicit in the behaviorist curriculum, citing literature to demonstrate its ineffectiveness: Students only experience short-term learning in these programs to appease the authorities (as a “get out of jail card”). These curricula reduce teachers to technicians responsible for manipulating variables in their environment so as to elicit the appropriate stimulus and response from students.

(Wright, 2008, p. xviii)

### **Pedagogy versus Andragogy**

Children may be successful with a structured, linear curriculum to form a foundation for higher order learning. Young students have limited experiences to associate learning and problem solving techniques; therefore, they might be more malleable for a teacher to mold them. The educator will apply strong guidance, in a mostly teacher-centered atmosphere. The teacher delivers the curriculum and the learner is expected to be sponge-like, absorbing the knowledge, storing it for future use. Adults, however, do not always learn best the same way children do. Behaviorist models take too much control from incarcerated students. “Instruction should foster, not control, learning” (Mergel, 1998, p. 18). As a result, some older students lose interest, become defensive, and often rebel against the entire educational process. Conventional ways of teaching were ineffective for these adults before incarceration, subsequently, new ways of disseminating knowledge need to be applied.

The traditional education system has generally failed to fulfill our learners' needs. Therefore, we must devise new curricula, create new methods of determining success, move away from the traditional educational structure and strive to achieve something new. (Behan, 2008, p. 126)

Offenders have an extensive background that shapes their perceptions of society and community. Even those who dropped out of school or maintain lower than a 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level have experiences that drive the way they see the world, make decisions, problem solve, and especially learn.

Social-constructivist methods [are] grounded in a transformative view of ABE and correctional education. It values the principles of andragogy and the capacity of prisoners – even those who struggle with literacy- to socially construct knowledge. (Muth, 2008, pp. 263-264)

Using the incarcerated students' backgrounds and experiences to help them learn will keep them interested, motivated and moving in a productive manner toward their ultimate goal.

### **A Case for Alternative Adult Learning Theories**

Researchers have asserted that the goal of correctional education needs to be the creation of a learning environment that embraces a more human concept. Because offenders are entrenched in behaviorist rules on the facility grounds, the inmate student needs an atmosphere of autonomy and independence within the school, which is in opposition to the institution outside educational doors.

Prison education should take the best adult education practices from outside and bring them into prison. The adult education approach takes a holistic attitude toward education as it aims to respond to the needs of the whole person; promotes a wide and varied curriculum; develops flexible and adaptable programs; creates a needs-based learning plan for students; and strives for a free space where critical thinking is promoted on the basis of mutuality, trust, respect and equality. (Behan, 2008, p. 126)

Hollingsworth (2008) agrees and adds additional research to support this idea.

Kilgore and Meade (2004) saw a need for correctional programs to bring social activities to the classroom supported by social constructivist theory. To realize these recommendations, preparation for correctional educators would need to promote methods associated with critical theory and social constructivist theory rather than the current empirical-analytical theory based curriculum. (p. 111)

No two students will look at a situation the same way, approach a problem from the same angle, or garner the exact same information from a learning session. Therefore, correctional educators must become facilitators of knowledge. They will guide students from point A to point B in a way that best fits the individual. Correctional educators will be learning alongside the student.

Correctional educators need to consider training in the theoretical practices of Knowles, Mezirow, Piaget, and Vygotsky. They should develop a foundation in conceptual methods, such as the theories of Informal Education, Transformational Learning, Cognitive Development and Proximal Development in which students embrace much more responsibility for their own education and progress. Students learn from their own experiences with limited amounts of guidance from the instructor. They need to develop skills that will be acceptable to society on the outside; and correctional educators are responsible to develop the curriculum to make it happen.

### **Modification to the School of Thought for Correctional Education**

Many institutional classrooms prescribe repetition of instruction, decontextualized subject matter, and measurement of learning according to a list of benchmarks developed for all students. Perhaps the promotion of an open educational setting in which outcomes of learning are individualized and not as easily measured, is a more appropriate area to explore. Constructivism is a learning theory gaining popularity in adult educational venues.

Constructivists believe that “learners construct their own reality or at least interpret it based upon their perceptions of experience, so an individual’s knowledge is a function of one’s prior experiences mental structures, and beliefs that are used to interpret objects and events.” “What someone knows is grounded in perceptions of the physical and social experiences which are comprehended by the mind.” (Jonassen, 1991, p. 10)

Jonassen (1994) further explains, “constructivists also believe that much of reality is shared through a process of social negotiation...” (pp. 34-37). Mergel’s comments from his 1998 article aid in clarifying this ideal,

Constructivism builds upon behaviorism...in the sense that it accepts multiple perspectives and maintains that learning is a personal interpretation of the world... Behavioral strategies can be part of a constructivist learning situation, if that learner chooses and finds that type of learning suitable to their experiences and learning style. Perhaps the greatest difference is that of evaluation. In behaviorism..., evaluation is based on meeting specific objectives, whereas in constructivism evaluation is much more subjective. (p. 10)

Correctional educators in a constructivist environment have to help each student use personal experiences to construct knowledge in a way that is productive for the individual. Constructivist Learning Theory (CLT) lends a branched, rather than linear, format for instruction. There are many possible ways to interpret information for learning to occur from a constructivist stance.

It is accepted widely, and rightly so, that in terms of methodology and curriculum, prison education must mirror the best practices available in the community.... In any adult learning situation, teaching and learning are considered to be dynamic and, to a large extent, interchangeable. Learners participate on a voluntary basis and take active responsibility for their learning. The educator can facilitate this by creating the climate for learning and in many cases “teach” the learner how to learn, but the learning must be always self-directed. The learner, in dialogue with the teacher, sets the agenda in terms of goals, self-appraisal, curriculum and evaluation. (Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 139)

Behan (2008) adds,

To merely provide a school and teachers will not necessarily create the opportunity for a constructive learning experience. It, therefore, challenges us as

educators to explore how to foster a positive learning environment in such an institution. (p. 126)

A paradigm shift needs to take place so that the perception of academics and short term behavior modification is discarded for an approach to educational praxis that develops the whole human in all avenues of his/her life. The offender's success in the outside world without the behaviorist controls depends on it.

### **Conclusion**

By identifying crucial characteristics of an effective correctional educator as well as establishing the components of a successful learning environment, the concepts researched in this study will better prepare correctional educators for the audience they are engaging. Correctional educators have to become advocates for their student's success and the correctional education field, while adjusting to an atmosphere in which neither is a priority. Correctional educators have to cope with new procedures and policies, feelings of isolation and an overall feeling of frustration, poor life choices of others, and unrealistic expectations of education. It might be suggested that correctional educators be taught how to remove themselves from the forefront of the teaching process in order to allow their adult students to take responsibility for their own education. They may also consider allowing the student the independence to develop emotionally and socially in a way that is acceptable to the individual as well as to society so that the offender can be successful in their life outside the prison walls. Current teaching trends reinforce the institutional culture, which simply aides the individual in becoming a better inmate. It helps to reinforce behaviors that guide the offender in a direction in which s/he is better able to survive in their current situation, but it does very little to develop proper social, real-world decision making skills to help the offender survive when s/he gets out of prison.

The theoretical and philosophical conceptualization for this study is shown in Figure 1.

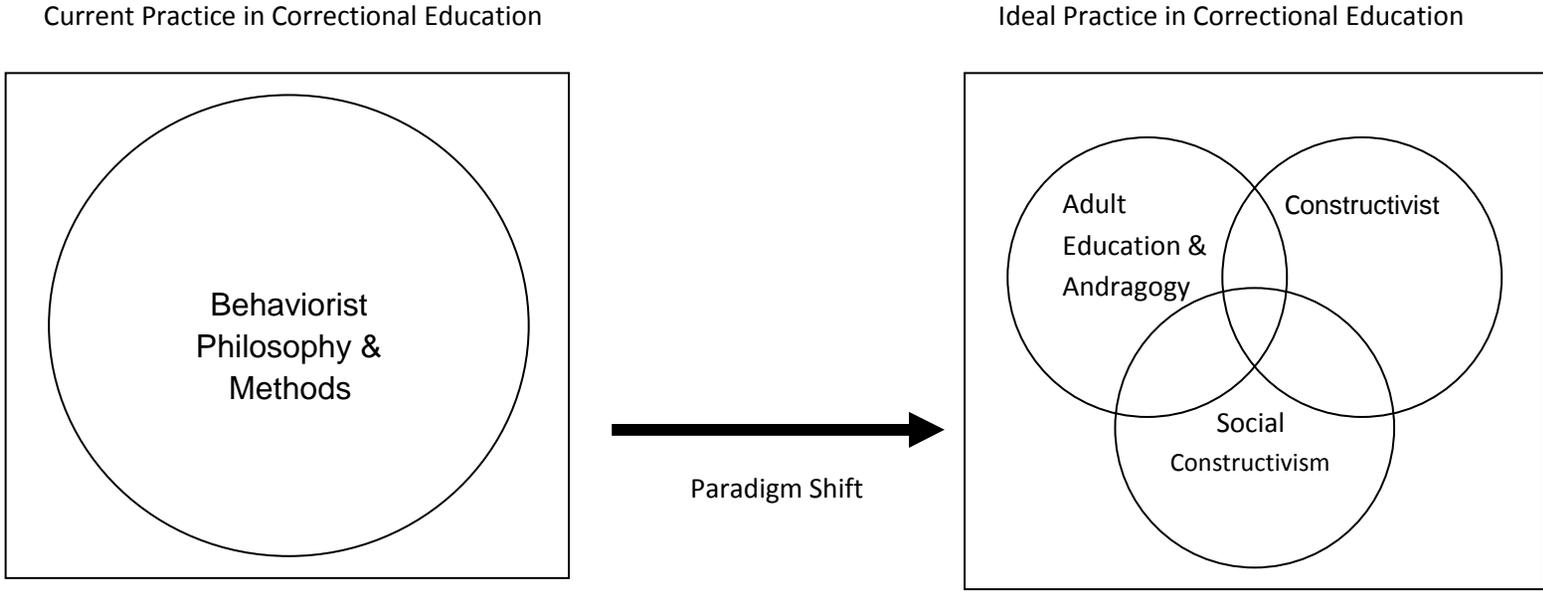


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework.

### **Organization of the Study**

This chapter has provided a background on the issues, a statement of the problem, the purpose, research questions, significance, limitations, assumptions, definition of terms, and the theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the appropriate literature on the topic. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and research instrument that was used in the study. Chapter 4 reports the results of the study, including an analysis of the data. Chapter 5 contains the summary, researcher's comments and conclusions, implications and recommendations for future studies.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Literature Review**

Chapter 2 presents a review of the current literature pertinent to the general topic of internal teacher traits and successful learning environments in an institutional setting. The areas examined in this literature review are general introduction to correctional education and professional development, effective internal teacher traits, successful learning environments, and, in conclusion, other research related to the issues of correctional education programs.

The literature search was conducted by completing a computer search of materials via several databases including ERIC, Questia and the Oklahoma State University and Ashland University libraries. Additional professional articles, books and studies were identified through references reported in current public and correctional education journals. The literature search covered the period from 1991 to 2011.

### **Introduction**

Students interested in the education field will spend four to six years studying theory, background and specific subject areas before they can be certified as public school teachers. Beginning with the first year of teaching, professional development is a key factor in the evolution of a career teacher. General content areas for professional development have been outlined by the ODOE for use by local school boards and their professional development committees (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2008, pp. 1-6). General content areas for professional development are as follow:

- Outreach to parents, guardians or custodians of students,
- racial and ethnic education,
- aids prevention education/ blood borne pathogens,
- motivation of pupils,
- incorporation study skills within the curriculum,
- classroom management and student discipline,
- special education including training on autism,
- recognition and reporting child abuse and neglect,
- increasing academic performance index scores as well as scores on state mandated tests, and
- reducing remediation rates for college freshmen (ODOE, 2008, p. 2).

These, among other specific content/subject related courses, are the main frame to the continuing development of knowledge required for teachers in the public arena.

Correctional teachers need the same training and more. There is no established policy of professional development course work for correctional educators at any level of experience. All new personnel in the DOC, including educators, security staff and secretaries, receive the same two week training by the organization and forty hours by the facility where they will be employed, but there is no specific classroom related training for new DOC teachers. Certain aspects of public school teaching are similar; however, many issues do not translate clearly from public school to an institutional setting. Werner (2008), in his article *What I Learned in Prison*, talks about the high expectations and ideals some teachers entering the institution hold and how these can hinder the educational process.

Maybe the real difference between public education and prison education is the enormous amount of baggage the prison teacher carries into that first classroom. We enter any classroom expecting certain things to happen, but we come into a prison classroom expecting much more. These expectations are mostly negative. Even the positive expectations can be just as harmful. I know quite a few people who have gone off to prison teaching with some sort of pseudo-liberal notion that

they are going to bring the light of reason to poor deprived individuals and many of those people have been seriously disappointed. But most people began as prison teachers with a whole cartload of negative baggage. (p. 14)

To further clarify this situation, Gehring explained, in his 2007 book, *The Handbook for Correctional Education Leaders*,

When traditionally asocial, non-social, or anti-social persons are pressed into a limited and confined setting, all sorts of interactions result. These problems are exacerbated in correctional institutions because most inmates have previously failed, or been failed by, the local schools. The closed setting enhances opportunities for violence, racism, sexism, other forms of brutality, and expressions of non-traditional sexualities. Inmates and institutional employees often share an anti-education disposition... Teachers and supervisors need to know what successful correctional teachers do. (p. 303)

Unless the individual teacher is fortunate enough to work with a knowledgeable correctional instructor, the novice will be thrown into the classroom environment with incarcerated students without knowing how to deal with them, how to teach them, what to teach them, or what is appropriate/inappropriate behavior for inmates and teachers. Only the luckiest of teachers will survive without being taken advantage of or conned, and some could find themselves in serious employment trouble or personal danger (Hollingsworth, 2008, p. 102). Frequently, an event highlights the urgency for change. Ropp (2008) wrote,

The need for both introductory and ongoing training of correctional educators is often re-emphasized after some incident has occurred that could have been prevented through more comprehensive training. In some cases, a new teacher is simply not aware of specific professional expectations being placed on him or her by colleagues or managers. Training for correctional educators should cover both the broad expectations outlined in the applicable codes of ethics and codes of conduct and the very specific, practical “do’s and don’ts” of working in a prison classroom. They should derive from their training a

strong sense of their professional duties both as a teacher and as a staff member in a prison. (p. 69)

Veteran correctional educators can become so comfortable with working in a prison environment that they lose their “edge” in terms of following some of the fundamental guidelines that they learned when they first started teaching in prisons. Because of the secretive nature of prisons, incidents involving staff committing professional infractions are usually not broadcast to other staff so that everyone can become more vigilant in terms of their own practices... Errors in professional judgment, which can be attributed to gaps in the training of individual correctional educators, can also be easily corrected by providing better initial training and retraining on an ongoing basis. (p. 69)

Other researchers expanded the discussion on this topic through observation in the results of their studies. “Wolford, Purnell, and Brooks (1998) discovered in their national survey that in 63 percent of responding states, ...correctional educators are not specially or specifically prepared to teach in alternative or correctional facilities or programs” (Hollingsworth, 2008, pp. 103-104). “Elrod and Ryder (1999) point out that many professionals in corrections have not had access to the training needed to perform their jobs well – and indeed, many of the teachers, administrators, and other correctional professionals entering the... justice system do so by happenstance and therefore lack adequate preparation” (Mathur, 2009, p. 164). Hollingsworth (2008) further defined the situation, “Most correctional educators do not come to the field intentionally. Consequently, correctional educators have not prepared for the specific challenges of teaching in correctional or alternative settings or for the special needs of correctional or alternative students” (pp. 103-104).

Many new teachers enter their first year of teaching clueless about how to relate to their students and how to create a successful classroom environment. Teachers in a regular classroom can often bluff their way through a year with children, but trying to deceive adult learners is both dangerous and ineffective. An incarcerated adult student will notice teacher inconsistencies and lack of knowledge quickly. “Nobody is more alert to rights\wrongs or fair\unfairness than an incarcerated student” (Penwell, 2008, p. 55). “It is critical that the teacher

be a help, not a hindrance” (Eggleston, 2003, p. 6). Therefore, teachers of adult students - specifically inmates - need to have a good idea of what they are teaching, how they will be teaching it and at what educational level. In addition, teachers need to have training in developing relationships between students and teachers to make the classroom as practical and lucrative as possible. “Teachers struggle to find the right professional distance, or ‘relational mean’, between student and teacher. So they find themselves on the ethical and social borders in their interactions with students as subjects and objects” (Wright, 2008, p. x). The relationship between teacher and student is maintained by a delicate balance of mutual respect. “Teachers struggle to find a proper relational balance or midpoint between the qualities of autonomy and dependence” (Wright, 2004, p. 193). Inmates usually fear the classroom, the teacher, and academics. They often have had horrible experiences with the public school atmosphere. It is up to a skilled and flexible teacher to overcome the student’s apprehensions and assist the inmate in achieving success in the classroom.

Professional development standards organized by Master Teacher Competencies at appropriate levels will benefit offenders, teachers, DOC and society as a whole. With proper professional development guidelines, teachers are prepared with a common view of correctional education between facilities and programs; they are up to date with innovative technology and new curriculum; and instructors are more capable of serving the unique population they are charged with so that felons become successful citizens decreasing repeat violations which will return the offender back to the institution. “Prison education, like all other activities, must now defend itself primarily in response to the question: How is it addressing offending behavior?...As a result, evaluation of prison education tends to be based on whether it’s courses can be seen to reduce recidivism” (Wright, 2008, p. xxi). For the purpose of the literature review, the following two categories were used: internal teacher traits and learning environments.

### **Internal Teacher Traits**

A comprehensive list of internal teacher traits for this population does not exist. The literature provides pieces of knowledge that would help to develop a list, but before specific competencies and professional development guidelines can be addressed, a breakdown of the

characteristics of a thriving correctional instructor would be helpful. Forty-eight references were reviewed to produce an inventory of traits that correctional educators ought to possess to be productive in the penal environment. The characteristic most articulated in the literature for all teachers, both public and correctional was knowledgeable (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. vii; Gehring, 2002, p. 97; Gehring, 2007, pp. 307-308; Geraci, 2008, p. 1; Guttman, 2008, pp. 17-24; Mathur, 2009, p. 170; Muth, 2008, p. 49; Wright, 2004, p. 200; Wright, 2008, p. xi). The most successful teachers know the concepts integral to their surroundings and subject matter.

They develop knowledge about life in a correctional institution and client value systems... They demonstrate knowledge of the factors underlying human behavior... They demonstrate knowledge of appropriate diagnostic and instructional strategies for disabled and non-disabled learners... They work to expand their knowledge of offender needs and supportive community agencies.

(Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327)

Also, the "...knowledge of cultures is important to correctional educators. In prisons, we must have knowledge of correctional, inmate and educational cultures" (Geraci, 2008, p. 1). Guttman (2008) explained, it is "my job: to join the ranks of educators charged with the task of imparting knowledge and wisdom, and awakening the stagnant spirit yet to embrace the glory of learning" (p. 17). The next highly advocated trait was the teacher as a professional (Behan, 2008, p. 134; Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. vii; Gehring, 2002, pp. 93 - 97; Gehring, 2007, pp. 300 - 308; Gehring, 2008, p. 81; Geraci, 2008, p. 1; Guttman, 2008, pp. 21 - 24; Mathur, 2009, pp. 170 -174; Ropp, 2008, pp. 66 - 67). "Administrators and program planners often hire as instructors people who are... highly competent professionals" (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. vii). Teachers are specialists who "are devoted to their program and their profession" (Gehring, 2002, p. 93). Continuing in this line, for educators who are involved in regular professional development programs "...the end result [is] a better-informed and professionally stronger correctional educator" (Ropp, 2008, p. 66). Another trait following closely in the literature was respectful (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 9 - 58; Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Guttman, 2008, pp. 23 - 24; Muth, 2008, pp. 40 - 44; Wright, 2004, pp. 196 - 203). Teachers should be respectful of each learner as an

individual having their own knowledge, experiences and background. Brady and Lampert (2007) suggested teachers “treat your students as [you] would like to be treated: with respect, dignity, open-ness, and a degree of flexibility” (p. 9). “When an inmate student is shown respect and consideration, he is likely to respond in kind” (Wright, 2004, p. 196). Additionally, Gehring (2007) adds, teachers should “treat everyone with respect, and demonstrate a concern for each student...” (pp. 310-327).

Other traits leading the rankings were enthusiastic (Gehring, 2007, pp. 301 - 327; Gehring, 2008, p. 88; Mathur, 2009, pp. 170 - 174) and honest (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 13 – 58; Gehring, 2007, pp. 300 - 327; Muth, 2008, pp. 38 - 44; Werner, 2008, p. 7; Wright, 2004, pp. 196 - 203). Most everyone remembers former teachers who were enthusiastic while teaching class, believed in their students’ abilities to succeed, and used this to push students to learn. Individuals stay engaged in the lesson, learn more, “and they in turn rate facilitators who are enthusiastic about the topic as effective and knowledgeable” (Mathur, 2009, p. 170). Students know when teachers are not being honest with them. It is very important when trying to establish an atmosphere of mutual honesty and trust, that the teacher be the first to model the behavior. Gehring (2007) explained, “Leadership...may accrue from expertise... [or] from a person’s honesty and integrity, or from that person’s high aspirations which correspond with those of the faculty” (p. 300).

Moreover, the literature elaborates a teacher’s need to be committed (Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Guttman, 2008, pp. 17 - 24; Mathur, 2009, pp. 170 - 174; Muth, 2008, p. 32; Penwell, 2008, p. 50; Wright, 2004, p. 200), flexible (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 9 - 13; Draves, 2007, p. 17; Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Wright, 2008, p. xi) and a life-long learner (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 1; Draves, 2007, p. 2; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Guttman, 2008, p. 24; Mathur, 2009, p. 170; Penwell, 2008, p. 50). Individuals using teaching as a transitional position or just “doing their time” to retirement will not be effective. A committed teacher will use extra time for professional development activities even though it takes away from personal time. They will “...contribute to successful professional development experiences...fostering enthusiasm and commitment...” (Mathur, 2009, p. 174). “They [successful teachers] bring

habitual dedication and commitment [to the profession]...” (Gehring, 2002, p. 96). Penwell commented on her experiences in the 2008 article *How I Learned to Teach in a Women’s Prison: A Tale of Growth, Understanding and Humor*, “some of us were black, some white, some straight, some gay, some married, some divorced, some mothers, some not, but all of us were committed to the success of our program” (p. 50). The teacher should be flexible. “Develop a strategy...Be prepared to be flexible....Be consistent in approach and policy...” (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 13). Anyone who has ever taught anything knows that a tremendous amount of flexibility is required to be a teacher. Many variables inevitably arise to interrupt schedules and carefully planned activities; therefore the ability of a teacher to adapt to situations that come along is imperative.

Our success will be enhanced if we adapt, to some degree, within the Institutional setting. ... Success [in the classroom] is related to the amount of effort expended, ability to empathize with clients, and mobilization of opinion leaders [to effect change]...[Factors used to create the intent to change] are mutual respect and trust, a shared stake in process and outcome, multiple layers of decision-making, flexibility, open and frequent communication, and attainable goals and objectives. (Gehring, 2002, p. 96)

Along with being committed and flexible, a teacher must be a life-long learner. Every learning situation for a student has the potential to also teach something to the instructor, if s/he welcomes the opportunity. Educators who are more open to learning themselves have the potential to make the experience better for everyone involved. “Professionals who are committed to life-long learning are eager to develop a diverse set of competencies that enable them to meet the demands of their profession (Candy, 1991)...” (Mathur, 2009, p. 170). Guttman (2008) explained her position, “...I strive to teach, honor, respect, inspire, and model lifelong learning in work and deed” (p. 24).

Caring (Gehring, 2002, p. 97; Guttman, 2008, p. 21; Hollingsworth, 2008, p. 111; Muth, 2008, p. 32; Wright, 2004, pp. 191 - 203), creative (Draves, 2007, pp. 17 - 19; Guttman, 2008, pp. 19 - 24; Kiser, 2008, p. 60; Werner, 2008, p. 14; Wright, 2004, p. 195) and good listeners (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 13, 57-58; Draves, 2007, p. 18; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Guttman,

2008, p. 24; Muth, 2008, pp. 43-44) were also found to be important instructor traits. Aspiring to be a caring teacher in a prison is a fine line to travel, but for those who do so the students will be very successful. In his 2004 article, *Care as the "Heart" of Prison Teaching*, Wright stated that "Despite the powerful, pervasive institutional imperatives of the prison to control, discipline and house inmates, teachers seem to care deeply for their students" (p. 191). He continued "...'Caring' builds rapport and trust, giving inmates (students) the freedom to be themselves" (p. 195). He concluded that "caring actions are hopeful...To truly teach effectively, caring must be the foundation" (p. 196). A teacher, regardless of where they teach, should be creative. There are many ways a teacher can present material and many ways an individual can learn a lesson. "The teacher must have understanding, flexibility, patience, humor, practicality, creativity and preparation" (Draves, 2007, p. 17). Their goals should be to "...ask more questions, listen well, provide cutting-edge curriculum, take more courses, [and] imagine one more creative project" (Guttman, 2008, p. 24). The creative teacher will be able to alter curriculum when necessary so that all pupils have the opportunity to learn what is being taught. In order to adapt classroom activities to include everyone, a teacher must be a good listener. "Listening is as important as effective speaking. And it is important to effective teaching because much learning takes place when a participant is expressing an idea..." (Draves, 2007, p.18). Likewise, an educator will not be able to develop an appropriate relationship with students if s/he is not a good listener. Adult students in particular need to have someone who will listen to them so that the work assigned can be revised for relevancy on an individual basis. Brady and Lampert's research in the book *The New Teacher of Adults: A Handbook for Teachers of Adult Learners* (2007) listed listening to students as one of the major factors students look for as "ground rules and needs" within the classroom (pp. 57-58). In the 2008 article, *The First Two Years of Prison Work: A Personal Narrative*, Muth agreed and suggested that teachers try "Listening to and learning from others, [and] using a quiet tone of voice in the classroom..." (p. 44).

In addition, teachers need to be patient (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 13, 197-198; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Guttman, 2008, p. 21), prepared (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 1 - 13; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Gehring, 2008, p. 81; Guttman, 2008, p. 21; Wright, 2004, p. 195)

and responsible (Gehring, 2002, p. 97; Gehring, 2007, pp. 307-327; Mathur, 2009, p. 170; Muth, 2008, pp. 43-44; Wright, 2004, p. 203). Coping with all the variables occurring within the facility and classroom setting requires patience, especially in the prison atmosphere. Institutionalized students almost always expect, when dealing with any correctional personnel that the staff will be short of patience and quickly will give up on the inmate. This is what an offender is accustomed too; therefore the teacher must “practice patience and forgiveness...” (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 197-198). When someone in this environment uses patience and a calm demeanor, it is so different from what the inmate is used to that they are more likely to change their behavior or attitude to match that of the teacher which improves the learning for both. Guttman (2008) shared her experience in the article *Teaching in the Existential Village*,

Prison climate was a far cry from the educational setting as I knew it. To find myself in a space that formulated structure often in seemingly harsh ways, not conducive to reframing character or providing avenues for change, proved trying and irritating... Thankfully a patience and calmness have transpired on my part regarding prison protocol, but this came slowly and with a willingness to see the world from the jailer's perspective. (p. 21)

An instructor must also “be prepared to be flexible...” (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 13). According to Wright (2004), teachers should be in a constant state of “...preparedness, [where there is] a willingness to act and intervene when one is called to respond...” (p. 195). Gehring (2008) added, that this “preparation [be] specifically for correctional education assignments and ongoing in-service applicable to education in institutional settings...” (p. 81). The educator must be prepared to teach, prepared to alter behavior, prepared to adapt to all kinds of situations and prepared to scrap a whole concept that does not work for the environment to develop something that might not be as good for curriculum, but better for the individual student. “No matter how much we already know about our subject prior to stepping into the role of teacher, we will learn substantially more by thinking about this new role, preparing for classes, and working to develop the appropriate readings, questions, and assignments that are designed to enable others to learn” (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 1). Teachers must also be responsible. The learners are depending

on the teachers to create an inspiring learning environment, keep up with what they are learning and develop strategies to take the student in the direction s/he wants to go. "Teachers are...responsible for drawing out the democratic and even critical possibilities of...new ways of seeing and shap[ing] correctional, educational and social, practices..." (Wright, 2000, p. 350 as cited in Gehring, 2002, p. 97). "The enrichment provided by new knowledge and skills gained...increases...the responsibility they [the students] feel for their own learning (Donaldson, Flannery, & Ross-Gordon, 1993)..." (Mathur, 2009, p. 170).

Teachers have a duty to be stimulating (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 2; Draves, 2007, p. 21; Gehring, 2007, pp. 307-327; Gehring, 2008, p. 98; Penwell, 2008, p. 58), supportive (Gehring, 2002, pp. 97 - 98; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Guttman, 2008, p. 23; Muth, 2008, pp. 43-44) and trustworthy (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 57-58; Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Ropp, 2008, p. 67; Wright, 2004, pp. 195 - 196). Stimulating instructors are generally enthusiastic and compassionate teachers. The students want to learn whatever the teacher is teaching simply because of who the teacher is. Gerhing (2008) stated, "...you are the most important resource students can access; your effectiveness in this work depends on your ability to interact with students in a way that stimulates them to self-improvement" (p. 98). Penwell (2008) advised, "show them [the students] you have knowledge that could be helpful to them and offer it to those who are interested. Make your classes fun, laugh a lot and constantly bring in stimulating materials from the outside, including speakers and videos, if possible" (p. 58). The supportive teacher is present for the student as well as other faculty and administration. Coworkers "...seek out supportive colleagues..." (Gehring, 2002, p. 97). "By supporting each other and focusing on issues such as improved curricula, innovative classroom strategies, maximum-use scheduling, systematized program evaluation/modification, and teacher-designed materials, we can help students learn more effectively" (p. 98). When the student has something going on and needs the teacher's attention, the supportive teacher will find a time to completely focus on the student, for a period of time, to help the student find the proper curriculum path or resolve other educational issues in the student's best interests. Guttman (2008) explained,

I let the respect and concern I hold for them [the students] lay the foundation for the work we will do together...– plus believing deeply in their capacity and possibility, standing by to provide information, assistance, support, reassurance and respect and also a relentless commitment to demanding students give their best to the task at hand. (p. 23)

A teacher must be trustworthy. “Students in prison need a safe environment for experimentation, for creativity and...[for] relationships of respect and trust, between teacher and student...” (Wright, 2004, p. 196). Learners need to feel that they can trust the teacher to get them where they want to be. They must be confident that whatever issue they have, the teacher can be trusted to help them follow through to the end.

Teachers in the correctional setting have an obligation to be authoritative (Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Gehring, 2008, p. 98; Guttman, 2008, p. 24; Ropp, 2008, p. 66), firm (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 13; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Geraci, 2008, p. 3; Guttman, 2008, p. 21) and fair (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 13; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Geraci, 2008, p. 3; Wright, 2004, p. 203). Not all situations in a prison school are pleasant. When the situation arises, the teacher must be able to take control of the situation so that the results are the best they can be for the facility, school, teacher and the student. Teachers must know the role they play in the penal environment. Ropp (2008) stated, “...all teachers occupy positions of authority, trust and influence, relationships between teachers and students must measure up to the closest scrutiny...” (p. 67). Gehring (2008) summarized his first experiences at a correctional institution. “I was getting socialized to an authoritarian work situation after a college career of resistance to authority” (p. 76). Geraci and others (2008) have expressed similar experiences such as, “Teachers are faced with a variety of organizational norms. They are taught certain expectations at correctional academies, including that they be suspicious of inmates (trust no one), not take things “personally”, be “firm, fair and consistent,” and “follow the rules” (p. 3). Brady and Lampert (2007) added that teachers need to “maintain an atmosphere of fairness...Be firm, yet patient...” (p. 13).

Teachers in an institution are required to be dedicated (Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Gehring, 2008, p. 98; Guttman, 2008, p. 24; Ropp, 2008, p. 66), helpful (Behan, 2008, p. 134; Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Wright, 2004, pp. 198 - 200) and open minded (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p 9; Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Gehring, 2008, pp. 75 - 88; Wright, 2004, p. 196). Ropp in his 2008 article, *Crossing Borders: The Problem of Professional Boundaries* wrote, "my advice to prospective correctional educators is: ...do a solid job as a dedicated teacher" (p. 66). Gehring added, "...to be a good teacher, one has to be a good person: ...dedicated to learning and teaching, and effective as both an individual and as a team member" (p. 98). In Behan's 2008 article, *From the Outside to Inside: Pedagogy Within Prison Walls*, he commented, "as professional educators, if our objectives include helping people cope with their sentence, we should be concerned about the prison regime, architecture and environment and our students' living conditions" (p. 134). With these factors in mind, the climate correctional educators work in aids in developing connections that are "...helpful, generous and caring..." (Wright, 2004, p. 198) which "demands openness and honesty" (p. 196). "In the field of correctional education, we will do best when we combine an open mind with a warm heart..." (Gehring, 2008, p. 88).

Correctional educators frequently work in environments that are hostile toward teaching and learning. To survive (perhaps even flourish) we are constantly assessing our abilities and weaknesses, identifying strategies that can be effective in the institutional setting, and working to diminish our vulnerability to anti-education influences, [and] ...that most effective correctional educators apply both "an open mind" and "a warm heart" to their daily work. (p. 75)

Teachers should be compelled to have integrity (Gehring, 2007, p. 300; Gehring, 2008, pp. 81 - 98; Muth, 2008, p. 40; Wright, 2004, p. 196), be leaders (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 197-198; Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Gehring, 2007, p. 300; Gehring, 2008, p. 98; Muth, 2008, pp. 43-44) and be role models (Gehring, 2002, p. 99; Ropp, 2008, p. 67). Quality leadership comes from those with integrity. Gehring (2008) defined integrity as "consistency between values and behavior..." (p. 81). Wright (2004) explained "for the teachers' part there is an expectation of integrity and accountability..." (p. 196) which infuses the classroom with the hope for success in

the future. Gehring (2008) also described a teacher's effort to improve by the extent to which they "...acquire integrity..., credibility.... and effectiveness..." (p. 98).

The most appropriate measure of our work has more to do with the internal resources we can bring to bear to relevant tasks (leadership) than about the external resources we can mobilize (funding, equipment and so forth). (p. 98)

"Don't be afraid to lead... focus on progress" (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 197-198). The best way to lead is by modeling the behaviors required, such as but not limited to integrity, honesty, professionalism, commitment, preparation, and responsibility. A teacher needs to "be a role model – it is the role of correctional educators to interrupt nonsocial behavior through pro-social learning activities" (Gehring, 2002, p. 99). Ropp (2008) added "... 'professional educators act with the understanding that they are role models for students'; and 'professional educators are accountable to students, parents, employers, the profession and the public' (British Columbia College of Teachers, 2004, pp.15, 17)" (p. 67).

Teachers should be self aware (Behan, 2008, p. 131; Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 141; Gehring, 2002, p. 97; Gehring, 2007, pp. 307-327; Mathur, 2009, pp. 170 - 171; Ropp, 2008, p. 69; Wright, 2008, p. xi), sensitive (Freudenberger, 1981, p. 154; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Wright, 2008, p. xi), and vigilant (Guttman, 2008, p. 21; Ropp, 2008, p. 69; Wright, 2008, p. ix). The correctional atmosphere is one of violence, fear, suspicion, and aggression. Teachers are not immune to this; therefore, correctional educators must learn to guard against and cope with the negative environment. As stated by correctional educator Gehring (2002), "...the greatest protection is self-awareness" (p. 97). "...Prison education is not like adult education on the outside...This is why prison educators must be very aware of how we view our students, what it is we are doing, why we are doing it and how best to do it" (Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 141). Similarly, "a sense of awareness of a student's present position and future possibilities is essential in any adult education experience. Activities that recognize this and empower students are especially welcome within prison..." (Behan, 2008, p. 131). The prison atmosphere changes people. Wright (2008) explained, "This culture is militaristic, authoritarian, vigilant, strategic, hierarchical, status-ridden and grounded in divisive practices entrenching a rigorous taxonomy

that distinguishes “Us” from “Them” – even among the inmates or wards” (p. ix). “Certainly some teachers arrive at the prison gates as mature, wise educators – flexible, sensitive to context, prepared to live with uncertainty – while others embark on a personal and professional journey on the inside that is insightful and transformative” (p. xi). Teachers have to notice these changes and adjust to the undercurrents present, so that they do not become victims. “Professionals in the helping occupations are especially susceptible. They are sensitive to feelings and behavior...” (Freudenberger, 1981, p. 154). Guttman (2008) gave an example: “Watching the students play basketball revealed the tension between them. I realized the day would require extra vigilance, as if such a stance could safeguard against the unknown” (p. 21).

In summary, the literature suggests the following as the internal traits a successful correctional educator should possess to be effective in the institutional environment:

- authoritarian
- caring
- committed
- creative
- dedicated
- enthusiastic
- fair
- firm
- flexible
- helpful
- honest
- integrity
- knowledgeable
- leader
- life-long learner
- listener
- open minded
- patient
- prepared
- professional
- respectful
- responsible
- role model
- self aware
- sensitive
- stimulating
- supportive
- trustworthy
- vigilant

## Learning Environments

A comprehensive list of successful learning environments inside a correctional facility does not exist. The literature provides pieces of knowledge that would help to develop a list, but before specific competencies and professional development guidelines can be addressed, a breakdown of successful learning environments would be helpful. Forty-eight references were reviewed to produce an inventory of learning environments that might be productive in the penal environment.

Education can be domesticating or liberating and there is no formulaic way we can create ideal conditions for liberating education. It is rare that there will be a perfect learning space, whether within or without the prison walls. (Behan, 2008, p. 135)

This study includes only correctional schools dealing with incarcerated adults at the state level. The population, however, varies with respect to maturity, educational level, ability level and motivation. In addition, the climate outside the education facility does not exactly support learning conditions. This is not only true of staff, but of offenders also. Student expectations are some of the hardest factors to change. The student has to realize s/he is not a child with childhood school issues. S/he has to modify her/his thinking to realize s/he is the only one in control of her/his learning; the teacher is merely in the classroom to guide and answer questions as s/he learns. Creating an effective learning environment for this clientele is both challenging and demanding. According to the literature, the learning environment in the penitentiary needs to be relevant (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 8; Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 139; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Hollingsworth, 2008, p. 111; Mathur, 2009, p. 170; Wright, 2008, p. 181), cooperative (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 57; Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 139; Duguid, 2008, pp. 115 - 116; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Mathur, 2009, p. 171; Muth, 2008, pp. 43-44; Wright, 2004, p. 200), supportive (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 49; Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 139; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Guttman, 2008, p. 23; Mathur, 2009, p. 169; Muth, 2008, pp. 43-44) and meaningful (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 13; Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 141; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Kiser, 2008, p. 58; Wright, 2004, p. 203). In their 2007 book, *The New Teacher of Adults*, Brady

and Lampert define what having a relevant course means. "Course relevancy [is determined by] content, instruction and the applicability of the material" (p. 8). Mathur, et al (2009) added what they think the learner expects, "They [students] typically examine the quality of their learning in terms of relevance, the emergence of new perspectives, and the potential for professional success..." (p. 170). The relevancy of the learning environment is complicated by the atmosphere outside the school. To maintain an environment conducive to learning, allowances need to be made and cooperation of all parties must be developed. The department was constructed to warehouse felons; to separate them from society and, as a result, punish them. Programs to rehabilitate did not form until later. Therefore, the mind set of this branch of state government, as a whole, is that inmates are bad people who do not deserve privilege, and an education is a privilege. Convincing staff and other stakeholders that what the education department is doing benefits all involved is difficult. Maintenance of a professional relationship is often strained when directives from corrections interfere with the desires of teachers to do their job. Duguid explained in his 2008 article, *The Professor in Prison: Reflections*, "...we had to simultaneously maintain relations with prison staff and the correctional system *per se* that were at least civil, and certainly cooperative if not cordial" (p. 115). Again in his reflections he explained further the ability of students to adapt. "...I was even more impressed by the students' eagerness to try cooperative and democratic practices even when severely limited in scope and power, in effect focusing on the "local" when larger areas of power remained out of bounds" (p. 116). Muth (2008) expanded on a theory of cooperative adult education by adding the following;

Inspired by T.A. Ryan's model of Adult Basic Education, I've sketched out the following skills, knowledge, and attitudes that might be relevant for the medium-security Federal Correctional Institution ABE classroom: ...Ownership: Accepts responsibility for his contribution to a problem, takes initiative for growth and learning, establishes personally meaningful goals...Cooperation: Works as part of a team, accepts direction from others, leads discussion or project, is tolerant of others' views, is supportive of others' efforts, competes and handles both winning and losing. (pp. 43-44)

Muth's article documents the cooperative and supportive environment educational professionals must create in the institutional atmosphere. Brady and Lampert (2007) discussed what actually happens from the beginning of the class to promote a supportive learning environment. "The first class sets the tone for the entire semester, and it is your opportunity to establish a supportive, positive learning experience and environment for students" (p. 49). Moreover, Mathur (2009) inserted how a supportive environment can be created through professional development.

In this era of accountability, correctional educators must understand how to create educational experiences that support student learning. Keeping up with emerging knowledge and responding to these influences by engaging in a continual process of professional enhancement has never been as important as it is today. (p. 169)

Along with relevant, cooperative and supportive surroundings, the literature also suggests that the environment must be meaningful. "The type of learning environment you create will go a long way toward making sure everyone in class has a meaningful and productive learning experience" (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 13). Costello and Warner elaborate in their 2008 article *Beyond Offending Behavior: The Wider Perspective of Adult Education and the European Prison Rules*, that the "bad people" deserve a chance to better themselves. "...People held in prison are citizens; citizens are entitled to lifelong education to ensure their full development, therefore prisoners should be offered meaningful education" (p. 141). But to be successful in the correctional classroom, Kiser gives this advice in her 2008 article, *In the Name of Liquidity and Flow*, "...be sure everything has a purpose and a meaning to the students; they are not children to be entertained but adults who will pick and choose among the various pieces of information you make available" (p. 58).

The learning environment should also be safe (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 57 - 58; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Wright, 2004, pp. 195 - 196), collaborative (Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 139; Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Mathur, 2009, p. 171), democratic (Behan, 2008, p. 129; Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 49; Duguid, 2008, p. 116; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327), and encouraging (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 57-58; Behan, 2008, pp. 129 -

132; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Wright, 2004, p. 195). “Your ability to create a learning environment that is safe, engaging, cooperative and productive will go a long way in making your students feel they are getting real value from your class” (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 57). Wright (2004) stated a similar idea, “students in prison need a safe environment for experimentation, for creativity and for personal growth” (p. 196). He also defined the issue of the learning environment as, “a safe environment where students can try new things without fear of making a mistake, or being ridiculed, is conducive to creativity and personal growth” (Wright, 2004, p. 195). Brady and Lampert added the following;

We have spoken to a number of our students about what they look for in a safe learning environment and they have mentioned many factors. Here are some “ground rules and needs” they have mentioned.

- Encourage everyone to participate.
- Make sure people don’t interrupt when others are speaking.
- Make sure people focus on the issue during classroom discussion and not the person talking.
- Listen to your students.
- Confidentiality is essential for people to feel safe in expressing themselves.
- Learn your student’s names.
- Encourage questioning and sharing.
- Show humility.
- Balance intervening versus allowing student dialogue.
- Insist on an air of honesty in the classroom.
- Bring a sense of humor to class....
- Encourage trust and mutual respect between the teacher and learner.
- Value diversity so everyone can learn.
- The teacher (and students) need to mutually respect the boundaries of fellow students. (2007, pp. 57-58)

“Similarly the ideals of collaborative learning, particularly small groups engaged in supportive discussion and problem solving, are relevant...” (Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 139). Gehring (2002) contributed this advice,

Our success will be enhanced if we adapt, to some degree, within the institutional setting... When addressing the institutional anti-education bias, correctional educators might consider administrators and line officers as target clients... Correctional educators are not usually in a position to initiate collaboration – it often comes top-down. If we stay abreast of the research on collaboration, and understand how it works, we will be ready to provide leadership when the inevitable opportunity arises. (p. 96)

According to the literature, arranging a democratic atmosphere is very important. In a place where order and directives must go unquestioned, inmates should be introduced to the democratic process so that they may develop the skills they need when they are released from prison. “This [learning environment] is critical because adult education, by nature, is one of the most democratic experiences you will encounter. Adult education students, for example, often come to school voluntarily, know what they are looking for, can be impatient, and need a comfortable learning environment” (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 49). “In a participative democracy and a learning society the people are the ultimate guarantors of human rights both inside and outside prison. Encouraging students to become agents for change, both inside school and throughout the penal system, is the best way to promote human dignity” (Behan, 2008, p. 129). “Teachers should also strive to encourage students to believe in their potential” (p. 131).

The learning environment should also be flexible (Behan, 2008, p. 126; Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 8 - 13; Duguid, 2008, p. 115; Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Mathur, 2009, p. 169), rehabilitative (Behan, 2008, p. 123; Duguid, 2008, p. 115), reflective (Behan, 2008, p. 121; Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 140; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Guttman, 2008, p. 19; Muth, 2008, pp. 43-44), and respectful (Behan, 2008, pp. 126 - 132; Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 6, 57-58; Gehring, 2002, p. 96; Guttman, 2008, p. 23; Muth, 2008, p. 43-44; Warner, 1998, p. 128; Wright, 2004, pp. 196 - 203). In his 2008 *Reflections* article, Duguid

expanded upon a model of post-secondary prison education in which he "...provided a dynamic and flexible framework within which individual educators could work" (p. 115). Behan discussed a similar idea in his 2008 article, *From Outside to Inside: Pedagogy Within Prison Walls*:

The adult education approach takes a holistic attitude toward education as it aims to respond to the needs of the whole person; promotes a wide and varied curriculum; develops flexible and adaptable programs; creates a needs-based learning plan for students; and strives for a free space where critical thinking is promoted on the basis of mutuality, trust, respect and equality. (p. 126)

Mathur (2009) asserted,

The challenges that... correctional professionals face in their classrooms include dealing with diverse student populations; teaching [those] who are typically behind in meeting academic standards; accommodating and modifying instruction; managing problem behaviors; developing and implementing individual plans to address education, transition, rehabilitation, treatment, re-entry, probation/parole or whatever current terminology their agency uses; maintaining flexibility in terms of what they are teaching, when they are teaching it, and where; and responding to the public profiles of student achievement and behavior. (p. 169)

Brady and Lampert (2007) stated, from the student's view, "adults want some control over their learning experience. They like to be able to set their own learning goals (when possible) based on their own needs, enjoy the flexibility to sometimes determine what they do and do not need, and like to be free to choose how to use information and feedback" (p. 8). It is commonly and unwisely practiced that the students are "...individuals at the center of what is called the rehabilitative process [and] are rarely asked what may be best for them" (Behan, 2008, p. 123). However, in an attempt "for 'academic freedom' in terms of courses, texts and staff...it was a key element in the rehabilitative hope that the program (and the correctional service) saw as the basis for its presence in the prison" (Dugiud, 2008, p. 115). Rehabilitation is the ultimate goal, but an essential part of the process is reflection, as stated by Costello and Warner in their 2008 article, "The

necessity to contextualize learning makes it incumbent on prison students and educators to be critical and reflective about the type of education provided in their particular situation” (p. 140). Guttman (2008) added, “the school day begins and ends with reflection... I quickly learned that a punitive and harsh probation setting was not conducive to sound learning practices...” (p. 19). Developing a reflective learning environment is not easy inside the prison walls, but Behan (2008) instructed that respect is also as important as flexibility and reflection in a rehabilitative situation. “It is there [in the classroom] where prisoners should be encouraged to engage in an intelligent riot (Davidson, 1995, p. 9) of the mind and inquiry based on freedom, mutuality and respect” (p. 132). Brady and Lampert (2007) explained in a similar way, “they need a comfortable learning environment...Furthermore, students want to feel welcome and respected... Often, adults look for learning environments that allow them to work closely with other students, thus providing them with a learning tool with as much informality as possible” (p. 6). Warner (1998) shared his opinion,

What adult education... is about is a process that leads to genuine change that because it is more respectful, more genuinely participative and works with people on a wider, deeper level – such adult education approaches beat the ‘criminogenic’ ones even on the latter’s terms. (p. 128)

The learning environment should also be caring (Hollingsworth, 2008, p. 111; Wright, 2004, pp. 195 - 203), consistent (Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 13; Duguid, 2008, p. 115; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Muth, 2008, p. 40), constructive (Behan, 2008, p. 123; Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 139; Muth, 2008, pp. 43-44), and engaging (Behan, 2008, pp. 121 - 132; Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 57; Costelloe & Warner, 2008, p. 139; Guttman, 2008, p. 23; Mathur, 2009, p. 169). Wright (2004) explained why caring is so important for the correctional classroom. “Caring is the foundation of a school environment. Without nurturing and caring, the school would be quiet and unproductive” (pp. 197-198). Then he proceeded with a warning to those teachers who use caring to build relationships within the classroom:

It is a difficult task to balance on this relational midpoint, because in caring classrooms, affection for students, warmth, cooperation, and respect are evident.

Teachers, especially women who care, are empathetic; they respond to the call to care, and these relationships open up possibilities of manipulation. (p. 200)

In addition to caring Dugiud (2008) recommended, "...keeping the overall program both innovative and consistent" (p 115). Muth (2008) reflected on his experiences, "despite my progress finding footing over this first year, the struggle to create a stable, consistent learning environment was in perpetual conflict with the prime security mission of the prison" (p. 40). Caring and consistent classrooms should also be engaging. Behan (2008) suggested, "we should engage in a vigorous and challenging debate about our position within the prison system and how educators and students might become reflective agents for change within the educational sphere, the penal system and throughout wider society" (p. 121). He continued, "to merely provide a school and teachers will not necessarily create the opportunity for a constructive learning experience. It, therefore, challenges us as educators to explore how to foster a positive learning environment in such an institution" (p. 123).

The learning environment should also be honest (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 13, 57-58; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Muth, 2008, pp. 43-44; Wright, 2004, p. 203), positive (Behan, 2008, pp. 121 - 131; Brady & Lampert, 2007, p. 49; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Muth, 2008, p. 40; Werner, 2008, p. 14; Wright, 2004, p. 195), transformative (Behan, 2008, p. 121; Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 3-4; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Guttman, 2008, p. 23; Wright, 2008, pp. ix - xx) and stimulating (Brady & Lampert, 2007, pp. 3-4; Gehring, 2007, pp. 310-327; Penwell, 2008, p. 58). "A positive nurturing environment is the basis for a classroom where there is hope in the future; hope that encourages inmates to believe in themselves, to set goals and believe that they can achieve academically and change the direction of their lives" (Wright, 2004, p. 195). "...A prisoner who has been successful in an examination or has had an inspirational learning experience is a more positive advocate for the school than any advertisement by a dynamic teacher or an outstanding program" (Behan, 2008, p. 131). Under the above situations, a positive educational climate is easily maintained. It is when the negative attributes of the institution infiltrates the learning environment that progress is difficult to preserve. Muth shares how the penal atmosphere can collide with that of the school, when penitentiary activities such as lock

downs, shakedowns and other investigations interrupt the educational process. "In an environment where positive momentum depended on the constant coaxing of mercurial classroom dynamics, these almost-constant interruptions were destructive and frustrating" (Muth, 2008, p. 40). Behan (2008) suggested the following to counteract the negative intrusions, "As correctional educators we should not only reflect on prison as an institution, but also give ourselves the space and opportunity to explore how education can achieve a positive transformation ..." (p. 121). Wright (2008) explained how this can affect new correctional teachers. "Prison cultures infuse teaching cultures in prisons, not totally absorbing them, but transforming them sufficiently so as to create culture shock for the novice teacher" (p. ix). Guttman (2008) added her experience, "...I have realized my best tool for transforming minds and hearts is to be fully awake, fully present with my students...But it is arduous sometimes to address all the concerns of one moment, keeping students both safe and growing" (p. 23). Brady and Lampert (2007) commented on why correctional educators continue to try to improve education for offenders. "We teach to make connections... We teach for stimulation... We teach in order to relate to peoples' minds and hearts... We teach to transform..." (pp. 3-4).

In summary, the literature suggests the following as the characteristics of a successful learning environment in an institutional setting:

- caring
- collaborative
- consistent
- constructive
- cooperative
- democratic
- encouraging
- engaging
- flexible
- honest
- meaningful
- positive
- reflective
- rehabilitative
- relevant
- respect
- safe
- stimulating
- supportive
- transformative

## Conclusion

Teachers who are not familiar with their students' needs will not be effective.

The case for the relation of theory to practice is evident in the general education literature. Stigler and Heibert (2000) for example, argue that teacher quality directly influences student learning; therefore, it belongs high on educational reform platforms. Quality correctional educators are important because America incarcerates large numbers of [individuals], with the hope that they will change their behavior and not re-offend. In addition, academic research of the general education field could inform professionalization of correctional education. (Hollingsworth, 2008, p. 106)

Additional research supports the previous statement and adds comments on how open to professional development correctional teachers are.

In their survey of all fifty state departments of education, Wolford, Purnell and Brooks (1998) suggested that researchers and educators continued to ask for instruction and special certification. Educators remained interested in professional development to such an extent that, according to Wolford, Purnell and Brooks' survey, its lack was one of the ten most significant barriers to the delivery of quality education in correctional settings. (Hollingsworth, 2008, p. 109)

"Like their counterparts in general education (Kvarfordt et al., 2005), teachers in correctional settings desire professional development that is relevant to their setting and needs" (Mathur, 2009, p. 168). "Effective professional development can provide educators in correctional settings with the training they need to bring genuine and lasting improvement to the institutions they serve" (p. 167). Habits of new and established teachers can hinder the educational process, through continued professional development and training new habits can be formed and a better product delivered.

The need for teacher preparation programs specifically designed to train individuals to work as correctional educators is well documented (e.g., Ashcroft, 1999; Bullock, 1994; C/SET, 1985; EDJJ, 2005; Wright, 2005). Although equally

important, the need for on-going and systemic professional development opportunities for existing correctional educators is mentioned less frequently. (Mathur, 2009, p. 166)

Organized guidelines for training may be able to redirect the well intentioned correctional educator, so that curriculum and teaching strategies are the most effective for the program, teacher and student.

Conventional school cultures are perpetuated by public school teachers who teach the way they were taught (which can be either positive or negative). Correctional educators experience more freedom: Untrained for the job, educators are ideally positioned to adopt models of practice that emphasize innovation and transformation, if their professional development program underscores these principles. (Wright, 2008, p. xviii)

Further research into professional development for correctional education exposes gaps in teacher training. One of the major categories of weakness is in the subject of special education. The literature reveals these voids as a concern for the best interest of the students because over worked teachers who lack training at the level and in the subject areas they are teaching do not benefit the learner, as it would if the student had a fully qualified and trained teacher.

Regardless of their educational knowledge, experience or expertise, teachers entering correctional settings are seldom prepared for the “culture shock” (Wright, 2005) of working within a secure care facility, or the subsequent unique demands of serving [the] detained, adjudicated, and incarcerated... Many are equally unprepared for the predominance of individuals with significant learning and /or behavioral problems they will be required to serve, with as many as a third possessing no training about persons with disabilities (Kvarfordt, Purcell, & Shannon, 2004). Compounding the problem, correctional education teachers who are not certified in the area of special education often have little understanding of the role special education plays in their instruction, believing it to fall outside their responsibility and means (Moody, 2003):...Therefore, if

professional development is to succeed in increasing student success by improving educator abilities, any comprehensive professional development for correctional educators must teach them how to incorporate the provision of special education services. (Mathur, 2009, pp. 165-166)

[It was]...Moody's [study] (2003) who established that 30 percent to 70 percent of [offenders] in correctional facilities qualified for special education; however, most educators working in those facilities have not been trained in special education procedure or interventions. All of these researchers' work implied a need to prepare correctional educators for classroom instruction methods that are implicit in the special characteristics of corrections students and all agreed that more empirical studies were needed. (Hollingsworth, 2008, p 108)

The Oklahoma DOC Education Department could benefit from the development of master teacher competencies at appropriate levels to use as requirements for professional development standards within their department. Without proper direction in professional development, there is no coherence between facilities and programs, teachers lack direction and motivation to keep up with new curriculum and technology, and they often fail to update their coursework to aid offenders/students in their ultimate goal - success upon release from prison. "...I dare consider the Adult Basic Education path...a noble calling. There is much work to be done. It [the ABE path] cries out for science and art to embrace it, study it, notate it, reshape it, and refine it" (Wright, 2008, p. 40).

### **Summary**

This review of literature consisted of the examination of issues related to correctional education in general and its professional development. Additionally, the areas of internal teacher traits and successful learning environments in an institutional setting were reviewed. Other work concerning professional research related to the topic of correctional education programs was also included.

The goal of this study was to link these factors into a list of internal teacher traits and successful learning environments survey that will eventually allow a comprehensive assessment

of the present system of professional development and the establishment of master teacher competencies in the Oklahoma DOC Education Department. The ratings of internal teacher traits and successful learning environments in an institutional setting, comparison of behaviorist and constructivist philosophical classroom practices and the demographics of the population surveyed are all components of the instrument. This provides opportunities to compare and contrast successful characteristics and practices, and determine needed modifications in Oklahoma's correctional education program.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Research Methodology and Design**

This chapter describes the procedures used to conduct the study. The procedures introduced are data collection, creation of the survey instrument, and the development of the travel itinerary. A description of the research design and a review of the theoretical framework of the study are also included.

### **Research Design and Theoretical Framework**

This inquiry, using survey and interview techniques in a multi-method design, demonstrated both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Accordingly, the study was divided into two parts identified by the researcher as Process I and Process II.

#### **Process I – Quantitative Instrument**

- Section One – Ratings
  - Part A - Internal Teacher Traits
  - Part B - Successful Learning Environments
- Section Two – Continuums
  - Part A - Internal Teacher Traits
  - Part B - Successful Learning Environments
- Section Three – Demographics of Oklahoma Correctional Educators
  - Part A – Personal Demographics
  - Part B – Occupational Profiles

- Part C – Certification Information
- Part D – Training

#### Process II – Qualitative Process

- Section Four – Permission to contact to be interviewed  
(Face-to-Face interviews were completed as appropriate)

The first process creates the quantitative portion of the study. A quantitative view in correctional education is exhibited by the push for numerical information on institutional data to measure results. The survey instrument was used to gather data that were analyzed with descriptive statistics. The instrument included four major sections. The first three sections contained information related to the quantitative data in Process I. Section four will be discussed in the qualitative portion of Process II. Section one of Process I identified possible internal teacher traits and successful learning environments, suggested by the literature related to teacher job performance in both public and correctional schools. Items on the survey were for determining internal teacher traits and suggestions on successful learning environments in an institutional setting. Section two of Process I compared correctional educator's perceptions on a continuum of Traditional/ Behaviorist and Facilitative/ Constructivist practices in correctional learning environments and internal teacher traits. Section three of Process I revealed the demographic descriptions of the population being surveyed.

To further glean knowledge related to this project, Process II builds upon the information collected in Process I for the qualitative component of the study. Section four of the survey, requested permission to contact participants from Process I for follow-up interviews related to the results of aggregate data in Process I. Qualitative interview questions were utilized to further explore perceptions of correctional educators on internal teacher traits and suggestions on successful learning environments in an institutional setting. The questions encouraged the participants to express their opinions, elaborate on perceptions and clarify feelings on the subject matter discussed.

Before going further, a reminder of the theoretical frame of the research is in order. Through the use of survey items, open ended questions, and interview questions, constructivist

epistemologies with a social constructivist view were presented. Although prison environments, as well as many correctional education classrooms, follow behaviorist models, the constructivist perspective which focuses, predominantly, on group settings and cultures, may be a better option for the institutionalized student. Within this perspective meaningful reality is multiple, constructed and experienced as real. The knowledge gained is expressed in generalizations formed by similarities and patterns.

Constructivism stresses learner inquiry, natural curiosity, engaging in dialogue with other students and the teacher to help provide multiple representations, cooperative learning, real-world situations in context and authentic life experiences. Acknowledging learners' past experiences and applying these to the construction and consideration of new knowledge and skills is important. The approach is inherently student-centered; people and processes are considered to be more important than the subject taught. (Costelloe & Warner, p. 139)

Constructivists believe that they each construct their own view of the world based on their perceptions of it. "The goal of research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Because perception and observation is deficient, our constructions may be faulty. Researchers never achieve reality perfectly, but they can approach it. Social constructivism is a compelling and adaptive flow of social activity observed between individuals or groups. The participants modify their activities and their reactions to those activities based upon the actions of other players within the group. For example, actors in a situation attach meaning to an event, translate the actions of others involved and act according to their interpretation.

Teachers acquire knowledge by communication within groups. They modify their behavior, speech, interaction patterns, curriculum and technology based on the success or failure of their students. "Behavior is determined by interaction between the individual and the environment and determines factors such as job satisfaction, stability and achievement, educational choice, and personal competence and susceptibility to influence" (Patton and McMahon, 2006, p. 30). Taking this view into account, the researcher was looking for patterns

and meaning from a survey instrument to gain understanding of internal teacher traits and successful learning environments in order to magnify the effectiveness of correctional educators in their unique environment. Based on the results of the study, what is learned about previous practices may be that they do not fit the current situation well and so they need to be revised to better reflect reality.

## **Procedures**

### **Preparation for Collecting Data**

Developing section one of Process I was the first step to assembling the survey instrument in this study. Part A of section one was based upon current literature about the precise skills a correctional educator might exhibit to be effective in an institutional environment. Continuing the first step, the researcher developed Part B of Process I based upon current literature about the elements that characterize a successful learning environment in an institutional setting. Section two of the survey also included two parts which compared philosophical practices within the DOC academic education program. Part A of this section, also based on current literature, was used to reflect where, on a continuum, Oklahoma DOC academic programs fell between Traditional/ Behaviorist and Facilitative/ Constructivist classroom practices in learning environments. Part B focused on the same continuum based on internal teacher traits. Following the first two survey sections, section three, a demographic page was developed. The demographics of the population included Part A - personal demographics, Part B - organizational profiles, Part C - certification information, and Part D - training directly related to correctional education within the last year (2010) and within the last three years (2007-2010). The last page of the survey packet, section four, was a contact information sheet for those correctional educators who volunteered to take part in Process II of the study.

After the survey instrument was completed, it was piloted using a small sample of university educators, public K-12 teachers, and retired correctional educators. The reason for the pilot study was to maintain the integrity within the study. The pilot investigation determined that the directions and questions used in the survey were easy to comprehend and follow (usability), and measured what they were meant to measure (content validity). The survey instrument was

not modified after consulting the panel of experts. Next the researcher obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix E) to do the data collection, as well as securing support from the Superintendent of Schools, Pam Humphrey; Deputy Director of Treatment and Rehabilitative Services, Ken Holloway; and Programs Administrator, Clint Castleberry from the Oklahoma State Department of Corrections.

Next, the researcher contacted a few of the facility principals to find out the best way to schedule the survey collaboration. Each principal suggested that the researcher tell them a date and time she would be there, and they would make arrangements. The schedule was developed by taking a map of Oklahoma, locating all of the facilities to be visited, and creating a realistic route to reach each destination with plenty of time to administer the survey during a regularly scheduled work day. Each facility in the state of Oklahoma was contacted to secure participation of all education faculty, and principals were informed of the dates, timelines and purpose of the study. The facilities were initially notified one month prior to the scheduled survey date. The researcher then emailed the principals and as many correctional educators as possible one week prior to the scheduled dates to remind them of the upcoming visit.

Next, the survey packets and consent forms were copied. Then the researcher prepared four envelopes in which the data would be stored and secured after completion by the participants. The envelopes were labeled "consent forms", "demographics", "survey", and "contact information". Individual facility envelopes were not used so that confidentiality of survey answers could be better protected.

The researcher was physically present for the completion of the survey portion of the project. No mail or email was involved. The researcher visited the Education Departments of the following facilities:

Bill Johnson Correctional Center (BJCC)

Dick Conner Correctional Center (DCCC)

Eddie Warrior Correctional Center (EWCC)

Howard McLeod Correctional Center (HMCC)

Jackie Brannon Correctional Center (JBCC)

James Crabtree Correctional Center (JCCC)  
Jess Dunn Correctional Center (JDCC)  
Jim E Hamilton Correctional Center (JEHCC)  
Joseph Harp Correctional Center (JHCC)  
John Lilley Correctional Center (JLCC)  
Lexington Correctional Center (LCC)  
Mack Alford Correctional Center (MACC)  
Mabel Bassett Correctional Center (MBCC)  
Northeast Oklahoma Correctional Center (NOCC)  
Oklahoma State Reformatory (OSR)  
Oklahoma State Penitentiary (OSP)  
William S. Key Correctional Center (WKCC)

#### **Data Collection Week**

**Travel.** The week of scheduled data collection began on Sunday October 10, 2010. The researcher traveled to Poteau, Oklahoma (213 miles) to stay the night in preparation for beginning data collection at Jim E. Hamilton Correctional Center (JEHCC) Monday morning. Even though the researcher was on annual leave, all surveys collected were completed during the work hours of the participants' normal work day. The following is the itinerary the researcher pursued in the collection of data for this study.

- Monday October 11, 2010
  - Traveled from Poteau to Jim E. Hamilton Correctional Center in Hodgen, Oklahoma (34 miles) at 7:30 am for two correctional educators;
  - Traveled from JEHCC to Howard McLeod Correctional Center in Atoka, Oklahoma (107 miles) to meet at 9:00 am for 4 correctional educators;
  - Traveled from HMCC to Mack Alford Correctional Center in Stringtown, Oklahoma (36 miles) to meet at 11:30 am for 3 correctional educators;

- Traveled from MACC to Oklahoma State Penitentiary and Jackie Brannon Correctional Center in McAlester, Oklahoma (43 miles) to meet at 1:30 pm for 6 correctional educators; and
  - Traveled from OSP and JBCC to Muskogee, Oklahoma (66 miles) to stay the night in preparation of beginning data collection at Jess Dunn Correctional Center and Eddie Warrior Correctional Center on Tuesday morning. Total mileage for Monday was 286 miles.
- Tuesday October 12, 2010
- Traveled from Muskogee to Jess Dunn Correctional Center and Eddie Warrior Correctional Center in Taft, Oklahoma (11 miles) to meet at 7:00 am for 6 correctional educators;
  - At this point the researcher received word that the correctional educator she was going to meet with at Northeast Oklahoma Correctional Center was not going to be at the facility because of family issues. There was only one correctional educator from this facility so the researcher did not travel to this location;
  - Travel from JDCC and EWCC to Dick Conner Correctional Center in Hominy, Oklahoma (110 miles) to meet at 1:30 for 4 correctional educators;
  - Travel from DCCC to John Lilley Correctional Center in Boley, Oklahoma (86 miles) to meet at 3:30 pm for 3 correctional educators;
  - Travel from JLCC to Blanchard, Oklahoma (95 miles) to home to stay the night and continue data collection at Bill Johnson Correctional Center on Wednesday. Total mileage for Tuesday was 202 miles.
- Wednesday October 13, 2010
- Travel from Blanchard to Bill Johnson Correctional Center in Alva, Oklahoma (173 miles) to meet at 8:00 am for 5 correctional educators;
  - Travel from BJCC to James Crabtree Correctional Center in Helena, Oklahoma (41 miles) to meet at 9:30 am for 3 correctional educators;

- Travel from JCCC to William S Key Correctional Center in Fort Supply, Oklahoma (90 miles) to meet at 11:30 am for 2 correctional educators;
  - Travel from WKCC to Oklahoma State Reformatory in Granite, Oklahoma (124 miles) to meet at 3:00 pm for 9 correctional educators; and
  - Travel from OSR to Blanchard, Oklahoma (111 miles) to home to stay the night and continue data collection at Lexington Correctional Center and Joseph Harp Correctional Center on Thursday. Total mileage for Wednesday was 339 miles.
- Thursday October 14, 2010
- Travel from Blanchard to Lexington Correctional Center and Joseph Harp Correctional Center in Lexington, Oklahoma (48 miles) to meet at 8:00 am for 6 correctional educators;
  - Travel from LCC and JHCC to Mabel Bassett Correctional Center in McLoud, Oklahoma (60 miles) to meet at 3:00 pm for 5 correctional educators; and
  - Travel from MBCC to Blanchard, Oklahoma (52 miles) to home. Total mileage for Thursday was 160 miles.

Figure 2 displays the distribution of correctional facilities across the State of Oklahoma. Four day total mileage was over 1200 miles.

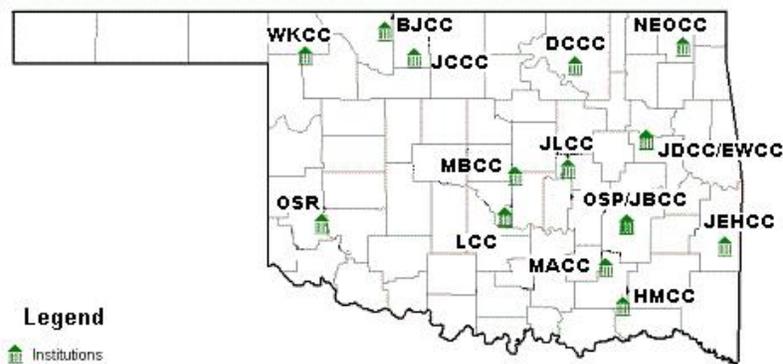


Figure 2. Department of Corrections Facility Locations.

### **Administration of Survey Instrument.**

**1. *Selecting participants.*** All Department of Corrections correctional educators were solicited.

**2. *Inviting participants to Participate.*** The participants were invited to participate by reading them the same solicitation script (Appendix A).

**3. *Administering the Survey.*** After the researcher reached the first facility, she contacted the site supervisor. The supervisor contacted the correctional educators to be surveyed, and the correctional educators gathered in a classroom or meeting room. The researcher introduced herself, explained what the visit was about, and what was being requested of the correctional educators. She distributed consent forms (Appendix B) and gave correctional educators time to read, ask questions and sign consent forms. *Every participant was free to refuse to participate or not complete the survey.* All DOC correctional educators in attendance at the time the survey was distributed participated in the data collection process. No one who was present refused to sign the consent form or fill out the survey document. However, three correctional educators were absent on the survey administration date.

The participants put the signed consent forms into the envelope labeled consent forms. Afterward, the researcher distributed the survey packet (Appendix C) which included five pages of survey items, a one page demographics sheet, and a contact information sheet stapled together. The researcher asked that the participants review the survey packet for clarity before filling out responses. The participants were informed that the researcher can ONLY answer questions that clarify instructions or procedures, or that clarify the meaning of questions. All procedural questions were answered to assure the participant understood how to respond to each question. No assistance was given to the participants in any way in making decisions about response choices or content. No personal ideas or opinions were given to any participant. The response sheet was then completed. Each participant was allowed as much time as s/he needed to finish the survey. Most concluded within about 20 minutes.

When each participant had accomplished the task, s/he was asked to quickly look over the responses to be sure every item had been answered as desired. The participants were asked

to detach the demographics and contact information sheets from the survey and place them into different envelopes. The survey responses were deposited in an envelope marked survey; the demographic information in an envelope marked demographics; and those who volunteered for the following interview component placed their contact information in an envelope marked contact information. No identification was put on the survey or demographic sheets prior to placement into the separate envelopes. All survey sheets from all facilities were stored in the same three separate envelopes so that confidentiality of responses from individual facilities was not compromised.

The participants were asked if they had any questions about the research or the survey. These conversations were not recorded, but questions such as, length of time to finish, publishing, graduation dates, etc. were asked by participants after the data was secured in the envelopes. All questions about the research project were answered at this point, but no surveys were returned to the participants for any reason. The participants were thanked for participating in the research. The researcher collected the four separate envelopes consisting of signed consent forms, demographics, surveys, and contact information, and exited the facility. The paperwork was secured in the separate envelopes and stored in either a locked vehicle while the researcher was traveling for data collection or a locked file cabinet at the researcher's home once data collection was completed. The envelopes stayed in the locked file cabinet, unopened, until the researcher was ready to begin data analysis. This procedure was followed at each of the facilities over the four day period.

After the fourth day of data collection, the researcher tried to reach the three correctional educators who missed the survey engagement. The researcher waited one week for responses from the three correctional educators. With no response, the researcher then decided to begin analysis of the data gathered from the 57 participants. The collection of data was done in two separate parts. In order to clearly distinguish between the two methods of data collection, the researcher refers to Process I and Process II.

#### **4. Process I – Quantitative Data Analysis.**

*Population.* This was a census study; therefore, there was no sampling process. All Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were solicited to respond to the survey. In 2006, there were 64 of 97 approved teaching positions filled in the Department of Corrections (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In December 2009, due to budget cuts the DOC dismissed all probationary and temporary employees. As a result, in 2010, there were 57 DOC correctional educator participants of a possible 63 (90.5%). Three correctional educators were missed due to family issues. A correctional educator retired one day prior to the scheduled survey date. The other two were the principal investigator and the Superintendent of Schools. The principal investigator is an Oklahoma DOC correctional educator. John Creswell (2009) warned about “backyard” research which “involves studying the researcher’s own organization, or friends, or immediate work setting. This often leads to compromises in the researcher’s ability to disclose information and raises difficult power issues” (p. 177). All data were collected in October 2010.

*Instrumentation.* Items on the survey were for demographics of current Oklahoma correctional educators, as well as effective internal teacher traits and suggestions on components of successful learning environments for incarcerated students.

- Variables.*
- Internal teacher traits
  - Elements of successful learning environments
  - Demographics

*Data.* The researcher retrieved the envelope marked demographics from the locked cabinet. The researcher worked with one envelope at a time, so that the data from each section of the survey could not be linked together. The first data analyzed were from the demographics envelope. After demographic data analysis was completed the envelope was stored and secured in the locked file cabinet. The second envelope labeled survey was opened to analyze the data. Again, after the researcher was finished analyzing the information, the envelope was stored and secured in the locked cabinet. The consent forms and contact information envelopes stayed in the locked cabinet.

The data consisted of 4 sections. Section one was divided into two parts: Part A, the rating of internal teacher traits and Part B, the rating of learning environments. Section one consisted of 51 items about internal teacher traits and learning environments. Part A of section one contained 30 items referring to internal teacher traits. Items 1 – 29 were terms suggested by the literature related to the specific traits needed by a correctional educator to be effective with incarcerated adult students. The participants were asked to rate the traits according to the level of importance the correctional educator felt they represent to a successful correctional educator. The response options given in the survey ranged from 1 = Not at all important; 2 = minimally important; 3 = somewhat important; 4 = important; and 5 = very important. The correctional educators were asked to circle the number that corresponded to their feelings. Item 30 was an open ended question in which the correctional educator was asked if they wanted to add any traits to the list. Part B of section one contained 21 items referring to learning environments. Items 1-20 were terms suggested by the literature related to the elements that characterize a successful learning environment in an institutional setting. The participants were asked to rate the learning environment according to the level of importance the correctional educator felt they represent to a successful learning environment. The response options given in the survey ranged from 1 = Not at all important; 2 = minimally important; 3 = somewhat important; 4 = important; and 5 = very important. The correctional educators were asked to circle the number that corresponded to their feelings. Item 21 was an open ended question in which the correctional educator was asked if they wanted to add any elements of a successful learning environment to the list.

Section two was a comparison of traditional/ behaviorist classroom practices versus facilitative/ constructivist classroom practices in teaching environments and for teacher traits. Section two was divided into two parts that consisted of 33 items about Part A - the teaching environment and Part B - teacher traits. Part A of section two contained 16 items referring to the teaching environment. Participants were asked to place a dot on a continuum between traditional/ behaviorist practices and facilitative/ constructivist practices in which they felt DOC education functions. A dot placed near the number one referred to the traditional/ behaviorist side of the continuum; a dot placed near the middle of the continuum at number three referred to a mix of

both traditional/ behaviorist and facilitative/ constructivist practices; and a dot placed near the number five referred to the facilitative/ constructivist side of the continuum. Part B of section two contained 17 items referring to teacher traits. Participants were asked to place a dot on a continuum between traditional/ behaviorist practices and facilitative/ constructivist practices in which they felt Oklahoma correctional educators function. A dot placed near the number one referred to the traditional/ behaviorist side of the continuum; a dot placed near the middle of the continuum at number three referred to a mix of both traditional/ behaviorist and facilitative/ constructivist practices; and a dot placed near the number five referred to the facilitative/ constructivist side of the continuum.

Section three concerned the demographics of the population and consisted of 15 questions divided into four parts: Part A referred to personal demographics of the population; Part B described the occupational profiles of the population; Part C introduced certification information; and Part D outlined the training received that was directly related to correctional teaching in the last year (2010) and the past three years (2007-2010). Demographic information was used only to describe, as a group, the participants in the study. Only the aggregate results of the survey, pages 1 through 5, were used in Process II.

Part A contained questions 1, 2, 8, and 9. Question 1 referred to the participant's gender. Question 2 pertained to the participant's age group. Question 8 designated the college/ university attended by the participants. Question 9 specified the highest degree the participant earned. The participant was asked to circle the responses that applied to them in question 1; the age group: (20-29), (30-39), (40-49), or (50 or above) they belonged to in question 2; and the highest degree they had earned: (Bachelor, Masters, Doctoral or other) on question 9. On question 8 they were asked to write in their response. Part B contained questions 3-5, 10-13, and 15. Question 3 indicated the courses the correctional educator was currently teaching. Question 4 referred to the number of years the correctional educator had taught with DOC. Question 5 pertained to the total number of years of teaching experience both public and correctional. Question 10 submitted the average class size the correctional educator taught. Question 11 designated the security level in which the correctional educator teaches. Question 12 was the name of the facility where the

correctional educator works. Question 13 was the number of teaching staff that work at their facility. Question 15 specified the level of job satisfaction of the correctional educator. The participants were asked to circle their response on question 3 indicating Literacy, ABE, GED, or college; question 10 average class size: (under 5), (6-10), (11-20), (21-30), or (30 or more); question 11 security level: (maximum, medium or minimum); and job satisfaction on a 10 point scale. They were also asked to write in responses on questions 4, 5, 12, and 13. Part C contained questions 6 and 7. Question 6 introduced the certification areas in which the correctional educator was certified. Question 7 specified the states in which the correctional educator was certified. The participants were asked to circle their response in question 6 for Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School, and write in responses for Secondary, K-12 or other. They were also asked to write in a response to question 7. Part D contained question 14 which referred to the training the correctional educator had received directly related to correctional education in the last year (2010) and the last three years (2007-2010). The participants were asked to write in their responses.

Analysis of Sections 1 through 3 was achieved in approximately 3 weeks. After the data analysis was completed, the researcher collected the information from the surveys and developed six qualitative questions to be used in Process II.

#### ***5. Process II – Qualitative Data Analysis.***

*Sample.* The participants were selected on a volunteer/ self-selection basis, by completing Section four of the survey, giving the researcher permission to contact them. Creswell (2009) stated, "The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (p. 178). Although this would be ideal, it was not possible in this study. Given the logistics of the study, purposeful selection of participants or sites was not possible. Eight participants from five different facilities offered to participate. All data was collected during November 2010.

*Instrumentation.* Section four of the survey packet supplied to all participants concerned the contact information of those participants willing to answer follow-up questions about Process I

data analysis results. Name, location, and contact preference of volunteers was recorded after the survey and demographic information were stored in their respective envelopes. This information was kept in an envelope separate from the completed survey and demographic sheets.

*Data.* The qualitative phase of this study consisted of the responses to six open ended questions. The questions were based on the results of the survey information gathered in Process I. All results were reported in aggregate form, so that confidentiality of the participants' answers was maintained. The participants were informed that they might be quoted in this study, but their names, facility names and other identifying information would not be used. Participants were given interview questions prior to the meeting so they could digest the information and develop quality responses (Appendix D). The researcher reviewed the answers with the participants to clarify their positions and to make sure quotations were correctly formulated. The researcher compiled data assigning pseudonyms/ numbers to the participants.

The intention of the researcher was to conduct as many interviews as possible in a face-to-face manner; however, this was not possible for all participants. If participants were not able to meet for a face-to-face interview, then the researcher accommodated them by conducting the interview via the telephone to gain as much information as possible. For convenience of both the participants and the researcher, the interviews were conducted, throughout the day, at a DOC Correctional Educator meeting held Thursday, November 18, 2010. Six of the eight participants were present; the other two participants were interviewed via telephone on Friday, November 19 and Tuesday, November 23, 2010. The participants were engaged approximately 20 minutes. Interviews were recorded via cassette tapes and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. A few of the participants answered the questions in written form prior to the interview and brought those responses to the interview. Tapes and any written responses were collected and stored in an envelope separate from the survey and demographic information and kept in a locked file drawer.

After all data were collected, the researcher bundled the surveys and prepared them for interpretation and use in the study. The data obtained was in the form of descriptive numerical ratings as well as some demographic information transcribed into a mathematical format for

analysis. Information gathered was measured through rated items, answers to open ended questions, and face-to-face interviews of current DOC correctional educators.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 consisted of a description of the specific procedures of the study. It first described the processes involved in the data collection. Followed then by, the creation of the survey instrument, the development of the travel itinerary, and the procedures for data collection outlined. A description of the research design and a review of the theoretical framework of the study are also included. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### Findings

This chapter includes the data analysis and interpretation of findings in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of this study. The findings are divided into two processes. The first process provides the data and analysis that addressed the research questions posed for the quantitative component of the study. The second process provides the data and analysis that applied to the questions presented in the qualitative component of the study.

#### **Process I – Quantitative Data and Analysis**

In 2010, there were 57 DOC correctional educator participants of a possible 63 (90.5%). Three correctional educators were missed due to family issues. A correctional educator retired one day prior to the scheduled survey date. The other two correctional educators who did not participate were the primary investigator and the Superintendent of Schools. Data are reported by first describing the population (research question #1), then reporting results of survey questions on Internal Teacher Traits (research question #2), Learning Environments (research question #3) and the Continuum of Teachers' feelings dealing with Behaviorist practices versus Constructivist practices in the classroom (research question #4).

#### ***Research question #1 - What are the demographics of Oklahoma correctional educators?***

The factors relevant to this question were the personal demographics of the participants (gender, age, highest degree earned, colleges attended by state, and Oklahoma colleges attended), occupational profiles (job satisfaction, security level, DOC facility name, grade level taught, class size, teaching multiple grade levels, teaching experience with DOC, and total

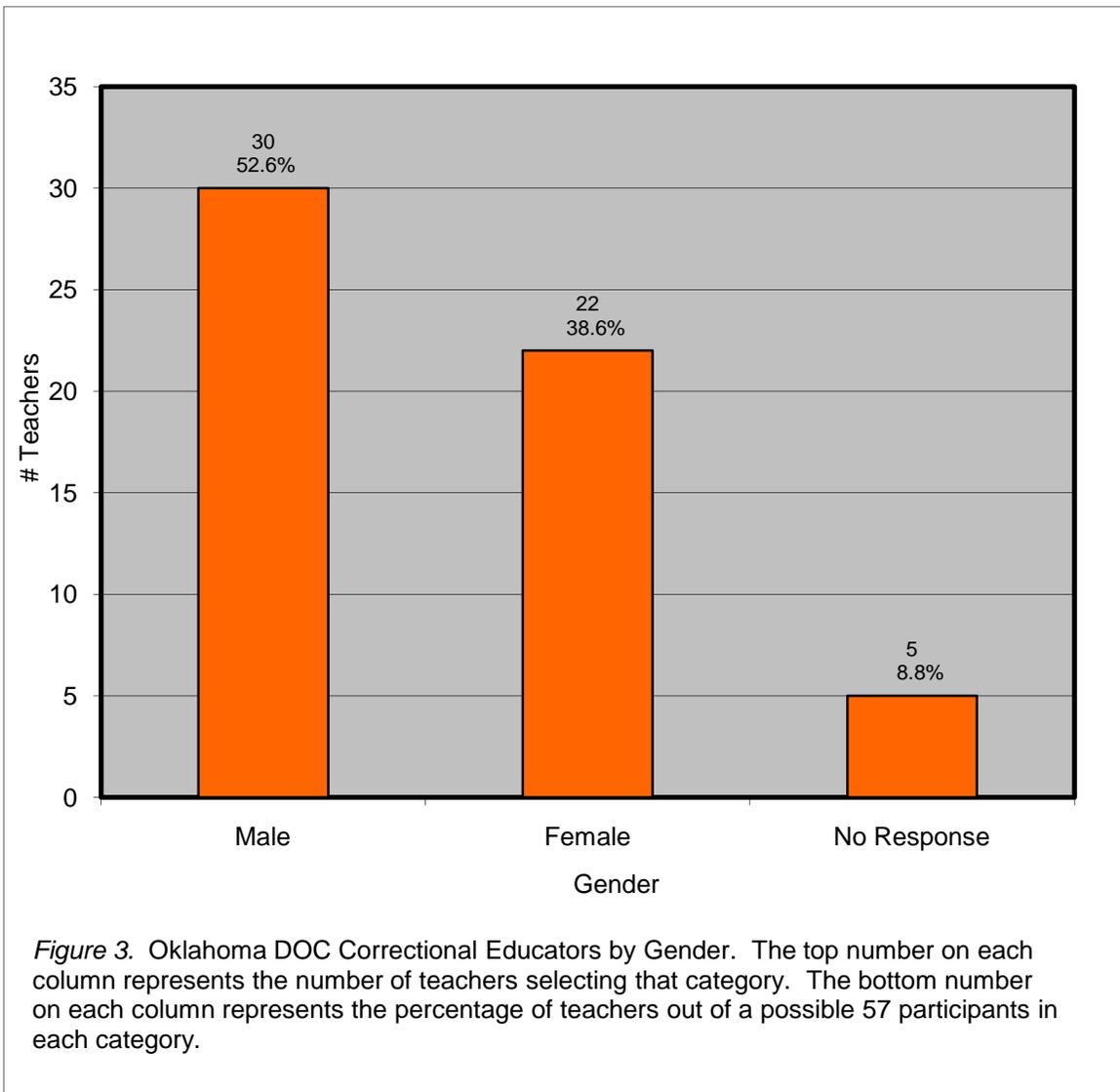
teaching experience [DOC and public]), certification information (certification areas, certification by state, number of correctional educators with multiple certification areas, and subjects correctional educators are certified to teach), and the training directly related to Correctional Education in the last year (2010) and last three years (2007-2010).

### **Personal Demographics**

The personal demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The personal demographic factors of the participants are shown in Figures 3 through 7. Figure 3 refers to gender differences within DOC. It shows 30 of 57 (52.6%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were male, along with 22 of 57 (38.6%) female. Five of 57 (8.8%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators did not mark their gender. Figure 4 indicates the age ranges of the participants as: zero Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were ages 29 or below; 2 of 57 (3.5%) were 30 to 39 years old; 13 of 57 (22.8%) were 40 to 49 years old; and 41 of 57 (72%) were 50 plus years old. One of 57 (1.7%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators did not mark their age group on the survey. Figure 5 reports the highest degrees earned by Oklahoma DOC correctional educators: 16 of 57 (28.1%) have earned a Bachelor degree, 38 of 57 (66.7%) earned a Master degree, 2 of 57 (3.5%) earned a Doctoral degree and 1 of 57 (1.7%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators marked other.

Figure 6 refers to the number of correctional educators attending colleges/ universities by state. Fourteen Oklahoma colleges were attended by Oklahoma DOC correctional educators, 2 schools in Arizona, 3 in Arkansas, 1 in Indiana, 1 in North Carolina, and 1 in Kansas. Figure 7 shows the Oklahoma colleges/ universities attended by Oklahoma DOC correctional educators. Data were recorded by regions defined as the State of Oklahoma divided by Interstate 40 into North and South halves, and divided by Interstate 35 into East and West halves. The Northwest region includes Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU), Panhandle State University (PSU), and Northwestern Oklahoma State University (NWOSU). Nineteen of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (33.3%) attended school in the northwestern region of the state. The Southwest region includes University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO). One of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (1.7%) attended school in the southwestern region of the

state. The Northeastern region includes Oklahoma State University (OSU), University of Central Oklahoma (UCO), Langston University (LU), Northeastern Oklahoma State University (NEOSU), and Oklahoma Christian University (OCU). Twenty-four of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (42.1%) attended school in the northeastern region of the state. The Southeastern region includes East Central University (ECU), University of Oklahoma (OU), Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SEOSU), Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU), and Western Oklahoma State University (WOSU). Twenty-one of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (36.8%) attended school in the southeastern region of the state.



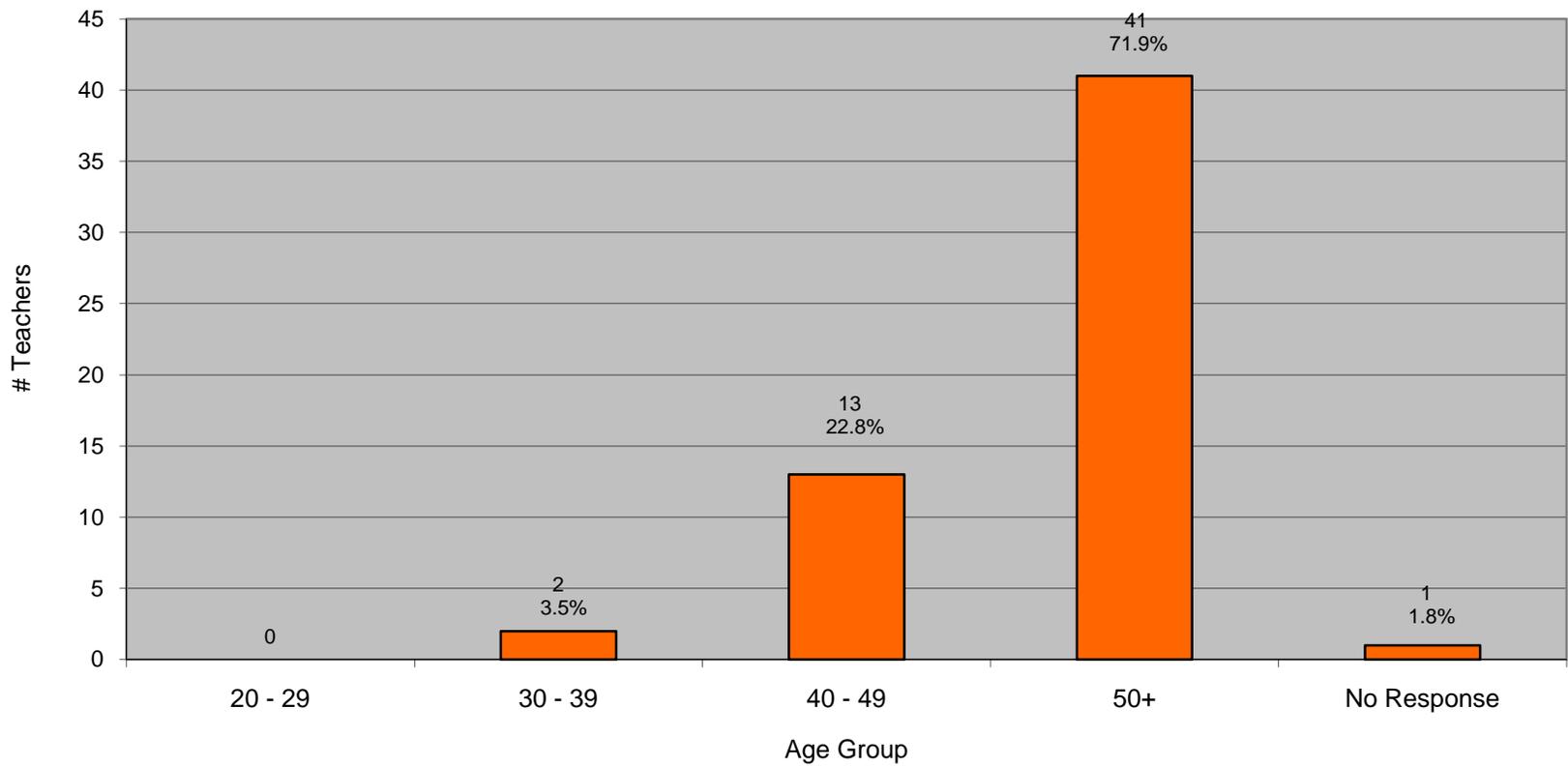


Figure 4. Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators by Age Group. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

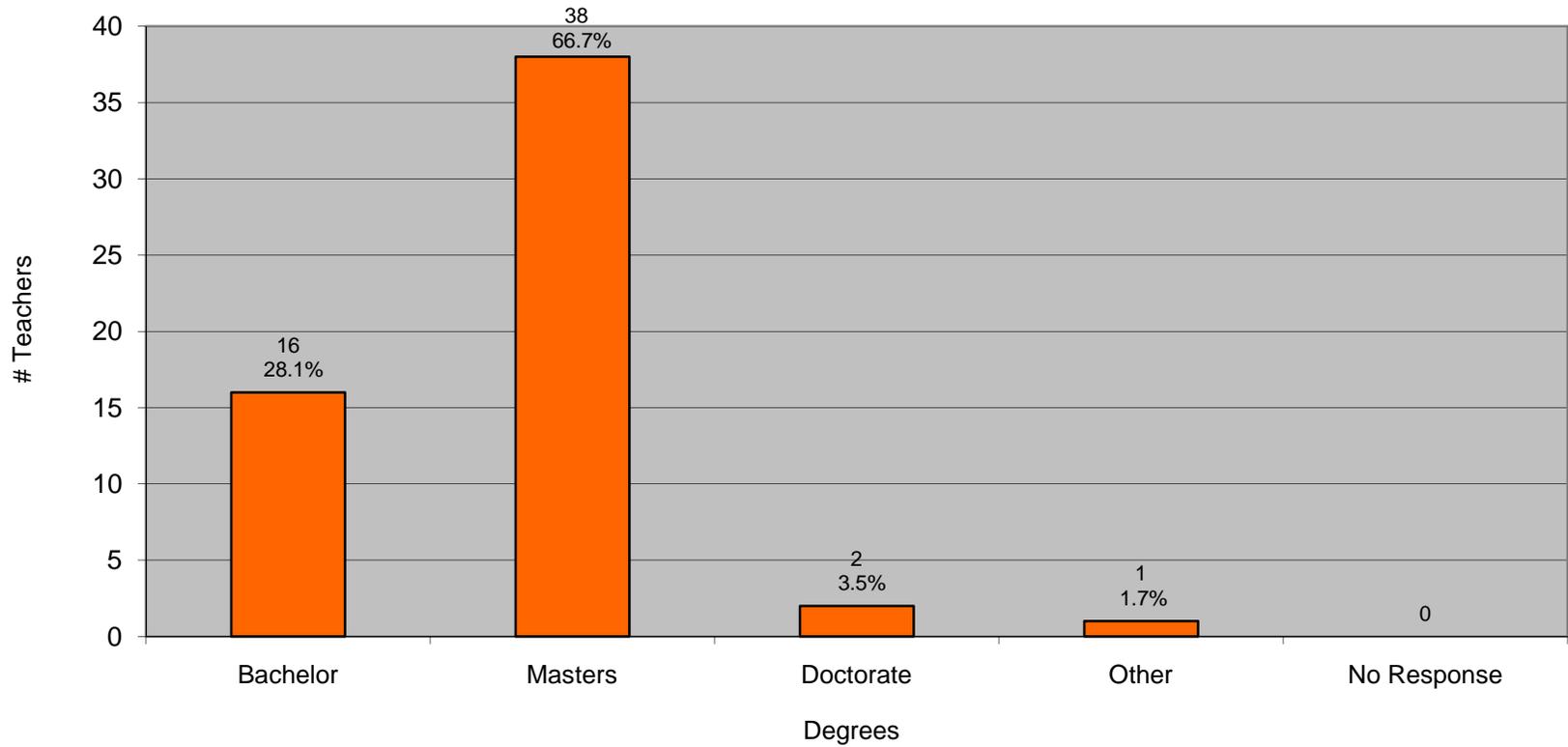


Figure 5. Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators Highest Degrees Earned. Other includes Barbering. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

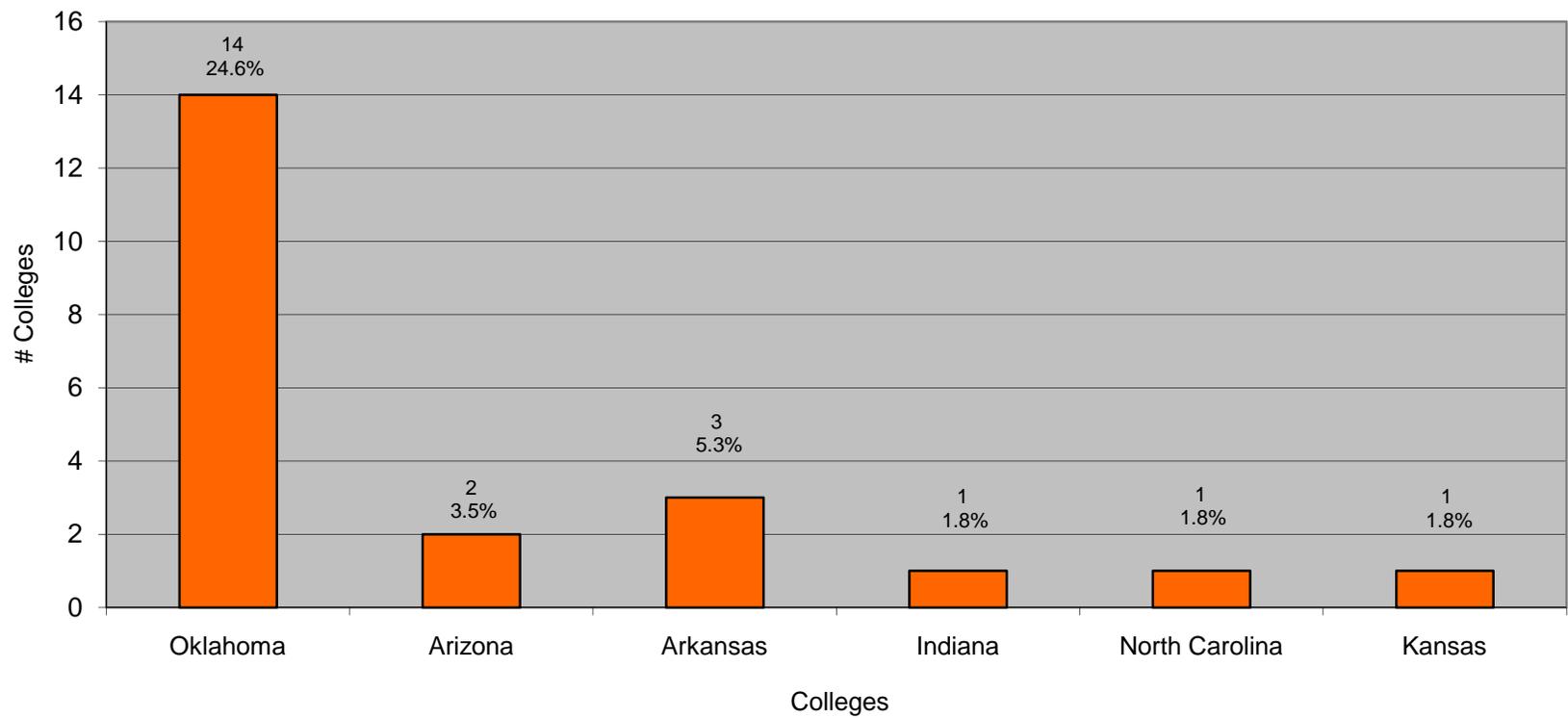
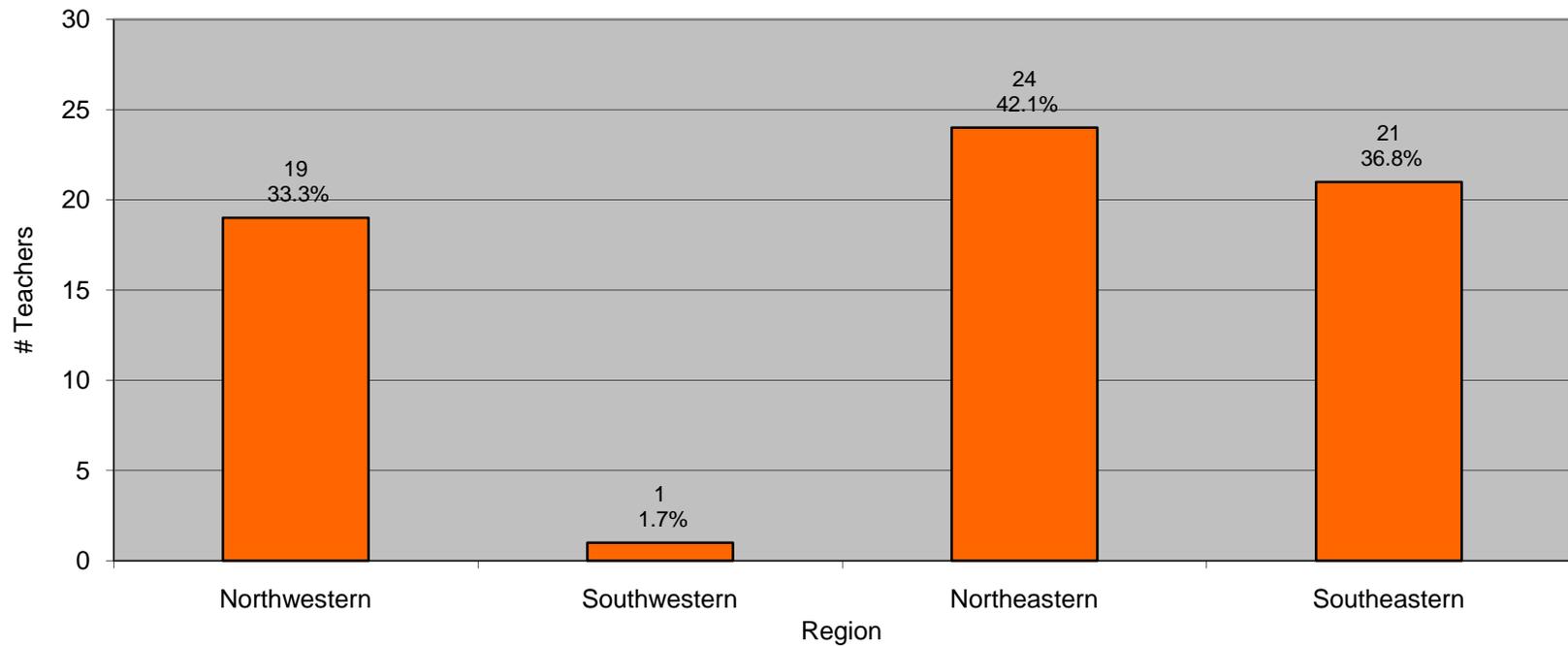


Figure 6. Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators Colleges Attended by State. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.



*Figure 7. Oklahoma DOC Colleges Attended by Region. Divided the State of Oklahoma into 4 quadrants. Northwestern schools include SWOSU, Panhandle State and NWOSU; Southwestern schools include USAO; Northeastern schools include OSU, UCO, Langston, NEOSU and OCU; Southeastern schools include ECU, OU, SEOSU, OBU and WOSC. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.*

## Occupational Profiles

The occupational profiles were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The occupational profiles of the participants are shown in Figures 8 through 15. Figure 8 addressed the job satisfaction of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators. None of the 57 correctional educators surveyed were completely dissatisfied with their jobs, rating it less than 4 out of 10; 18 of 57 (31.6%) had a job satisfaction rating of between 4 and 7 out of 10; and 39 of 57 (68.4%) had a job satisfaction rating of above 7 out of 10. Figure 9 summarizes the number of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators teaching at the different security levels in prisons. 8 of 57 (14%) of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators teach at the Maximum Security Level, 25 of 57 (44%) teach at the Medium Security Level, and 37 of 57 (65%) teach at the Minimum Security Level. Figure 10 shows the number of Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educator participants by facility. Five of 57 (8.8%) from Bill Johnson Correctional Center (BJCC), 4 of 57 (7%) from Dick Conner Correctional Center (DCCC), 3 of 57 (5.3%) from Eddie Warrior Correctional Center (EWCC), 4 of 57 (7%) from Howard McLeod Correctional Center (HMCC), 5 of 57 (8.8%) from Jackie Brannon Correctional Center (JBCC), 3 of 57 (5.3%) from James Crabtree Correctional Center (JCCC), 4 of 57 (7%) from Jess Dunn Correctional Center (JDCC), 2 of 57 (3.5%) from Jim E Hamilton Correctional Center (JEHCC), 3 of 57 (5.3%) from Joseph Harp Correctional Center (JHCC), 3 of 57 (5.3%) from John Lilley Correctional Center (JLCC), 3 of 57 (5.3%) from Lexington Correctional Center (LCC), 3 of 57 (5.3%) from Mack Alford Correctional Center (MACC), 4 of 57 (7%) from Mabel Bassett Correctional Center (MBCC), 8 of 57 (14%) from Oklahoma State Reformatory (OSR), 1 of 57 (1.7%) from Oklahoma State Penitentiary (OSP), 2 of 57 (3.5%) from William S. Key Correctional Center (WKCC).

Figure 11 indicates the grade level equivalent at which each Oklahoma DOC correctional educator teaches. Twenty-six of 57 (45.6%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators teach at the literacy level (0.0 – 5.9 reading level on the TABE); 32 of 57 (56.1%) teach at the ABE level (6.0 – 8.9 reading level on the TABE); 26 of 57 (45.6%) teach at the GED level (9.0 – 12.9 reading level on the TABE); 11 of 57 (19.3%) supervise/ proctor the college level, but are not the instructor of record; and 4 of 57 (7%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were administrators, test

coordinators, librarians and a barber instructor. Seven of 57 (12.3%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators did not mark a grade level taught on the survey. Figure 12 elaborates on the number of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators teaching multiple grade levels. Grade levels were defined as Literacy, ABE, GED and College. Eighteen of 57 (31.6%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators teach only one grade level; 12 of 57 (21.1%) teach two grade levels; 11 of 57 (19.3%) teach three grade levels; and 5 of 57 (8.8%) teach four grade levels. Eleven of 57 (19.3%) reported having no Literacy, ABE or GED classes. Figure 13 describes the average class size of Oklahoma DOC Education classrooms. Oklahoma DOC correctional educators do not have classes with 5 or less students enrolled. Ten of 57 (17.5%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators have approximately 6 to 10 students in their classes; 33 of 57 (58%) have approximately 11 to 20 students; 4 of 57 (7%) have approximately 21 to 30 students; and 5 of 57 (8.8%) have approximately 31 or more students enrolled in classes. Five of 57 (8.8%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators did not mark an average class size on the survey.

Figure 14 documents Oklahoma DOC correctional educators' experience teaching within the prison system. None of the Oklahoma DOC correctional educators have less than 2 years with DOC; 19 of 57 (33.3%) have from 2 to 5 years of DOC teaching experience; 15 of 57 (26.3%) have from 6 to 10 years; 9 of 57 (15.8%) have from 11 to 15 years; 5 of 57 (8.8%) have from 16 to 20 years; 5 of 57 (8.8%) have from 21 to 25 years; and 3 of 57 (5.3%) have 26 plus years of DOC teaching experience. One of 57 (1.7%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators did not mark their years of DOC teaching experience on the survey. Figure 15 records the total teaching experience of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators. Total teaching experience is defined as the correctional educator's total number of years of teaching experience in public school and correctional school combined. None of the Oklahoma DOC correctional educators have less than a total of 2 years teaching experience; 2 of 57 (3.5%) have from 2 to 5 years of total teaching experience; 5 of 57 (8.8%) have from 6 to 10 years total; 5 of 57 (8.8%) have from 11 to 15 years total; 8 of 57 (14%) have from 16 to 20 years total; 4 of 57 (7%) have from 21 to 25 years total; 10 of 57 (17.5%) have from 26 to 30 years total; and 23 of 57 (40.4%) have 30 plus years of total teaching experience.

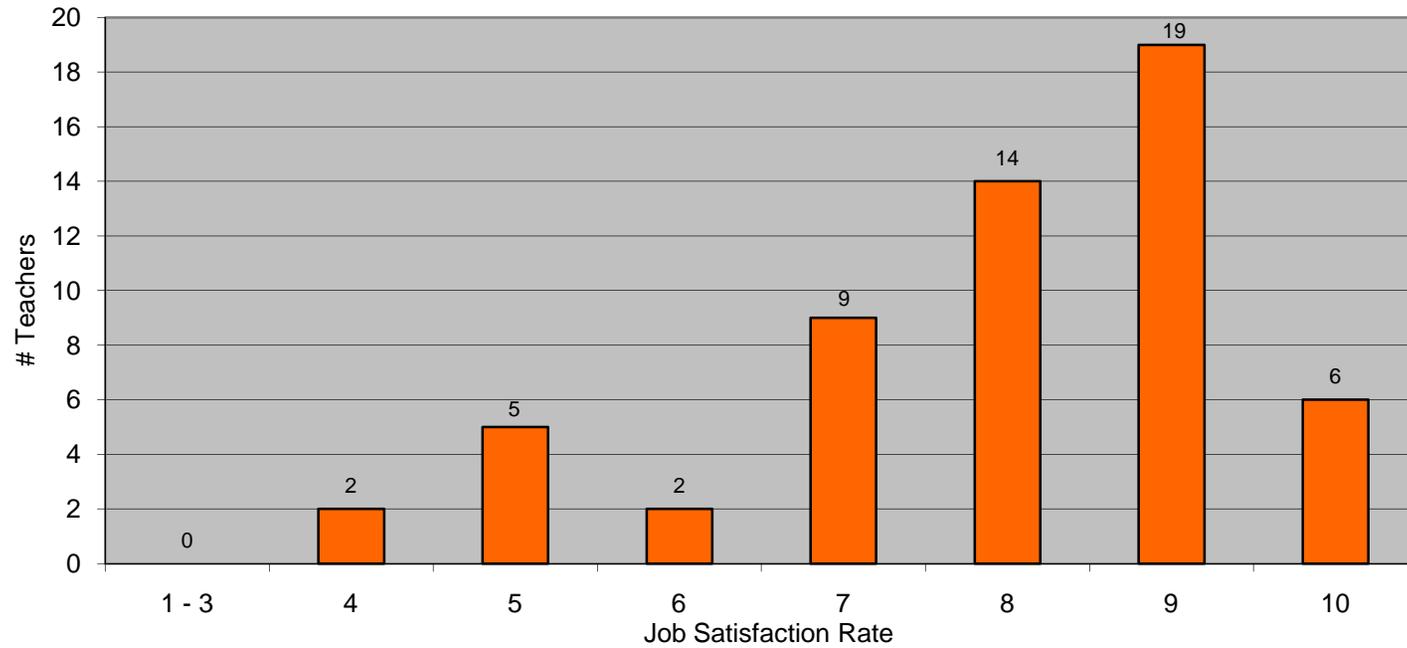
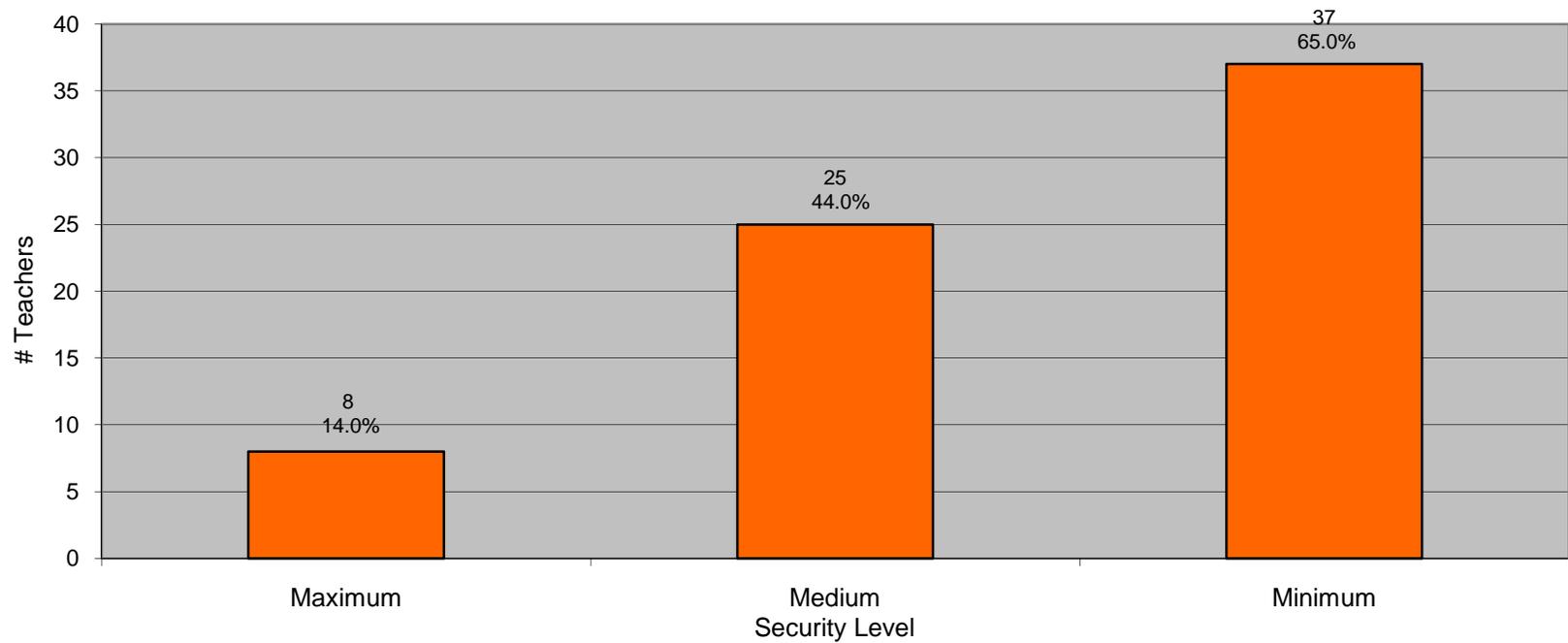


Figure 8. Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators' Job Satisfaction Rating. 1-Low Job Satisfaction Rate; 10-High Job Satisfaction Rate. The number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category.



*Figure 9.* Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators Teaching at each Security Level. Community Corrections, Halfway Houses, jails and youth facilities are not included. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

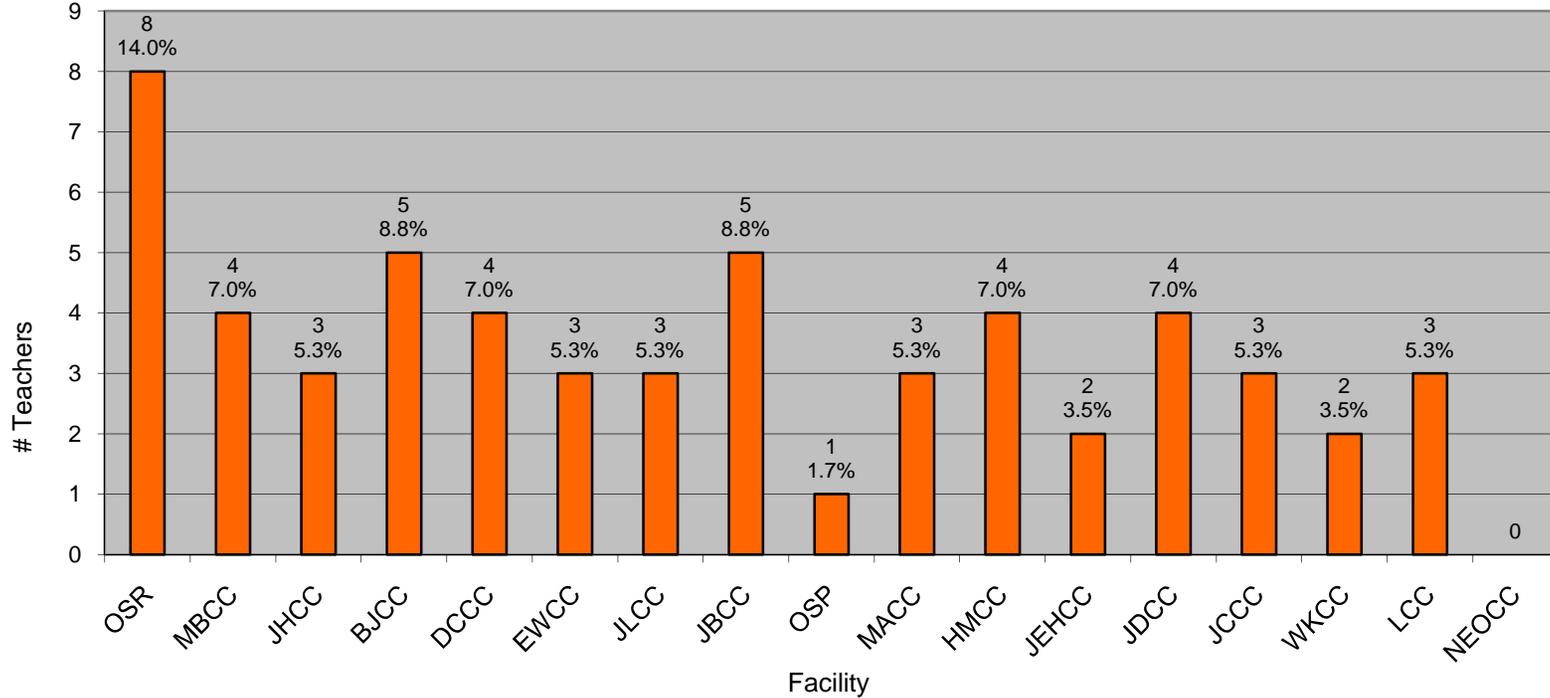
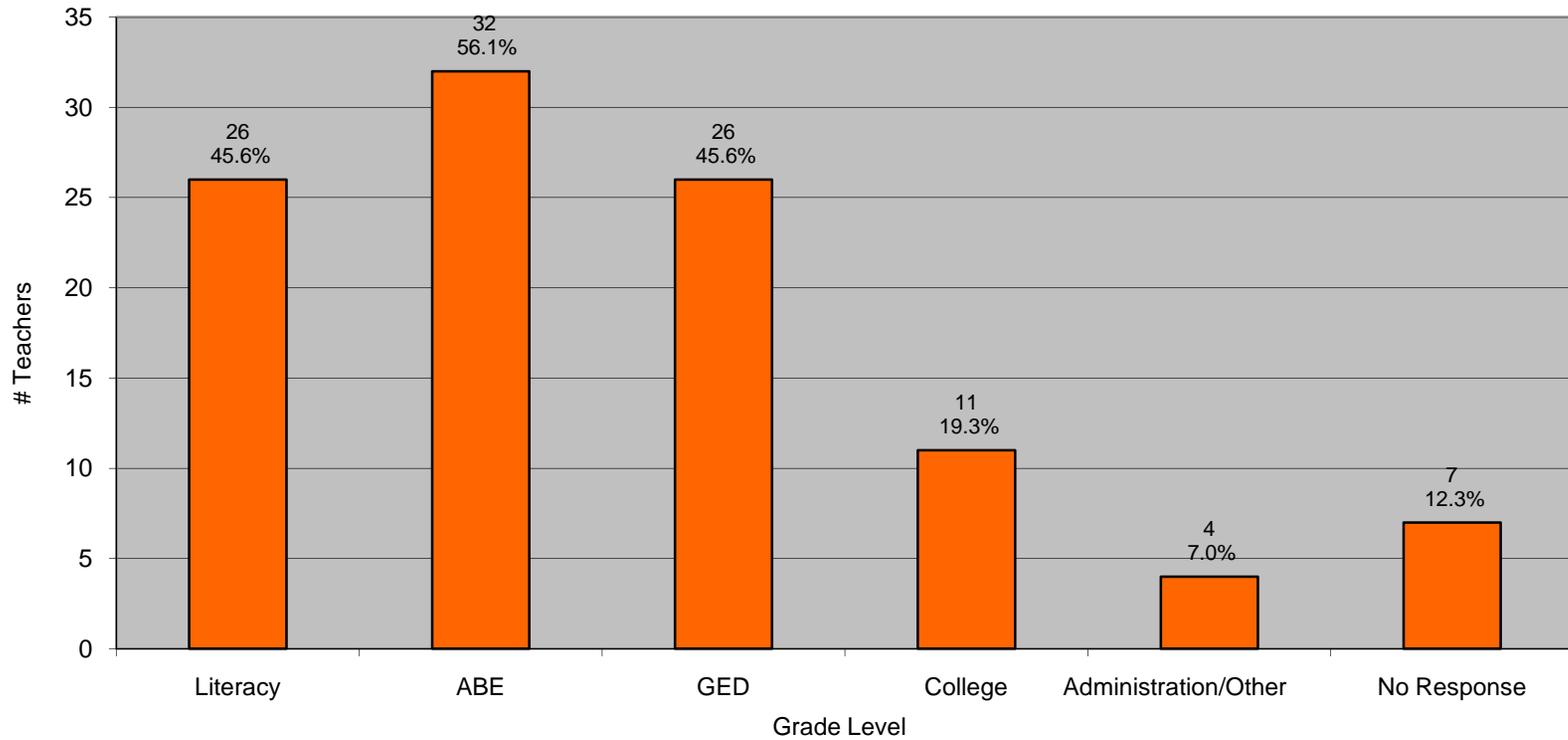


Figure 10. Oklahoma Correctional Educators by Facility. Oklahoma State Reformatory (OSR), Mabel Bassett Correctional Center (MBCC), Joseph Harp Correctional Center (JHCC), Bill Johnson Correctional Center (BJCC), Dick Conner Correctional Center (DCCC), Eddie Warrior Correctional Center (EWCC), John Lilley Correctional Center (JLCC), Jackie Brannon Correctional Center (JBCC), Oklahoma State Penitentiary (OSP), Mack Alford Correctional Center (MACC), Howard McLeod Correctional Center (HMCC), James E. Hamilton Correctional Center (JEHCC), Jess Dunn Correctional Center (JDCC), James Crabtree Correctional Center (JCCC), William S. Key Correctional Center (WKCC), Lexington Correctional Center (LCC), Northeast Oklahoma Correctional Center (NEOCC). The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.



*Figure 11. Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators by Grade Level Taught. Administrative/Other category includes one A & R Testing Coordinator and one barber instructor. Grade levels are determined by scores on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE): Literacy (0.0 - 5.9); ABE (6.0 - 8.9); GED (9.0 - 12.9). The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.*

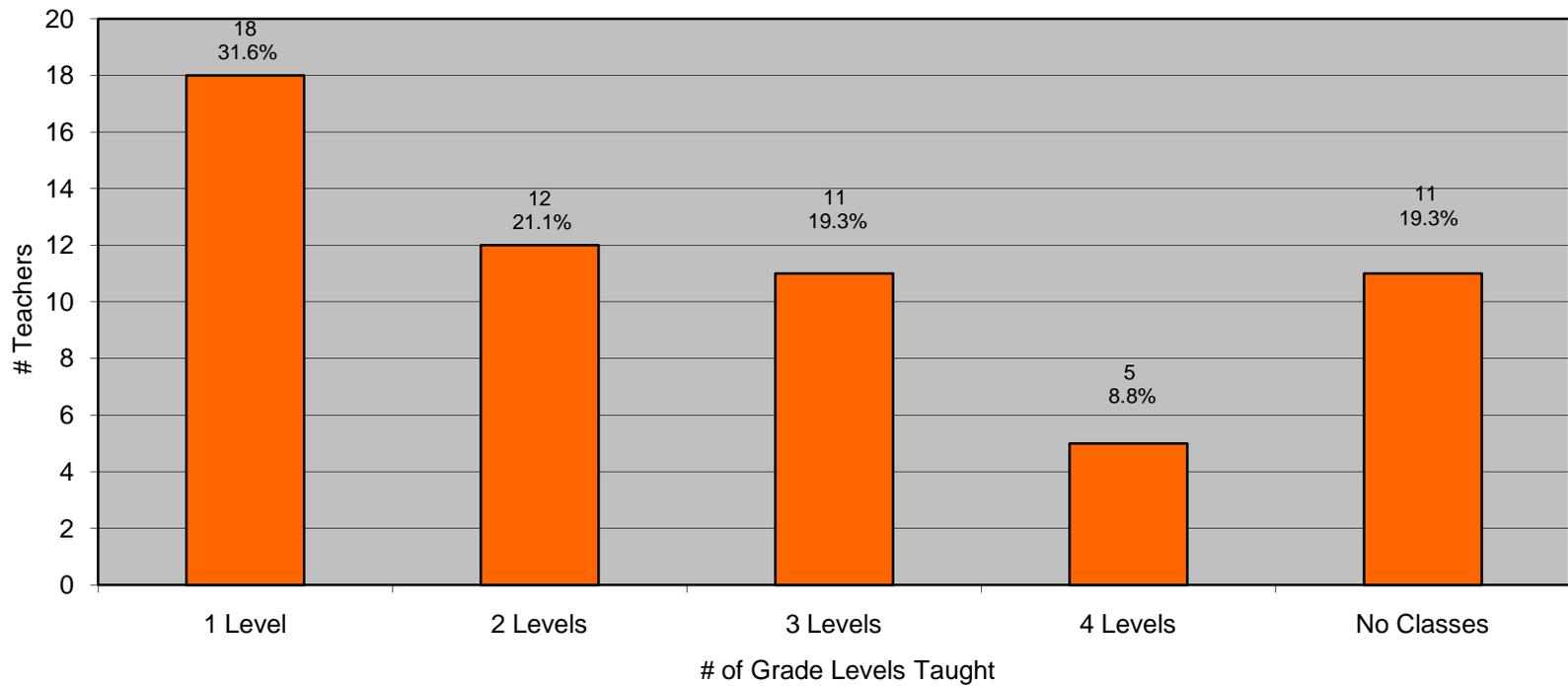


Figure 12. Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators Teaching Multiple Grade Levels. No Classes category includes Administrators and A & R Testing Coordinator. Grade Levels are defined as Literacy, ABE, GED, and College. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

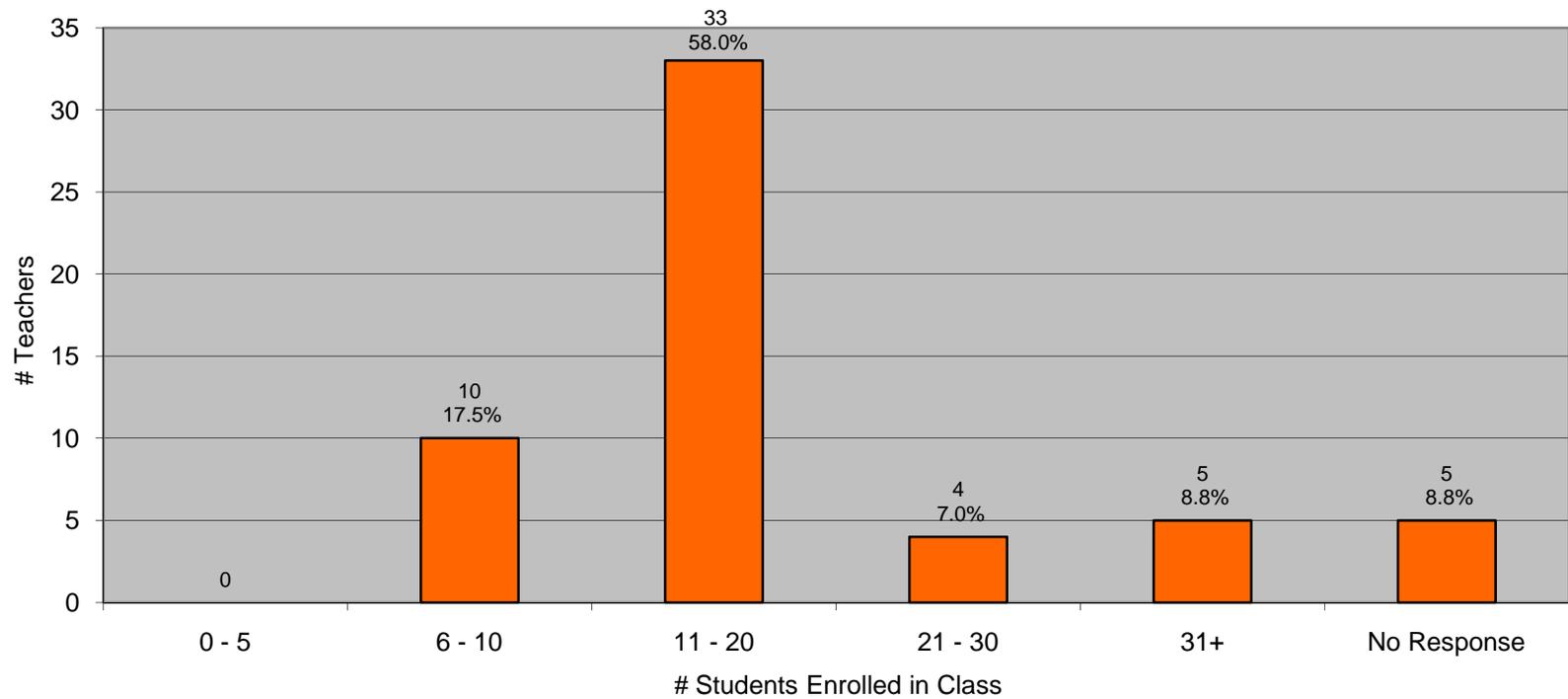
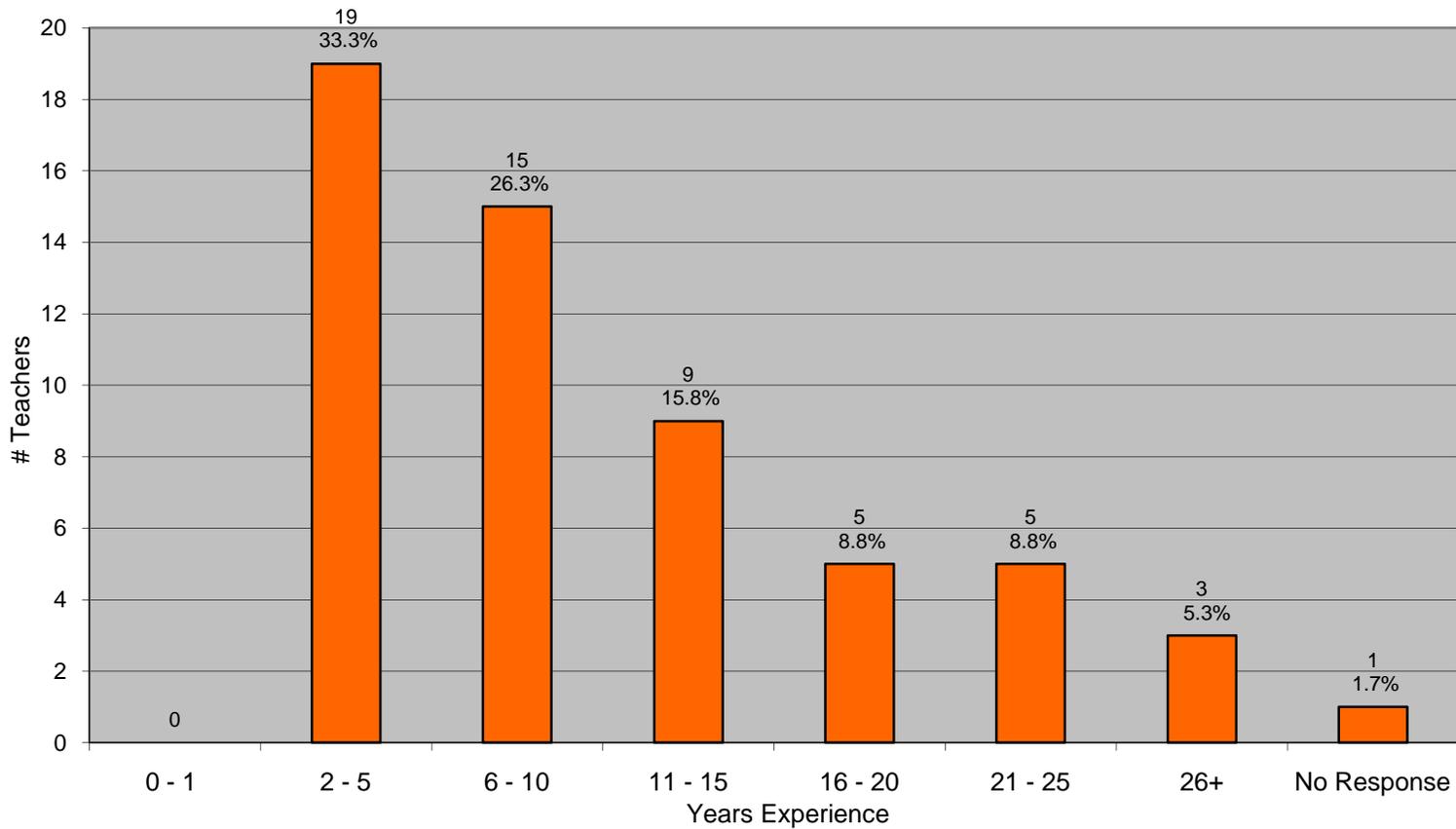


Figure 13. Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators' Average Class Size. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.



*Figure 14.* Years Teaching with DOC only. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

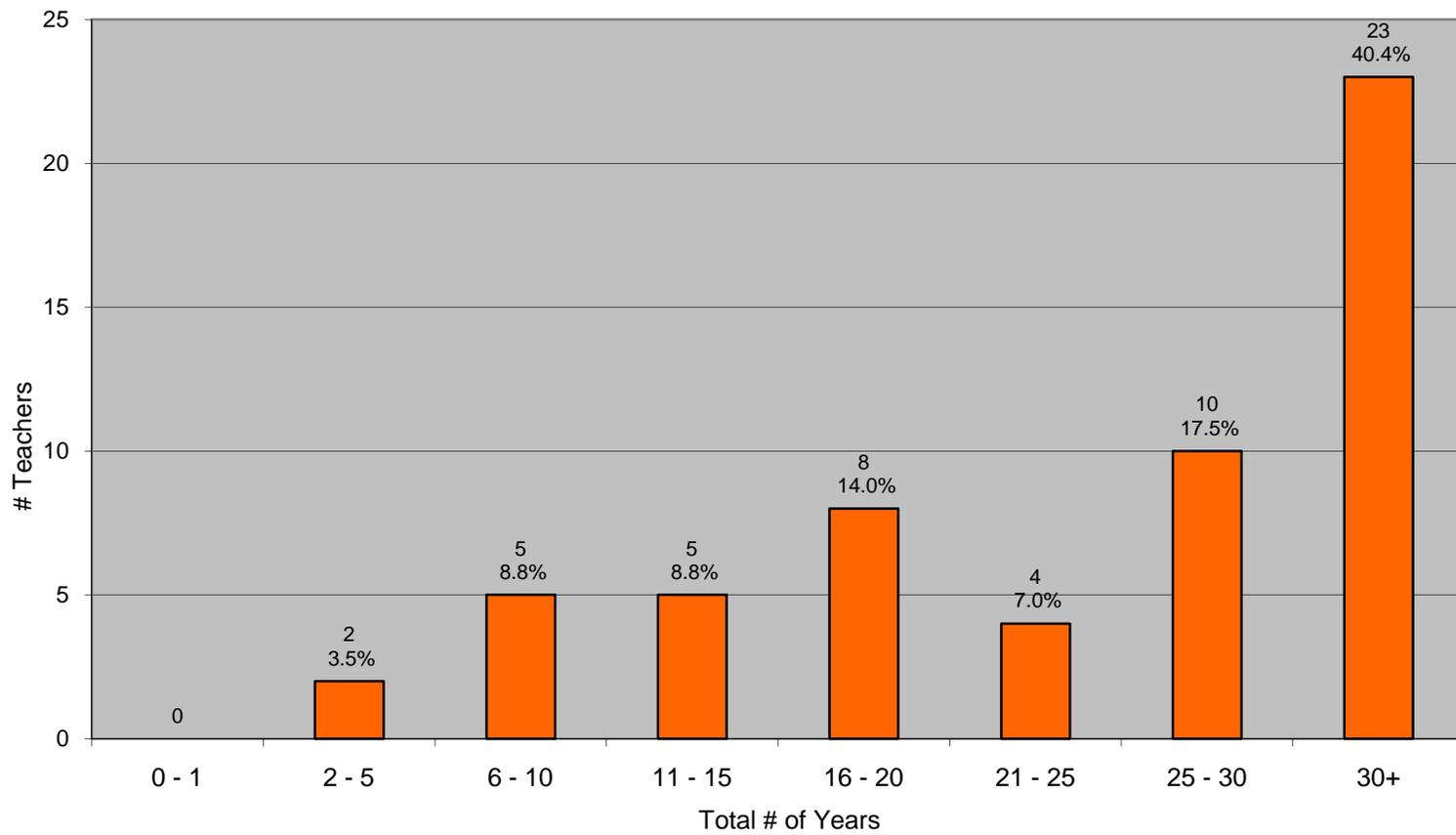


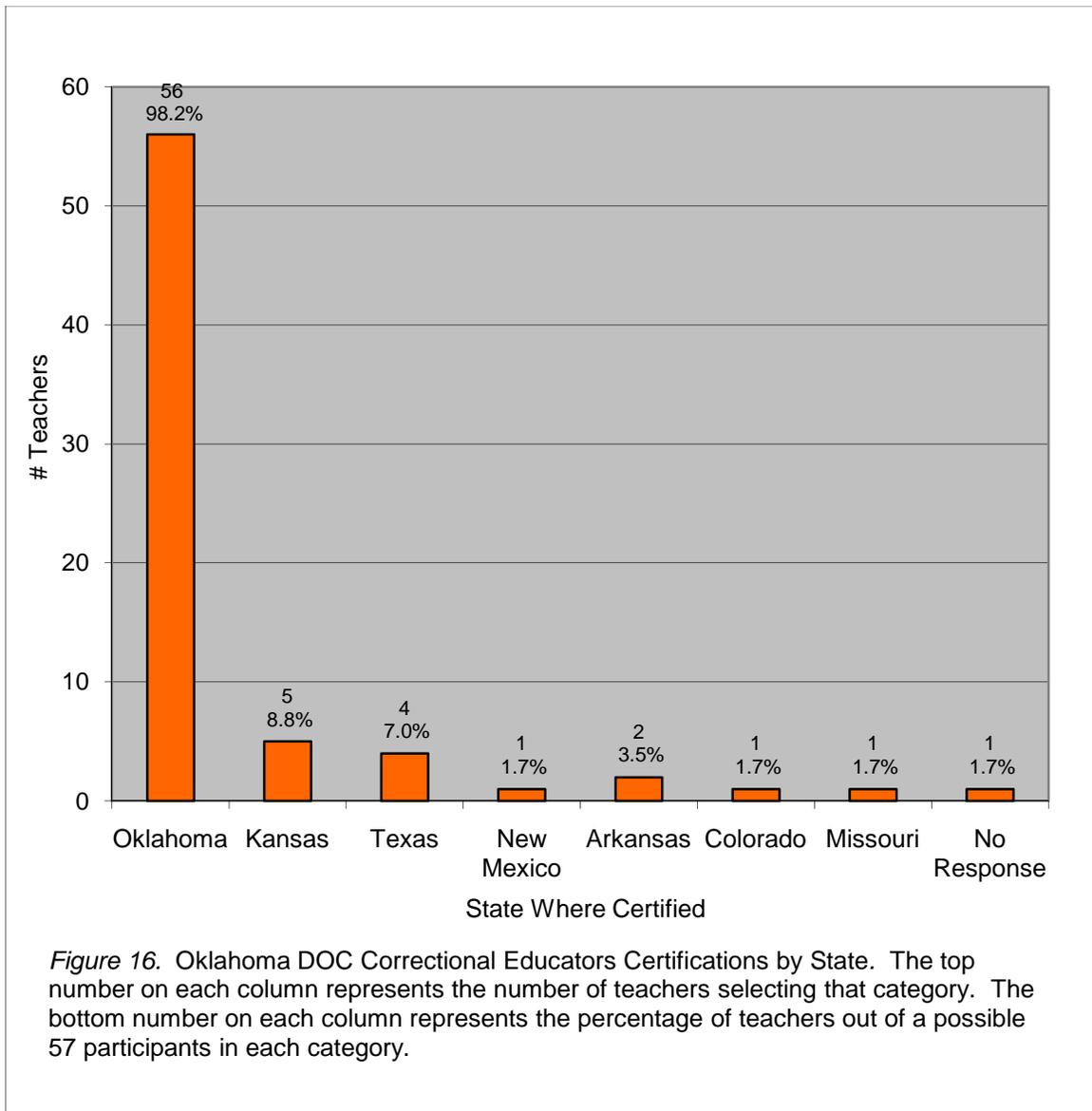
Figure 15. Total Number Years Experience (Public and Corrections). The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

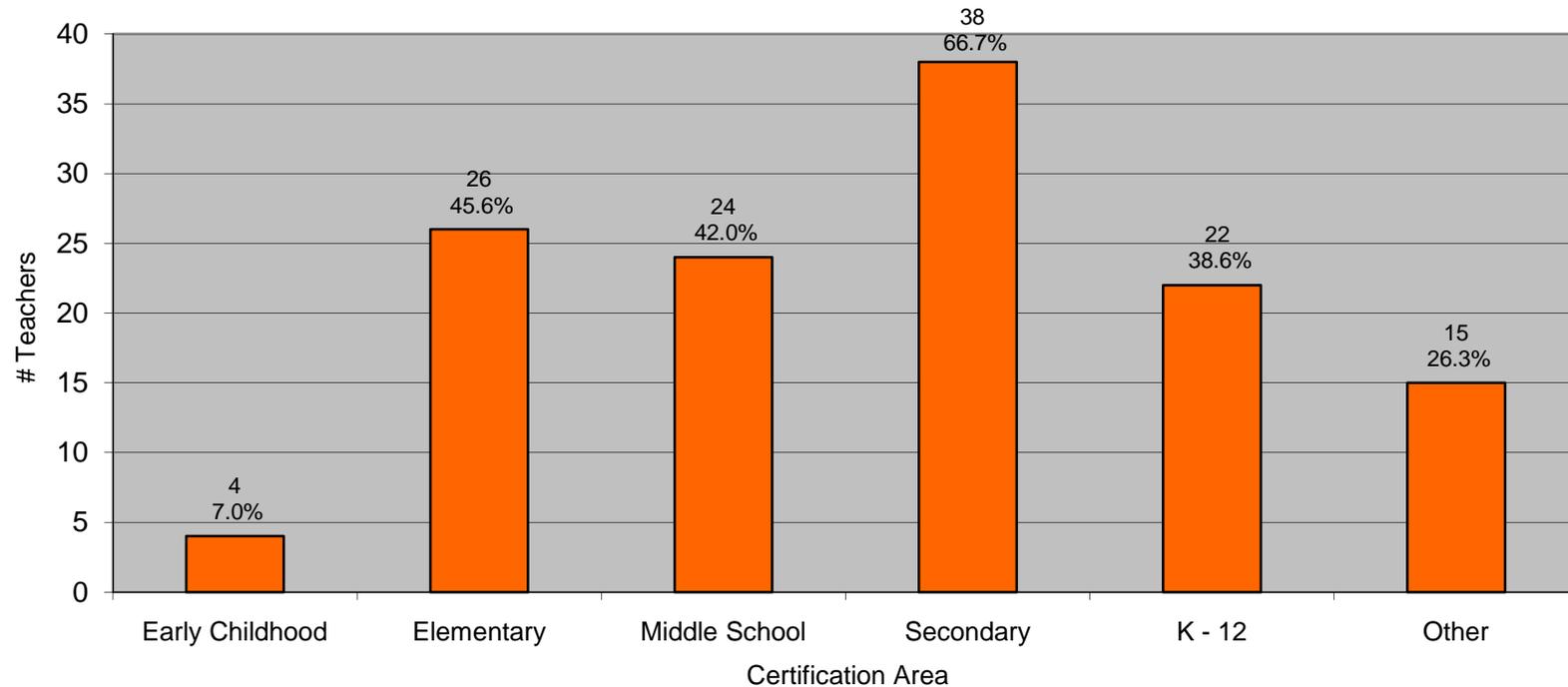
## **Certification Information**

The certification information was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The certification information of the participants is shown in Figures 16 through 19. Figure 16 refers to the states in which Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were certified. Fifty-six of 57 (98.2%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were certified in the state of Oklahoma, 5 of 57 (8.8%) were certified in Kansas, 4 of 57 (7%) were certified in Texas, 1 of 57 (1.7%) was certified in New Mexico, 2 of 57 (3.5%) were certified in Arkansas, 1 of 57 (1.7%) was certified in Colorado, and 1 of 57 (1.7%) was certified in Missouri. One of 57 (1.7%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators did not indicate a state on the survey. Figure 17 identifies the certification areas in which Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were certified. Certification areas were defined as Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School, Secondary, K-12 and other. Other certification areas included Coaching, Special Education, Driver's Education, Technical Education, School Administration, Counseling, and Barbering. Four of 57 (7%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were certified in Early Childhood Education, 26 of 57 (45.6%) in Elementary Education, 24 of 57 (42%) in Middle School Education, 38 of 57 (66.7%) in Secondary Education, 22 of 57 (38.6%) in K-12 Education, and 15 of 57 (26.3%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were certified in other educational areas. Figure 18 documents the areas in which the Oklahoma DOC correctional educators individually hold more than one certification. Twenty-one of 57 (36.8%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were certified in one certification area, 15 of 57 (26.3%) were certified in two areas, 11 of 57 (19.3%) were certified in three areas, 6 of 57 (10.5%) were certified in four areas, 3 of 57 (5.3%) were certified in five areas, and 1 of 57 (1.7%) was certified in six certification areas.

Figure 19 shows the subject categories in which Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were certified. Seven of 57 (12.3%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were certified in Business and Economics; 16 of 57 (28%) were certified in Physical Education, Health and Coaching; 21 of 57 (36.8%) were certified in History, Social Studies, and Geography; 2 of 57 (3.5%) were certified in Spanish; 15 of 57 (26.3%) were certified in Science, Biology, Zoology, and Chemistry; 11 of 57 (19.3%) were certified in Administration; 6 of 57 (10.5%) were certified in

Language Arts, Remedial Reading, Reading and English; 5 of 57 (8.8%) were certified in Math; 7 of 57 (12.3%) were certified in Industrial Arts, Vocational Agriculture, Technical Education, Curriculum and Instruction, and Barbering; 10 of 57 (17.5%) were certified in Social Sciences, Psychology, and Counseling; 1 of 57 (1.7%) was certified in Computers; 7 of 57 (12.3%) were certified in Special Education; 2 of 57 (3.5%) were certified in Humanities, Art and Vocal Music; 1 of 57 (1.7%) was certified in Adult Education; and 1 of 57 (1.7%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators was certified in Driver's Education.





*Figure 17.* Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators by Certification Area. Other includes Physical Education/Coaching, Special Education, Driver's Education, Technical Education, School Administration, History, English, Reading, Counseling, Mild/Moderate Learning Disabilities, Secondary Administration and Barbering. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

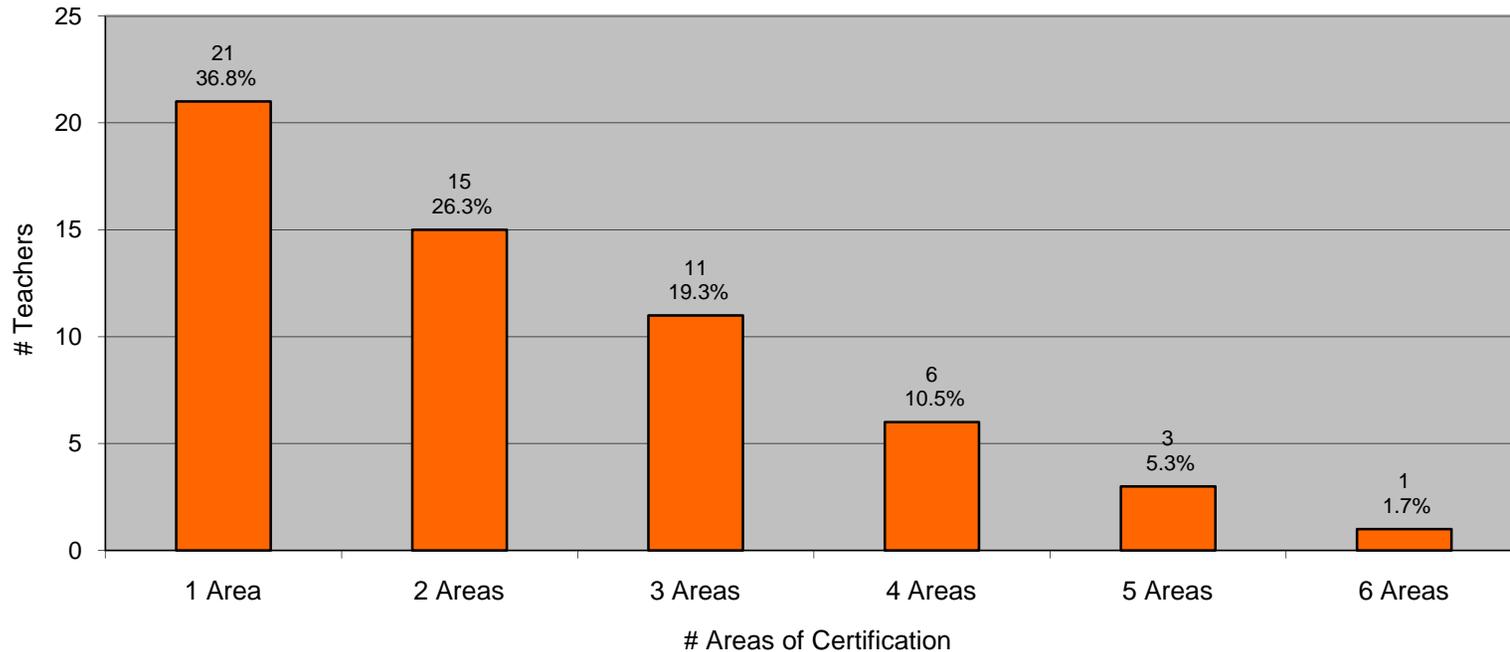


Figure 18. Number of Certification Areas of Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators. Certification Areas include Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School, Secondary, K-12 and Other (Physical Education/Coaching, Special Education, Driver's Education, Technical Education, School Administration, History, English, Reading, Counseling, Mild/Moderate Learning Disabilities, Secondary Administration and Barbering). The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

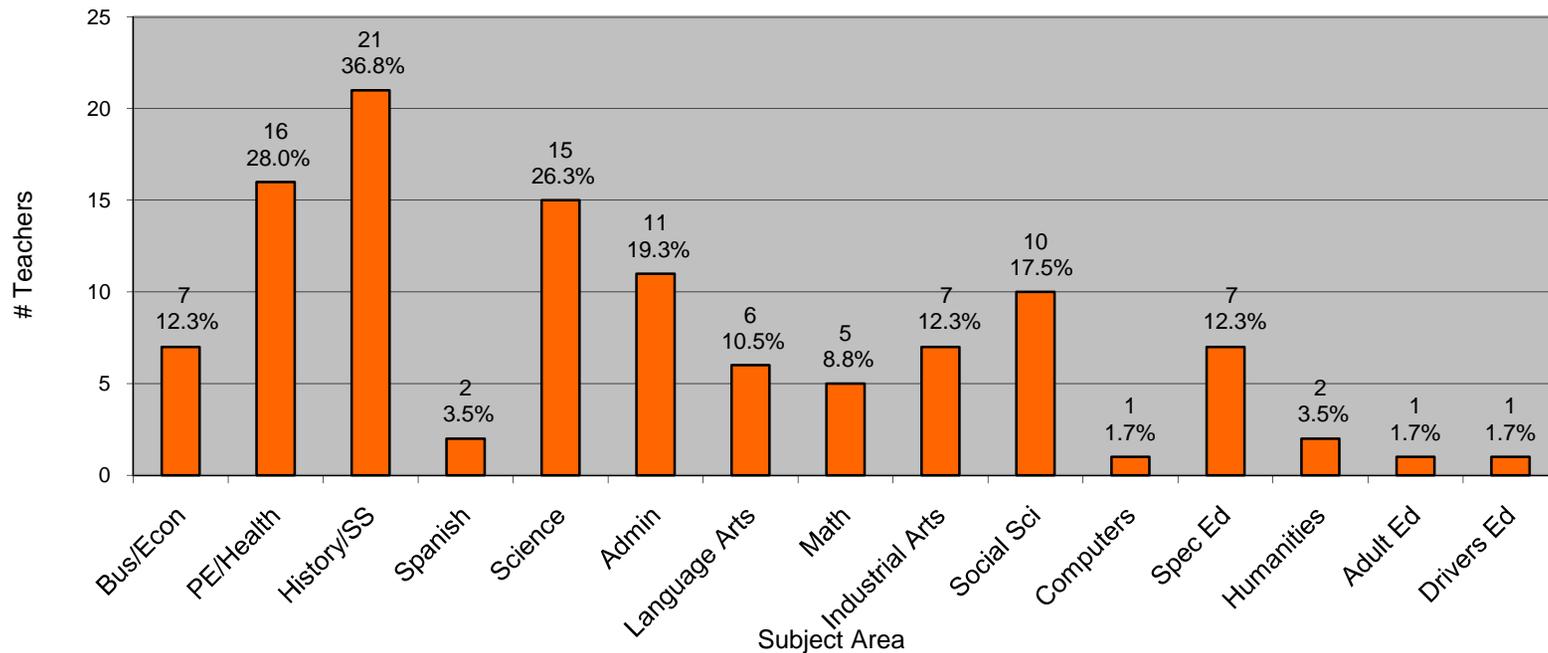


Figure 19. Certification Categories. Physical Education/Health includes Coaching; History/Social Studies includes Geography; Science includes Biology, Zoology and Chemistry; Language Arts includes Remedial Reading, Reading and English; Industrial Arts includes Vocational Agriculture, Technical Education, Curriculum and Instruction and Barbering; Social Science includes Psychology and Counseling; Humanities includes Vocal Music and Art. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

## Training

Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators were also asked to state the professional development training they received, directly related to correctional education in the last year (2010) and last three years (2007-2010). This information was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data collected from the participants are shown in Figures 20 and 21. Figure 20 indicates that in the last year (2010), 3 of 57 (5.3%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators had training on the LACES Database, 1 of 57 (1.7%) had online training, 13 of 57 (22.8%) went to the Correctional Education Conference for training, 1 of 57 (1.7%) went to the Oklahoma State Department of Education Special Education training, 3 of 57 (5.3%) went to the Correctional Teacher's Meeting, 1 of 57 (1.7%) went to a Reading course, 4 of 57 (7%) went to TABE test training, 1 of 57 (1.7%) went to CPR training, 6 of 57 (10.5%) went to the Adult Education and Literacy Conference, 2 of 57 (3.5%) went to a Motivating Youth seminar, 4 of 57 (7%) went to the Organization of Adult Basic Education Association (OABEA) Meeting, 1 of 57 (1.7%) went to the Oklahoma State Department of Education Smart Board Training, 1 of 57 (1.7%) went to the DOC State Conference, 1 of 57 (1.7%) went to the *How to Get Along with Anyone* seminar, 3 of 57 (5.3%) went to GED training, and 6 of 57 (10.5%) went to DOC facility training. 9 of 57 (15.8%) stated that they had received no training directly related to Correctional Education in the last year and 1 of 57 (1.7%) recorded not applicable.

Figure 21 represents the training Oklahoma DOC correctional educators received in the last 3 years (2007-2010). Three of 57 (5.3%) Oklahoma DOC correctional educators had training on the LACES Database, 17 of 57 (29.8%) went to the Correctional Education Association Conference for training, 2 of 57 (3.5%) went to the Adult Education and Literacy Conference, 7 of 57 (12.3%) went to DOC facility training, 3 of 57 (5.3%) went to TABE test training, 2 of 57 (3.5%) went to the Oklahoma State Department of Education Special Education training, 3 of 57 (5.3%) went to the Correctional Teachers Meeting, 1 of 57 (1.7%) went to *Reading for Spanish* seminar, 1 of 57 (1.7%) went to Key Train/ Work Keys training, 1 of 57 (1.7%) went to computer technology training, 3 of 57 (5.3%) went to Organization of Adult Basic Education Association (OABEA) Meeting, 2 of 57 (3.5%) went to GED training, and 1 of 57 (1.7%) went to a Re-Entry

seminar. Five of 57 (8.8%) stated that they had received no training directly related to Correctional Education in the last three years and 2 of 57 (3.5%) recorded not applicable.

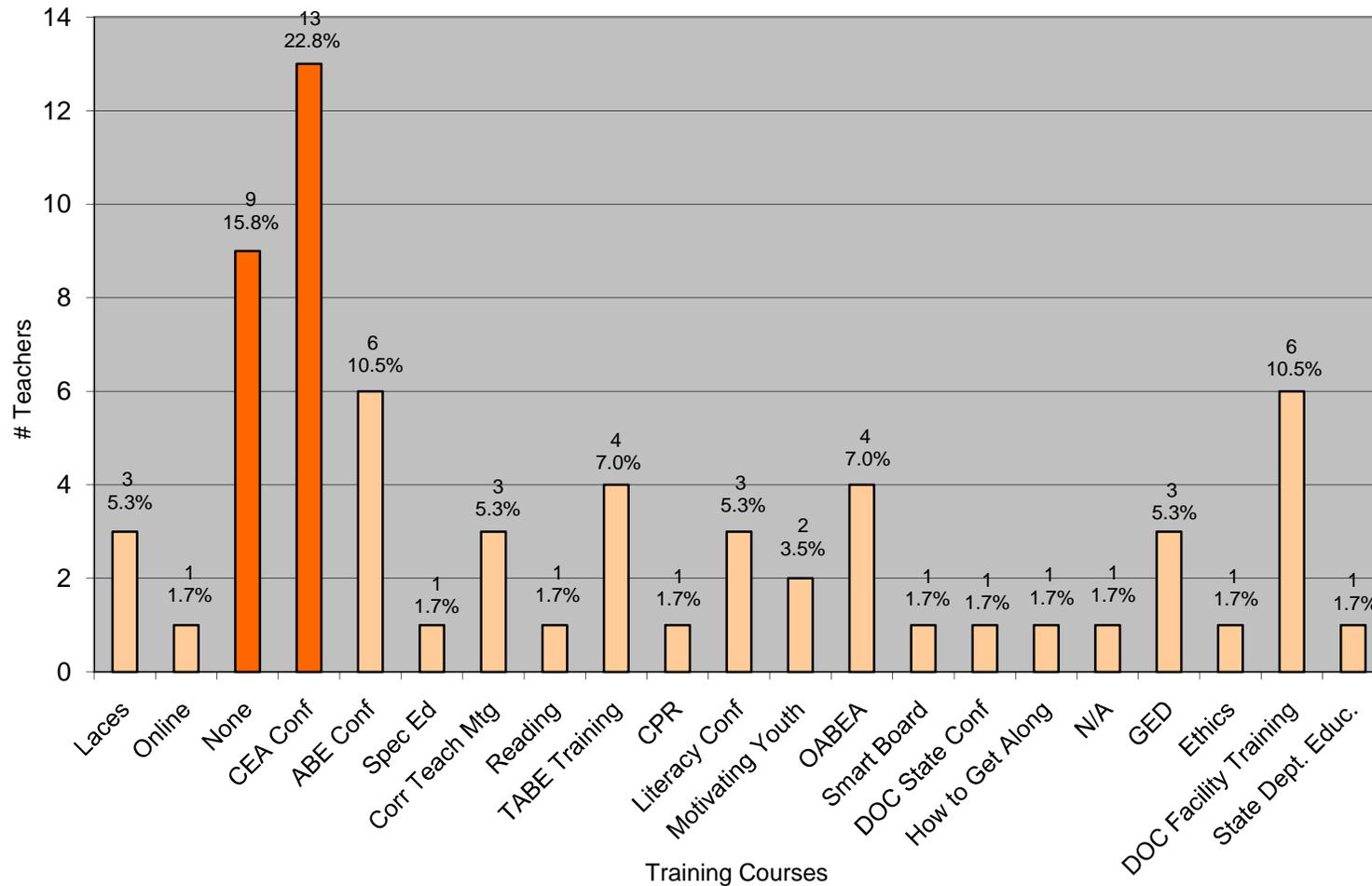


Figure 20. Training Received by DOC Educators in Last Year (2010). The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

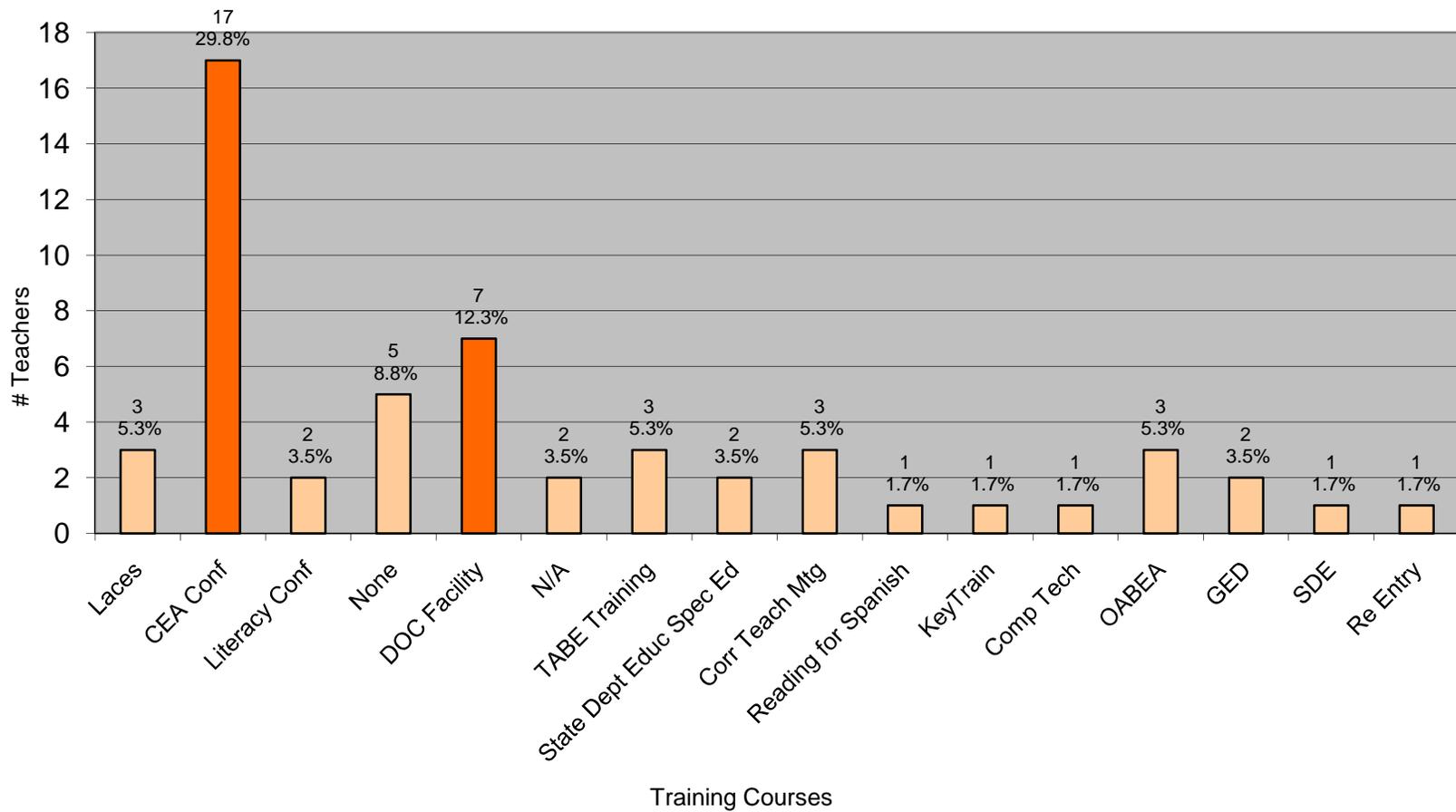


Figure 21. Training Received by DOC Educators in the Last Three Years (2007-10). The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

***Research question #2 - What specific internal traits are needed by a correctional educator to be effective with incarcerated adult students?***

On the first page of the survey, the 57 participants were given a list of 29 internal teacher traits identified from the literature as possible traits needed by correctional educators. Data are reported by levels of importance identified by participants according to the top frequencies in the very important category and then by the higher frequencies left in each of the subsequent categories. Figure 22 shows the top ten Internal Teacher Traits that were rated very important to the success of a correctional educator:

- Integrity was rated very important by 48 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (84.2%).
- Fair and trustworthy were rated very important by 44 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (77.2%).
- Honest and professional were rated very important by 43 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (75.4%).
- Respectful was rated very important by 39 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (68.4%).
- Patient was rated very important by 37 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (64.9%).
- Committed was rated very important by 35 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (61.4%).
- Flexible and responsible were rated very important by 34 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (59.6%).

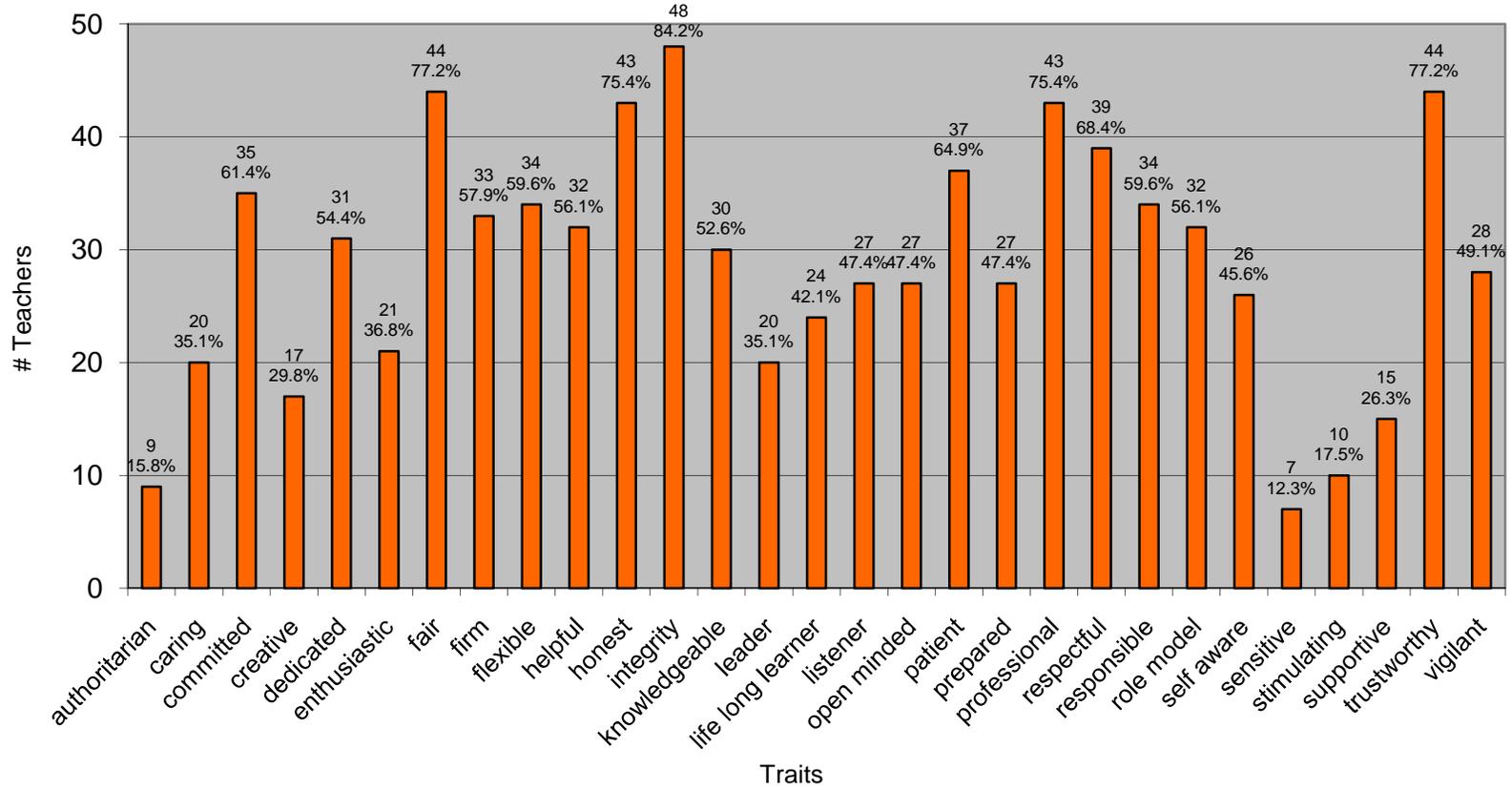


Figure 22. Internal Teacher Traits-Rated Very Important. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

Figure 23 shows nine Internal Teacher Traits that were rated important to the success of a correctional educator:

- Supportive was rated important by 33 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (57.9%).
- Stimulating was rated important by 30 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (52.6%).
- Enthusiastic was rated important by 26 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (45.6%).
- Self Aware was rated important by 25 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (43.9%).
- Creative was rated important by 24 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (42.1%).
- Authoritarian and leader were rated important by 23 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (40.4%).
- Knowledgeable and dedicated were rated important by 22 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (38.6%).

Figure 24 shows eight Internal Teacher Traits that were rated somewhat important to the success of a correctional educator:

- Sensitive was rated somewhat important by 22 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (38.6%).
- Caring was rated somewhat important by 15 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (26.3%).
- Life Long Learner was rated somewhat important by 11 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (19.3%).
- Open minded and vigilant were rated somewhat important by 8 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (14%).
- Firm and listener were rated somewhat important by 7 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (12.3%).
- Helpful was rated somewhat important by 6 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (10.5%).

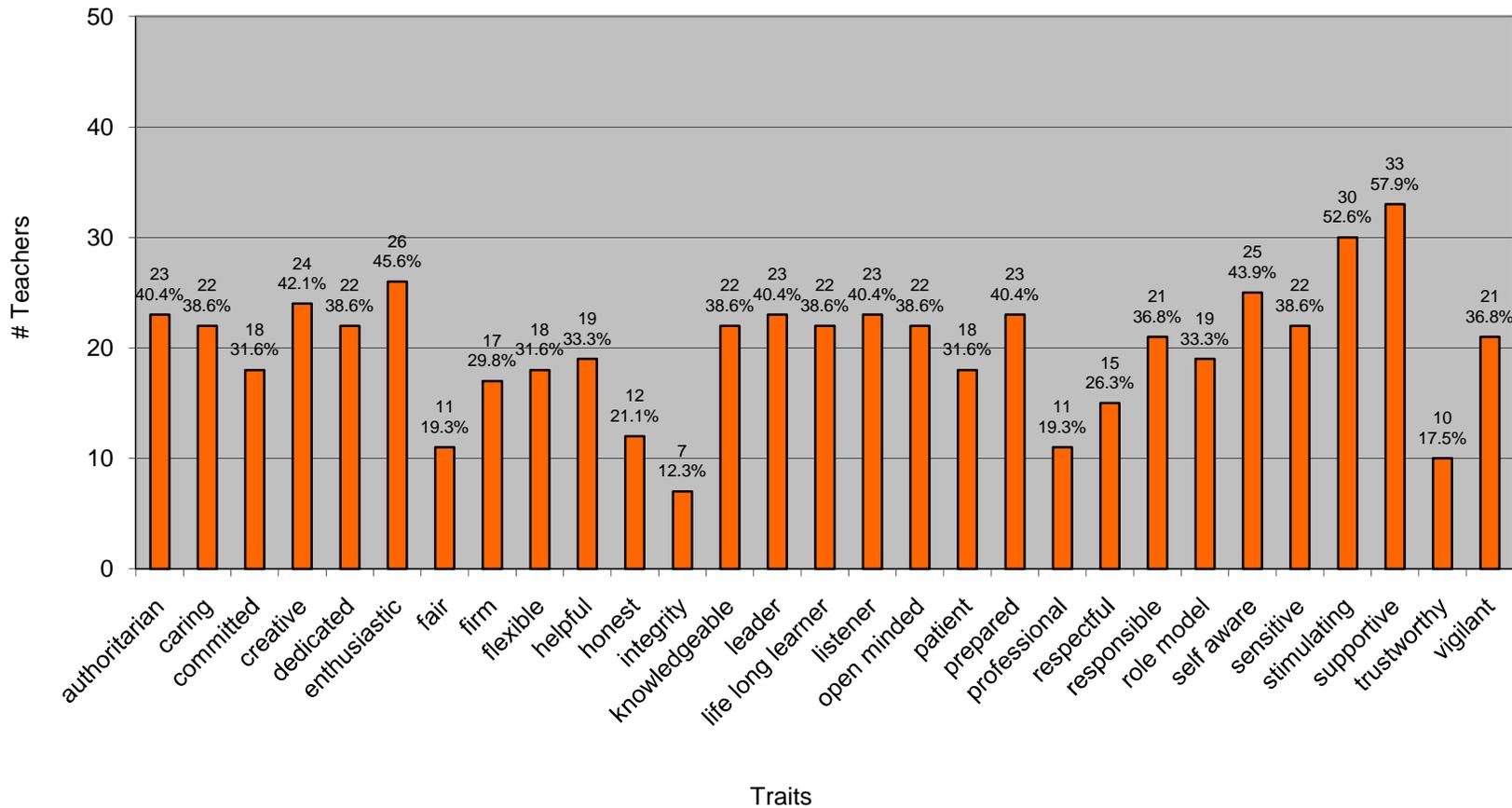


Figure 23. Internal Teacher Traits-Rated Important. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

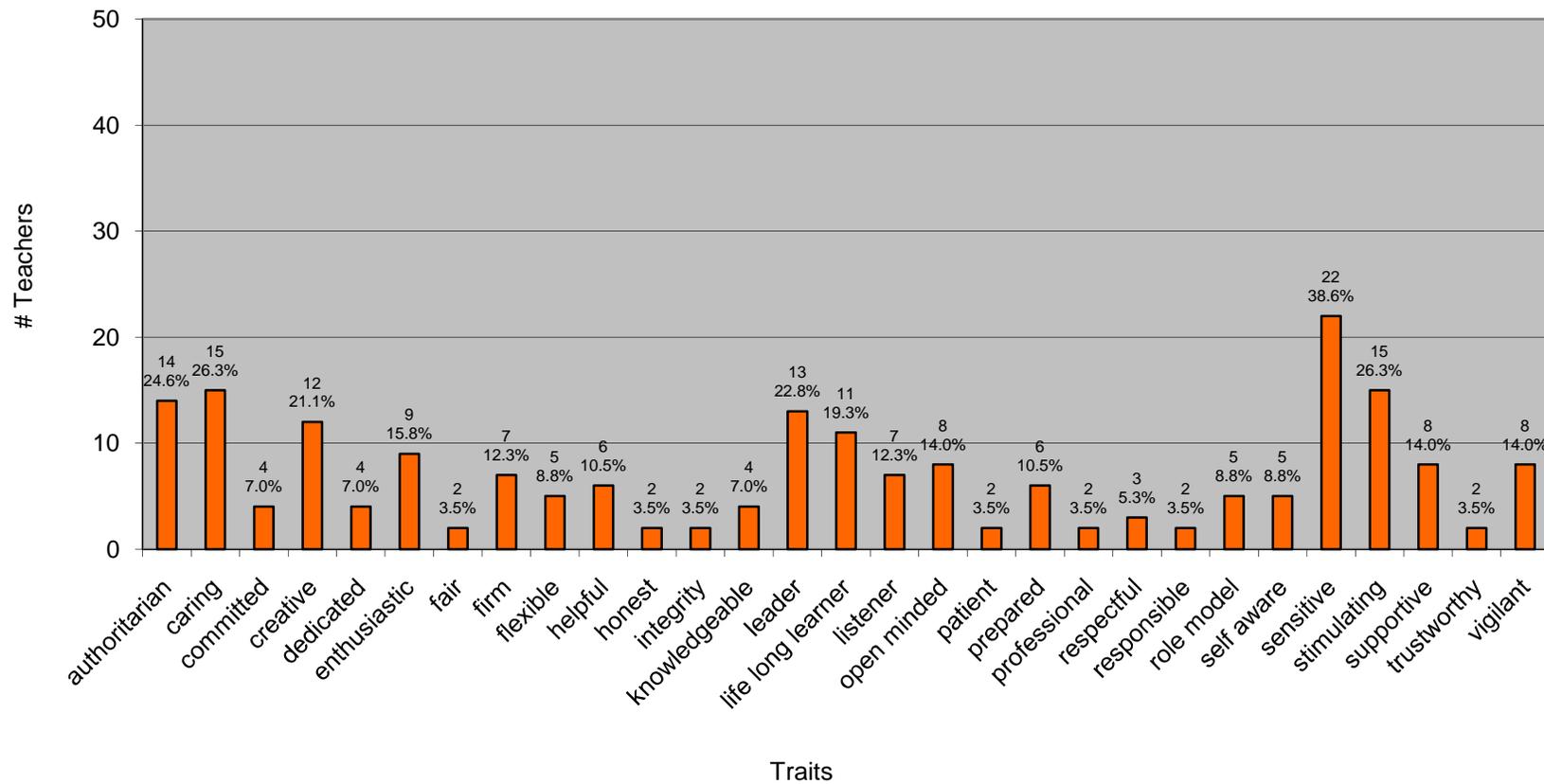


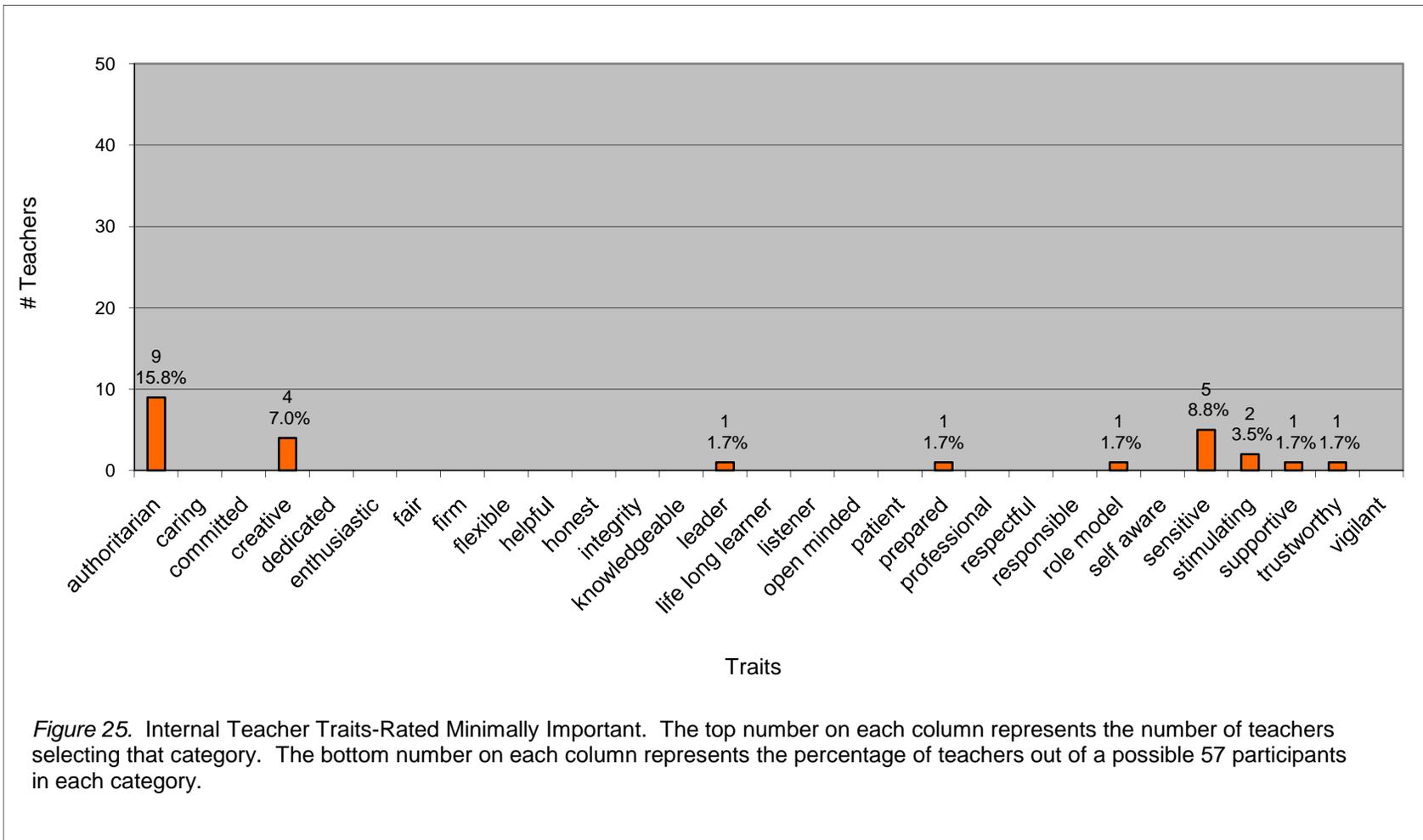
Figure 24. Internal Teacher Traits-Rated Somewhat Important. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

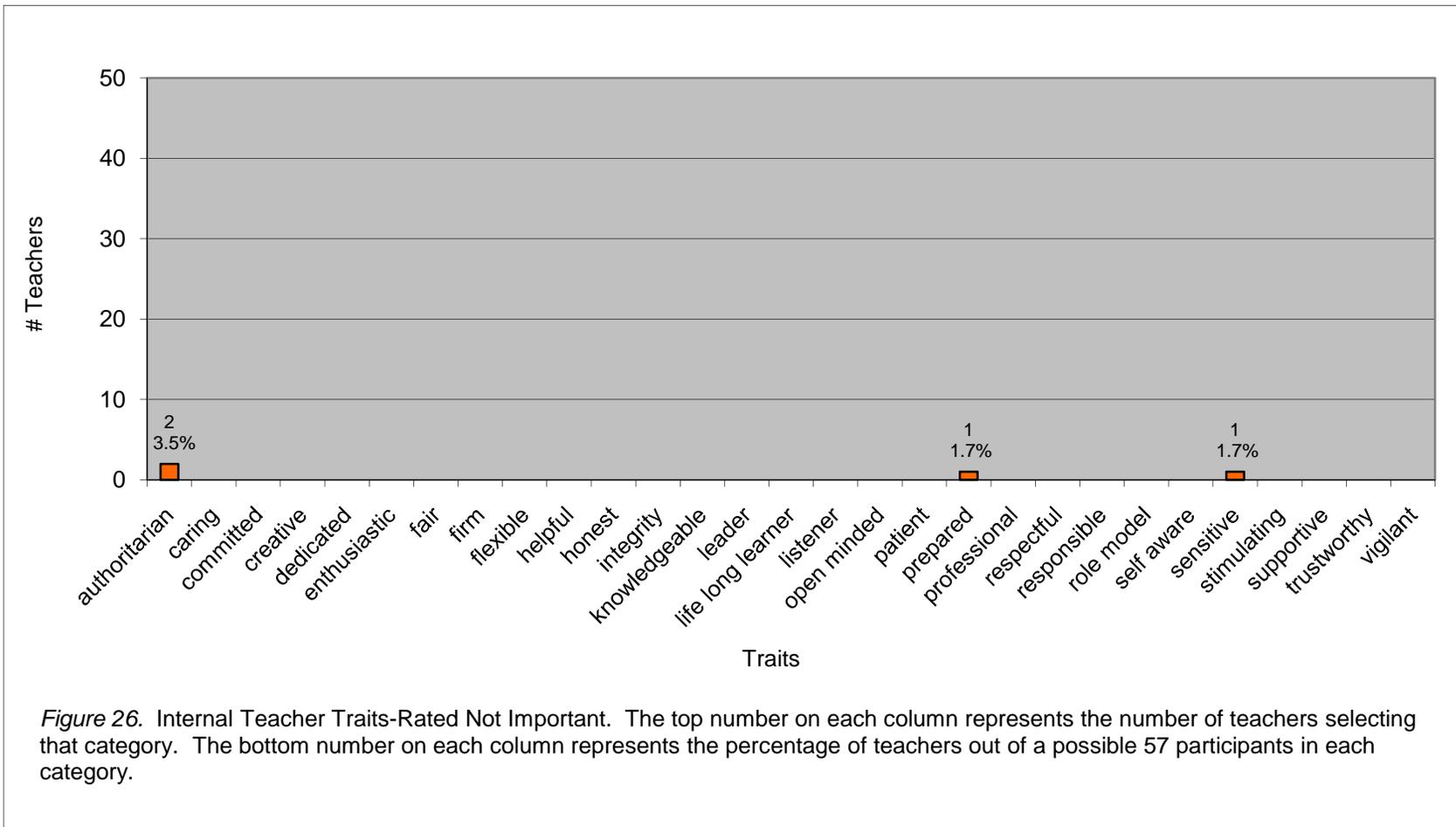
Figure 25 shows two Internal Teacher Traits that were rated minimally important to the success of a correctional educator:

- Prepared and role model were rated minimally important by 1 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (1.7%).

Figure 26 shows three Internal Teacher Traits that were rated not important to the success of a correctional educator:

- Authoritarian was rated not important by 2 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (3.5%).
- Prepared and sensitive were rated not important by 1 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators





**Research question #3 - What elements characterize a successful learning environment in an institutional setting?**

On the second page of the survey, the 57 participants were given a list of 20 Learning Environments identified from the literature as possible elements critical to the success of an institutional classroom. Data are reported by levels of importance identified by participants. Figure 27 shows the top seven learning environments that were rated very important to the success of an institutional classroom:

- Honest was rated very important by 50 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (87.7%).
- Safe was rated very important by 49 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (86%).
- Respectful was rated very important by 43 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (75.4%).
- Consistent was rated very important by 41 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (71.9%).
- Positive was rated very important by 40 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (70.2%).
- Encouraging was rated very important by 33 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (57.9%).
- Flexible was rated very important by 31 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (54.4%).

Figure 28 shows six learning environments rated important to the success of an institutional classroom:

- Caring, cooperative, engaging and stimulating were rated important by 30 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (52.6%).
- Constructive and supportive were rated important by 27 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (47.4%).

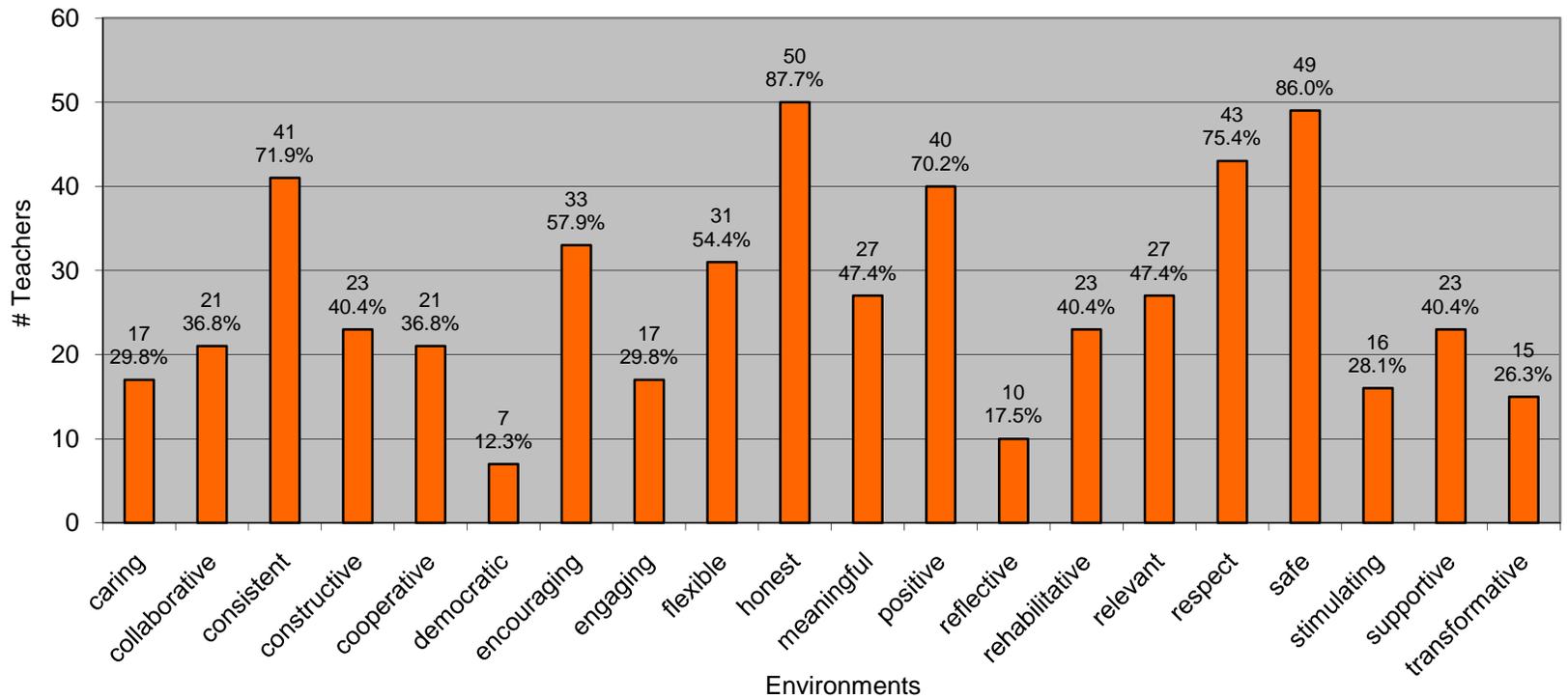


Figure 27. Learning Environments-Rated Very Important. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

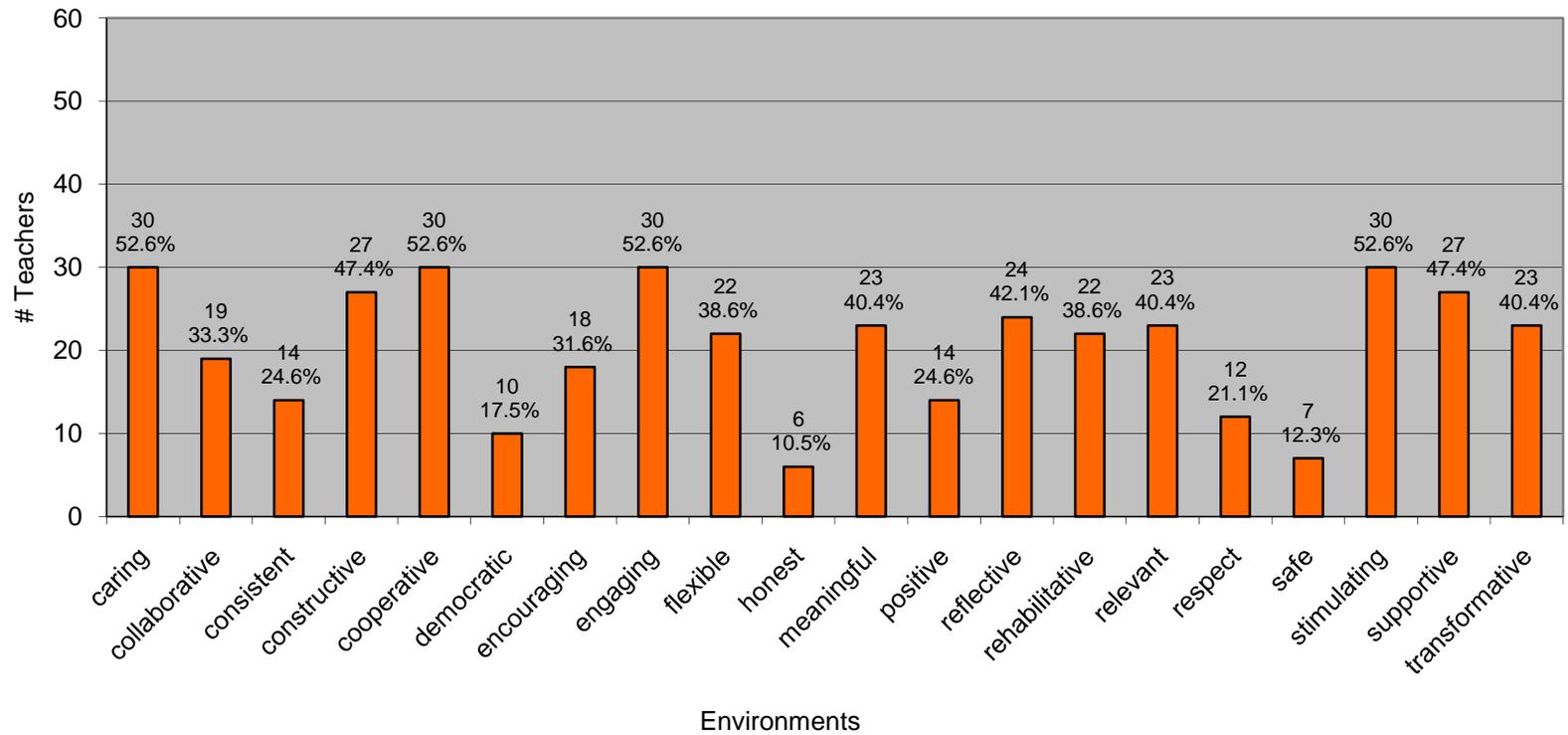


Figure 28. Learning Environments-Rated Important. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

Figure 29 shows five learning environments rated somewhat important to the success of an institutional classroom:

- Democratic was rated somewhat important by 26 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (45.6%).
- Reflective was rated somewhat important by 21 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (36.8%).
- Collaborative and transformative were rated somewhat important by 16 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (28.1%).
- Rehabilitative was rated somewhat important by 9 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (15.8%).

Figure 30 shows two learning environments rated minimally important to the success of an institutional classroom:

- Meaningful and relevant were rated minimally important by 1 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (1.7%).

Figure 31 shows the learning environments that were rated not important to the success of an institutional classroom:

- Democratic, engaging, reflective and stimulating learning environments were rated not important by 1 of 57 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (1.7%).

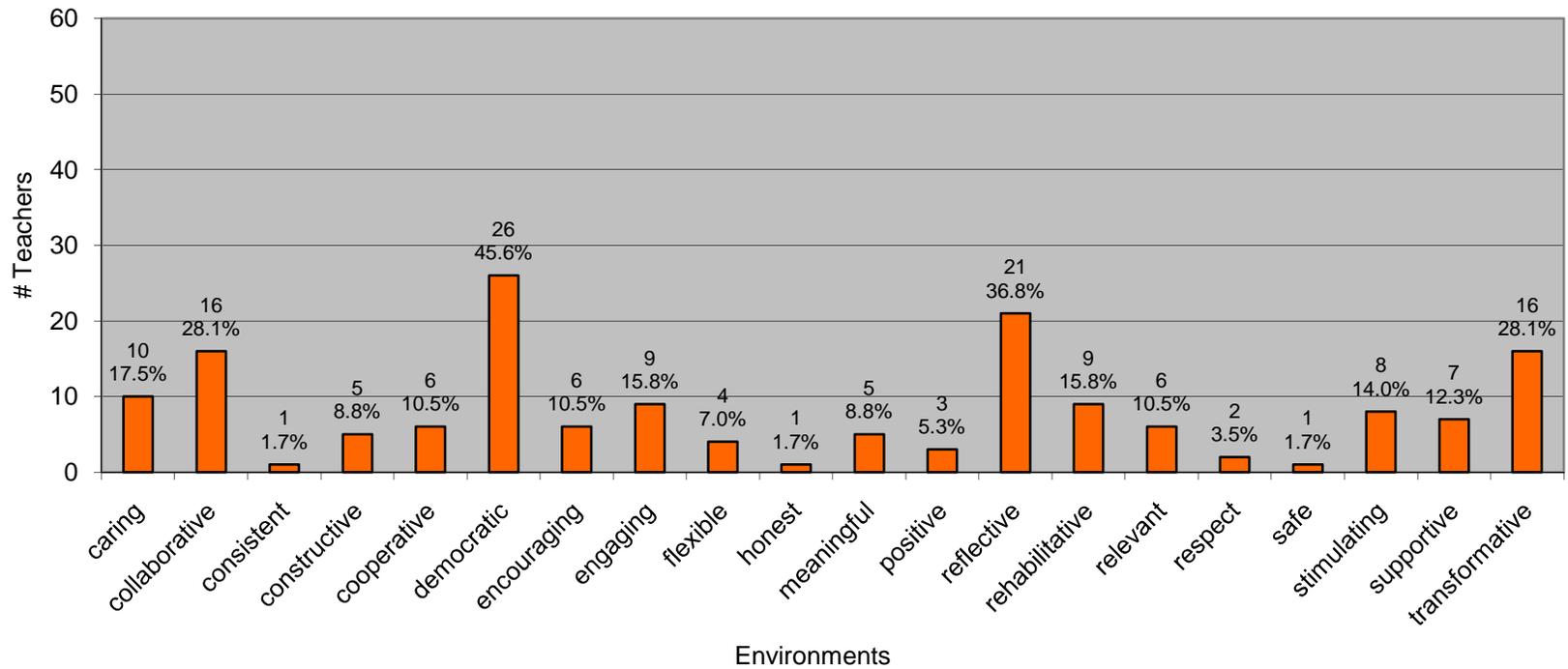


Figure 29. Learning Environments-Rated Somewhat Important. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

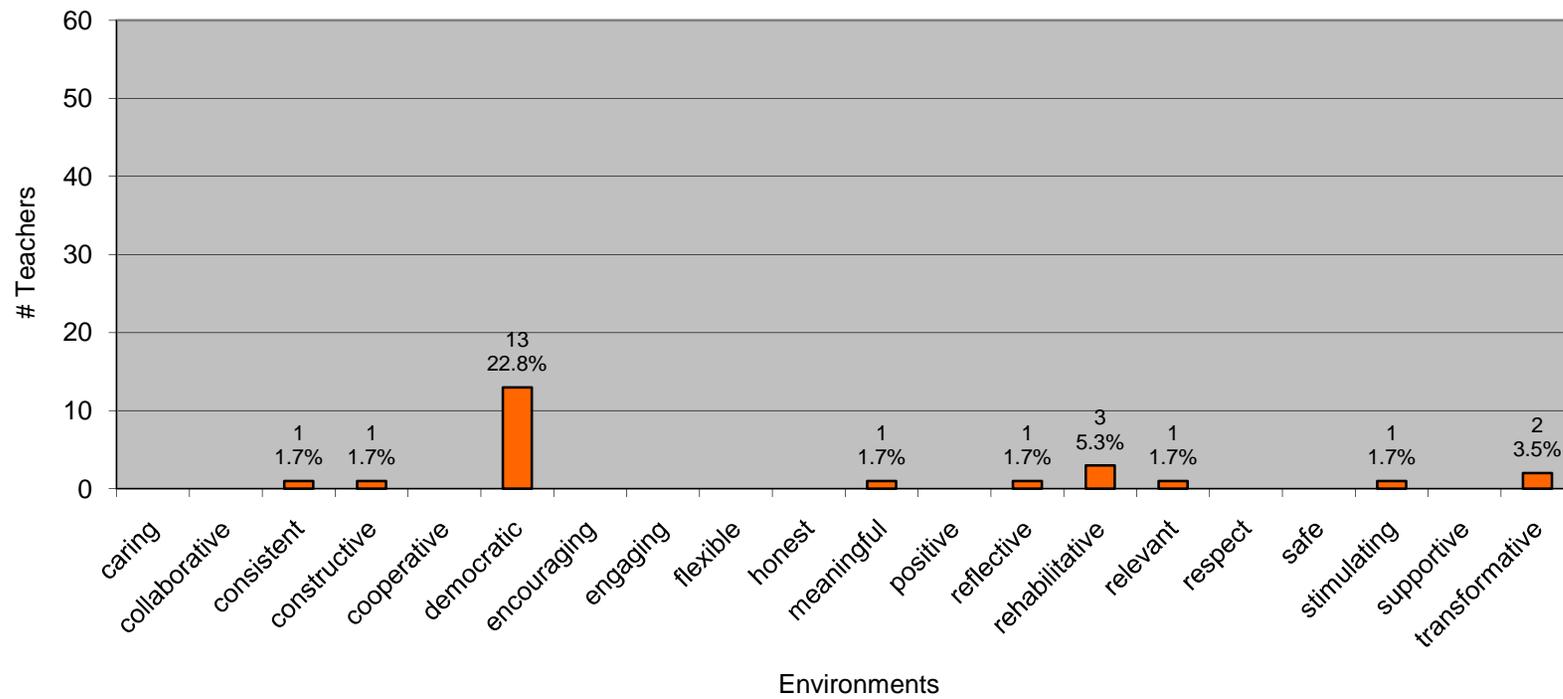


Figure 30. Learning Environments-Rated Minimally Important. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

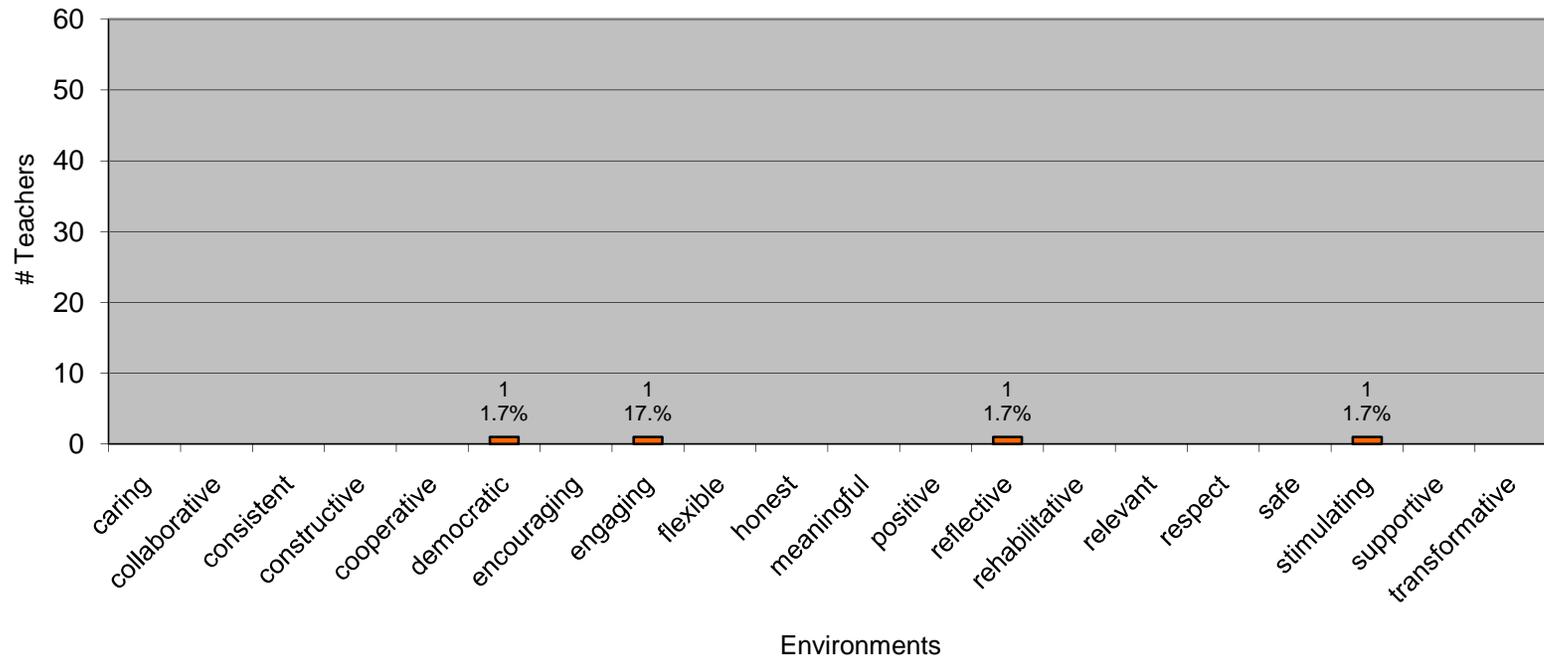


Figure 31. Learning Environments-Rated Not Important. The top number on each column represents the number of teachers selecting that category. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

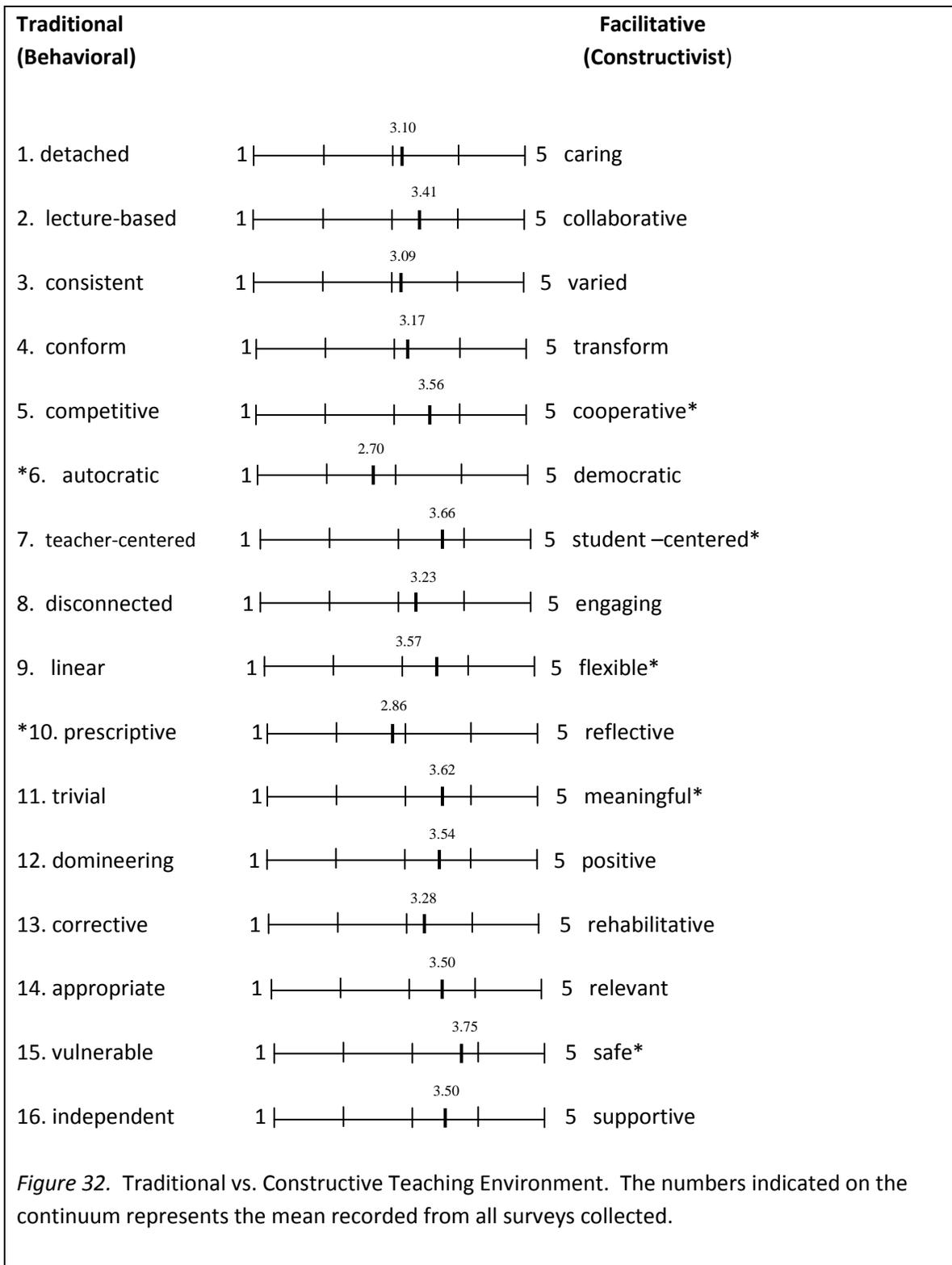
***Research question #4 - How do correctional educators view themselves on the continuum between Behaviorist (Traditional) and Constructivist (Facilitative) philosophical classroom practices?***

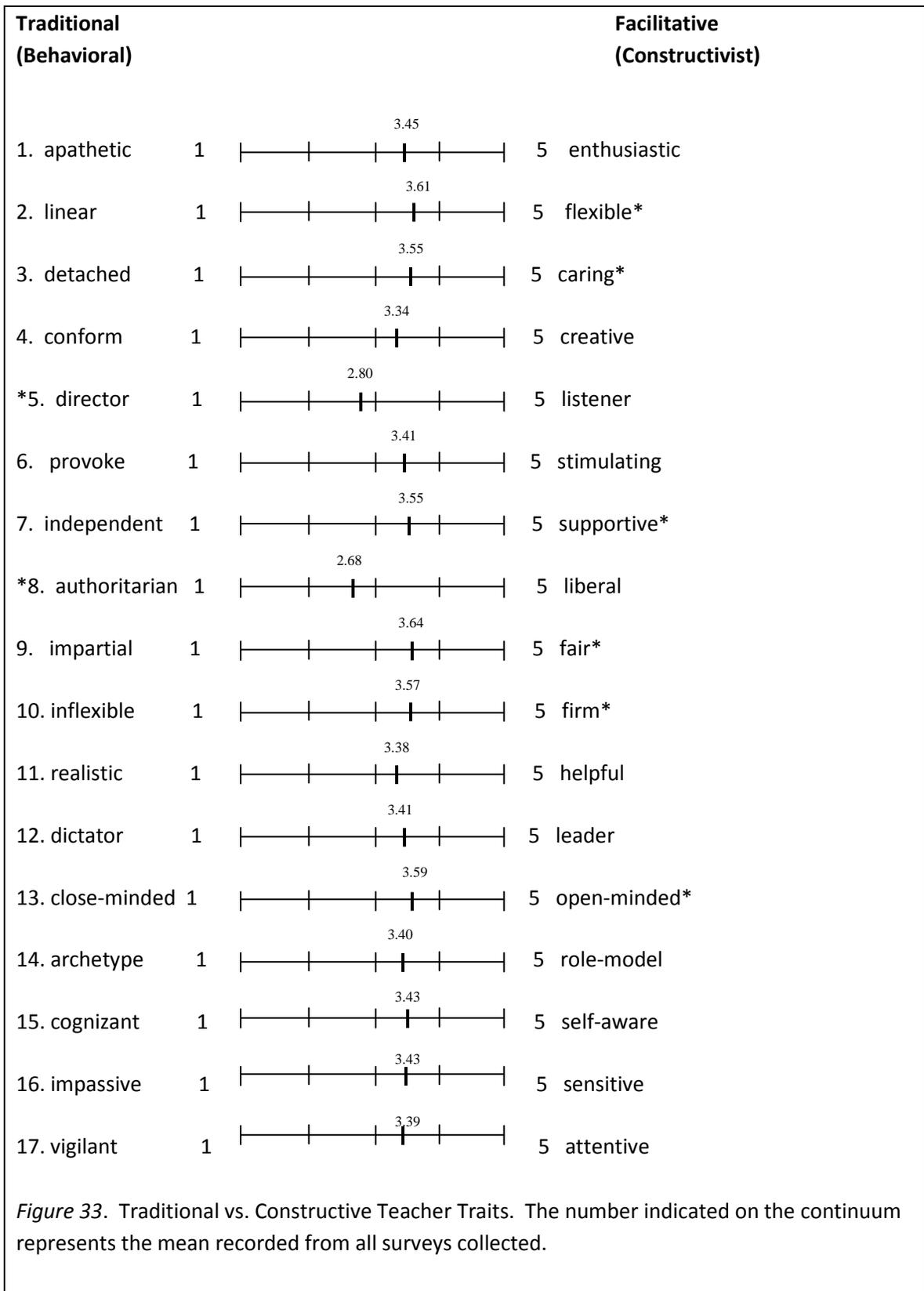
From the research reviewed for this study, the researcher developed a comparative list based on Traditional/ Behaviorist philosophical classroom practices versus Facilitative/ Constructivist philosophical classroom practices (Kellough, pp. 40-42; Cruikshank, pp. 247-249). On the third page of the survey, the 57 participants were given a continuum based on the list described above to identify their feelings regarding where Oklahoma DOC correctional educators function in their classrooms as well as where DOC education falls on the continuum. The subsequent data are submitted using descriptive statistics as reported by participants. The numerical values are means of the responses given on the survey. The participants rated their answers according to the placement of a dot on the continuum, a score of 1 meaning the feeling the correctional educator was reporting was a Traditional/ Behaviorist philosophy; a score of 3 meaning a mixture of both philosophies were employed; and a score of 5 was a Facilitative/ Constructivist philosophy. The data are recorded in Figures 32 and 33.

Figure 32 shows the results of the continuum of learning environments. Oklahoma DOC correctional educators feel the trend is toward the Traditional/ Behaviorist side of the continuum in the categories of autocratic (M = 2.7) and prescriptive (M = 2.86) learning environments. They also feel there is a proclivity toward the Facilitative/ Constructivist side of the continuum in the categories of cooperative (M = 3.56), student-centered (M = 3.66), flexible (M = 3.57), meaningful (M = 3.62) and safe (M = 3.75) learning environments. In all other areas of the learning environment continuum, they feel their practices are a mixture of both, Traditional/ Behaviorist and Facilitative/ Constructivist philosophies, only slightly leaning toward the Facilitative/ Constructivist side of the continuum [caring (M = 3.1), collaborative (M = 3.41), varied (M = 3.09), transform (M = 3.17), engaging (M = 3.23), positive (M = 3.54), rehabilitative (M = 3.28), relevant (M = 3.5), supportive (M = 3.5)].

Figure 33 shows the results of the continuum of internal teacher traits. Oklahoma DOC correctional educators feel the trend is toward the Traditional/ Behaviorist side of the continuum in

the categories of director (M = 2.8) and authoritarian (M = 2.68). They also feel there is an inclination toward the Facilitative/ Constructivist side of the continuum in the categories of flexible (M = 3.61), caring (M = 3.55), supportive (M = 3.55), fair (M = 3.64), firm (M = 3.57) and open-minded (M = 3.59) internal teacher traits. In all other areas of the internal teacher traits continuum, they feel their practices are a mixture of both, Traditional/ Behaviorist and Facilitative/ Constructivist philosophies, only slightly leaning toward the Facilitative/ Constructivist side [enthusiastic (M = 3.45), creative (M = 3.34), stimulating (M = 3.41), helpful (M = 3.38), leader (M = 3.41), role-model (M = 3.4), self-aware (M = 3.43), sensitive (M = 3.43), attentive (M = 3.39)].





### **Summary of the Findings of Process I (Quantitative Data)**

The personal demographics section described the population completing the survey in Process I. DOC Education had more males (52.6%) than females (38.6%). The largest age range is those in the 50 plus (72%) category, followed by 40 to 49 (22.8%), and 30 to 39 (3.5%). The highest degree earned by most DOC correctional educators was a Master degree (66.7%), then Bachelor degree (28.1%) and Doctoral degree (3.5%). Most DOC correctional educators have attended college/ university in Oklahoma, but some attended colleges/ universities in Arizona, Arkansas, Indiana, North Carolina, and Kansas. A great number of DOC correctional educators attending college/ university in Oklahoma took coursework in the Northeastern region of the state (42.1%), correspondingly in Southeastern region (36.8%), Northwestern region (33.3%), and Southwestern region (1.7%).

The occupational profiles report the following. A majority, 68.4% of DOC correctional educators, has a job satisfaction rating between 8 to 10 on a 10 point scale, and 31.6% fall between 4 and 7. Sixty-five percent of DOC correctional educators teach at the minimum security level, 44% at medium security level and 14% at the maximum security level. Fourteen percent of the participants were from Oklahoma State Reformatory; 8.8% were from Bill Johnson Correctional Center and Jackie Brannon Correctional Center; 7% were from Dick Conner Correctional Center, Howard McLeod Correctional Center, Jess Dunn Correctional Center and Mabel Bassett Correctional Center; 5.3% were from Eddie Warrior Correctional Center, James Crabtree Correctional Center, Joseph Harp Correctional Center, John Lilley Correctional Center, Lexington Correctional Center, and Mack Alfred Correctional Center; 3.5% were from Jim E. Hamilton Correctional Center and William S. Key Correctional Center; and 1.7% were from Oklahoma State Penitentiary. The grade equivalent where each correctional educator teaches is (56.1%) ABE, (45.6%) Literacy and GED, and (19.3%) supervise college courses. Several, 31.6%, DOC correctional educators teach only one grade level, while 21.1% teach two grade levels, 19.3% teach three levels, and 8.8% teach four grade levels. The largest average class size for DOC classrooms is 11 to 20 students (58%), then 6 to 10 (17.5%), 30 plus students (8.8%), and 21 to 30 (7%). Most correctional educators teaching in this system have 2 to 5 years

with DOC (33.3%), followed by those with 6 to 10 years (26.3%), 11 to 15 (15.8%), 16 to 20 (8.8%), and 26 plus years with DOC Education (5.3%). However, the correctional educators have much more experience in the educational system as a whole, both DOC and public. Many, 40.4% of DOC correctional educators have more than 30 years of total teaching experience, 17.5% from 26 to 30 years, 14% from 16 to 20, 8.8% from 6 to 10 years and 11 to 15 years respectively, 7% from 21 to 25 years, and only 3.5% have from 2 to 5 years of total teaching experience.

The overview of certification information appears as follows: 98.2% of DOC correctional educators are certified in Oklahoma, 8.8% in Kansas, 7% in Texas, 3.5% Arkansas, and 1.7% in New Mexico and Colorado respectively. The certification areas of correctional educators include 66.7% Secondary Education, 45.6% Elementary Education, 42% Middle School Education, 38.6% K-12 Education, 26.3% marked other on the survey, and 7% are certified in Early Childhood Education. A number of DOC correctional educators, 36.8%, are certified in one area; 63.2% were certified in more than one certification area: 26.3% were certified in two areas, 19.3% were certified in three areas, 10.5% were certified in four areas, 5.3% were certified in five areas, and 1.7% was certified in six areas. There are many subjects in which a correctional educator can be certified. DOC correctional educators hold the certifications listed: 36.8% in History, Social Studies, and Geography; 28% in Physical Education, Health and Coaching; 26.3% in Science, Biology, Zoology and Chemistry; 19.3% in Administration; 17.5% in Social Sciences, Psychology and Counseling; 12.3% in Business and Economics; 12.3% in Industrial Arts, Vocational Agriculture, Technology Education, Curriculum and Instruction, and Barbering; 12.3% in Special Education; 10.5% in Language Arts, Remedial Reading, Reading and English; 8.8% in Math; 1.7% in Driver's Education; 1.7% in Computers; and 1.7% in Adult Education.

The correctional educators commented on their training directly related to correctional education over the past year (2010). The largest category (33.3%) of the Oklahoma DOC correctional educators went to a professional conference to get their annual training; 15.8% went to training developed by the Department of Corrections; 14% went to training seminars developed by the State Department of Education; 12.3% went to TABE and GED test training; and 12.3% went to professional meetings. Several, 15.8% of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators stated

they did not receive any training directly related to correctional education. The correctional educators also described the training they received in the past three years (2007-2010). Assorted Oklahoma DOC correctional educators (33.3%) went to a professional conference to get their training; 15.8% went to training developed by the Department of Corrections; 12.3% went to training seminars developed by the State Department of Education; 8.8% went to TABE and GED test training; and 10.5% went to professional meetings. 12.3% of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators stated they did not receive any training directly related to correctional education.

The internal teacher traits recognized by DOC correctional educators as very important were integrity (84.2%), fair (77.2%), trustworthy (77.2%), honest (75.4%), professional (75.4%), respectful (68.4%), patient (64.9%), committed (61.4%), flexible (59.6%) and responsible (59.6%). Those internal teacher traits rated important were supportive (57.9%), stimulating (52.6%), enthusiastic (45.6%), self aware (43.9%), creative (42.1%), authoritarian (40.4%), leader (40.4%), dedicated, (38.6%), and knowledgeable (38.6%). The internal teacher traits recognized by DOC correctional educators as somewhat important were sensitive (38.6%), caring (26.3%), life-long learner (19.3%), open minded (14%), vigilant (14%), firm (12.3%), listener (12.3%), and helpful (10.5%). The internal teacher traits recognized by DOC correctional educators as minimally important were prepared (1.7%) and role model (1.7%). The internal teacher traits recognized by DOC correctional educators as not important were authoritarian (3.5%), prepared (1.7%) and sensitive (1.7%).

The learning environments recognized by DOC correctional educators as very important were honest (87.7%), safe (86%), respectful (75.4%), consistent (71.9%), positive (70.2%), encouraging (57.9%), and flexible (54.4%). The Learning Environments recognized by DOC correctional educators as important were caring (52.6%), cooperative (52.6%), engaging (52.6%), stimulating (52.6%), constructive (47.4%), and supportive (47.7%). The learning environments recognized by DOC correctional educators as somewhat important were democratic (45.6%), reflective (36.8%), collaborative (28.1%), transformative (28.1%), and rehabilitative (15.8%). The learning environments recognized by DOC correctional educators as minimally important were meaningful (1.7%) and relevant (1.7%). The learning environments recognized by DOC

correctional educators as not important were democratic (1.7%), engaging (1.7%), reflective (1.7%), and stimulating (1.7%).

The results of the comparison between Behaviorist philosophical practices and Constructivist philosophical practices revealed DOC correctional educators feel the trend is behaviorist in autocratic and prescriptive learning environments; and in director and authoritarian internal teacher traits. They believe the trends are constructivist in cooperative, student-centered, flexible, meaningful and safe learning environments; and flexible, caring, supportive, fair, firm, and open-minded internal teacher traits. Additionally, they feel they are a mixture of both philosophies in all other categories.

### **Process II – Qualitative Data and Analysis**

To further glean knowledge related to this study, Process II builds upon the information collected in Process I for the qualitative component of the study. Page four of the survey, requested permission to contact participants from Process I for follow-up interviews related to the results of aggregate data in Process I. Qualitative interview questions were utilized to determine perceptions of correctional educators on internal teacher traits and suggestions on successful learning environments in an institutional setting. The questions encouraged the participants to express their opinions, elaborate on perceptions and clarify feelings on the subject matter discussed.

The qualitative phase of this study consisted of the responses to six open ended questions. The participants were informed that they might be quoted in this study, but their names, facility names and other identifying information would not be used. Eight participants from five different facilities agreed to participate. Participants were given interview questions prior to the meeting so they could digest the information and develop quality responses. The researcher reviewed the answers with the participants to clarify their positions and to make sure quotations were correctly formulated. The researcher is only reporting on a small number of participants. The study is not suggesting the answers in this section are a consensus of the total participant population's views.

Interview data analysis:

In questions one and two of the interview, the participants were asked their feelings on the outcome of the survey questions relating to internal teacher traits and successful learning environments. The two questions were developed according to the frequency in which the items appeared in the literature and ranked by the means of the responses on the survey by Oklahoma DOC correctional educators in Process I. Figures 34 and 35 show the results of the aggregate data.

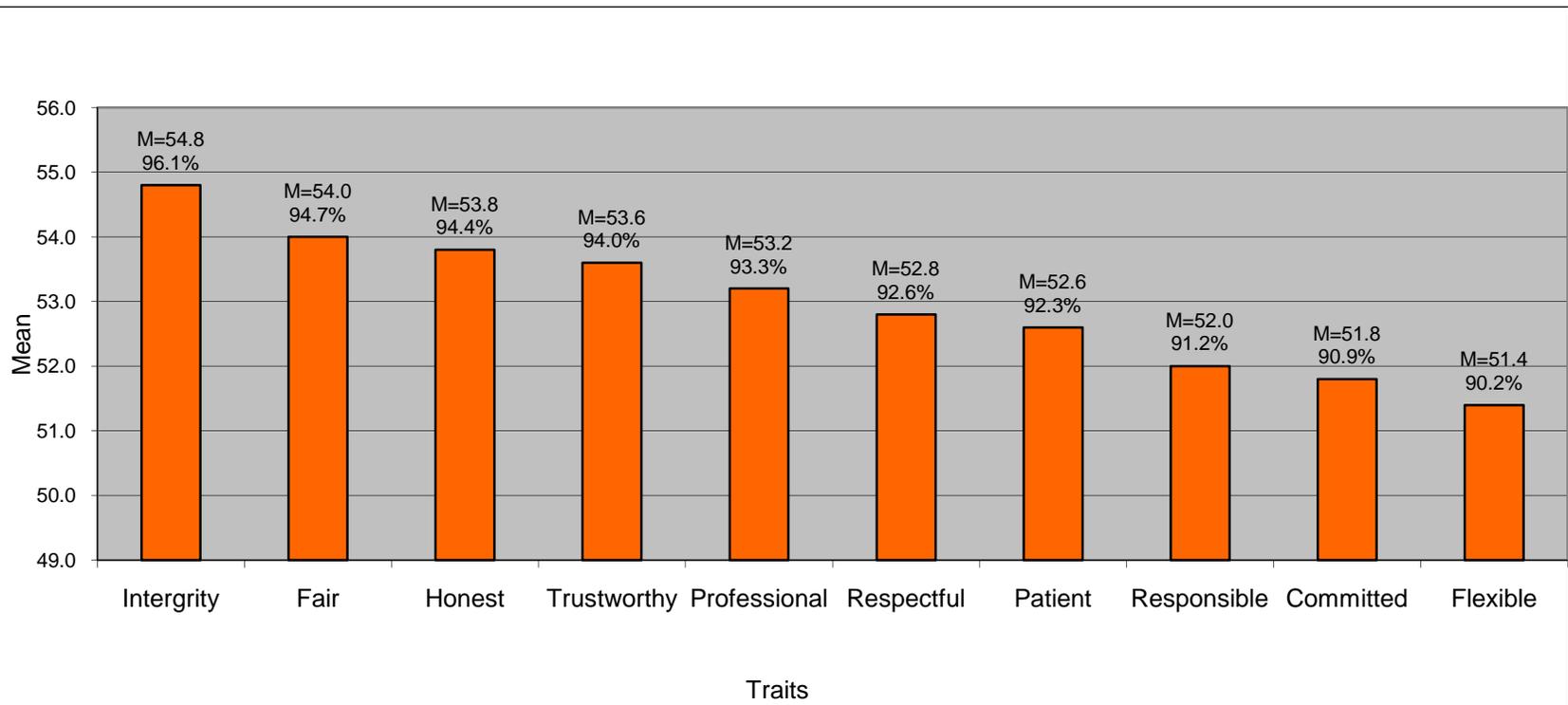


Figure 34. Top 10 Ranked Internal Teacher Traits Rated by Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators. M represents the mean of aggregate data collected in Process 1. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

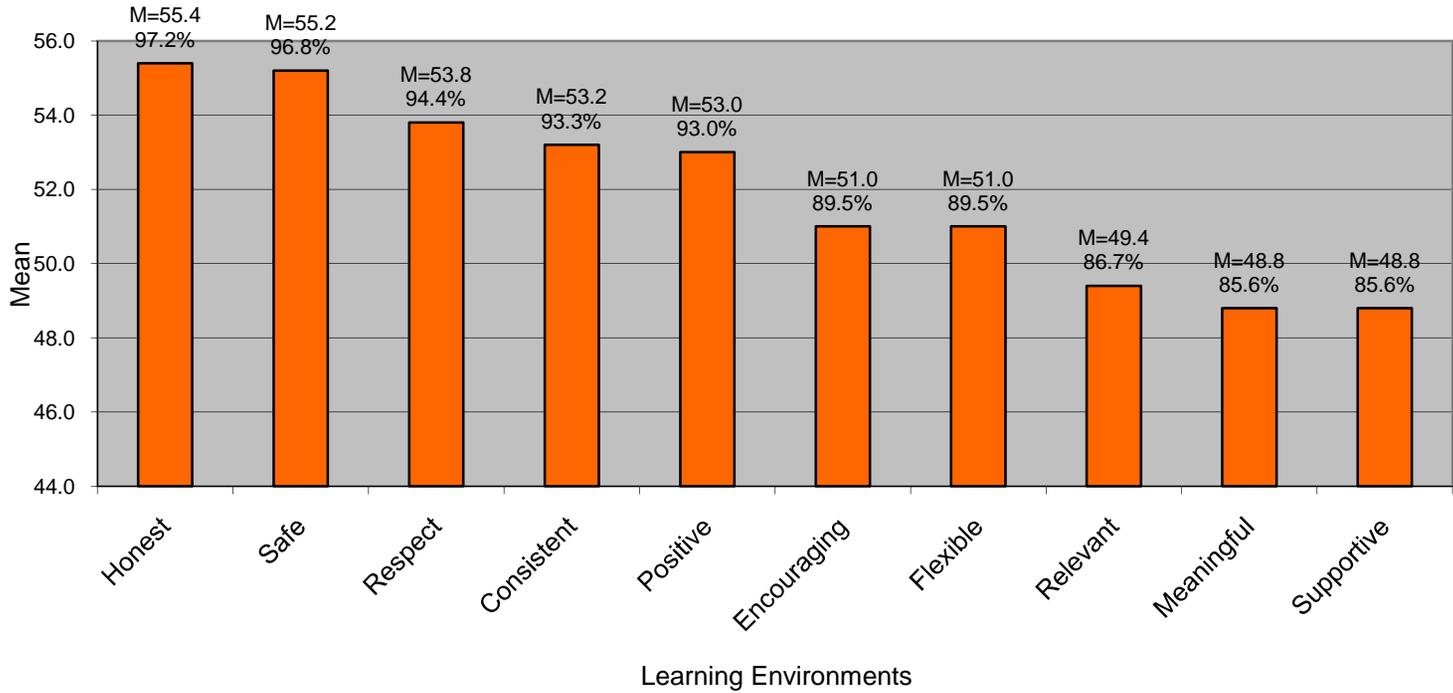


Figure 35. Top 10 Ranked Learning Environment Traits Rated by Oklahoma DOC Correctional Educators. M represents the mean of aggregate data collected in Process 1. The bottom number on each column represents the percentage of teachers out of a possible 57 participants in each category.

Question one stated:

In the literature reviewed for this study knowledgeable, professional, respectful, enthusiastic, and honest were found to be the most frequently recognized internal teacher traits a correctional educator must possess to be an effective correctional educator. According to the survey given to Oklahoma DOC correctional educators, integrity, fair, trustworthy, honest and professional were the traits ranked the highest. Give your thoughts on why the list from researchers is so different from that of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators. Which list do you identify with most? Why?

Question two was similar, only differing in that the list referred to learning environments.

The literature suggests relevant, cooperative, supportive, safe, and meaningful are environmental characteristics that affect the learning atmosphere. According to the survey given to Oklahoma DOC correctional educators honest, safe, respectful, consistent, and positive were the learning environments ranked the highest. Give your thoughts on why the list from researchers is so different from that of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators. Which list do you identify with most? Why?

All eight participants identified with the Oklahoma DOC list rather than the researchers' list in the literature on both questions. Comments such as "DOC all the way" (Teacher 2) and "I identify with the ODOC Teachers' list" (Teacher 4) were given. Teacher 5 proposed one possible explanation:

The vast majority of teachers for the Oklahoma DOC are older, seasoned and experienced. Perhaps, the reviewed literature took into account a much larger, younger, as well as a less seasoned and experienced pool of correctional educators... For example, many young and inexperienced correctional educators probably are overly intent on knowing all the answers to the questions presented in his/her subject area. Thus, the educator's concern centers more toward the knowledge characteristic as opposed to relationship building, breaking down the walls of distrust, or earning respect of the students. On the other hand, a

seasoned and much more experienced educator understands that his/her integrity is crucial within the correctional environment.

Another participant, Teacher 7 said this about internal teacher traits for correctional educators:

Teaching in DOC requires a relationship with students built on mutual respect, trust, and fair/unbiased treatment in order to be optimally successful... The students in DOC classrooms are the students who did not succeed in the public school. They have often been neglected or made to feel intellectually and academically inferior... Much of a DOC teacher's job is to restore the student's confidence in themselves, the teacher, and their ability to learn. This can only be achieved through fair, consistent, unbiased treatment and meeting the student where they are academically in order to create immediate and sustained success.

The major issue of concern with respect to question two and the learning environment was safety. "Most of our clients have experienced a tremendous amount of failure, especially in educational settings. It is important that they feel safe and respected in the classroom" (Teacher 3). "Safety should be the first priority of the classroom simply because of the prison environment. With this said, the offender students will be more apt to learn if they know that they are in a safe environment to study" (Teacher 4).

Teacher 5 explained further,

...one of the greatest concerns for Oklahoma D.O.C. educators as well as other correctional educators in regard to environmental characteristics that affect the learning atmosphere is safety. The Department's mission is to protect the public, to protect the employee, and to protect the offender. Thus, within its core, all three aspects of the mission call for and demands safety... In contrast, teachers outside the correctional environment... are not overly concerned with the potential dangers that their environment may present. As a result, they do not possess incessant sensitivities to security and safety concerns as being their

number one goal, and relegating every other consideration to a subordinate position.

When answering questions three and four, the correctional educators were split five to three in favor of Constructivist practices in the classroom over Behaviorist practices in the classroom. Question three discussed the following statements:

Many correctional educators currently use behaviorist methods of teaching. The Behaviorist philosophy of teaching could be defined as passive learning (students have little or no control over the content, curriculum or direction in which the educational process goes – one size fits all concept), student knowledge attainment is simply remembering information, understanding is recognizing existing patterns, and instruction is “teacher centered” or “lecture based”. The literature reviewed for this study implies that not only is this philosophy very prevalent in institutional education systems, but that it is not very effective for the population being served. According to answers given on the survey, Oklahoma DOC correctional educators feel that they use a mixture of behaviorist and constructivist (see definition in question # 4) philosophies in their classrooms. Do you think the Behaviorist method is effective and should continue to be used? Why?

Question four specified the conflicting issue:

Some researchers claim Constructivism is the new solution to learning problems of the incarcerated. Constructivist philosophy of teaching could be defined as learning via an active process based on individual backgrounds and experiences, various responses to patterns are explored and students choose those that are relevant to their situation, knowledge attainment is acquiring information, understanding is application of new information and creation of new patterns, instruction is facilitated by instructors and students direct their own learning. According to answers given on the survey, Oklahoma DOC correctional educators feel that they use a mixture of behaviorist and constructivist

philosophies in their classrooms. Do you think the Constructivist method would be effective? Why?

The discussion with correctional educators was divided. Those who use Behaviorist philosophical practices gave the following reasons. "I use behaviorist [philosophical practices] and it reaches the percentage of student[s] who need "teacher centered" or "lecture based" instruction" (Teacher 1). Teacher 2 supported her view with this statement, "... it should always be used to measure, modify, reward, punish, reinforce, evaluate, reevaluate... Being able to understand a concept and remembering it will always be the controlling factors in a learning environment." Participants against the use of Behaviorist practices stated:

The behaviorist model may be effective in the classroom with homogeneously grouped students, but the reality in a DOC classroom is that there are rarely two students in a given classroom at the same educational level. In DOC classes differentiated instruction and specific personalized plans of instruction are essential...for these groups of students. There may be times when whole group lecture would be effective, but not as the primary instructional delivery method.  
(Teacher 7)

Teachers 3 and 8 had very strong opinions about the Behaviorist approach. Teacher 3 voiced her opinion:

No, I do not believe the Behaviorist method is the most effective. In fact, I think this is exactly why these individuals may have failed in the traditional educational settings in the first place. In a correctional setting I think it is important that we make education relevant to the learner. It is important that the learner see the usefulness of what they are trying to master. Also, in the adult educational setting each individual has such varying needs. As adults, me included, we don't want to waste our time learning skills that have no apparent application for us.

Teacher 8 continued this line of thought, "The Behaviorist method will result in students gaining knowledge, but the GED is a 'thinking man's test'. Our students need to obtain knowledge, and be able to think and process information."

The correctional educators in support of Constructivist practices in the classroom were convinced it contributes to the success of the offender student population.

Yes, I think Constructivism is the best solution because it is based on the individual. It would create more enthusiasm by the learner just because they can see the application of what they are learning. It creates more interest. I know, as an adult learner, it is important to me that I see the usefulness and application of what I am learning. (Teacher 3)

Teacher 8 asserted, "The Constructive philosophy is effective and important. Each student in corrections comes from such a different background, different public school experience, educational functioning level, and expectations..." Teacher 7 added:

I believe the constructive method of teaching should be the primary system for delivery of instruction... The groups of students in a given classroom are rarely at the same education function levels for any given subject matter. This requires differentiated instruction. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the constructive model relies on background knowledge of students. The typical DOC student has a vastly different experience base in which to construct or attach new ideas and traditional methods have proven unsuccessful for any number of reasons. Allowing the student to find new and innovative ways of approaching learning and establish links to their background knowledge is key to student success.

Those against these practices argued that Constructivism may not be the answer to the disabilities of the inmate student. Teacher 1 responded, "I must be very careful not to teach only what they [the students] need to pass the GED. A lot of students want only the info necessary to achieve that goal for the 'days'." Teacher 6 explained, "I feel that the Constructivist method, for some, is too liberal (non-structured or not structured enough). I feel that a teacher would have to temper this method with a more traditional method to be most effective."

Question five addressed how the correctional educators felt about their success in institutional classrooms by asking:

When you began teaching in prison, did you feel prepared to handle the environment you were entering? Did you receive any training specific to the correctional education field? Did you feel confident you, as the teacher, would be successful? How do you rate your success?

Teacher 5 declared, "Prepared? No. I was prepared and trained to teach in a High School. And no, the training I received mainly concerned the security aspects of corrections..." Teachers 4 and 3 expanded on similar ideals. Teacher 4 reported:

I felt that I could teach in the prison environment but I did not feel that I should be left completely alone with the offenders and without any other staff members in the building during my first year of teaching. I was unprepared for that... I rate my success as a correctional teacher not only by statistical data but also by my students who continue to gladly come to school and keep striving to obtain their GED with good, positive attitudes.

Teacher 3 replied:

No, I did not really feel prepared when I first entered DOC; it was actually a little scary at first. There were training opportunities, but not specifically for teachers of the incarcerated. However, I have felt very successful as a correctional teacher and would not want to teach anywhere else. I have seen many offenders improve their skills and improve their self-esteem in the process. Some have totally changed in their attitude towards education, seeing it as achievable and something they desire. So many have left the classroom with GEDs and [are] considering more education.

Question number six related to the professional development and training in which the correctional educators participated. Question six stated:

Do you feel DOC education handles your professional development needs successfully? What would you change? What would you keep the same?

All eight teacher participants credited CEA with relevant professional development. They also agreed training opportunities in the past were much better prior to the economic downturn and the resulting budget cuts.

Over the years staff development has changed. We use to go to two DOC workshops a year (2 ½ days long a session) and to one ODOE adult education workshop a year. Then we started to attend CEA meetings. Currently, because of budget cuts, we have a one day meeting a year. The training use to be excellent prior to the budget issues. (Teacher 6)

Teacher 8 agreed:

DOC Education has always been helpful and concerned with the success of their teachers; with budget cuts the support has been reduced. I feel that it is essential to continually have teacher meetings, teacher training, and teacher workshops to maintain success. Growth and training are essential for continued success.

Teacher 3 pointed out, "I realize many of these concessions have come about because of money shortages, but the lack of training affects performance and morale." Other participants made suggestions on the types of training they would like to have in the future. Teacher 1 commented, "I would like to have more training on adult learning ideas (skills), all of us need special ed. training, and additional basic technology training." Recommendations from Teacher 4 included, "...DOC Education should provide more teacher professional development geared toward teaching adults. I would like to attend professional development with an area public school in order to keep up with the current teaching trends, changes, additions, etc."

### **Summary of the Findings of Process II (Qualitative Data)**

The interview section of Process II built upon the information collected in Process I for the qualitative component of the study. Eight of eight (100%) participants identified with the DOC correctional educators lists of internal teacher traits and learning environments over those obtained from the literature. Three of eight (38%) participants believed that Behaviorist practices in the classroom should be continued, while five of eight agreed there should be a paradigm shift to Constructivist practices in DOC classrooms. On question 5, seven of eight (88%) participants

were not prepared to teach in the prison environment, one of eight (13%) believed that their past experiences prepared them for institutional education programs. Eight of eight (100%) agreed they did not receive new teacher training specifically related to correctional education. However, eight of eight (100%) concurred that despite the lack of training they had been successful correctional educators. Question number six showed six of eight (75%) agreed that the DOC Education Department took care of their professional development in the past, but that the opportunities and support for training are declining. Two of eight (25%) believed that their professional development needs are sufficient. All eight (100%) wanted to see training opportunities increase annually. Again, all eight (100%) agreed that CEA conferences offer the best and most appropriate correctional education professional development.

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 consisted of the analysis of the data collected through the survey instrument and interview procedures. The two processes were described. Next, the demographics concerning the population surveyed were examined. The following section reviewed data related to internal teacher traits and successful learning environments in an institutional setting. Next, the data related to the continuum of behaviorist versus constructivist classroom practices were presented. Finally, the answers to the six interview questions were analyzed. The next chapter, Chapter 5, will present the summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for this study.

## CHAPTER V

### **Summary, Implications, Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter presents a review of the study and an interpretation of the findings within the two processes of the research. It includes a summary of the findings and implications in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of this study. The first process provides the assumptions and implications that addressed the research questions posed for the quantitative component of the study. The second process provides the indications and implications that apply to the questions presented in the qualitative component of the study. Finally, conclusions derived from the study and suggestions for further research are presented.

#### **Review of the Study**

In this research, effective teacher traits related to successful classroom structure in the correctional environment for adult students with a wide variety of issues, problems and learning difficulties were identified. The study also suggested the components of a successful learning environment for institutional students. In Process I the participants filled out a survey rating effective internal teacher traits, successful learning environments and Behaviorist versus Constructivist classroom practices. In Process II the information gained from Process I was used to develop interview questions. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with correctional educators who volunteered to participate. Next, the data collected were analyzed and reported using descriptive statistics. Finally, implications and recommendations for future research are suggested.

## **Population**

This was a census study; therefore, there was no sampling process. All Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were solicited to respond to the survey. In 2010, 57 DOC correctional educators participated in Process I out of a possible 63 education employees (90.5%). Three correctional educators were missed due to family issues. One correctional educator retired one day prior to the scheduled survey date. The other two were the principal investigator and the Superintendent of Schools. In Process II, interviews were conducted with eight volunteer correctional educators, who completed Process I. All data were collected in October and November 2010.

## **Research Questions**

1. What are the demographics of Oklahoma correctional educators?
2. What specific internal traits are needed by a correctional educator to be effective with incarcerated adult students?
3. What elements characterize a successful learning environment in an institutional setting?
4. How do correctional educators view themselves on the continuum between Behaviorist (Traditional) philosophical classroom practices and Constructivist (Facilitative) philosophical classroom practices?

## **Interpretation of Findings and Implications**

From the data presented, a number of conclusions can be drawn. Based on the findings of this study several possible interpretations were made by the researcher. These postulations are organized by research question and in the same sequence as the discussion of the findings in Chapter 4 of this study. Where appropriate, the related literature and research that supports or differs from the results of this study are noted at the end of a conclusion.

This inquiry addressed the issues of Oklahoma correctional educators' perceptions of effective internal teacher traits and successful institutional learning environments, as measured by the responses to survey ratings and open ended questions. The results were compared to the literature found in public and some correctional school research, as well as the constructivist

theoretical view. The lack of literature specifically related to corrections is a hindrance to the program as a whole. Results may clear a pathway to measure the quality of current educational programs, evaluation of correctional educators, possible changes to teacher certification for correctional educators and a fluid curriculum throughout the field from facility to facility. Outcomes of the study could also guide further research opportunities in the areas of master teacher competencies in correctional education and organized guidelines for correctional educator professional development.

### **Process I – Interpretation and Implications related to Quantitative Data**

Data was reported by first describing the population (research question #1), then reporting results of survey questions on internal teacher traits (research question #2), learning environments (research question #3) and the Continuum of Teachers' feelings involving Behaviorist practices versus Constructivist practices in the classroom (research question #4). Included in each category are findings and conclusions drawn from the research and researcher commentary.

#### ***Research question #1 - What are the demographics of Oklahoma correctional educators?***

##### ***Personal Demographics.***

*Figure 3 – Gender.* In terms of gender and the overall teaching profession in public, private, and Indian schools, nationally, females outnumber males by 75.6% to 24.4%, respectively, in total numbers of teachers (see Table 16 of the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2008, for complete details). The statistics are similar in Oklahoma where 76.6% of the total teaching population is female and 20.4% males (see Table 7 of the U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2008, for complete details). For the population in this study the reverse is true; the results showed that there are more males (52.6%) than females (38.6%) working in the DOC Education Department. Nothing in the literature was found to suggest that correctional education is traditionally a male- or female-dominated profession. Several questions arise from these findings. Because of the nature of the work, is this field considered to be a male occupation? Does it indicate that females are less likely to choose

this as a viable career option? Are females less likely to be hired for a position in an institutional classroom? Will this trend continue in the future?

Also found in the survey, almost 10% of correctional educators did not mark their gender. Did they believe they could be identified by this demographic?

*Figure 4 – Age Groups.* News media such as CBS, PBS and the New York Times have reported on the “Graying of America”, meaning the United States has an aging population still in the workforce. “People who are healthy and entering their 50s face the prospect of being retired nearly as long as they worked. That’s a very long retirement. It will be terrifying, because our greatest fear is outliving our money. People will want to prepare to renegotiate that, so that they can work longer and stay sharper longer” (Mackey, 2010, p. 1). DOC education is no exception. Seventy-two percent of DOC correctional educators are at or above retirement age. When one analyzes the age groups in combination with the total years of experience for DOC correctional educators, the indication is that many teachers are coming to DOC after retiring from public schools. Older individuals have an abundance of life and perhaps educational experience to draw on when dealing with incarcerated individuals; in spite of this wisdom public and correctional schools are very different. Older patrons of educational systems maintain a certain viewpoint that may be difficult to change. Veteran teachers with well established or even ingrained practices moving into a new and radically different environment might have major training issues. Professional development for these individuals will need to fill gaps they do not even know they have. How can these individuals be encouraged to assess their own professional development needs? What is the most productive way to give them the professional development and transition training they need? Little to none is being done now. Will the trend continue that those retiring from public school systems move into correctional education programs? Is it necessary for DOC to have older correctional educators to be successful? Currently, DOC does not appear to be trying to attract young teachers fresh out of college. Personnel recruitment, job announcements and marketing strategies are not strong toward young teachers; however DOC hires correctional officers at 20 years of age. If a correctional officer can be successful, so can a young teacher with the right training and mentorship.

*Figure 5 – Highest Degrees Earned.* Nationally, teachers from all public, private and Indian schools maintain around 48.2% Bachelor degrees, 43% Master degrees and 7% above a Master degree (see Table 5 of the U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2008, for complete details). In Oklahoma correctional education, two-thirds of the teachers have earned their masters degrees. Alternatively, one participant recorded “other” as highest degree earned, even though it is specifically stated in the job description that candidates for correctional educator positions must have at least a Bachelor degree in education. Does s/he have a degree in education? If an individual is not teaching a core subject but is filling a requirement for accreditation, is it still expected that this person have a degree in education? For example, a Bachelor degree may not be required to teach barbering; however what is the expectation when filling the vocational instructors portion of the State’s accreditation standards; should this correctional educator have a degree?

*Figure 6/ 7 – Colleges Attended by State and Oklahoma Colleges Attended by Region.* Most of the DOC correctional educators in Oklahoma attended colleges within the state at some point in their educational career. Some have degrees from other states. Some have attended multiple college/ universities. Is the education and certification equivalent? Are there regulations applied to teacher candidates in other states that are not required in Oklahoma? Of the Oklahoma colleges/ universities attended within the state are the teacher preparation programs standardized? Is the training unified?

### ***Occupational Profiles.***

*Figure 8 – Job Satisfaction.* Over two-thirds of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators rated their job satisfaction above 7 on a 10 point scale, indicating either the correctional educators are very satisfied with their role in DOC or perhaps they did not feel secure answering the question honestly. The other third (31.6%) of the DOC correctional educators are not completely disheartened with DOC education in general, but are also not content with the current situation. Six correctional educators have left DOC since this data was collected in October 2010. If none of the 57 correctional educators polled rated job satisfaction at the bottom of the scale

(rating 1-3), was the population honest about their feelings? Where did those who left fall on the scale? Were they in the bottom one-third or the upper two-thirds on the job satisfaction groups?

*Figure 9 – Correctional Educators at Each Security Level.* Sixty-five percent of DOC correctional educators teach at the minimum security level. DOC believes at some point all of these inmates will discharge to the streets; therefore, in an effort to keep these offenders from coming back or recidivating, they should have the opportunity to get an education. Some correctional educators teach at more than one security level. They may even hold classes in Community Corrections, Halfway Houses, Jails and Youth Centers, but these levels of incarceration were not included in this survey. There are three maximum level prisons in Oklahoma – McAlester, Lexington, and Granite; most of these people will never get out of prison, however some will discharge to the street from maximum security so they should have the opportunity to receive an education just like everyone else. Besides the slight possibility that they may one day get out of prison, there are other factors to consider for this population and their education. One factor is that DOC expects all offenders to know and follow rules and policies. Unless the individual can read at approximately an eighth grade level s/he will be at a grave disadvantage. A second factor is the correspondence that is continually coming through the mail in the form of letters from family and loved ones, legal documents and other important personal information. The offender needs to be able to read the documents and respond coherently. Also, these same offenders are expected to legibly fill out forms for a wide variety of activities from canteen slips to property forms and legal documents to request to staff forms. Therefore, DOC has assigned eight (14%) correctional educators to this level of incarceration.

*Figure 10 – Participants by Facility.* In 2006, the Oklahoma DOC Education Unit consisted of 128 full time employees (FTE); one Superintendent, one Senior Principal, 5 Regional Principals, 15 Correctional Teacher II positions; one Psychometrist position, 17 Library Technician positions or temporary staff to fill the library duties, a Secretary IV position, two Vocational Instructors, and 85 Correctional Teacher positions (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). The following information and explanations of staff was collected

in the DOC Education Administrative Office. When the research was conducted in 2010, the researcher found every facility was understaffed.

**McAlester Unit.** This unit was comprised of the Oklahoma State Penitentiary and Jackie Brannon Correctional Center. The McAlester Unit had 10 FTE. The FTE consisted of one Correctional Teacher II, eight Correctional Teachers and one Library Technician. The McAlester Unit shared the services of the Correctional Teacher II and the Library Technician positions (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted 7 of 10 FTE positions were filled.

**Lexington Unit.** This unit was comprised of the Lexington Correctional Center and Joseph Harp Correctional Center. The Lexington Unit had 11 FTE. The FTE consisted of one Correctional Teacher II, eight Correctional Teachers, one Psychometrist and one Library Technician. The Lexington Unit shared the services of the Correctional Teacher II and the Library Technician positions (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted 7 of 11 FTE positions were filled.

**Lakeside School Unit.** This unit was comprised of the Oklahoma State Reformatory, Jess Dunn Correctional Center and Eddie Warrior Correctional Center. The Lakeside School is the official high school for the Department of Corrections; therefore, it must maintain a specific number of Correctional Educators, a Counselor, Vocational Instructors and a certified Librarian to maintain licensure with the State Department of Education. Accreditation must be maintained to be eligible to receive federal and state grant funding. The Lakeside School Unit had 23 FTE. The FTE consisted of one Regional Principal; two Correctional Teacher II positions, sixteen Correctional Teachers, two Vocational Instructors, one certified Librarian, and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted 17 of 23 FTE positions were filled. While understaffed and regardless of the economic situation, this facility maintains the accreditation certification and has retained higher numbers of education staff than other facilities that have lost significant numbers of correctional educators over the years.

**James Crabtree Correctional Center.** The education unit at the James Crabtree Correctional Center had 5 FTE, consisting of three Correctional Teachers, one Correctional Teacher II and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted, 3 of 5 FTE positions were filled.

**Howard McLeod Correctional Center.** The education unit at the Howard McLeod Correctional Center had 6 FTE, consisting of four Correctional Teachers, one Correctional Teacher II and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted, 4 of 6 FTE positions were filled.

**Mack Alford Correctional Center.** The education unit at the Mack Alford Correctional Center had 7 FTE, consisting of five Correctional Teachers, one Correctional Teacher II and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted, 3 of 7 FTE positions were filled.

**Jim Hamilton Correctional Center.** The education unit at the Jim Hamilton Correctional Center had 6 FTE, consisting of four Correctional Teachers, one Correctional Teacher II and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted, 2 of 6 FTE positions were filled.

**Dick Conner Correctional Center.** The education unit at the Dick Conner Correctional Center had 7 FTE, consisting of five Correctional Teachers, a Regional Principal and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted, 3 of 7 FTE positions were filled.

**Mabel Bassett Correctional Center.** The education unit at the Mabel Bassett Correctional Center had 7 FTE, consisting of five Correctional Teachers, one Regional Principal and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted, 5 of 7 FTE positions were filled.

**John Lilley Correctional Center.** The education unit at the John Lilley Correctional Center had 6 FTE, consisting of four Correctional Teachers, one Correctional Teacher II and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted, 3 of 6 FTE positions were filled.

**William Key Correctional Center.** The education unit at the William Key Correctional Center had 6 FTE, consisting of four Correctional Teachers, one Correctional Teacher II and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted, 2 of 6 FTE positions were filled.

**Northeast Oklahoma Correctional Center.** The education unit at the Northeast Oklahoma Correctional Center had 5 FTE, consisting of three Correctional Teachers, one Correctional Teacher II and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted, 1 of 5 FTE positions was filled.

**Bill Johnson Correctional Center.** The education unit at the Bill Johnson Correctional Center had 6 FTE, consisting of four Correctional Teachers, one Correctional Teacher II and one Library Technician (B. Anderson, personal communication, April 12, 2006). In 2010 when the research was conducted, 5 of 6 FTE positions were filled.

One conclusion drawn from this information is that not only are DOC correctional educators being held to unrealistic standards in regard to subjects and levels taught, but they are also doing the work of several teachers. Because of budget cuts, numerous positions are not being filled and, as a result, the remaining teachers have had to substitute the best they can. "The result is a disparate patchwork of isolated educators, each doing the best they can to change inmate's lives. Often seen as less of an educator than their local school counterparts, correctional educators work with the most forgotten members of society in the most brutal of environments" (Rennie, 2008, p. 190). Due to these economic times, what are the short and long term implications of this situation?

*Figure 11 - Grade Level Taught.* Some DOC correctional educators teach more than one grade level. Test Coordinators, Administrators, Barbers and Librarians do not conduct classes at the ABE, Literacy, and GED levels. Two-thirds (64%) of correctional educators teach middle level students. There are as many correctional educators teaching literacy level students as there are teaching GED level students. This indicates that there are a wide range of students at all three levels of undergraduate coursework. It also shows that many students are functioning well below the educational levels they should be. It would be safe to say that all incarcerated students have

dropped out or were kicked out of their public schools for various reasons and at various grade levels within their educational careers. They all have gaps in their educations. Are these gaps being identified? If so, by whom? How is this information being communicated? What is the best way to handle these students? What is the best way for correctional educators to address the negative assumptions and unrealistic expectations of inmates connected to the school setting?

*Figure 12 – Correctional Educators teaching multiple grade levels.* Teaching in prison may be more difficult than teaching in public schools where the teacher must be certified in the subject level and grade level they are teaching. Almost half of DOC correctional educators teach more than one grade level of student every day. These correctional educators also teach multiple subjects. The way the program is currently structured most correctional educators do not teach subject specific courses; therefore, these correctional educators are probably teaching levels and subjects they are not certified or trained to teach. They are consistently called upon to rapidly shift from one subject to a second or third and one grade level to another all within the same scheduled class time. In most cases, the inmate is already behind because of a disability; already behind because of a lack of attendance in a school system; and already behind because of negative experiences, attitudes and expectations. Are correctional educators really prepared or capable of delivering the services this population needs? Further compounding the issues presented and as frustrating as it is for the offender, the problems are magnified for the correctional educator who has to break down these barriers before any real learning can take place. In addition, all DOC schools are under the umbrella of the Lakeside School District. Accreditation is based on that umbrella, including aggregate information such as teacher certification. For example, The Education Unit has been unable to fill the library technician positions due to the lack of qualified applicants. The Lakeside School must maintain a certified librarian to meet certification standards. This requirement is currently met by utilizing a correctional educator, who is a certified librarian to fill both requirements.

Another illustration of accreditation shortcuts is in the area of special education. Currently, individual sites do not have a correctional educator certified in special education, rather, there are 7 special education teachers among the 17 facilities with educational programs.

What are the implications of accrediting a whole system with special education programs spread over the entire state, when that expertise is not readily available? Correctional educators in the system are facility based; they rarely travel between facilities. Would it be different perhaps more successful, if there were special education teachers at each site? Correctional educators need to have training in special education to help identify issues in this area (Gemignani, 1994, p. 2). Based on personal experience, the researcher has found that the older inmate population has undiagnosed learning disabilities the correctional educator is not trained to work with or diagnose. The older population is not monitored according to a specialized individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan. The younger population (21 and under) may get IEP or 504 paperwork from previous schools attended, but the information is most likely out of date. The strong possibility exists that the individual might have already dropped out of school or have been disenfranchised from the educational system long before incarceration. In addition, since most personal information is self reported, if the under 21 student denies special education affiliation they may not get the help they need (Lawrence, et al, 2002, p. 3). To clarify, it exacerbates the issues for correctional educators in that they are teaching multiple subjects and grade levels, teaching areas in which they are not certified or trained, and they are teaching a population long disconnected from a regular education setting.

*Figure 13 – Average Class Size.* Question #10 on the demographics sheet asked Oklahoma DOC correctional educators what their average class size was; consequently, the wide variation in feedback indicated the question was unclear. The answer selection given to correctional educators were under 5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 30 or more. Based on comments recorded not all correctional educators shared the same opinion of what this question was asking. Some correctional educators have several classes throughout the day; therefore, they most likely reported class size per class during the day; making the number they reported small. A majority (58%) of correctional educators serve 11-20 students in each class they have during the day. If the DOC correctional educator has 11-20 students within 3 classes each day, they are servicing approximately 60 students at varying educational levels every day. Alternatively, other correctional educators may have determined that they have only one class during the day and

reported their class numbers for the whole day as one number; making the number appear larger. Nine of 57 (15.8%) correctional educators with 21 or more students in class may have been the barber, librarians, test coordinators, or college coordinators. The 5 of 57 correctional educators who reported having no classes were probably administrators, although many of the administrators also teach life skills and supervise college courses.

*Figure 14 – Years teaching with DOC (Corrections only).* In October of 2009, DOC education let go/laid off all temporary and probationary correctional educators; a total of 8 positions. Probationary staff had been with the department less than twelve consecutive months. One-third of DOC correctional educators have been with DOC for more than one but less than five years. Thirty-four of 57 (60%) of DOC correctional educators have less than 10 years of experience teaching in DOC. In contrast, the majority of correctional educators have more than 30 years total teaching experience. This information speaks volumes. It shows that many teachers are finding DOC education as a second career; they are already at retirement age; and they are most likely not trained to teach adults, the subject levels or the grade levels they are teaching.

*Figure 15 – Total Years Experience (Public and Corrections).* Almost 80 % of DOC correctional education workforce has been teaching for more than 20 years; and almost half have more than 30 years of teaching experience. There is a wealth of experienced correctional educators in DOC. These professionals with so much knowledge may not want to change what they are doing; therefore, they resist training and professional development. Without mandated professional development guidelines or master teacher competencies, many correctional educators may adopt their own version of the training they need for corrections. These concepts may or may not be in the best interest of the offender population. How can the DOC smooth the transition from public education to correctional education for these very experienced and highly qualified public school teachers? Also, 9 of 57 (15.8%) of DOC correctional educators had the same number of years with the DOC as they did total years of experience. These correctional educators have taught only in the institutional setting. Do they have a similar view as those with experience in public education?

### ***Certification Information.***

*Figure 16 – Certification by State.* Almost all DOC correctional educators are certified by Oklahoma. However, one demographic page was not marked. The assumption here would be that the participant just forgot to mark the correct answer. Alternatively, due to some answers given on other demographic questions during this survey, that assumption may be false. What are the implications of not having all DOC teachers certified by the State of Oklahoma?

*Figure 17 – Certification Area.* When hiring teachers to fill positions for literacy level students, one might think the obvious answer is to hire someone with an Elementary background. The opposite may be true, because of the population being served. Early childhood and elementary teachers have very different behaviors, attitudes and vocabulary that set them apart from many in secondary and higher education venues. As cited in chapter 2, incarcerated adult males and females need an environment that fosters autonomy and independence which might not be possible to provide. Hence, not only are many correctional educators certified in Secondary education, they are also licensed in multiple subject areas. This high school student population is close enough to the age of inmate students that success or failure of the correctional educator is probably not related to this certification area. However, are those with early childhood and elementary certifications effective with adults? Are the correctional educators with early childhood and elementary certifications licensed in multiple areas?

*Figure 18 – Multiple Certification Areas.* Almost 40% of DOC correctional educators are licensed in only one certification area. This means that most DOC correctional educators are teaching at a level and in subjects that they are not only not certified in, but also not trained to teach. With minor children this would not be allowed. Why then is it allowed in correctional schools? Is it because of the public's perception of the incarcerated? If society does not really care that offenders get an education, then one conclusion might be that they also do not feel it is important that the correctional educator be properly qualified to teach this unique population.

*Figure 19 – Subject Certification Categories held by DOC correctional educators.* DOC correctional educators individually hold certifications in 24 different subject areas. There are numerous other subject areas in which DOC correctional educators do not hold certifications.

Many of the DOC correctional educators previously were coaches who taught History and Social Studies. Among the 57 DOC correctional educator participants only one correctional educator is certified to teach adults. Does this certification make the correctional educator more qualified to do his/her job? Does this certification give the correctional educator more insight or an advantage over other correctional educators?

***Training.***

*Figure 20/ 21 – Professional Development 2010 and Professional Development 2007-2010.* Unlike public schools, universities and CareerTech organizations, there is no governing board for the Lakeside School District to oversee adherence of standards and professional development. Correctional educators are answering to two masters, one the ODOE and the other DOC, when it comes to training. Many correctional educators see their job as a blended role of security and teaching. In question #14 of the survey, the researcher asked about training related to the teaching side of their employment. Correctional educators reported any and all training, but not necessarily activities directly related to correctional education or the classroom aspect of their profession. They did not distinguish between teaching, DOC and security. In retrospect, question number 14 could have been reworded.

By the diverse answers to this survey question, it is apparent to this researcher that master teacher competencies for institutional schools are needed. It is also evident that clarifications on appropriate professional development are essential. Correctional educators either do not know what training directly affects them in the classroom or they are confused on how to approach the correct training. They do not have a clear and cohesive definition of what training directly affects them in the classroom. Some correctional educators stated that the facility training given annually to all DOC employees relates directly to the classroom. DOC annual training does not translate into information on theory or best practices for the institutional classroom. If this is the only training DOC correctional educators receive, they are considerably lacking in their professional development. Additionally, those who receive training from CEA conferences seemed happy with their professional development, while those who recorded nothing about CEA reported having no training or training that was not applicable.

**Research question #2 - What specific internal traits are needed by a correctional educator to be effective with incarcerated adult students?**

In general, the researcher questions whether the correctional educators knew the definitions of all vocabulary used in the survey. Time was not taken to discuss and clarify the terminology presented. Upon reflection, the researcher should have taken steps to make sure there was a commonly shared definition for all terms appearing in the survey.

*Figure 22 – Internal Teacher Traits (ITT) Rated Very Important.* The top five ITT rated by Oklahoma DOC correctional educators are integrity, honesty, fair, professional, and trustworthy. Four of the top five seem to encompass moral qualities of correctional educators. It appears that Oklahoma correctional educators feel it is more important to be a quality person who will not commit criminal acts, than it is to know subject matter, teaching strategies or educational theory. Alternatively, they could be assuming that knowing subject matter, strategies and theory are a given. They also think it is very important to be professional as a correctional educator; however they do not like professional development training.

*Figure 23 - Internal Teacher Traits (ITT) Rated Important.* Five ITT rated important were creative, enthusiastic, self-aware, stimulating and supportive. These traits comprise the correctional educator's attitude or approach to the classroom and students, more than knowledge of subject content, educational theory or appropriate teaching strategies.

*Figure 24 - Internal Teacher Traits (ITT) Rated Somewhat Important.* Five ITT rated somewhat important were open-minded, caring, vigilant, sensitive, and life-long learner. The researcher posits that being a life-long learner should be rated high in the very important category. If the offender students cannot find a good example to follow when they are thrust back into society how does anyone expect them to stay out of prison?

*Figure 25 - Internal Teacher Traits (ITT) Rated Minimally Important.* Nine of 29 traits were marked minimally important, all other traits were rated higher.

*Figure 26 - Internal Teacher Traits (ITT) Rated Not Important.* Only three of 29 traits were marked as not important. 4 Oklahoma DOC correctional educators believe being authoritative, prepared and sensitive are not important to success in the correctional classroom. Prepared was

one of the traits listed by one of the correctional educators as not important to a classroom full of behavioral problems, perhaps some additional professional development would change their mind.

Oklahoma DOC correctional educators may not have been able to distinguish between the internal teacher traits on the list. The nature of the survey in which participants were given a list of 29 traits and asked to rate the levels of importance, may have suggested to the participants that some traits were more important than others. In analyzing the data, the researcher considered the implications of rating the traits on the survey, unconsciously but most likely, influencing the way the correctional educator recorded their feelings. Did the method of rating the internal teacher traits inadvertently skew the data? For example, could a participant have wondered about rating the traits when they did not really feel there was a difference?

***Research question #3 - What elements characterize a successful learning environment in an institutional setting?***

As in question number 2, the researcher ponders whether the correctional educators knew the definitions of all vocabulary used in the survey. Time was not taken to discuss and clarify the terminology presented. Upon reflection, the researcher should have taken steps to make sure there was a commonly shared definition for all terms appearing in the survey.

*Figure 27 - Learning Environments (LE) Rated Very Important.* The top five LE rated very important were consistent, honest, positive, respect, and safe. It was not surprising that having a safe LE is at the top of the list. It is surprising, however, that relevant and meaningful LE were not rated on the list of very important. Any adult learning theory will state that both of these are imperative to learning with adults. Reflection is a concept built into much college/university curriculum. Unless Oklahoma DOC correctional educators have not been in a college/university classroom as a student within the last 10 years, they would understand the educational influence and importance of reflection. If an inmate student does not reflect on his/her past how will they be able to change their future by learning from their past experiences? In addition, it is very hard to demand an honest LE considering the atmosphere in which correctional educators work.

*Figure 28 - Learning Environments (LE) Rated Important.* Five LE rated important by Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were constructive, cooperative, engaging, stimulating and supportive. Caring was also very high in the important and somewhat important categories.

*Figure 29 - Learning Environments (LE) Rated Somewhat Important.* Five LE rated somewhat important by Oklahoma DOC correctional educators are rehabilitative, collaborative, democratic, reflective and transformative. Education should be transformative for everyone, but in corrections it should also be rehabilitative. The researcher does not understand educators in this environment who do not strive to transform and rehabilitate these students into productive, successful citizens. Furthermore, involvement in a democratic LE will give not only the student a feeling of control over the learning situation, it may also change their perspective on what is important.

*Figure 30 - Learning Environments (LE) Rated Minimally Important.* Relevant and meaningful were two LE that Oklahoma DOC correctional educators think are only minimally important. The literature states otherwise. Scholarly studies reveal that the more relevant and meaningful the environment and curriculum, the more knowledge is acquired by an adult learner. This suggests that a majority of DOC correctional educators still think of offender students as children who have not connected their learning to real world experiences.

*Figure 31 - Learning Environments (LE) Rated Not Important.* Some Oklahoma DOC correctional educators rated the following four traits as not important: engaging, stimulating, reflective and democratic. If the LE is not engaging and stimulating, how will the correctional educator keep the student's attention? Do these correctional educators believe only in the "banking system" of education referred to by Friere in which the teacher communicates the information and the student absorbs the material for no particular reason except the teacher said it was important?

Oklahoma DOC correctional educators may not have been able to distinguish between the learning environments on the list. The nature of the survey in which participants were given a list of 20 traits and asked to rate the levels of importance may have suggested to the participants that some learning environments were more important than others. In analyzing the data, the

researcher considered the implications of rating the learning environments on the survey, unconsciously but most likely, influencing the way the correctional educator recorded their feelings. Did the method of rating the learning environments inadvertently skew the data? For example, could a participant have wondered about rating the learning environments when they did not really feel there was a difference?

***Research question #4 - How do correctional educators view themselves on the continuum between Behaviorist (Traditional) and Constructivist (Facilitative) philosophical classroom practices?***

*Figure 32/33 – Continuum of LE and ITT.* Here again, the rating sheet would have benefitted from clarification. The terms Traditional (T), Behaviorist (B), Facilitative (F) and Constructivist (C) were not explained to the participants; therefore, a cohesive definition of the vocabulary was not given and the correctional educators were left to figure out what the survey was asking. As a result, the data reported fell mostly in the combination range of both philosophical practices, which may not accurately reflect the position of the correctional educators and DOC Education. The results of this page did not hold any significant answers. All means on LE were between 2.7 and 3.75 on a five point scale. The means figured on ITT fell between 2.68 and 3.64 on the continuum, also not showing significant conclusions. The researcher believes Oklahoma DOC correctional educators fall more on the T/B side of the continuum, but maybe they would like to be more F/C but do not know how or feel that they cannot relinquish that much control.

## **Process II – Volunteer/Self-Selected interviews**

The qualitative phase of this study consisted of the responses to six open ended questions posed to volunteer participants from Process I of this study. The questions were based on the results of the survey information gathered in Process I. All results were reported in aggregate form, so that confidentiality of the subjects' answers was maintained. Eight volunteers agreed to participate.

The researcher's intention was to study and report the data in Process II in a constructivist view, but because of the researcher's background and experience, the actual interview process took on a more structured entity resembling a post-positivist perspective. If it were to be done over again, to gain the Constructivist view desired, more time would have been spent with the participants and more follow-up/clarifying questions would have been asked. As it was, the interview was as short as possible for convenience sake and probably did not get the answers sought in as much depth and detail as would have been desired. Correctional educators had a difficult time shifting between lines of questioning. For example, after finishing the answer to the first question and moving on to the second, many correctional educators kept referring back to internal teacher traits even though question two designated the environment external to the correctional educator. Noticeably, the correctional educators also had a perplexing time distinguishing between what information was important or relevant to questions in the qualitative section.

## **Conclusions**

Through the organization of data presented by Oklahoma DOC correctional educators, it is clear that professional development guidelines would be beneficial. The top characteristics revealed in the literature for successful teachers traits and classroom environments did not reflect the ratings of the Oklahoma correctional educators. The following is a list of emerging themes that may have affected the data output of this study. The themes are presented in no particular order of importance, but also include findings and conclusions drawn from the research and researcher commentary.

- **Public perception and the mission of correctional education.** The prison education system is a macrocosm for the global community in general. Media viewpoints, truth in sentencing, and the 85% rule are topics highly important to this field (Travis, 2000, p. 2). What happens when offenders re-enter the workforce? This deserves continued attention, training and additional research. Society has not completely bought into the mission of correctional education, which is to prepare incarcerated students for a successful reentry into society by equipping them with academic, career and technical, and personal and social skills. If this is not enough to convince the citizenry of its worth, what should the mission be to gain the confidence, understanding and support of the general public? Even though a majority of prisoners will eventually get out of the institution, most people relate more to the DOC mission: Protect the public; protect the employee; protect the offender. This could be interpreted as the last individual to receive anything positive including an education should be the offender. Not having a clearly accepted mission of correctional education leads to many issues such as the mindset that offenders do not deserve an education; even with a structured plan, educating offenders may be ineffective (Lochner and Moretti, 2002, pp. 2-3). Putting professional development in a Behaviorist form may not translate well with those who prefer the leniency of Constructivist methods; and in general, as with public school teachers, there is a tension between theory and practice (i.e. administrators may send correctional educators to training, but many of them will continue to do what they have always done.)

There is a genuine lack of consensus about what constitutes quality correctional education. Answers to interview questions from DOC correctional educators illustrate this issue. Teacher 2 feels the behaviorist philosophy of classroom practices is the best way to conduct instruction. "It should always be used to measure, modify, reward, punish, reinforce, evaluate, reevaluate or whatever is necessary...Being able to understand a concept and remembering it will always be the controlling factor in a learning environment." Teacher 3 disagreed, "I do not believe the Behaviorist method is the most effective. In fact, I think this is exactly why these individuals may have failed in the traditional educational settings in the first place... I think Constructivism is the best solution because it is based on the individual. It

would create more enthusiasm by the learner just because they can see the application of what they are learning. It creates more interest.” Should the fundamental philosophy in the classroom be rehabilitation or punishment, deterrence and incapacitation (Farabee, 2006, p. A19; Ryan and Woodard, 1987, pp. 1-2)? Could some correctional educator’s views of prisoners be the same as society’s? Do DOC correctional educators think inmates deserve an education? These questions were not asked on the survey; however, due to some of the answers on the survey, it could be concluded that many do share the opinions of mainstream society and they believe the offenders do not deserve an education. If this is the case, correctional educators’ negative opinions would influence data in the survey. Do DOC correctional educators share the view that those who have never been incarcerated should have more opportunity than those who have been incarcerated? Correctional educators need a shared viewpoint of the correctional education program. Training in adult learning theory and best practices would be good places to start.

- **Funding and accreditation.** Oklahoma ranks the highest in the nation in women’s incarceration and is steadily in the top 5 for the confinement of males (Hartney, 2007; Gilliard & Beck, 1998). With federal government spending spiraling out of control and a national debt in trillions, what should be the future of education for the incarcerated? Correctional education receives a majority of its financial assets from the DOC budget along with some funds from state and federal programs. These resources are secured through Title I and ABE grant projects. Oklahoma correctional education qualifies for this money due to state and federal school accreditation policy. Oklahoma was one of the first correctional schools to secure this funding by being certified as a public school district. Because of the nature of the accreditation process, the chance of losing these benefits is ever present. What would happen to Oklahoma correctional education programs if accreditation were lost and the state and federal grant money were not approved? Much work has been done on public schools and educational structure for children. It is time someone took a stand for those who are incarcerated. Bringing the Lakeside School District as a whole up to actual accreditation standards would be a good place to start.

- **Lack of specific certifications and professional development.** It has been mentioned several times in this study that correctional educators do not follow the certification policy set forth by the ODOE for public school teachers. Correctional educators are teaching subjects in which they are not certified; grade levels in which they are not trained to instruct; and they are doing their jobs in an environment that historically does not support educational efforts nor does it place high value on what the correctional educators are trying to achieve. The Lakeside School District is seriously understaffed due to FTE positions that have been vacated but not refilled. Within this struggling staff still working hard to fulfill their mission, there is no shared view of what the correctional education process should look like. Fragmented curriculum, out of date and age inappropriate materials, and inferior training guidelines leave these educational professionals in a stressful situation that affects the overall morale of everyone involved, administration, staff and students; consequently, it affects the educational process as a whole. No one is left untouched by the lack of educational structure; not students; not correctional educators; not stakeholders; and especially not the communities these offenders re-enter after leaving the penitentiary.
- **Security.** The nature of the setting makes it difficult for the correctional educator to perform daily teaching duties without the inclusion of security issues. It is a blended role so intertwined that correctional educators cannot separate what is corrections and what is teaching. The teacher must always teach AND maintain security. “I felt that I could teach in the prison environment but I did not feel that I should be left completely alone with the offenders and without any other staff members in the building during my first year of teaching” (Teacher 4). In public school, security is such a small part of what the teacher does that it is often felt that it is someone else’s job, i.e. the principal, off duty policemen or sheriffs deputies, or the school resource officer.
- **Impact upon education by a particular learning environment.** Offenders are given the opportunity to participate in educational programs; however, very few are forced to obtain their GED. The offenders who are required to participate are those who have less than a fifth grade reading level or are under the age of 25. Having a wide variety of students in the

classroom at any given time creates issues that include the ability of the correctional educator to teach multiple subjects; the ability to relate information to multiple grade levels; teaching subjects the correctional educator is not only not trained in but also not certified; and preparing curriculum, testing, documentation, and modifications for special education and ESL learners. All of this in an environment where security is the most important issue and all other functions of education are secondary.

- **Data did not mirror the literature reviewed or theoretical framework.** Is Oklahoma unique? Was it that the data of other studies was conducted in an environment so different from correctional education? Teacher 5 suggested, "Perhaps, the reviewed literature took into account a much larger, younger, as well as a less seasoned and experienced pool of correctional educators." Did the correctional educators simply not understand the vocabulary used in the survey? Or do they just not care? Did issues such as not being told ahead of time, being peers with the researcher etc. affect the way the correctional educators approached the survey, therefore skewing the data?
- **Age, gender and experience of Oklahoma DOC correctional educators.** From the demographic information, the researcher concluded that most DOC correctional educators are of retirement age and have not recently been in the classroom as a student. Most of the literature recorded in this research was gathered and published within the last seven years. If this is true, Oklahoma DOC correctional educators need annual training to keep them up to date not only with curriculum and technology, but also with current theories, philosophies and best practices of successful correctional educators and classroom environments. This is the only way correctional educators will be productive. As previously indicated, DOC education employees tend to be older, experienced, male correctional educators. It is difficult to change the views of this group as a rule, but to tell them they need training might set up a hostile work environment. Many are content to do what they have always done, collect their paycheck and health benefits while not investing a tremendous amount of effort or thought into the best ways to serve this special population.

- **Participant's attitudes and perceptions of the research.** For the most part, the participants and the researcher are peers. This level of familiarity between the researcher and the correctional educators may have affected the outcomes of the study and the correctional educator's eagerness to participate. Knowing or thinking they know what the researcher wanted to hear might have skewed their responses. Furthermore, correctional educators may have shared one of two opinions of this research. Some may have been enthusiastic about helping the researcher, offering answers they thought the researcher wanted. Others may have viewed the survey as an intrusion into their work day. Participants may have been overwhelmed by the tasks to be completed during that day or they may have perceived the study as a waste of their time, in which case their answers may not be valid.

Some correctional educators were forewarned/ told ahead of time about the impending survey date; others were not told or forgot. How the supervisor handled or interacted with the correctional educators when talking about it may have influenced the attitude in which the correctional educators approached the survey. In addition, the type of day the correctional educators were having or other events going on in their personal lives may have distracted the correctional educators in such a way that the answers given may not have been the same as those supplied on a different day under different circumstances.

Correctional educators work in an environment where they have to be vigilant about detecting cons and schemes. As a result, some correctional educators develop a sense of paranoia. They may have been naturally suspicious of the researcher's motives, therefore not reporting appropriate answers. At multiple places in data collection the participants chose to simply not mark a response. It may be possible, even after being told that no responses would be linked back to any one respondent and that data would only be reported in aggregate form, that they were still worried about confidentiality.

Effective internal teacher traits and successful learning environments were discussed in this study. Both of these categories will aid in guiding professional development, to maintain a scholarly atmosphere in correctional education facilities, to improve teacher preparation for classroom activities and curriculum development, and, as a result, increase offender/student

success upon release from prison. Within the combination of perspectives, and quantitative and qualitative research methods, the study was informed by data from multiple sources. This gave the researcher and the reader varied information to use in future research and problem solving situations. As with any employee in any professional capacity, correctional educators need guidance to get through the trials confronting them in the correctional environment. Correctional educators need guidelines on treatment of inmates, dress codes, curriculum to be used, introduction to teaching incarcerated adults and their issues (moods, educational ability, comprehension ability, con-games, etc.), and common barriers to their education (inability to ask for help, negative self-image, bad public school experience, learning disabilities, etc.). If educators are introduced to the information above, they can make a more knowledgeable decision on how to create a positive learning environment with students who will be successful in reaching their full educational potential. This type of training also benefits the offender in that his/her educational issues will be handled by an informed professional.

#### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Determining effective internal teacher traits and successful learning environments is only one of the first steps to establishing a comprehensive professional development plan. Armed with this information further research into the needs of correctional educators will create a map to the development of Master Teacher Competencies that will benefit both the correctional educator and the offender. The Oklahoma Correctional Education Department would be well served to take the initiative to construct Master Teacher Competencies at appropriate levels to use as requirements for professional development standards within this area, emulating other programs such as public education, higher education and Career and Technical education (Hrach, 2002, p.1). Without proper direction in professional development, there is no coherence between facilities and programs; no incentive to improve teacher preparation for classroom activities and course development; and correctional educators lack direction and motivation to keep up with new curriculum and technology, all of which will reduce recidivism and increase offender/student success upon release from prison (Platt, et al., 1993, p.1).

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Solicitation Script

## **Solicitation Script**

"I am a doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. As part of the requirements for graduation, I am conducting a research project to help learn more about viewpoints on internal teacher traits and learning environments in the institutional setting.

I am inviting you to participate in this study, if you are willing. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are completely free to decline if you are unwilling. Before you agree to complete the questionnaire, I will first ask you to read a Consent Form that gives details of the project and your participation.

To participate in the study, you will complete a short written questionnaire that will take about 20 minutes of your time. Your signature and removal of the Consent Form, and completion of the questionnaire will indicate your agreement to participate in the research under the conditions presented in the form.

If you indicate your willingness to participate in this research, you will complete the questionnaire. You can take as little or as much time as you wish to complete the questionnaire, but most people finish in about 20 minutes.

I will be happy to set a time that is convenient for you to meet with you to complete the questionnaire.

Are you willing to consider participating in this research?"

APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form

**Education on an Island: Oklahoma Correctional Educator's View of Internal Teacher Traits and Successful Learning Environments on Incarcerated Adult Students in an Institutional Setting**

**Participant Consent Information**

This research project is being conducted by Jeana Ely at Oklahoma State University to study the perceptions of Oklahoma Correctional Education Teachers in relation to internal teacher traits and successful learning environments for incarcerated adults in an institutional setting.

Specifically, this research will collect information about how correctional educators rate a set of internal teacher traits and successful learning environments for use to organize professional development and suggest possible master teacher competencies.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary, there are no special incentives for participation, there is no negative consequence for declining participation, and you are free to decline to participate for any reason without explanation. There are no known risks in participating in this research beyond those encountered in daily life.

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

The purpose of this research is to help researchers learn more about correctional education for future professional development opportunities, higher education curriculum and possible creation of master teacher competencies for the field of correctional education.

If you agree to participate, you agree to the following conditions regarding your voluntary participation in this research:

- Your participation will involve completing a single questionnaire.
- Your participation will take about 20 minutes of your time.
- Information you provide will be anonymous and treated with complete confidentiality.

- Information you provide will be secured at all times by the Principal Investigator .
- The data yielded from this research will be used solely for research.
- Any data from this research used in preparation and publication of professional literature and reports will be anonymous and reported only in aggregate and/or in codes. No specific reference to your name or personal identity will be made at any time.
- Completed research questionnaires will be kept under locked security by PI for up to one year for analysis and preparation of professional literature. After one year, all questionnaires will be destroyed.

If you have questions or concerns, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Jeana Ely, by phone at (405) 863-7134 or by email at [jeana.ely@doc.state.ok.us](mailto:jeana.ely@doc.state.ok.us) . In addition, you may contact Dr. Mary Jo Self at Oklahoma State University at (405) 744-9191 or by email at [maryjo.self@okstate.edu](mailto:maryjo.self@okstate.edu) .

If you have questions about the research and your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Sue C. Jacobs, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-1676 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu)

To give your consent to participate in this research and submit your data to the researcher for inclusion in analysis and use in professional education literature, please sign and remove this Consent Form and complete the questionnaire.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has been given to me.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## APPENDIX C

### Survey

**Survey Questionnaire**  
**Effective Correctional Teacher Traits and Successful Institutional Learning**  
**Environments Survey**

The following statements are descriptions, according to the literature, of specific traits needed by a correctional educator to be effective with incarcerated adult students and the elements that characterize a successful learning environment in an institutional setting that may or may not reflect personnel practices in your school. Indicate the extent to which the statement describes effective traits and successful environments by circling the number that best reflects your opinion. The response options range from 1 = Not at all important through 5 = Very important. Use "NA" (Not Applicable) response if the item does not apply to you or you don't know.

To what extent do you believe that the following list are the specific traits needed by a correctional educator to be effective with incarcerated adult students:

		Not at all important	Minimal Importance	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
1	authoritarian	1	2	3	4	5
2	caring	1	2	3	4	5
3	committed	1	2	3	4	5
4	creative	1	2	3	4	5
5	dedicated	1	2	3	4	5
6	enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5
7	fair	1	2	3	4	5
8	firm	1	2	3	4	5
9	flexible	1	2	3	4	5
10	helpful	1	2	3	4	5
11	honest	1	2	3	4	5
12	exhibit integrity	1	2	3	4	5
13	knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5
14	leader	1	2	3	4	5
15	life long learner	1	2	3	4	5
16	listener	1	2	3	4	5
17	open minded	1	2	3	4	5

18	patient	1	2	3	4	5
19	prepared	1	2	3	4	5
20	professional	1	2	3	4	5
21	respectful	1	2	3	4	5
22	responsible	1	2	3	4	5
23	role model	1	2	3	4	5
24	self aware	1	2	3	4	5
25	sensitive	1	2	3	4	5
26	stimulating	1	2	3	4	5
27	supportive	1	2	3	4	5
28	trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5
29	vigilant	1	2	3	4	5

In the following space, please add any other suggested traits that may be needed to complete this list:

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To what extent do you believe that the following list are the elements that characterize a successful learning environment in an institutional setting:

		Not at all important	Minimal Importance	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
1	caring	1	2	3	4	5
2	collaborative	1	2	3	4	5
3	consistent	1	2	3	4	5
4	constructive	1	2	3	4	5
5	cooperative	1	2	3	4	5

6	democratic	1	2	3	4	5
7	encouraging	1	2	3	4	5
8	engaging	1	2	3	4	5
9	flexible	1	2	3	4	5
10	honest	1	2	3	4	5
11	meaningful	1	2	3	4	5
12	positive	1	2	3	4	5
13	reflective	1	2	3	4	5
14	rehabilitative	1	2	3	4	5
15	relevant	1	2	3	4	5
16	respect	1	2	3	4	5
17	safe	1	2	3	4	5
18	stimulating	1	2	3	4	5
19	supportive	1	2	3	4	5
20	transformative	1	2	3	4	5

In the following space, please add any other suggested elements that may be needed to complete this list:

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### Traditional vs. Constructive Teaching Environment

Place a dot on the continuum in which, you feel, Oklahoma DOC Education functions.

1 = Traditional 3= mixture of both 5 = Facilitative

Traditional  
(Behaviorist)

Facilitative  
(Constructivist)

- |                     |   |                         |   |                   |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. detached         | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | caring            |
| 2. lecture-based    | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | collaborative     |
| 3. consistent       | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | varied            |
| 4. conform          | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | transform         |
| 5. competitive      | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | cooperative       |
| 6. autocratic       | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | democratic        |
| 7. teacher-centered | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | student -centered |
| 8. disconnected     | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | engaging          |
| 9. linear           | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | flexible          |
| 10. prescriptive    | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | reflective        |
| 11. trivial         | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | meaningful        |
| 12. domineering     | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | positive          |
| 13. corrective      | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | rehabilitative    |
| 14. appropriate     | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | relevant          |
| 15. vulnerable      | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | safe              |
| 16. independent     | 1 | ----- ----- ----- ----- | 5 | supportive        |

### Traditional vs. Constructive Teacher Traits

Place a dot on the continuum in which, you feel, Oklahoma DOC Teachers function.

1 = Traditional 3= mixture of both 5 = Facilitative

**Traditional  
(Behaviorist)**

**Facilitative  
(Constructivist)**

1. apathetic	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	enthusiastic
2. linear	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	flexible
3. detached	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	caring
4. conform	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	creative
5. director	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	listener
6. provoke	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	stimulating
7. independent	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	supportive
8. authoritarian	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	liberal
9. impartial	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	fair
10. inflexible	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	firm
11. realistic	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	helpful
12. dictator	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	leader
13. <b>close-minded</b>	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	open-minded
14. archetype	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	role-model
15. cognizant	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	self-aware
16. impassive	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	sensitive
17. vigilant	1	----- ----- ----- -----	5	attentive

These items concern Demographic Information:  
Please circle your responses.

1. Gender:                      Male                      Female
2. Age:    20-29                      30-39                      40-49                      50 or above
3. Courses currently taught:    Literacy                      ABE                      GED                      College
4. Years teaching with DOC: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Total years teaching experience (public and corrections): \_\_\_\_\_
6. Certification areas: (Circle all that apply to you.)  
    Early childhood  
    Elementary  
    Middle school  
    Secondary (state subject) \_\_\_\_\_  
    K-12 (state subject) \_\_\_\_\_  
    Other (be specific) \_\_\_\_\_
7. States where certified: \_\_\_\_\_
8. College/University graduated from: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Highest degree earned:  
    Bachelor                      Master                      Doctoral                      Other (be specific): \_\_\_\_\_
10. Average class size:    under 5                      6-10                      11-20                      21-30                      30 or more
11. What security level do you work in:  
    Maximum                      Medium                      Minimum                      Community
12. Facility Name: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Number of Full-time Educators at your facility (Teacher I and II): \_\_\_\_\_
14. What training, directly related to correctional teaching, have you received in the last year: \_\_\_\_\_  
    3 years: \_\_\_\_\_
15. On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), how would you rate your current job satisfaction:  
    1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7                      8                      9                      10

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FACILITY LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

PREFERRED METHOD OF CONTACT: PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY THE E-MAIL ADDRESS OR  
PHONE NUMBER YOU WISH TO BE USED TO CONTACT YOU TO SET UP THE LOCATION  
AND TIME OF YOUR INTERVIEW:

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

In the survey given October 2010, you indicated that you would be willing to answer some follow up questions based on the data collected. The following pages have six open ended questions I would like for you to give your opinion on.

There is a possibility that I will quote you in this study. However, I will not use your name, facility or any other information that will identify you to the reader.

I would like to schedule an interview time at the November teacher's meeting, so that I can talk to you about your responses in order to make sure I understand your position and quote you correctly.

Thank you for your time.

Jeana

## Interview Questions

1. In the literature reviewed for this study knowledgeable, professional, respectful, enthusiastic, and honest were found to be the most frequently recognized internal teacher traits a correctional educator must possess to be an effective teacher. According to the survey given to Oklahoma DOC Teachers integrity, fair, trustworthy, honest and professional were the traits ranked the highest. Give your thoughts on why the list from researchers is so different from that of Oklahoma DOC Teachers. Which list do you identify with most? Why?

2. The literature suggests relevant, cooperative, supportive, safe, and meaningful are environmental characteristics that effect the learning atmosphere. According to the survey given to Oklahoma DOC Teachers honest, safe, respectful, consistent, and positive were the learning environments ranked the highest. Give your thoughts on why the list from researchers is so different from that of Oklahoma DOC Teachers. Which list do you identify with most? Why?

3. Many correctional educators currently use behaviorist methods of teaching. The Behaviorist philosophy of teaching could be defined as passive learning (students have little or no control over the content, curriculum or direction in which the educational process goes – one size fits all concept), student knowledge attainment is simply remembering information, understanding is recognizing existing patterns, and instruction is “teacher centered” or “lecture based”. The literature reviewed for this study implies that not only is this philosophy very prevalent in institutional education systems, but that it is not very effective for the population being served. According to answers given on the survey, Oklahoma DOC teachers feel that they use a mixture of behaviorist and constructivist (see definition in question # 4) philosophies in their classrooms. Do you think the Behaviorist method is effective and should continue to be used? Why?

4. Some researchers claim Constructivism is the new solution to learning problems of the incarcerated. Constructivist philosophy of teaching could be defined as learning via an active

process based on individual backgrounds and experiences, various responses to patterns are explored and students choose those that are relevant to their situation, knowledge attainment is acquiring information, understanding is application of new information and creation of new patterns, instruction is facilitated by instructors and students direct their own learning. According to answers given on the survey, Oklahoma DOC teachers feel that they use a mixture of behaviorist and constructivist philosophies in their classrooms. Do you think the Constructive philosophy method would be effective? Why?

5. When you began teaching in prison, did you feel prepared to handle the environment you were entering? Did you receive any training specific to the correctional education field? Did you feel confident you, as the teacher, would be successful? How do you rate your success?

6. Do you feel DOC education handles your professional development needs successfully? What would you change? What would you keep the same?

APPENDIX E

IRB

JUSTIN JONES  
DIRECTOR



BRAD HENRY  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF OKLAHOMA  
OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS'  
EDUCATION UNIT

September 1, 2010

Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Re: Jeana Ely Research

To Institutional Review Board:

I hereby grant permission for Jeana Ely to conduct the research project concerning teacher professional development, as outlined in the attached research plan.

Sincerely,

  
Pam Humphrey, Acting Superintendent of Schools  
Oklahoma Department of Corrections

**Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board**

Date: Tuesday, September 07, 2010  
IRB Application No ED10105  
Proposal Title: Education on an Island: Oklahoma Correctional Educators' View of Internal Teacher Traits and Successful Learning Environments on Incarcerated Adult Students in an Institutional Setting  
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

**Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 9/6/2011**

Principal Investigator(s):  
Jeana Ely Mary Jo Self  
2305 County Road 1222 261 Willard  
Blanchard, OK 73010 Stillwater, OK 74078

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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Shelia Kennison, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

### Participant Solicitation Script

**Each subject will be invited to participate by reading them the following solicitation:**

"I am a doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. As part of the requirements for graduation, I am conducting a research project to help learn more about viewpoints on internal teacher traits and learning environments in the institutional setting.

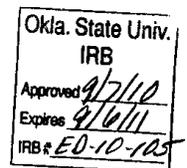
I am inviting you to participate in this study, if you are willing. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are completely free to decline if you are unwilling. Before you agree to complete the questionnaire, I will first ask you to read a Consent Form that gives details of the project and your participation.

To participate in the study, you will complete a short written questionnaire that will take about 20 minutes of your time. Your signature and removal of the Consent Form, and completion of the questionnaire will indicate your agreement to participate in the research under the conditions presented in the form.

If you indicate your willingness to participate in this research, you will complete the questionnaire. You can take as little or as much time as you wish to complete the questionnaire, but most people finish in about 20 minutes.

I will be happy to set a time that is convenient for you to meet with you to complete the questionnaire.

Are you willing to consider participating in this research?"



**Participant Consent Form**  
**Education on an Island: Oklahoma Correctional Educator's View of Internal Teacher Traits and Successful Learning Environments on Incarcerated Adult Students in an Institutional Setting**

This research project is being conducted by Jeana Ely at Oklahoma State University to study the perceptions of Oklahoma Correctional Education Teachers in relation to internal teacher traits and successful learning environments for incarcerated adults in an institutional setting.

Specifically, this research will collect information about how correctional educators rate a set of internal teacher traits and successful learning environments for use to organize professional development and suggest possible master teacher competencies.

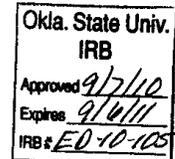
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary, there are no special incentives for participation, there is no negative consequence for declining participation, and you are free to decline to participate for any reason without explanation. There are no known risks in participating in this research beyond those encountered in daily life.

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

The purpose of this research is to help researchers learn more about correctional education for future professional development opportunities, higher education curriculum and possible creation of master teacher competencies for the field of correctional education.

If you agree to participate, you agree to the following conditions regarding your voluntary participation in this research:

- Your participation will involve completing a single questionnaire.
- Your participation will take about 20 minutes of your time.
- Information you provide will be anonymous and treated with complete confidentiality.
- Information you provide will be secured at all times by the Principal Investigator.
- The data yielded from this research will be used solely for research.
- Any data from this research used in preparation and publication of professional literature and reports will be anonymous and reported only in aggregate and/or in codes. No specific reference to your name or personal identity will be made at any time.



- Completed research questionnaires will be kept under locked security by PI for up to one year for analysis and preparation of professional literature. After one year, all questionnaires will be destroyed.

If you have questions or concerns, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Jeana Ely, by phone at (405) 863-7134 or by email at [jeana.ely@doc.state.ok.us](mailto:jeana.ely@doc.state.ok.us). In addition, you may contact Dr. Mary Jo Self at Oklahoma State University at (405) 744-9191 or by email at [maryjo.self@okstate.edu](mailto:maryjo.self@okstate.edu).

If you have questions about the research and your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

To give your consent to participate in this research and submit your data to the researcher for inclusion in analysis and use in professional education literature, please sign and remove this Consent Form and complete the questionnaire.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has been given to me.

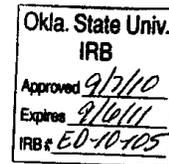
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



VITA

## VITA

Jeana Dawn Ely

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy/Education

Thesis: EDUCATION ON AN ISLAND: OKLAHOMA CORRECTIONAL EDUCATORS' VIEW OF INTERNAL TEACHER TRAITS AND SUCCESSFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ON INCARCERATED ADULT STUDENTS IN AN INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

**Major Field: Occupational Education**

### **Biographical:**

#### **Education:**

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy/Education in Occupational Education at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2011

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science/Arts in Human Resources Administration at East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma/USA in 2001.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science/Arts in Secondary Education at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma/ USA in 1991.

#### **Experience:**

1992 Biology, Botany, Zoology, Health, Physical Education Teacher, Mustang High School; 1996 Health and Physical Education Teacher, Lyles Middle School; 1997 Biology, Middle School Science and Physical Education Teacher, Little Axe Public Schools; 1998 Biology, Middle School Science and Physical Education Teacher, Hartshorne Public Schools; 1999 Recreation Assistant McAlester Army Ammunition Plant; 2000 Biology, Middle School Science, Mustang North Middle School; 2005 to present Literacy, Adult Basic Education, General Education Diploma, and Life Skills Teacher, Lexington Correctional Center.

#### **Professional Memberships:**

USA Gymnastics Judge: 1988-Present; Co-Facilitator Group Therapy- Student Assistance Program: 1994-1996; Red Cross Instructor- Community CPR and First Aide, Professional CPR and First Aide, Lifeguard, and Water Safety Instructor: 1994-2002; Curriculum Committee: 2000-2005; Science Department Chair: 2003-2005; NCA Committee: 2003-2005; Team Leader: 2004-2005; Contract Negotiation Committee: 2004-2005; Social Committee: 2004-2005; NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals): 2004-Present; OTT (Omicron Tau Theta): 2004-Present; Bridge Creek School Board (President): 2006-Present; Oklahoma Correctional Professionals: 2009-Present; Correctional Education Association (National Executive Board Treasurer): 2005-Present.

## ABSTRACT

Name: Jeana Dawn Ely

Date of Degree: December, 2011

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: EDUCATION ON AN ISLAND: OKLAHOMA CORRECTIONAL EDUCATORS' VIEW OF INTERNAL TEACHER TRAITS AND SUCCESSFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ON INCARCERATED ADULT STUDENTS IN AN INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

Pages in Study: 182

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: Occupational Education

Scope and Method of Study: This inquiry, using survey and interview techniques, demonstrated both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. In this study, effective teacher traits related to successful classroom structure in the correctional environment for adult students with a wide variety of issues, problems and learning difficulties were identified. The research also suggested the components of a successful learning environment for institutional students. This is a census study, all Oklahoma DOC correctional educators were solicited to respond to the survey. In 2010, there were 57 DOC correctional educator participants of a possible 63 (90.5%). In Process I the participants filled out a survey rating effective internal teacher traits, successful learning environments and Behaviorist versus Constructivist classroom practices. In Process II the information gained from Process I was used to develop interview questions. Face to face interviews were conducted utilizing correctional educators who volunteered to participate.

Findings and Conclusions: Through the organization of data presented by Oklahoma DOC correctional educators, it is clear that professional development guidelines would be beneficial. Armed with this information further research into the needs of correctional educators will create a map to the development of Master Teacher Competencies that will benefit both the correctional educator and the offender. The Oklahoma Correctional Education Department would be well served to take the initiative to construct Master Teacher Competencies at appropriate levels to use as requirements for professional development standards within this area, emulating other programs such as public education, higher education and Career and Technical education. Without proper direction in professional development, there is no coherence between facilities and programs; no incentive to improve teacher preparation for classroom activities and course development; and correctional educators lack direction and motivation to keep up with new curriculum and technology, all of which will reduce recidivism and increase offender/student success upon release from prison.