



The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program®

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL



“Inside-Out should come with a warning label – in big black and yellow letters: Warning: may cause severe damage if taken internally. We have seen, first hand, the kind of damage the program can do to preconceived notions, stereotypes, and most importantly – ignorance. ...We came here incarcerated, mentally incarcerated, and we have learned things about not just... the Prison Industrial Complex, but about ourselves. Inside-Out has acted, for many of us, as a kind of eye-exam for the soul, forcing us to realize what we believe and why we believe it. And now we realize that our vision was never 20/20. We leave here with a little better vision.”

In Memoriam, Glenn, Outside Student, 2002

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The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program®

Instructor's Manual

1. Introduction	1
Some Caveats and Comments	1
2. The Inside-Out Program	3
Context of Inside-Out	3
History of Inside-Out	5
Program Philosophy	6
Transformation	7
Inside-Out in Relation to the Correctional System	8
What Inside-Out is Not	9
Things for Instructors to Consider	10
Being Unafraid	10
Knowing Oneself	11
Race, Class, and Other Diversity Issues	14
3. Classroom Dynamics	17
Setting the Tone	17
Instructor as Facilitator	18
Circles	19
Speaking and Listening	20
Triggering	21
Handling the Unexpected and Troubleshooting	23
4. Classroom Strategies	24
Icebreakers	24
Developing Guidelines for Dialogue	24
Small Group Discussions and Workgroups	25
5. Getting into Prison	27
Building Support for Inside-Out	27
Other General Principles re: Getting Into Prison	30
6. Common Rules of Correctional Institutions	32
Procedures for Entering	33
Bringing Things In and Out	34
Dress	36
Behavior on the Inside	37

7. Logistical Issues in the Prison	38
8. Rules, Parameters, and Boundaries of the Inside-Out Program	42
Semi-Anonymity	43
Grading and Credits	44
9. Class Composition and Student Interactions	45
Outside Students	45
Inside Students	46
Student Interactions	47
10. Special Class Sessions	50
Briefing and Debriefing	50
First Class Session	50
Third Class Session	52
Final Class Session	53
The Group Project	55
The Final Closing Ceremony	57
11. Taking Inside-Out Further	60
Think Tanks	60
12. Securing and Expanding the Inside-Out Program	62
Stakeholders	62
Developing Support on Campus for an Inside-Out Program	63
Assessment and Evaluation	65
Follow-Up Consultation / The International Network	66
13. Appendices	67
Instructor Contract	67
Policy on Non-Programmatic Contact	70
Guidelines re: Media and Inside-Out	74
Perspectives on Ethical Inquiry	76
FAQ Concerning Evaluation and Research	90
Updated Research 2018	91
Working with Trauma in Carceral Intergroup Settings	93
Sample Letter to Prison Administrator	95
Sample Clean Check Form for Prison	97
Sample Liability Waiver	98
Sample Student Evaluation	99
Sample Instructor Evaluation	100
Reflections from an Outside Student	102
Sample Student Paper	105

Introduction

Welcome to The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program® International Instructor Training Institute. We hope that you are as excited to be here as we are to have you. We have an intensive (and intense) week planned that will cover what is needed to begin an Inside-Out program at a college or university. Presented here is the unique approach to teaching that is at the core of the Inside-Out program.

Inside-Out is education in its truest form – “drawing forth,” as the root of the word “education” suggests. In this “exchange” behind prison walls, we create an environment in which a group of “inside” and “outside” students can together explore issues of justice, drawing forth from one another a deeper understanding of how these issues affect our lives as individuals and as a society. Inside-Out has been a transformative experience for those who have been involved. Invariably, participants’ (and instructors’) lives are never quite the same. The ripple effect allows ongoing conversation about issues of justice in the larger society to be transformed, as well. We believe deeply in social change and see Inside-Out as one way to make that happen – one idea, one person at a time.



The training is structured in a very experiential, hands-on way. It is modeled, from start to finish, on a typical Inside-Out semester. Many of the approaches that we take and exercises that we use throughout the training are directly from the course, for two reasons. First, we find that they help create group cohesiveness and facilitate analysis and exploration, and second, conducting the training this way provides an opportunity to model these approaches. All that is needed is an openness and willingness to enter into the experience.

This manual describes the Inside-Out history, philosophy, and experience in detail. The other document, the Inside-Out Curriculum, lays out the basic course on a day-by-day basis, including the exercises that are used throughout the semester, the goals and objectives for each week, the themes and processes for small and large group discussions, and any instructions that may be necessary for conducting individual sessions.

Some Caveats and Comments

In developing the manual and curriculum, we realized that this information would be used by mostly college and university instructors, which presented an interesting challenge. Each training group is comprised of an array of individuals, each with their own talents, experiences, and length of time teaching in higher education. Some instructors have taught for many years, while others are still in graduate school, and everything in between. Additionally, we are aware of the diversity of teaching styles and approaches to the educational process used in the classroom.

That having been said, we want to offer a caveat regarding the approach taken both in this manual and in the Inside-Out Curriculum. While some of what is explained here may seem basic at times, we hope it is understood that we do not make any assumptions about what folks may or may not know (e.g. group dynamics, ice-breaker activities, getting into and out of prison, etc.). So, we decided to explain everything fully, and readers can make their own determinations about what information is most helpful. We would caution, however, based on feedback from instructors who have been trained in this approach, that even some of the elements that seem the most simple or obvious can sometimes present surprising complexities.



It may be helpful to note that, throughout these documents, when we use the word “students,” we are referring to the combined group of students, those from the university or college and those from the prison or jail. When it is necessary to distinguish between the two groups, we usually use the phrases “inside students” and “outside students.” We may, at times, use other words, like “incarcerated students” and “campus-based students.” The use of the word “student” for everyone in the course is important because all of those involved are participating on an equal basis, as peers, in a classroom setting, which happens to be behind prison walls.

One other note related to language and labeling: even though it can be cumbersome, we are committed to using person-centered language to refer to people who are incarcerated, rather than employing the shorthand of labels (e.g. “prisoner,” “inmate,” “convict,” “murderer,” etc.). If one of the many goals of this exchange is for the outside students to put names and faces to the individuals who are behind the walls, it seems incongruous to then use labels that will, de facto, place these same individuals right back into the “class” of people described by that particular label. As someone once explained it: if we take the worst thing that we’ve ever done in our lives, and imagine ourselves defined by that one act... that is the essence of labeling.

Finally, we’d like to share a thought about one other dimension of the Inside-Out experience. To put it bluntly – it is a risk (one, of course, that we believe is well worth taking). As we will see in the following pages, and in our time together during the training, there are landmines everywhere in this work. It can be likened to a tightrope walk – a constant balancing act that calls for great care, attention, and consciousness in the navigations and negotiations that are necessary to make the program work. What Inside-Out attempts to do is both radical and cutting edge: radical, because it comes from a rooted place and gets at the roots of issues that are of great concern to all of us. And, as we all know, it is usually those cutting edge ventures in our lives, about which we have great passion, that test us, challenge us, deepen us – and often have us living, actually, on the razor’s edge.

The Inside-Out Program

Context of Inside-Out

When we pause long enough to look at the statistics related to incarceration, we understand just how truly sobering they are. The U.S. incarcerates 693 people for every 100,000 residents, which is more than any other country. With more than two million people confined, we incarcerate at more than six times the rate of Canada and Australia, and fifteen times the rate of Japan. It is estimated that the lifetime risk of incarceration is one in 23 for white men, a shocking one in six for Latino men, and a stunning one in three for African American men. More than two-thirds of those released from prison are back behind bars in three years.

Meanwhile, though US crime rates overall are lower than they have been in decades, our violent crime rate remains off the charts compared with other industrialized nations. In 2014 alone, more than 5.4 million Americans were victims of violent crime. What were the short and long-term emotional and economic costs of those victimizations? How many times could that number be multiplied to estimate the number of lives affected by a loved one's victimization? And what is our lifetime risk of violent victimization? Though accurate statistics are difficult to find, a 1987 Bureau of Justice Statistics study put the number at 87 percent. How many times a day do our most trivial acts – like locking our doors – reveal that we all think of ourselves as potential victims, all the time?

“Inside-Out has changed me so much; it honestly showed me what life is about. In the eight years that I've been incarcerated, I've never felt so strong about wanting to make a change.”

At the same time, we have millions of men and women across the country working in professions related to criminal justice, including prison security, administration, parole and probation, treatment, the law, as well as numerous areas of law enforcement. Our criminal justice system, broadly defined, costs \$270 billion annually. This number does not include areas that are difficult to quantify, such as the emotional or economic cost of crime to victims, or the loss of the potential economic and social contributions that incarcerated individuals could make if they were not in prison and had the resources necessary to make changes in their lives. Imagine the difference that would be made in our society if that \$270 billion, and all of the energy of our intelligent, committed criminal justice professionals, were spent on health care, education, scientific research, reclaiming our inner cities, or finding alternatives to fossil fuels.

¹ From The Prison Policy Initiative (<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2016.html>)

² It should be noted that there is some debate about these numbers: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/06/16/the-stale-statistic-that-one-in-three-black-males-has-a-chance-of-ending-up-in-jail/?utm_term=.db41e83952a8

³ These statistics come from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/).

⁴ From the US Department of Justice (<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv14.pdf>)

Something is clearly broken and needs to be fixed. But, what? And how?

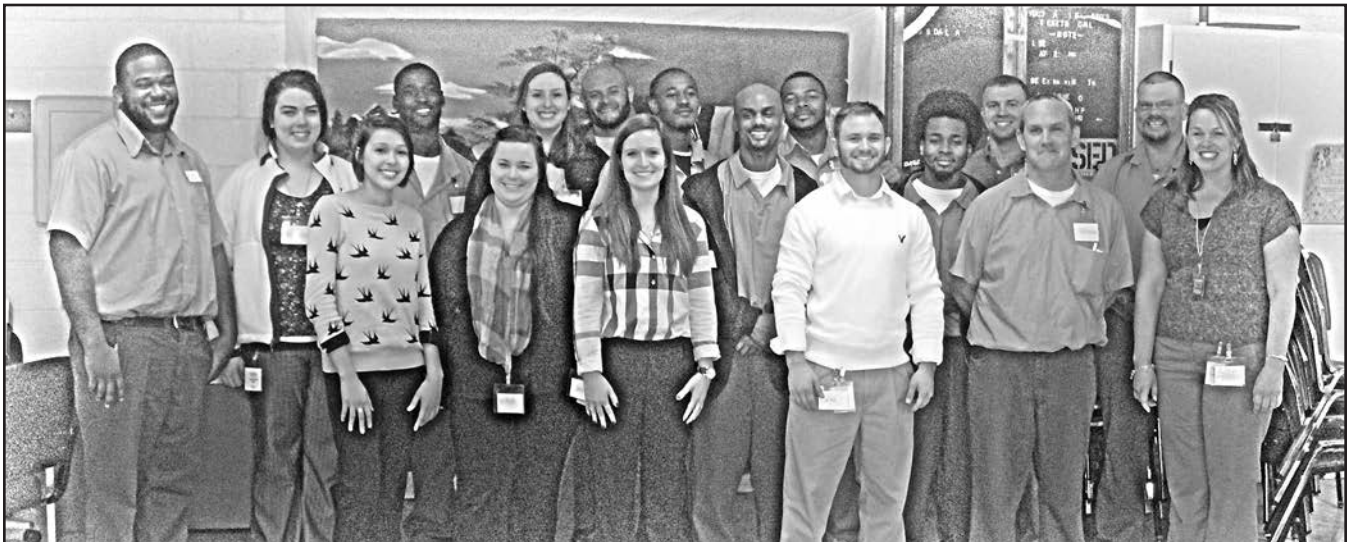
Inside-Out’s approach to these questions is to create a dynamic partnership between institutions of higher learning and correctional systems in order to deepen the conversation about and transform our approaches to issues of crime and social justice.

“This class has acted as the catalyst in my passion for life and human rights, and was the pivotal point where I realigned my own path....This program has brought me to a new understanding of life, not just in prison, but in my own life. I have acquired the concrete knowledge of the...workings of the system, and at the same time, come to realize my own captors in life.”

One of our goals is to provide tools and space to those who are part of our criminal justice system – those incarcerated and those working in it, both now and in the future – to find ways to build a safer and more just society for all.

Inside-Out brings “outside” (campus-based) students together with “inside” (incarcerated) students to study as peers behind prison walls. The semester-long course provides a life-altering experience that allows the outside students to contextualize and rethink what they have learned in the classroom, gaining insights that will help them pursue the work of creating humane, restorative social systems rooted in justice.

At the same time, Inside-Out challenges participants on the inside to place their life experiences in a larger social context, to rekindle their intellectual self-confidence and interest in further education, and to encourage them to recognize their capacity as agents of change in their own lives, as well as in the broader community.



⁵ From The White House (https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/page/files/20160423_cea_incarceration_criminal_justice.pdf)

History of Inside-Out

by Founder and Executive Director Lori Pompa

As the founder of the Inside-Out program, I would like to briefly share the story of its genesis. In 1985, when I first set foot inside prison, I never realized that it was a moment that would change my life forever. I went into prison on a regular basis during those first few years as a volunteer in a number of programs and then as a full-time staff person with a prison reform agency. My work took me behind the walls several times a week and, in the process, over time, I came to meet thousands of people locked up in both state and county facilities. The more I went in, the more questions I had – and the more I searched for answers. The experience of going inside was unceasingly disturbing to me. It completely changed my way of looking at life, the world, social systems, other people and, actually, myself and my own life.



So, when I was offered the opportunity to teach a class at Temple University, called “Introduction to Corrections,” I knew what I had to do. I would take my students inside so that they too could have the kind of experience that I had had – so that their worlds would be rocked, as well. And that’s what we did – in that class and in the scores of classes that I taught during the decades that followed. Tens of thousands of Temple students have passed through the doors of a state prison, county jail, youth detention center, community correctional facility, or drug & alcohol treatment program.

Somewhere along the way, in 1995, I took a group of 15 students to the State Correctional Institution at Dallas, three hours away from Temple, for a tour of the facility. As we usually did on tours, we met with a panel of men who were incarcerated there, most of whom were serving life sentences. The conversation that we had that day was quite profound, touching on all of the relevant issues – social, economic, political, racial, psychological, philosophical – as they related to crime and justice. After this hour-long conversation, we had to end, though no one wanted to.

As we were leaving, one of the men from the panel, named Paul, asked if I would think about the idea of expanding this conversation across an entire semester, as a course. I told him that I thought it was a fabulous idea, but that the distance to Dallas would make it impossible. However, the concept just wouldn’t let me go, and I began to think about the possibilities of such an idea.

In the Fall of 1997, The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program was born, conceived of as a pilot project that we would try to institutionalize, if it seemed successful. More than 20 years and hundreds of classes later, we can boast of more than 30,000 students – from the inside and the outside – who are alumni of the program. We currently have 800+ instructors from 45 states and several other countries who have taken part in the Inside-Out Training Institute. Much of this growth was influenced by our expansion to Graterford Prison in 2002, which deepened the program, and became the inspiration for developing it into a national (then, international) model.

Program Philosophy

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program is an evolving set of projects creating opportunities for dialogue between those on the outside and those on the inside of correctional facilities. The program demonstrates the potential for dynamic collaborations between institutions of higher learning and correctional institutions. Most importantly, through this unique exchange, Inside-Out seeks to deepen the conversation – and transform ways of thinking – about crime, justice, and related social issues.

At its most basic level, Inside-Out allows students and others outside of prison to go behind the walls to reconsider what they have learned about issues of justice, while those on the inside are encouraged to place their life experiences in a larger framework. However, much more occurs in the exchange, layers of understanding that defy prediction. In the groups' discussions, countless life lessons and realizations surface about how we as human beings operate in the world, beyond the myths and stereotypes that imprison us all.

As its name suggests, Inside-Out is a process through which an exchange takes place involving both “inside” and “outside” participants. It is the power and reciprocity of this exchange that makes the Inside-Out experience unique. The contact that occurs behind the walls, the depth of discussion involved, the collaborative nature of the engagement, and the consideration of the issues (literally from the inside, out) together encompass a dynamic that has the ability to change lives. Through the transformation of ways of understanding the self, others, the issues, and the world, participants begin to see their own potential as agents of change.

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program provides an opportunity to put a human face on a problem that can be kept simplified only if it remains faceless. It is designed to advance insight into complex social issues, as well as the complexity within us all, thereby expanding the repertoire of possibilities in responding to issues of social injustice. The program rests on the belief that challenging individuals to stretch beyond simplistic assumptions will, over time, produce a transformation in public thought.

“Fighting to stop an injustice from continuing is not like ordering at a drive-up window. It’s like cultivating a tree. The tree might not be strong enough in our lifetime to spread its leaves very far but our children might appreciate its shade. We probably won’t get to live in a world where people are not dehumanized in the prison system. But we can live in a world where we don’t let it dehumanize us and expect that someday someone will live in that other world.”

Through the exchange behind the wall – among people on both sides of the wall, the hope is that these walls will gradually become more and more permeable. To paraphrase a gentleman who was once incarcerated in SCI-Graterford, prison walls are there to keep some people in – and other people out. Inside-Out is trying to change that reality.

Transformation

Those of us facilitating this training cannot imagine what our lives would be like had we not chosen to first walk into a prison. For us, and for many others who choose to go behind the walls, the experience can be transformative, changing one's perspective and entire path in life. Based on many years of experience, we recognize that Inside-Out creates an environment in which transformation can happen to people on many levels.

"In agreeing to participate in the Inside-Out Program, I did not know exactly what to expect. ...Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined having one of the best experiences of my 27 years of incarceration. Of all the groups, workshops or other activities I've participated in, this was, without question, the most enriching and rewarding experience I've ever had."

For outside students, the discovery that incarcerated individuals are people with whom they share many values, people with whom they could imagine being friends, people who, given resources, can grow and change, has a powerful impact. So does the realization that, with different backgrounds, different choices, different life situations, their lives could look a lot like those of their incarcerated classmates. They will carry this transformed outlook with them as they grow in their careers and move into positions where they can eventually influence policy.

Inside-Out is also transformational for inside students. It is radically different from almost everything else that is part of the prison experience.

For people who have been shut away, sometimes for very long periods, and who feel, on a daily basis, entombed and forgotten by the outside world, the effect of knowing that people on the outside care enough to come in and spend time with them – not as people who need to be “fixed,” but as human beings with contributions to make, who deserve respect – cannot be underestimated.

Given that many men and women who are incarcerated come from backgrounds of relative deprivation in terms of educational resources, Inside-Out is transformative in another way. By bringing people with somewhat tentative confidence in their own brain power into a college class in which their ideas are valued, Inside-Out rekindles intellectual ambitions and gives students the confidence to pursue those ambitions. Since increased education correlates with decreased rates of return to prison, Inside-Out may not only be transformative for inside students, but, by extension, for their children, friends, and family on the outside who suffer anytime someone they love returns to prison.



Inside-Out in Relation to the Correctional System

By virtue of its design and structure, Inside-Out is a course that invites analysis of the current system of crime and justice. But it is important to know that that's certainly not all it is. For one, Inside-Out courses are offered in a variety of disciplines. One way of framing what happens in Inside-Out classes is that we examine social issues through the prism of prison. Additionally, for instructors to frame the



class exclusively in terms of the **problems** in the criminal justice (or any attendant) system is a potentially disempowering and alienating message. Rather, we create opportunities for inside and outside students alike to recognize that they have the power to find **solutions** and help change the system and society, as well as their own lives.

The best thing about this message is that it is, in fact, true. The very fact that the Inside-Out program can happen at all is emblematic of some of the possibilities of the existing system. Inside-Out relies on the daily support of many people in the system – prison administrators, program staff, correctional

staff, and others. Inside-Out can happen because many of these folks share similar values. Based on their day-to-day involvement inside the prison, they know the countless ways that the system fails those who are in prison, those who have been victimized by crime, and our communities. Fundamentally, they are often our allies in seeking change.

We hope that Inside-Out will benefit the system and those who work in it. We hope that some of the outside students will go on to help them with their work or to have an impact on other social systems. We hope that the inside students will help them too, during their incarceration and after. There are instances, probably many more than we know, in which formerly incarcerated men and women return as prison staff, seeking – based on their own experience – to make the situation better for others who are incarcerated.

In short, Inside-Out is not just about the course material, but about transformation and building bridges that will make change happen – bridges between people on both sides of the prison wall, educators, current and future justice professionals, and the community at large.

“...To give a complex issue a human face is to change forever after how one thinks and acts about the issue. I am now more convinced than ever that the lock-‘em-up-and-throw-away-the-key approach to criminal justice in this country is the product of thinking that never gets beyond or beneath the abstractions of ‘criminals’ and ‘crime’.”

What Inside-Out is Not

Given the delicate nature of this program, it is important to make clear to all who are involved in the program what Inside-Out is not.

- It is not an opportunity to do human subject research on those who are on the inside. Understandably, incarcerated students have a deep sensitivity about this issue. Folks on the inside are very used to being “othered,” sometimes for years, by systems in which they have been involved. Conducting any kind of research in this sort of setting is fundamentally disrespectful and dehumanizing, and antithetical to the goals and purpose of the Inside-Out program.
- It is also not an opportunity for charity, or to “help” those who are incarcerated in the usual sense of volunteerism or charity. Though some schools refer to Inside-Out as a “service learning” experience, the phrase “community-based” learning is more appropriate. The concept of “service” implies, and often produces, a power differential that undercuts the equality of the inside and outside students. Alternatively, Inside-Out is not doing **for**, but rather doing/being **with**, in a true collaboration – in which everyone serves and everyone is served.
- Inside-Out is not, as is sometimes assumed, a “scared straight” program. Our intentions are not to give the outside students an experience that, based on fear, will cause them to rethink their life choices. Though it is sometimes the case that individual students will express either an appreciation for how their lives have gone or a clarity that they don’t want to “end up in prison,” that is not the goal of the program.
- Additionally, Inside-Out is not a whistle-blowing program that has as its aim to draw public attention to problems inside the prison. First, the particular prison sponsoring the program is not the focus of the class and its discussions. True, while there may be examples from life inside the individual prison in question that illustrate something being discussed, it is important always to bring the analysis

“I didn’t expect to learn so much.
I didn’t expect to grow and
change as a result of the process.
...As I reflect on the power of
this course, I am awestruck and
humbled...”

back to larger, systemic issues. It is these issues – which include the criminal justice system, as well as the larger political, economic, and social questions – that are at the heart of what Inside-Out attempts to unearth in its exploration.

Second, the importance of honesty and transparency with the prison administration cannot be overstated. If we are there to conduct a class, then that is the limit of

what we can do. There is plenty of room for advocacy about issues, and certainly plenty of issues that need to be addressed, but this class is not the forum for those activities. Trust is fundamental to the ongoing relationship that an outside person (or group) has with correctional administration, as it is in all of life. It is important for us to be true to our word in terms of what we are offering. No activity in the name of advocacy, activism, or serving in a watchdog capacity can be conducted in the name of Inside-Out. Besides the lack of honesty and integrity that would be involved, it is also the quickest and surest way to guarantee the program’s demise.

- Finally – and this is always the most difficult issue: even though bonds between and among students inevitably form throughout the semester, Inside-Out is not a vehicle for developing relationships that will exist outside the parameters of the program. This issue is discussed at length in the section called, “Rules of Inside-Out.” Parameters are critical to this program, as it exists within a very clear-cut, black and white environment. There is no room for shades of grey. Allowing situations to move into the grey area can potentially place the existence of the program in great jeopardy.

These are the issues that instructors need to be clear about and discuss with both the inside and outside students at the start of the semester. The key is for instructors to remember – and remind the students – what we’re there for, what the mission of the program is, and how fragile this kind of program can be. It is helpful for us as instructors to remind students – **clearly and directly** – that every one of us is responsible for the success and future of the Inside-Out program, and that what we each need to do is to be aware and responsible for ourselves for the good of the project as a whole.

Things for Instructors to Consider

Prison memoirs often describe the chronic suspicion, violence, and alienation that pervade day-to-day life behind bars. Occasionally, these factors erupt in ways that are sufficiently sensational that the media features pieces about prison riots, gangs, gladiator fights, rape as a daily reality and sometimes as a tool of prison management. This climate of fear affects virtually everyone in prison to some degree: those who work there, those who visit, as well as those who are incarcerated.



So how are we, as instructors, supposed to bring in a group of college students, mix them together with a group of incarcerated students, and create a classroom in which everyone feels safe enough, in which inside and outside students can reach across chasms of race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, education, and life experience to learn from – and inspire – one another? What we have found is this: We can do it by being unafraid, by knowing ourselves, and by using a few simple approaches.

Being Unafraid

Once, at the end of an intensive workshop combining incarcerated men with visitors from the outside, one of the facilitators asked participants to describe what made the strongest impression during their four days together. “In twenty years of being here,” one gentleman said, “this is the first time I have been around people from the outside, including people who work here, who were not afraid of me.”

Prisons are alien kinds of places, and we have the expectation that they will be scary, as well. Being unafraid is a gift the instructor gives to students. When the instructor is unafraid, it is possible for students to be unafraid – and, therefore, able to learn. And if the instructor is anxious and uncomfortable, the students will be, as well. The truth is that we are taking a calculated risk by choosing to be in a prison and to bring college students into a prison with us. That being said, we really are quite safe. There are plenty of policies in place that ensure that our prison classrooms will be as safe as if they were on our own campuses.

The inside students also know what most people on the outside think of them. They live the experience of feeling hated, walled up and forgotten, and they appreciate that, though we don't have to be inside, we choose to come in anyway. They are on our side – they want this to succeed.

“...Other classes don't create the bonds that will be broken for all of us in a few days. The conversational and, at times, highly personal format of this course makes for a lot more interaction than you would find in a normal class. We've learned a lot about each other this semester and it's depressing to think we will never see each other again.”

Knowing Oneself

The first, best thing that we, as instructors planning to teach in prison, can do is spend some time reflecting on the emotional needs, values, and assumptions that we bring to the task. A high degree of self-awareness will provide more control over the implicit messages that are communicated to the class, affording a greater ability to create the kind of environment that allows students to take intellectual and emotional risks.

Emotional Risks

Sometimes prisons can seem like massive monuments to human pain and cruelty. Being within that edifice – with students who may have experienced and/or caused some of the worst pain that humans and institutions can inflict and who may give voice to that experience – can be very difficult. Remaining



Photo by Ryan S. Brandenburg

emotionally open to hearing what is expressed is essential to creating a genuine, honest learning environment. At the same time, one's emotional openness has to be bounded, because students will not feel safe if the instructor's emotions and reactions are not contained while in the class. What this means is that, at times, something that was discussed in class might hit us after the class is over, perhaps when we may least expect it. We need to make sure that we have people in our lives who can support us if and when this happens.

Another emotional risk has to do with the way that people from the outside are often welcomed in prison. Perhaps because the prison environment is one of such boredom and deprivation, it is not uncommon for a person facilitating a group to be greeted with a level of respect, attention, and enthusiasm that is rare in the outside world. However, especially if, as an instructor, I am feeling underappreciated for my work outside prison, the experience can become more about meeting my ego needs than about creating a learning environment for students.



Finally, there is a risk that the instructor will form an emotional bond with an inside student or with a member of the prison staff. This is a particular risk because interactions with people in prison often seem to have an unusual level of emotional depth and intensity. Sometimes, especially when instructors' emotional needs are not being met in their day-to-day life, what happens in a prison setting can seem more real and meaningful than what happens on the outside. Without making any kind of moral judgments about such relationships, whether they are romantic or platonic in nature, they are problematic in two ways (besides the rules that most universities have about becoming involved with students). First, from the prison administration's point of view,

such relationships are security risks. Additionally, nothing that happens in prison is ever a secret, and a close relationship between an instructor and an inside student or staff person, no matter how innocent or carefully conducted, will become a topic of gossip, undermining the credibility of both the program and the instructor. Having a good reputation is critical in prison settings.

Obviously, we all have emotional needs that are fulfilled through our work in some way. Prison work isn't any different. It is just a question of being aware of keeping things in balance and knowing the subtleties of our own hearts.

Values

As we approach teaching an Inside-Out class, taking time to think through our values will be one of the most useful things we can do, since our values influence what we say, how we say it, and what we are able to hear. Keeping our values at the front of our consciousness as we facilitate the class will help in responding gracefully and congruently to the challenges, inconveniences, and surprises inherent in teaching in prison. We might ask ourselves:

- What are the two or three core values that are most central to who I am?
- How do these values relate to what I am hoping to accomplish in teaching this class?
- How might things that may happen in a classroom situation challenge by values?
- How might I respond to a difficult situation (take time to imagine some) in a way that is consistent with my values?

Preconceptions

Each one of us comes out of a particular context, influenced by the many elements in our background: family, neighborhood, school, religious affiliation, years of life experience, etc. We know enough about psychology to realize that many of the attitudes that we carry with us into our daily lives are, to some

“I just want to be human, but so much of my humanity must be buried here... Cell doors may not open up, yet hearts have. Sometimes, that is actually a larger and more lasting accomplishment.”

degree, unconscious. It takes constant vigilance to be aware of the assumptions and stereotypes that we each have floating around inside of us – and where they came from. In a prison environment, where assumptions and stereotypes can be more visible – and more damaging – than they are in less charged situations, it is important to be aware of what attitudes we carry with us, and how they could potentially get in the way of what we are trying to accomplish.

- What racial, gender, and class attitudes am I bringing to this experience?
- How tolerant am I of religious difference?
- What are my feelings about gender fluidity? Will I feel comfortable if some of my students openly identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered? Am I prepared to deal with the homophobia that can sometimes be expressed in prison settings?
- What judgments might I have towards those who have been convicted of a crime? Those who have been victims of crime? Those who work in the criminal justice system?
- Do I have a tendency to see people who are incarcerated as innocent victims of social injustice? Or as people who are getting what they deserve? Or in some other way?
- Do I have different attitudes and beliefs about incarcerated people based on their gender, race/ethnicity, social background, etc.?
- How do I respond to authority? Do I err on the side of being overly accommodating or passive aggressive or angrily anti-authoritarian?
- Can I imagine, ahead of time, what a student or correctional staff person might be like who would really get under my skin? How might I respond to this person?



Our approaches to these kinds of questions will affect everything about how we facilitate the class, the kind of language we use, and the environment we are able to create with our students. And no matter how self-aware I may be, teaching a class in prison will offer startling, incongruous, moving, and occasionally amusing moments that will gently push aside the veil to reveal an assumption I didn't know I had. That's part of what makes Inside-Out such a wonderful learning experience for instructors.

"I feel in this dialogue of Temple students and men on the inside an extremely critical engagement with issues of suffering and our society's accountability to the widespread phenomenon of suffering. I've been in many settings where I feel poverty, class oppression, racism were all talked about. But somehow it still just felt like words. What is spoken in the Graterford class strikes me on a much deeper level."

Race, Class, and Other Diversity Issues

More than in most classes, Inside-Out intentionally brings people together. Some of those in the class might be perceived as "other." This perception applies both to the inside and the outside students, in relation to each other, and to the instructor in relation to the students (particularly, the incarcerated students). In many cases, instructors may be coming from a more privileged class and educational background than some of the inside students, may be of a different race, ethnicity, or cultural context than many of the inside students, and might never been convicted of a crime or incarcerated.

Is it possible, then, for instructors who can seem so "other," from the perspective of students on the inside, to be able to bridge the divide and create a transformative learning opportunity? One of the strengths of Inside-Out is that it is structured to make manifest the possibilities for connection, communication, and commonality across such lines, both in the classroom and in the other worlds that the inside and outside students, as well as the instructor, inhabit.

"I entered this program without knowing what to expect. I imagined that it would be a bunch of white college students basically coming to observe convicts first hand. From the first moment I came into contact with the students it was an experience out of the ordinary. I felt like a saltwater fish moving into fresh water. Years of conditioning by brutality, anger, hatred, mistrust, and guarded emotions, left me unprepared for the reception and humanness with which the Temple students greeted me."

Our approach is to acknowledge openly early on that the inside and outside students and the instructor all bring vastly different life experiences to the classroom and that there is something important to learn from all perspectives, without privileging or disparaging any of them.

Yet it is still difficult. We will have moments of self-doubt, wondering if something we have said displayed a prejudice that could create a barrier to learning. The best thing we can do in these moments is to have compassion for ourselves, acknowledge our error, and keep moving on.

An exhaustive analysis of what needs to be considered is not possible here. However, there are a few questions for reflection that can help us in doing this work.

■ **How does diversity and inclusion impact the work of Inside-Out?**

- ▶ It is important to look at the makeup of the group as it relates to gender, race, ethnicity, age, etc. This is not for the purpose of being hyper-aware of these distinctions; rather, the awareness is to ensure that we are creating space to honor the wholeness of each student in the classroom. A diverse classroom adds to the richness of the Inside-Out experience and we strive to reach this balance. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to achieve the diversity we aspire to. We must be prepared for the dynamics that this challenge can present, realizing that it will not always be evident how a lack of diversity might affect the ebb and flow of class discussions.



■ **Is there a philosophy or value system with which we operate?**

- ▶ We value all identities and perspectives. That being said, there will be perspectives that do not match our own or conflict between students. It is important to know ourselves, know our own triggers, know where we have hidden assumptions and/or unconscious biases. We are responsible for doing this preparation before we walk into the classroom. We must also articulate clearly and early on that we value people in the space, that we value equity, and that Inside-Out operates from a social justice framework. This means that we expect from our students mutual respect, valuing everyone’s voice, understanding that no one voice is more important than another.

■ **How can we best address issues of diversity and equity when they emerge?**

- ▶ It is important that we be as transparent and authentic as possible when discussing issues of diversity and inclusion. Some ways to do this are to speak clearly and directly about issues of gender, race, and other dimensions of diversity, and name the reality of these topics when they come up. We need to avoid dismissing issues, even when it might feel uncomfortable to deal directly.

“I will hold its ideals and values for the rest of my life ...not only to keep them with me but to act consciously with them.”

- ▶ A way to help students get “unstuck” from feeling the personal weight of these issues is to talk about the institutional structures that impact these topics. This is not to let students “off the hook” from the personal and emotional implications involved, but we need to also recognize and remind students that we all come to these issues from many contexts. Their first encounter with these conversations could bring up feelings of shame and guilt around privilege. While it is the responsibility of students to examine their own privilege, it is not productive for them to stay stuck in the feelings of guilt, shame, or, in some cases, denial. Looking at these issues from a structural perspective allows conversations to move forward.

“Class sessions were not ‘classes’ by the usual standard. They were safety nets, zones by which we could come together and discuss issues commonly significant to all of us, problems and solutions that we felt were important to consider and resolve.”

- ▶ At the same time, we may not all have had many opportunities to have these kinds of conversations. It is better to be authentic about our positionality and understanding than to feel like we have to act as if we know everything. Acknowledging our privilege helps build trust within the group. When racist or phobic things are said, we need to find ways to address the harm while keeping a sense of trust in the group. The delicate balance is for the group not to feel that they are being censored, while, at the same time, knowing that prejudice and bigotry will not be tolerated.

■ **What are some key words and concepts that consistently emerge when doing the work?**

- ▶ This manual is not a place to dive deeply into definitions; we can all certainly do our own research. However, some terms (as well as their nuances) that we need to be familiar with include gender and gender fluidity, race, ethnicity, ableism, ageism, educational ability and classism. There are invariably terms that may come up in class that we may not be familiar with. A strategy to address this could be to ask for a volunteer within the group to explain what a terms means or to invite the group – including ourselves – to do some research about the topic and come prepared to touch on it in the following class.
- ▶ It is also important to know that issues around race and gender and sexuality are more heightened in prisons. Prisons are places that are more segregated than society in which many gender and race norms are perpetuated. It is important to be aware of this reality, as some of the viewpoints that might be expressed could cause tension.



Classroom Dynamics

Setting the Tone

There are many considerations when working towards setting a positive tone for the class.

- It is essential that the instructor reach a comfort level with the prison environment and its many unexpected twists and turns before attempting to bring students inside. The instructor is responsible for communicating to the students (both inside and outside) that this is an experience that is well contained, limited as it is by the rules of the prison and parameters of the program. That sense of containment, while seemingly restrictive, actually has the effect of freeing up the group by providing well-defined limits.
- For students to be able to relax and enjoy the class, they need to know that the instructor is confident. This means being sufficiently prepared and aware of what is coming next in order to create a sense of seamless flow, both within and between class sessions. There are many things at play: at one and the same time, the instructor has to be concerned about the subject matter, how the process is working at each given moment, when and how to end a particular activity or discussion, the segue from one activity to the next, the interactions among students (individually and as a group, including side conversations), the passage of time, and what is going on in the surrounding environment. It can seem daunting, but it is eminently doable, with a combination of awareness and practice.
- The instructor needs to model for outside students how to interact with folks on the inside as classmates in a way that communicates equality, without overcompensating and patronizing others. It is crucial to encourage all students to offer their perspectives, knowledge, and experience, and avoid casting the inside students as experts who have “the answers” about the system, which can lead to othering and exoticizing those on the inside. Everyone involved has an important and integral perspective to bring to bear in the conversation.

“All I could see when I sat in class was their [prison uniforms] and I think that caused me to subconsciously form false perceptions. However, all this began to change for me when I...began to look at the [inside] students as individuals, not just as blue uniforms...”

“...This was a very different perception from my first and was an enlightenment for me as an individual. I don’t think I have ever felt such a strong change occur inside of me and it will be something that I hold inside for the rest of my life.”

- It is important for the instructor to model using language in a manner that is not alienating or unconsciously labeling. Using “I” statements is a good approach. For instance, if an instructor were trying to pose an example, it might be better to say something like, “Suppose I rob a bank...,” rather than “Suppose you rob a bank...”
- The instructor needs to set the stage for treating all students as equal partners, despite the potential educational differences in the group.

- Again, we want to suggest the importance of avoiding labeling terms, such as convict, criminal, inmate, prisoner, as well as words such as rapist, murderer, and any of the labels that are based on someone’s conviction or charge. The same is true when speaking of people who work in the criminal justice system, as well as those who have been victimized by crime. The point is not simply



that incarcerated men and women are human, but that **everyone** is. We strongly recommend that the instructor bring up the issue of language with both the outside and inside students in the two early class meetings in which the inside and outside students meet separately (see the Inside-Out Curriculum), because it can be a difficult one for students to wrap their minds around. One of the common words used by the outside students in referring to their incarcerated classmates is “them.” It’s understandable for that

to happen, especially at the beginning of the semester, but as time goes on, the use of “them” has a continual “othering” effect that is incongruent with the sense of relatedness that gradually develops.

- For instructors for whom criminal justice is not their field, it may be a good idea to spend some time, before the beginning of the semester, becoming more familiar with the issues related to the criminal justice system. While a fundamental working knowledge is all that is required, the truth is that the more informed instructors are at the outset, the richer the experience they will be able to create with the students. (The appendix in this manual includes suggested readings, videos, websites, and other sources of information about the criminal justice system.)

Instructor as Facilitator

In *A Pedagogy for Liberation*, Paulo Freire describes a teacher who is “...not directive of the *students*, but directive of the *process*....As director of the process, the liberating teacher is not doing something to the students but *with* the students” (p. 46). Although the philosophy of Inside-Out aligns with Freire’s, Inside-Out was actually developed without prior knowledge of Freire’s work.

Inside-Out is based on the idea that the instructor, rather than being the source of knowledge, serves as the individual who creates an environment conducive to learning and exploring. This particular approach to the educational process means drawing forth from students, not only their perspectives and opinions, but their ability to think things through in new ways and to speak up for themselves skillfully in a group context.

In creating this environment for learning, instructors need a strong, but subtle, hand in guiding the atmosphere of the room. It is important to create a safe and bounded space in which there is room for the unexpected to emerge, as well as for power to be shared among all participants. As instructors, we need to be comfortable with having our ideas challenged, with hearing various social systems challenged, and with the idea that there may be many ways of approaching a particular issue.

And most importantly, we'll have to move out of the way and let the group do its work, inserting ourselves only when necessary to raise a question, move toward clarification of an issue or point, or bring the class dynamic back on track. In other words, the challenge is to facilitate in the best sense of the word – to make the learning process easier by creating an atmosphere where students are excited about the work in which they are engaged.

Since conversations rarely progress in a linear way when 30-35 people are involved, instructors need to have a feel for when to keep the group on task, when to allow the group to stay on a fruitful tangent, and when to pull the group back. It helps to be comfortable with the idea that the class agenda may not be completed as originally planned – some of the most interesting and important discussions occur on the margins. The facilitation process involves striking the balance between quality and quantity, breadth and depth – and being flexible and open to move in other directions at times, if need be.

Circles

Many cultures (e.g. Native American, First Nations, Maori) have traditions of using a “circle process” for important group conversations, including decision-making or addressing and resolving problems. Those accustomed to using circles realize that they are highly symbolic, representing the wholeness of the group and the equality of all participants.



Although Inside-Out does not use a formal circle process per se, it is vital that students sit in a circle rather than in a traditional classroom format. The symbolism of the circle is especially profound in prison. By sending people to prison, we are excluding them from our communities. Using a circle format in a class that includes students from both inside and outside the prison symbolically brings those who are incarcerated back into community.

“Most college courses are lectures and readings which, later on, we are supposed to apply to real-life situations. This class was a real-life situation itself. The readings gave all of us facts, statistics, and the opinions of the ‘experts,’ but the class itself was what gave the course an additional meaning and another dimension. The students in the class gave it life – we taught each other more than can be read in a book.”

Circles have other advantages, as well. Students are encouraged to develop an atmosphere of collegiality by dialoguing directly with one another rather than triangulating through the instructor. Encouraging students to use names when addressing comments to each other further enhances this atmosphere.

Additionally, circles engender a greater “group consciousness,” which is important for the work that is being done. When a group is able literally to see itself and all of its members as one, it is more likely that the individuals will be aware of one another and willing to hold one another accountable for how the group proceeds. This concept bolsters the idea of holding each other responsible for staying within the parameters of the program (see “Rules of Inside-Out”).

At the beginning of the semester, it is important to invite the inside and outside students to intersperse themselves throughout the circle, sitting alternately – inside / outside / inside / etc. This request presents an immediate challenge to participants to move out of their comfort zones. After the first week or two, as people become more comfortable with one another and the group gets accustomed to the seating arrangement, the mixing of the students occurs naturally, without prompting.

The initial meeting “...brought home to me the extent to which I’ve been isolated and socially deprived. ...While you’re isolated, you do not realize how much you lose psychologically. This is the first time in thirteen years that I’ve been exposed to such an environment. ... It made me consider how much I may have lost touch with humanity. Emotional centers were stirred within me that I thought had long since been atrophied. I guess it’s because this was the closest I’ve been to society in thirteen years.”

Speaking and Listening

The sense of power and transformation that develops in Inside-Out frequently comes through listening. For this to happen, we, as instructors, need to model the skill of being good listeners. It is important for us to give students space to express their opinions and perspectives, by listening actively to what is being said and occasionally reflecting back what someone else has said, being sure to use “I” statements (e.g. “What I hear you saying is...”).

“There is a power in the collective actions of good people. Inside-Out lets us find the source of that power. We do it. We grow. We change the world one class at a time.”

We may want to explain to students that speaking – giving others the opportunity to listen to what **they** have to say – is just as important as listening. It is important to enable the group to strike a balance in the participation of people who are very extroverted and people who are more reserved. In order to accomplish this, it helps to challenge students at the beginning of the semester, and at different points during the semester, reminding them

that introverted people need to challenge themselves to get beyond their comfort zones and share their voices with the class, and that highly extroverted people need to challenge themselves to pull back to make space for others to speak.



One area that inhibits discussion involves side conversations. As instructors, we need to make clear at the beginning of the semester that side conversations are inappropriate and disrespectful to the person currently speaking. It is important to stop this from happening as soon as it starts, as directly as possible. Humor, if done in a disarming way, is often an effective tool for addressing this issue. It is also helpful to remind the class not to take anything personally that we may say or do when we interrupt these side conversations.

Another challenge involves figuring out a way, through a hand signal or some other approach, to ask someone who is speaking for too long to bring it to a close. The signal can be established at the beginning of the semester. Cutting short

someone's comments can be difficult to do if the individual is talking about a personal situation that has a lot of emotional content. Striking a balance between sensitivity to the individual and sensitivity to the needs of the group is always a bit of a tightrope walk.

Triggering

“Triggering” refers to something that sets someone off – the instructor or anyone in the class. A sign that triggering has occurred is that I am no longer listening to what someone is saying because I am so irritated that I am busy composing my response – or because I have blurted out a retort without thinking first. In other words, I am reacting from an emotional place and dialogue has broken down.

It is helpful, in a context in which difficult and controversial topics will be discussed, for us to draw attention to the issue of triggers at the outset and give the class a way of responding with self-awareness. For example, we can dedicate a part of the blackboard as a place for students, when they feel triggered by something someone has said, to write down the word or phrase that affected them. Or we can ask them to write it down for themselves, which helps to move it out of the student's head, where all it does is continue to be a distraction. Sometimes it can be useful to have the students brainstorm potential triggers at the beginning of the course.

“My experience this semester... has not only helped me to shed some light on my own prejudices and misconceptions, but it has also strengthened and reinforced my desire to facilitate the process of growing, changing, and realizing the strength and power that is contained in a voice.”

This approach is certainly not intended to suggest that students are to be silenced, in the sense that they may not express ideas that might be trigger words for someone else. Certain things are triggers precisely because they are linked to crucial, sometimes controversial, issues. Rather, this strategy is intended to let students know ahead of time that, if someone says something that upsets them, there will be an avenue for acknowledging and responding to it. Often, identifying something as a trigger creates a space in which a difficult issue can be discussed with less anxiety.

It can be a bit more challenging when it is us, rather than a student, who feels triggered. One effective way to respond is to model exactly what we want the students to do: telling the class that I have been triggered by something that was said and why. Another approach is to simply ask the group, “Would anyone like to speak to that issue?” Doing so moves the focus away from me as the instructor (having lost objectivity for the moment) and allows the group to address the issue without being unduly influenced by my perspective.

Sometimes, students who are feeling triggered will get locked in an exchange in which neither is able to let the other person complete a thought. When this happens, it is important for us, as instructors, to see to it that both are able to finish – and to challenge both students to consider what the conversation may have brought up for them.

It helps to encourage students to be aware enough of their own context to be able to put it aside when listening to other people. It is also good to challenge students, when triggered, not to assume that they know what the other person is saying, but to keep listening and asking for clarification, rather than responding/reacting right away.

When a student’s hand shoots up in the air during someone else’s comment, it is often a sign that something being said has had a triggering effect. We can suggest ahead of time that, when this happens, the student whose hand is raised has probably stopped listening, since the focus is now on what that student wants to say in response to the original comment. In the actual moment, we may, either verbally or through some action, suggest that participants lower their hands until the original student is finished speaking. As with so much of this process, it is really about encouraging respect for one another, without coming across in a heavy-handed, controlling way.

“After our first visit to PICC, we had a ‘debriefing’ meeting at Temple. During that session, I somehow found the courage to disagree with you. You questioned our ‘need to rescue’ and I questioned your questioning. I said that I understand the purpose of ‘anti-co-dependency’ language, but I think it often obscures and diminishes the positive role of kindness – that kindness and caring are necessary to our humanity and we need to remember that when we problematize things like ‘rescuing.’ You listened to me. Not only did you listen – very carefully – but you thanked me for disagreeing with you and brought up my point later in the class. I was deeply moved and profoundly affected by this. When you – from your power position – listened to me, I felt honored and strengthened. I was able, in turn, to listen to you. I went home and thought for days about my ‘need to rescue.’ You had ‘triggered’ something for me in class, but because you listened, I was able to move past that triggering, to open up and really listen to you and to others. That set the tone for me for the rest of the course.”

Handling the Unexpected and Troubleshooting

Part of our task is not only to handle the unexpected with poise, but also to convey, even when nothing unexpected has happened, that we know how to deal with any contingency that might arise, including anything from startling comments by students to interruptions from prison staff.

Given the dynamism of this process, there is always something happening – sometimes several things at once. As instructors, we have to juggle many different elements at the same time, including the sensitivities and sensibilities of the individuals in the group. Sometimes, those sensitivities end up being expressed through conflict. A common experience in Inside-Out is the sense that conflict or other challenges, if properly handled, can enhance the sense of trust and strength within the group, rather than damage it. The key is responding promptly and effectively, not allowing the situation to get out of control. Fundamentally, in this kind of situation, as with so many others, as instructors, we need to trust our own intuition in terms of how best to deal with what may arise.



Classroom Strategies

Icebreakers

A collection of skillfully designed icebreaker activities is an essential ingredient of the Inside-Out experience.

Icebreaker activities can work wonders in groups that meet outside of prison; inside prison, the effect of a well-structured icebreaker, in terms of alleviating participants' anxiety, is nothing short of amazing. Icebreakers provide a way for inside and outside students to connect on a level that is not personally intrusive, but at the same time, allows people to get to know one another a bit and build a sense of community. When an icebreaker is used that connects thematically to the work the group is doing in a given week, it also provides an illustration of the idea that learning can be fun.

“The opening exercises allowed each person to get a glimpse into the other’s humanity. Labels such as ‘inmate’ and ‘student’ fell away and were irrelevant. We were just people engaging each other on a basic human level.”

A key component in doing icebreakers is how we carry ourselves doing them. If we are stiff or uncomfortable, the stage is set for the group to feel uncomfortable. We need to have a somewhat playful quality, inviting the participants to suspend their seriousness for a brief time. Since icebreakers, by their nature, are highly interactive, there may be those in the group who will be less comfortable in doing them, at least at first. Invariably, though, even the more skeptical students come to appreciate the effect of the icebreakers on the group.

It is important when we are using icebreakers to remember where we are. We need to keep the exercise sufficiently contained so that it does not appear to correctional staff to be getting out of hand. It is also important to avoid any icebreaker that involves too much physical contact.

The Inside-Out Curriculum has a number of examples of icebreakers with a step-by-step explanation of how to do each one. There are also many books that contain good ideas for icebreakers. The one that we have most commonly used is entitled *Values Clarification* by Sidney Simon (see Appendix for more information).

Developing Guidelines for Dialogue

At the beginning of the semester, the class members develop their own guidelines for dialogue, agreed to by everyone and adhered to throughout the semester. Defining and refining these guidelines is a fascinating process, calling for a relatively large group to come to consensus on a set of rules that will govern the group. This exercise – and how it is experienced – helps set the tone for the rest of the semester. (See Inside-Out Curriculum for further description.)



Usually conducted during the first combined class, this process is a wonderful way to get people talking about something that everyone can appreciate: the importance (and challenge) of good communication and what is needed to develop an atmosphere in the group that is positive, productive, and constructive. It is actually the first group project of the semester.

An issue to explore during the guideline process is the idea of context – understanding that we each have one – and that it is our unique context, and everything that has helped to form it, that influences how we hear, speak, and take in our surroundings. Wrestling with

complex issues that are viewed from many perspectives calls for students to extend themselves and suspend their judgments in order to maximize the learning for the group as a whole.

Small Group Discussions and Workgroups

Assigning students tasks to complete in smaller subgroups is an effective way of empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning. For this approach to work best, here are a few suggestions:

- Randomly assigning students to groups is very helpful. A good technique is to have people count off, based on the number of groups. This takes students out of their comfort zone and ensures that they will connect with people they might not have chosen on their own, making for a richer experience over the course of the semester. Additionally, each time subgroups are formed, they will be constituted differently. It is always a good idea to check to be sure that there is an equal number of inside and outside students in each group; if not, the groups can be adjusted accordingly.
- Once the subgroups have been set up, it helps to make sure that they are far enough away from each other so they will be able to focus on the task at hand without being distracted by the other groups.
- It is good to ask groups to choose a facilitator and a recorder/reporter prior to starting their task. The group facilitator's job, like that of the Inside-Out instructor, is to keep the group on task and encourage input from everyone in the group. The recorder/reporter is responsible for reporting back to the large group on what the small group has accomplished.

"These teaching methods...provide for an extremely challenging, fun, and stimulating learning experience. I've come to look forward to our group sessions almost as much as I look forward to a family visit."

- A good idea is to float between groups without entering in on their conversation, except to check on their progress and make sure they understand the assignment. It is important that we not insert ourselves into the small group discussion because of the influence it would have on the group dynamic.
- When the small groups report back on their work to the larger group, the recorder/reporter can read what the group has done, while the instructor writes it on the board. Another approach, which is more empowering, is to have the student write on the board. A third option involves having the small groups use flip chart paper and posting their work so that the entire class can see it.

“One thing that stood out for me is how tolerant, respectful, and understanding people can be of other opinions if the parameters are established before they interact. It made me wonder why it is so easy to accomplish in the classroom and not in society.”



Getting into Prison

Prisons may be antithetical to what we stand for. They are, in many ways, antithetical to the creation of a good educational environment. Teaching in a prison involves countless inconveniences, frustrations, and occasional slights from prison staff. After all, prisons are designed to keep people on the outside separated from people on the inside. A person from the outside who chooses to enter a prison for any reason is not only a security risk but, in the eyes of some, a potential threat to the system.



Yet, one of the endlessly surprising things about doing prison-related work is the way it continually challenges us to discard our stereotypes, and not just the ones relating to those who are incarcerated. For people who teach inside prison, this challenge can be just as true about prison administrators, correctional officers, and other prison staff as it is about those who are incarcerated.

People who work in the correctional system are likely to be our most important allies in implementing Inside-Out. Being able to recognize, appreciate, and work with prison staff and administrators is a fundamental skill for those who come into prison to teach. When responding to the inevitable difficulties, it is good to try to take the long view, keeping in mind what it takes to create long-term social change. Doing so helps to cultivate patience, a thick skin, and good relationships.

Building Support for Inside-Out

In order to build support for Inside-Out within the local prison system, it is essential to develop a relationship with the person in the system who will be able to authorize us to move forward. (This person usually will be different from a “liaison,” discussed in “Logistical Issues in the Prison.”) This person could be in charge of the prison (sometimes called the superintendent, and sometimes called the warden – it is important to find out the correct local language), or it could be the person who directs education and/or treatment programs for that particular prison. If attempting to work within a state system, these individuals, their titles, and their contact information may be posted on the state Department of Corrections website. If not, it helps to call the general information number for the prison and simply ask for the name of the appropriate individual.

Assuming that there is not an already existing relationship with this person, it is recommended that the initial approach be in the form of a letter, followed by a phone call requesting a meeting. (An example of such a letter can be found in the Appendix.)

In planning communication with administrators, it is advisable to keep in mind their professional concerns, in order to explain how Inside-Out addresses them. In addition, many people who work in corrections, especially those with high levels of responsibility, are very busy. They have a difficult job, are working with limited resources, and are under enormous pressure to be tough, fair, and resourceful all at the same time. And as everyone in corrections is aware, even one problem with a program can be enough to shut it down within a prison or throughout an entire system, making life more difficult for many people, especially those on the inside. We need to be persistent in order to keep advancing the goal (since our contacts are probably so busy that they may not do much about the program without a little nudging) and patient (remembering that virtually everything within a prison system moves at a painstaking pace).

It may increase our contacts' comfort level to make a connection between them and someone who actually has had experience with the program. If this is the case, the state coordinator or someone from The Inside-Out Center can assist with questions that may arise.

From a prison administrator's perspective, the points in Inside-Out's favor may include:

- **Education.** Many administrators are familiar with studies that show the value of education in reducing the re-incarceration rates of those released from prison. College courses have been shown to be especially valuable. Clearly, Inside-Out fits into this framework. One of the central goals of Inside-Out is to motivate inside students to continue pursuing their education, both before and after release from prison. As an added point in its favor, Inside-Out educates those who are incarcerated about the criminal justice and related social systems. As men and women in prison more fully understand these systems, they may be more able to make better sense of their experiences in the system.



- **Management.** Most administrators are aware that providing those who are incarcerated with interesting, engaging ways to spend their time is an effective prison management tool. Inside-Out is especially effective because it is transformative – those who take the class become better citizens within the prison – and because it gives participants the opportunity to express their concerns in the context of trying to find ways to make positive changes.

- **Release Preparation.** Inside-Out can be an important release preparation tool through the educational opportunity that it affords. Moreover, it provides inside students the chance to learn and practice valuable communication, leadership, and social skills. Inside-Out is structured to allow participants to engage in conversations around difficult social issues in a way that promotes respectful dialogue, even in the presence of conflict. In addition, by providing an opportunity to interact with students from the outside, Inside-Out challenges the inside students to reexamine biases and preconceptions they may have developed during their time in prison.

“Even when opinions differed, it was striking to note that sometimes I thought both were right or equally reasonable. I had to redefine my concept of conflict and differences of opinion. There can be circumstances when differing opinions are equally correct, though they be mutually opposed to each other. It’s not always necessary for one to be right and the other wrong.”

- **Motivational Tool.** Inside-Out motivates inside students to improve their reading, writing, speaking, and researching skills for their own advancement, as well as to develop their capacities as leaders and agents of positive social change.
- **Security.** Anytime people enter a prison, there is the risk that they will bring in contraband (this could even happen accidentally) or do something that would jeopardize their own safety or the safety of those who live or work inside the prison. It is helpful to let our contacts know that Inside-Out has been implemented at prisons in the US and beyond for more than 20 years with no significant security problem. A fundamental tenet of the program is that Inside-Out takes security very seriously.
- **Cost.** In all likelihood, Inside-Out costs will be covered in many different ways, depending on the venue. However, it is helpful to let our contacts know that there generally are no direct Inside-Out

costs to either the state or county prison system (with the exception of the textbooks, which the institution can choose to purchase). Having said that, the in-kind costs of Inside-Out, such as space, security, and staff time for clearance checks, inside student screening, and supervision can be significant and represent a real commitment to the program on the part of the prison.



Other General Principles re: Getting Into Prison

Below are some general principles that will be helpful to keep in mind in terms of getting into prison. (For more specifics, see “Rules, Parameters, and Boundaries of the Inside-Out Program,” and “Typical Rules of Correctional Institutions.”)

- **Be early.** We need to allow at least a half an hour to be processed into the prison, and 15 minutes to be processed out. Usually, a gate memo has a range of times within which we are supposed to arrive. If we are late, we may not get in. Period. It really does not matter how many hours we drove to get there.
- **Time constraints.** It helps to show that we are aware of the fact that, for the convenience of everyone, including those who are incarcerated, prisons are run on very strict schedules with strict time constraints. We want to communicate the fact that we understand the importance of “time” in prison.
- **Gate memos.** People from the outside do not get inside prison unless their names are on a gate memo, and in general, no one’s name gets on a gate memo without a security clearance. Getting a name on a memo is an administrative hassle for everyone involved and usually takes several days, if not weeks. Since liaisons are probably overworked and have plenty of other things to do, we need to make sure to submit information about students and guests far enough in advance that the liaison can have them added to the memo without unnecessary inconvenience.
- **Lockdowns.** Class can be cancelled suddenly if there is a lockdown or some other kind of unusual occurrence. There is nothing we or anyone else can do about it.
- **Demeanor.** It is important that we model a polite and respectful demeanor towards all correctional staff at all times. As stated above, inconveniences, frustrations, and even slights will inevitably occur. We need to be true to ourselves, but also know that the program and its continuation is *always* on the line. It is not worth jeopardizing the program and its potential benefit to current and future students for the sake of calling someone on a slight or even a whole series of slights. If there is a serious problem, we would do well to let it slide in the moment, take detailed notes of the incident (including names), and document it in any other way possible, and then let the liaison handle it, or the warden/superintendent.
- **Rules.** We need to make it clear through word and action – to our students and to the prison staff – that we respect the institutional rules and are committed to upholding them.



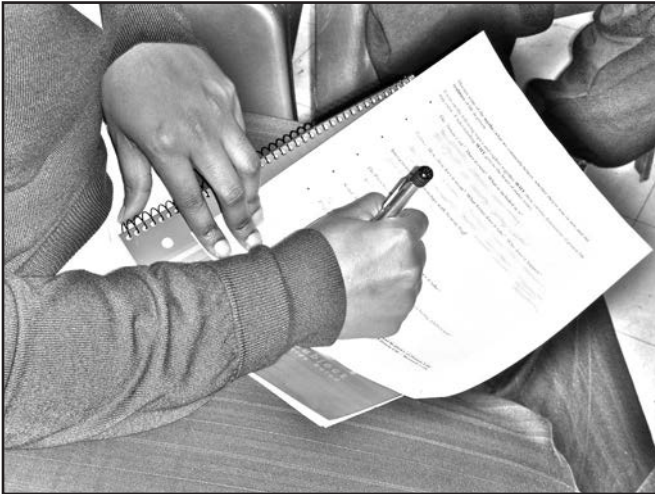
- **No surprises.** We need to make sure that the relationships with prison staff are based on trust, honesty, and an understanding of their job. It is not helpful to surprise them with requests that will force them to make difficult decisions.
- **Comfort level.** It is important to communicate that we are comfortable working in the prison environment and that we can effectively set the necessary limits and parameters for the inside and outside students' experience. This cannot be overstated!
- **Flexibility.** A key quality is the willingness to stretch to make things work. We are trying to do something that is somewhat "outside the box" within a very structured setting over which we have little if any control.
- **Role of Inside-Out.** It is crucial to make clear to the administration that we know what we are there for – to teach a class. We are not there as a watchdog, and we are not going to go to the media with things that we may observe. As important as it is to correct problems inside of prisons, drawing attention to them in ways that are not well thought through will only have the effect of further limiting outside access to the system and making the situation worse. Additionally, any such activity would be a breach of trust, as it is a misrepresentation of the reason for our being there.

A corollary point is – if I witness or hear about something that I feel that I must respond to, I need to think it through **very carefully**. I may want to call a colleague or The Inside-Out Center to get advice. It is important to be true to one's conscience, but we need to keep in mind the potential negative consequences of any actions we may take. If not done appropriately, our actions could jeopardize the continuation of the program there and/or elsewhere.



Common Rules of Correctional Institutions

Teaching inside prison involves following numerous rules and ensuring that our students follow these rules, even regulations that may seem trivial or stupid. The reality is that we are entering someone else's turf, and to remain welcome, respect for the administration's way of conducting business is paramount. **The rules are not negotiable.**



Moreover, there are often good reasons for these rules. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that instructors and inside and outside students alike follow the rules in order to protect their own safety, as well as the safety of others incarcerated in the prison and the people who work there.

Additionally, it goes without saying that following these rules protects the Inside-Out program and its continuation. The fact that we have been able to take tens of thousands of students inside prisons and jails without a security problem is a direct result of taking

these rules seriously. In fact, the rules of Inside-Out include, and sometimes surpass, those of many correctional institutions, in order to ensure the safety of the individuals involved, as well as the program itself. (See "Rules, Parameters, and Boundaries of the Inside-Out Program.")

Below are some rules common to many correctional institutions with regard to visitor dress, behavior, and items that may or may not be brought into prison. However, it is important to remember:

- Though in general terms, the rules are often the same, on the details, **rules vary from prison to prison**, even within the same system. For example, in some prisons, we may bring in a few items (such as car keys and some change) if they are in a clear plastic bag. At other prisons, we can bring the items in, with the understanding that they would be kept in a pocket. But, in many places, we cannot take them in at all.
- **The rules may vary within a prison.** Sometimes the rules change officially, sometimes they are enforced differently by different staff, and sometimes they are actually enforced differently by the same staff depending on the day. For example, a staff person may allow us to come in wearing, let's say, a limited amount of jewelry, for months at a time. Then, with no apparent reason, the same staff person will tell us to take it all off. There is sometimes nothing that can be done about this sort of situation, unless it is so egregious that it clearly calls for intervention from a higher-ranking officer. It is best, of course, to try to solve the dilemma with the officer in question in the most rational, respectful way possible.

Overall, we must **choose our battles carefully**. Since we will be going into prison on a regular basis, we need to develop good working relationships with the officers. Outside people who are perceived as problematic may have an increasingly difficult time getting in and out of the institution. That having been said, there are times when we may feel it necessary to have an issue addressed. If that happens, it is important to remember the paramilitary nature of correctional institutions and work “up the ranks” in communicating our concerns.

If an outside student feels disrespected, the student **must not** show irritation through body language or visual cues. **Students must defer all complaints to the instructor**. It is helpful to make all of this clear before taking the outside students in for the first time. If, as an instructor, I am treated disrespectfully, I may well want to let it slide, in many cases. It can be seen – and processed with the outside students – as an opportunity to get a sense of what it must be like living behind prison walls.

- **We must always know and share with our students the rules that are specific to the institution in which we are meeting.** Often, for state prisons, visitors’ rules can be downloaded from a website; additional rules are often posted near the front gate. The best bet, if there is no official prison orientation session, is to ask the liaison at the institution if there is a specific list of rules to be reviewed prior to entering the institution for the first time.

Procedures for Entering

There are numerous ways people from the outside are checked into a prison. We need to be prepared for any combination of the following processes:

- One’s printed name, signature, reason for entering, and car information logged into a book.
- Glow-in-the-dark hand stamp.
- Plastic bracelet.
- Visitor’s pass.
- Pass-through metal detector. (Depending on the sensitivity of the machine, some jewelry may set it off. Certainly, the metal in some shoes and underwear can be a problem. We need to alert outside students ahead of time so that they can dress accordingly and/or be prepared. If a student has had a metal piece inserted through a surgical procedure, we need to find out about that ahead of time, as well, in order to tell the gate officer. Sometimes medical documentation is necessary in these cases.)
- Wand for further metal detection.
- Ion scanner and/or drug-sniffing dogs for drugs.
- Pat down. (According to prison policy in most institutions, this is supposed to be conducted by an officer of the same gender. It is quite appropriate for the instructor to raise that issue with the correctional officer, if necessary.)

Bringing Things In and Out

Things to Bring In

- **Valid photo ID.** The type of ID that is acceptable may vary from prison to prison. For example, some institutions will want a valid driver's license, passport, or state ID, while others will require the students' school ID cards. Some institutions will take either one. Some institutions may also require that the ID that was used for clearance be the same ID presented at the gate.
- **Students may bring in a notebook, textbooks, and a pen** for class, provided that doing so has been cleared with the institutional liaison ahead of time. Often, spiral-bound notebooks are not permitted, if the binding is metal.

The instructor may often bring in **additional items** if they are needed for class, provided they have been added to the gate memo in advance. But we need to be prepared to teach the class without them, in the event that, for some unforeseen reason, they are confiscated at the gate. CDs usually need to be approved in advance, and may be scanned for viruses and possibly viewed for content.

Things Not to Bring In (aka Contraband)

The following items usually may not be brought into prison. In some instances, we cannot even bring them onto prison property (i.e. we cannot have them in the car).

One reason for this restriction is that incarcerated men and women at lower security levels often work on prison grounds and so, from the point of view of the prison administration, leaving something in your car is as good as bringing it into prison. We will want to be aware that **cars parked in prison parking lots are subject to being searched**. An actual physical search does not happen very often, but many prisons use dogs to identify cars that may contain drugs.

It is important that we let students know that taking photos on prison grounds is **never** permitted and will get the individual and the program in trouble.

Many prisons have lockers in the entry area for people from the outside to store their possessions. Usually, there is a cost to operate these lockers – anywhere from a quarter to \$10 (higher amounts are returned upon the visitor's departure). However, it is important for us to clarify when the lockers are available for use.



The following items may not be brought inside:

- Weapons. (Not on prison property, not even in the car, not even with a permit.)
- Illegal drugs. (They are illegal. By the way, some prisons use ion scanners on people as they enter to determine if they have even handled drugs. We suggest that students wash their hands carefully once they arrive at the prison, since drug residue can often appear on cash. And, as noted above, some institutions use dogs to determine if there are cars in the parking lot that contain drugs.)
- Medications of any kind. (If there is a need to have some kind of medication on hand, like an inhaler for asthma, we need to get clearance ahead of time, or it will not be allowed inside.)
- Alcohol.
- Cigarettes or any other tobacco products. (An increasing number of institutions are smoke-free, and cigarettes are considered serious contraband.)
- Maps. (We need to make sure they are locked in the glove compartment or in the trunk.)
- Chewing gum.
- In some cases, car alarm remotes.
- Cell phones or beepers. Cell phones are **MAJOR** contraband.
- Wallets, pocketbooks, or money.
- Umbrellas (usually can be left at the front gate).
- Food or drink, which includes hard candy.
- Make-up, lip balm, hand lotion, aspirin, Advil, cough drops, etc.



Dress

Restrictions on dress vary from prison to prison, and may be idiosyncratic based on specific problems that have occurred at that particular institution. Many of the rules about clothing are intended to prevent escape. Others are to prevent those from the outside from being distracting to those who are incarcerated.

The list below may have a rather restrictive feel to it. Unfortunately, that is the reality. It helps to spot a student during the first week (when the group is meeting on campus) who is dressed appropriately for prison, and use the student as an example for the class (without, of course, unduly embarrassing the individual).

It is fully within the instructor's purview to have a student get changed, if possible, or to turn the student away on a given week, if not dressed appropriately. (During warm weather, it takes even more vigilance than at other times.) Though it may not be a comfortable thing to have to do, it is better than having the person turned away by staff at the prison.

Here are some restrictions that are common:

- No clothing that resembles the uniforms worn by either staff or those who are imprisoned in the institution. It is best to check out in advance whether blue denim, orange, brown, black, olive green, neon green or khaki may be worn (uniform colors vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction).
- Minimal skin shown (i.e. tummies, legs above knee, cleavage, upper arms, and shoulders). Most institutions do not allow shorts on men or women.
- Nothing excessively tight or low cut. We instruct students to dress casually, but appropriately, with loose-fitting pants and tops, recognizing that "loose-fitting" is a relative term. Many institutions do not allow athletic pants, yoga pants, or sweat pants. Additionally, jeans that are too tight and/or have holes in them are not permitted.
- No (or limited) jewelry, including body piercing, such as nose rings, tongue rings, etc. A piercing that does not show (e.g. navel) is usually not problematic. Wedding rings are a frequent exception to the "no jewelry" rule, as are religious medals, which are not supposed to be banned by institutions.
- No underwire bras, when there is a metal detector involved.
- No hooded sweatshirts (aka "hoodies"), white T-shirts, bandanas, colored shoelaces, caps. Some of these items are considered related to gang activity.
- Ability to wear coats or other outerwear may vary depending on the institution.
- No open-toed shoes or sandals.



Behavior on the Inside

- No outside student may bring anything in to give to an inside student, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, including such things as articles, pens, paper, and the like (not to mention books – institutions have strict policies about the process by which books are brought inside).
- No inside student may give anything to an outside student.
- Inside students may not ask outside students to bring in anything or to contact anyone for them (e.g. no mailing of letters or making phone calls on an inside student's behalf).
- **There is no contact between inside and outside students beyond the classroom. This restriction includes letters, telephone calls, email, social media, and visiting at the prison. This regulation is fundamental – and must be made clear to and understood by everyone involved in the program.**
- There can be no displays of physical affection between inside and outside students. Warm handshakes, sometimes with an arm grasp, are acceptable. Hugging is not. This is important to clarify, especially since, as people get to know each other, it feels natural to give each other an embrace. Although this is not enforced the same way everywhere, a hug can get us banned from prison. The inside students are aware of this rule and generally observe it, but sometimes – in the moment – it might be hard to remember. And it is important to note that the potential repercussions

“As much as we say we are open minded, it is not until we are forced to listen to the opinions of others that we really can appreciate the perspective that each of us brings to a subject. This was clearly instructive for me personally.”

for an inside student can be quite serious, including being removed from the class and possible lock-up in restrictive housing.

- No personal information may be exchanged, such as address, telephone number, prison number, or other contact information. One of the rules of the Inside-Out program is that we also do not share last names, which adds a layer of security for everyone involved. (See “Rules, Parameters, and Boundaries of the Inside-Out Program.”)



Logistical Issues in the Prison

Books

- The question of how to ensure that the inside students have access to the necessary books for class has been approached in a couple of different ways throughout our network. One approach is for the prison (or an organization in the prison) to purchase the books, which the students then borrow and return at the end of the semester. Of course, inside students may choose to purchase their own set of books, if they have the resources.

Other options that we have used in the past include contacting book publishers, explaining the program, and seeing if they would donate copies of books for the inside students. That strategy may work in the beginning, but may be hard to sustain over time. Another option involves contacting a local prison reform agency for a donation towards books. While there are many possible approaches, we actually think it is wise, when possible, to work with the institution on securing the books, since it is one of the ways that the institution can express an ongoing commitment to the program.

Denial of Access

- Correctional institutions may deny access to outside individuals for several reasons. For example, no one under the age of 18 is permitted inside an adult facility for a program of this kind.
- Additionally, many institutions check the criminal records of those seeking to come in from the outside, as well as whether or not they are on the visiting or phone call list of anyone currently incarcerated in the prison. (See below for “clearance check” information.) People may well be denied access if there is an issue in either situation.
- Finally, according to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a person cannot be denied access based on any kind of physical disability. Accommodations must be made in such situations.



Clearance Checks

- Many institutions do clearance checks, including criminal histories, and may turn down for admittance those with a conviction on their record. In some places, unpaid parking or speeding tickets, driving with an expired car registration, and other relatively mundane things can prevent someone from clearing the check, not to mention arrests or prior criminal convictions. It is important for us to explain the clearance check process to outside students in advance, leaving it up to them as to how specific they want to be about any situation that could prove problematic (remembering that an individual's confidentiality and privacy is a basic right).
- Many institutions also check to see if those seeking to come in are on the visiting or phone call lists of any of the individuals currently incarcerated there. Sometimes they will even check to see if an outside person has ever visited or called anyone in the institution or the state system, and will refuse to allow them to come in. So, it is important to ask if they know anyone in the prison, if they have ever been on the visiting or call list of anyone in the prison, or if they have been inside the prison with another group (for example, a church group). If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," it is best to discuss the matter with the institutional liaison. Depending on the issue, many administrators may be willing to be flexible, but they do not appreciate being surprised, and are much more likely to grant an exception to a rule if they hear about the potential glitch from us ahead of time.
- The information required for institutional "clearance checks" varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Usually it includes name, social security number, place of birth, date of birth, hair color, eye color, weight, height, address, telephone number, and driver's license number. (See Appendix for an example of a Clearance Check Form.)
- If informed that someone has not passed a clearance check, it is important to ask why. Chances are we will be told that the information is confidential. However, we must be aware that there are instances in which erroneous information may show up on a clearance check (for example, there may be an arrest record for someone with the same name but different social security number as one of the outside students), and if the liaison is willing to work with us, it may be possible to resolve the problem.



Working Through Other Programs

- Sometimes, in bringing Inside-Out into a prison or jail in our area, we may be able to work through some other program already operating inside the institution we are considering. Doing so simplifies recruitment of inside students, and facilitates the logistics involved in making the class happen. Examples could include a drug treatment program, a volunteer office, or the education or activities department of the institution.

Gate Memos

- It is important that we provide the institutional liaison with clearance check information weeks ahead of time, so that a standing memo can be prepared that includes all of the students, guests, and instructors. Multiple parties review and sign these memos, so allowing sufficient time for them to move through the system is crucial.
- If following the Inside-Out schedule as set out in the curriculum, a special gate memo should be prepared for weeks 1, 3, and 15 (or whatever the last week of the term is), because we will be going in without the outside students and at a different time than usual (possibly even a different day, schedule depending).
- If we are planning on making a special trip to the prison to pre-screen the inside students, we need to make sure a memo is submitted for that as well.
- Finally, a memo for the Closing Ceremony, held during the final week of class, will have to be prepared in advance. The memo includes the names (and often, social security numbers) of all the guests who are coming into the prison for the event. If the institution requires that a clearance check be completed for each guest, the administration will need that information several weeks in advance.



Liaison

- A prison liaison or point person who will take care of internal prison details is a critical ally. We want to build a positive relationship with this person and stay in close contact and be aware of the liaison's schedule, like work hours and vacation plans. These types of regular occurrences can delay plans.
- It is also important for us to have a contact number for someone else as a back-up in case of emergency. The contact should be able to reach us if class has to be cancelled for some last-minute reason.

Passes

- The inside students are not allowed to be anywhere in the prison outside of their housing block without a written pass. Usually, each housing block has one or more counselors whose responsibility it is to prepare passes enabling all those living on the block to participate in their daily activities – working, going to class, going to the doctor, etc. Students will not be able to come to class without a pass. It helps to touch base with the liaison to make sure that the preparation of these passes is on the appropriate person's weekly list of things to do.
- Sometimes an inside student may not show up for class and the other inside students will explain that the person's pass was not ready. If this happens, it is best to let the liaison know about it.

Scheduling

- Usually, prisons have blocks of time in the morning, afternoon, and evening that are available for activities. These blocks of time begin and end with a count of those who are incarcerated, and nothing in the prison happens until the count has “cleared.” The class will have to accommodate this schedule, fitting into one of the prison’s pre-set blocks of time. The time blocks are usually 2 to 3 hours in length.
- Even though these “counts” happen many times each day, in larger institutions, where there are thousands of people locked up, it is amazing how often count does not clear for awhile. Needless to say, there is nothing that can be done in this situation; there will be no movement whatsoever until count has cleared. We need to be as flexible as possible and always expect the unexpected.
- It is also advisable for us to check with the prison at the beginning of the semester about any federal holidays that may conflict with the class schedule. Often, class will not be able to be held on a holiday due to a shortage of staff coverage.

Sign-In Sheets

- It helps if we ask the inside students to use a sign-in sheet for the class (the prison may supply one) and let the correctional officer or staff person assigned to keep tabs on the group know right away if someone is absent. Absences are usually the result of a work or program conflict, a pass problem, a visit, a court date, or the result of someone being in “the hole” as the result of a disciplinary issue. Given security issues, it is a good idea for us to have a way to account for everyone who is supposed to be in the class.

Space

- Space is at a premium in most prisons. It is wise for us to communicate clearly with the liaison early in the process that we need a room with moveable chairs and space enough to make a circle that can accommodate 30-35 people.

Supplies

- Instructors are not expected to supply inside students with notebooks, pens, paper, folders, etc. The inside students either purchase these on their own at the prison commissary or the supplies are provided by prison staff. Again, communicating with the liaison about what will be needed is a smart move as we are working out details. Additionally, we need to make clear that a blackboard, whiteboard, or newsprint will be needed for use throughout the semester. It is important for us to bring nametags and markers, and have them ready to distribute in the first combined class (i.e. the second week). These items also need to be included on the gate memo.

Rules, Parameters, and Boundaries of the Inside-Out Program

The rules of Inside-Out incorporate all prison rules (see “Common Rules of Correctional Institutions”) and address some additional concerns.

Since its inception in 1997, Inside-Out has never had a serious security problem. This is because the instructors follow the institutional rules, insist that their students obey these rules, and encourage respect towards institutional staff. It is also because Inside-Out has some of its own rules, which instructors need to review in detail with the inside and outside students at the beginning of the semester.

- It is important to remind both inside and outside students what we are **not** there for: to study the inside students, to “help” the inside students, to find out why the inside students are incarcerated, or for either the inside group of students or the outside group of students to “teach” the other group. We are simply there to explore issues together.
- Students need to behave appropriately during class, remembering that it is a college class and that it is being held inside a prison. Not only is there no hugging or other physical contact (see “Common Rules of Correctional Institutions”) between the inside and outside students, but there can also be no flirtation, inappropriate body language, etc. There must be no passing of notes during class between any students.
- There is no loaning of pens or pencils, or bringing anything in for someone on the inside, even something as trivial as a newspaper article. Everything of this nature must be handled by the instructor. (For a good example of what can happen, see “Class Composition and Student Interactions.”) Also, no outside student may take anything out of the institution for or from an inside student.
- Notebooks can be labeled with first names only and no other identifying information, and papers submitted are to be marked with first names only. (These are related to the policy of semi-anonymity, explained below.)
- Confidentiality with regard to personal information: what is shared in the classroom stays there. Not only can it not be shared with anyone outside of class in a way that could identify the speaker, but it must not be a topic of further discussion among students who are enrolled in the class.



Semi-Anonymity

What Inside-Out means by semi-anonymity is the use of first names only. No last names are allowed in the prison classroom (except for the instructor). Depending on whether students in the class find this policy ironic in light of Inside-Out's emphasis on humanizing issues and including all voices, discussion on this point can consume hours. However, it is essential that Inside-Out instructors follow this policy.

The basic reasons for the policy are as follows:

- **Some students, inside and out, are uncomfortable sharing their last names.** A policy prohibiting all students from sharing last names makes the decision of whether or not to share this information a lot less difficult for individuals.
- **It protects the inside students.** Though we make it clear from the beginning that it is neither required nor advisable, inside students sometimes do want to talk about their cases. Doing so can cause legal problems for them, particularly if they have an open case of any kind. Using first names removes the threat that other students could be subpoenaed to testify in a classmate's case. It preserves inside students' privacy so that their past or present legal situations cannot be researched by outside students who may be curious about why they're in prison or if they have any previous convictions.

It is worth mentioning at this juncture that, since the screening of the inside students will be conducted by prison staff, it is not necessary (or, in some ways, advisable) for the instructor to have information on the criminal histories of the inside students. Even though we each strive to be conscious of our biases and assumptions, it is too easy for our objectivity to be influenced by this kind of information. We have made it a point not to learn the reasons why inside students are incarcerated, unless they want to reveal their backgrounds for some particular reason.

- **It protects the outside students.** It is in the realm of possibility that an inside student or someone they know could present problems in the life of one of an outside student. This is not to cast aspersions on inside students; the point is, it only takes one instance for someone to be seriously harmed or for the program to be shut down. Statistically, the more people who participate in Inside-Out, the more possible it is that someone with problematic inclinations may be in a class.
- **It makes it much harder for students to try to keep in touch with one another during or after the semester, which is a serious violation of the rules of the program and, probably, of most prisons.**
- **It teaches the lesson that it is not necessary to know things about people in order to come to know them in a different way and learn with and from them.**



Grading and Credits

For Inside-Out classes, students' grades are based on their weekly papers, their class participation, and their final paper, all about equally weighted.

Outside students must, of course, be graded on a college level. If inside students are not receiving credit, we recommend letting them choose individually whether they want to be graded on a college level or not. For some, grading at too high a level may become a disincentive, especially since some of the inside students may not yet be able to do college level written work.



Whether inside students can receive college credit for completing the class depends on many variables. Each educational institution is different and has different capabilities, possibilities, and limitations in this regard. For instance, if there is an existing higher education program in the prison, inside students who are matriculated in such a program may be able to receive credit for the course as part of that program. (In some cases, the students will need to pay a fee of some kind, possibly the entire amount for the course.) Additionally, over the years, instructors throughout the Inside-Out network have developed creative ways to address the issue of credit. There are many examples that can be shared – and we encourage instructors to use their ingenuity and institutional connections to make credit accessible whenever possible.

Other inside students who complete the course and receive a grade may be able to get the college credits for the course if and when they matriculate in the sponsoring college after their release and pay for the course. Some colleges are willing to set up special payment plans for students in this situation.

Separate from the issue of credits, it is important that each student – both inside and outside – receive a certificate for involvement in the course. (See *The Inside-Out Curriculum* for a sample certificate.) For the inside students, this certificate is a very important part of the individual file (aka “jacket”) that is reviewed at the time of parole or sentencing. It serves as the official verification of an individual’s involvement in the Inside-Out program.

In order to keep the semi-anonymity in place, we usually produce two certificates for all the students: one, with only first names, to be used for the Closing Ceremony, and a second, with full names, to be distributed at the final separate debriefing meeting (the last week of class).

Class Composition and Student Interactions

Part of what is wonderful about Inside-Out is the way in which students who bring very different values, experiences, approaches to learning, and knowledge bases come together and learn with and from one another. For the most part, all we need to do in order for this kind of learning to happen is to create a safe enough classroom environment with very clear boundaries, as discussed in the section called “Classroom Dynamics.” At the same time, there are some elements we may want to look for as we put together a class, as well as some pitfalls to be avoided.

Outside Students

We want to try to pull together students in a class who bring a diversity of perspectives. Some variables to consider include geography, economics, ethnicity/race, age, sexual orientation, and political perspective.

We recommend interviewing outside students interested in taking the class. The interview provides the opportunity to give the students a fuller idea of both what is involved in the class and what is expected from them. It is important to be comfortable with the students who we will be taking inside the prison. The two most important qualities for us to look for in students are maturity and trustworthiness.



- The vast majority of the outside students will not have had much, if any, experience inside a prison, so everything will be new to them. Some areas we want to look out for are:
- Immaturity and/or naiveté, especially on the part of younger students.
- The desire to “help” or “be supportive” of the inside students, which can lead to objectification and/or patronization, and can be fundamentally disempowering.
- Students whose manner and body language could be distracting for other students in a prison classroom, and who do not appear to have the self-awareness to be able to conduct themselves appropriately in a prison setting.
- For those students who are not Criminal Justice majors, it is essential that they have (or are provided with) a basic framework of understanding about the criminal justice system.
- It is important for prospective students to disclose whether they have been in a prison before – most specifically, in this particular institution. See “Clearances” section.

Inside Students

The class make-up of inside students may vary greatly depending on whether class is being held in a state or county institution, the security level of the facility, the length of time the inside students have been incarcerated, and how much time they have left on their sentences. As with the outside students, it is best to include individuals who bring a diversity of perspectives to the class, including additional areas such as educational background and numbers of times incarcerated.

It is important to hold pre-class interviews of the inside students; exercising good judgment is key in determining who will participate in the class. In general, inside students self-select for the class just as outside students do, and most of those who sign up for the class will bring a lot to it. Once again, however, there are some issues to be aware of:

- Students who seem angry or dominating in a way that will inhibit class discussion and exchange of ideas.
- Students who seem inclined to use the class as a forum to talk about their case (especially if they claim innocence) or to address a particular complaint they have with regard to the prison administration.
- Students who have threatening body language or inappropriate communication skills.

Inside Students in County Jails

In a county facility, one of the major challenges is turnover among inside students. Up to 2/3 of those incarcerated in the county may be pre-trial, and they may be released or go to trial or sentencing at some point during the semester. Others who are serving sentences may be released, transferred to state facilities, or sent to participate in another program. The attrition rate may be as high as 3/4 of the class by the end of the semester.



The sudden absence of someone who has been part of the class can be difficult for everyone involved. It is important to address this issue with the entire class at the beginning of the semester so that everyone can be prepared in advance. In a way, this situation is similar to what those who are incarcerated experience when someone with whom they have developed a friendship is moved or transferred. There is often no notice. The people remaining behind don't know where the other person has been taken, and they are not allowed to contact each other. For outside students, this is a way in which they experience a small taste of what it is like to live in an environment in which the ability to sustain connections with people depends completely on the vicissitudes of the institution.

In practical terms, transfers out of the class can result in a group that does not have a balanced number of inside and outside students. In order to avoid this, it's advisable to have a waiting list of others interested in taking the class, in order to fold in new inside students, as needed. If an inviting, inclusive classroom dynamic has been successfully developed at the beginning of the semester, the group will easily absorb new people. An important strategy to try to avoid excessive attrition is to work with prison administrators to identify students who will be in the facility for the duration of the class (for jails, this usually involves people who have been sentenced).

Inside Students in State Prisons

Classes in state institutions tend to have less inside student turnover, and often the inside students have been incarcerated for a lengthy period and have had quite a bit of time (often, years) to reflect on some of the issues that are explored in the class.

Student Interactions

Inside and Outside Students Who Know Each Other

For a variety of reasons, it is important that the class not contain inside and outside students who have a previous acquaintance outside the classroom. These reasons include:

- **Security:** From the prison administration's perspective, it is a security risk to have inside and outside students who know each other in the same class. For example, the inside student might ask the outside student to give messages to mutual acquaintances, or the outside student might share with mutual acquaintances information that could threaten the security or safety of the inside student.
- **Semi-Anonymity / Confidentiality:** These elements are essential in creating the safe and bounded atmosphere necessary for Inside-Out. Including inside and outside students in the class who have a pre-existing relationship can easily compromise our ability to create this environment.

Students need to be told to inform us as soon as they discover that they know someone in the class. We, then, must assess the degree and type of acquaintance and discuss it with the institutional liaison as soon as possible. It may be necessary for the inside student or the outside student to withdraw from the class.

"What a motley crew we made in that little program room at [the prison]. I often think about the incredible dynamic of our group and wonder what we must look like to the people outside that room. People of different colors, sexes, ages, education levels, social classes and opinions in a circle, laughing, talking, arguing and respecting each other for hours at a time. It has to make it difficult for anyone who watches to hold on to the status quo. The status quo says that doesn't happen. It says that people are different and that some things are never going to change. For two and a half hours every Thursday this semester, we proved that untrue."

Gender Issues

Many Inside-Out classes consist of male inside students and male and female outside students (in men's prisons), as well as some single-gender classes. There are advantages and disadvantages to having mixed and single-gender classes (recognizing that the situation is never so clearly binary). Mixed classes provide more diversity of viewpoints. At the same time, single gender classes sometimes allow for a greater sense of emotional safety and openness, especially when very sensitive subjects – such as rape and sexual molestation – are discussed, as sometimes happens in women's classes. Issues surrounding gender fluidity may also arise and it is important that we remain open to these conversations to maintain trust within the group.

Since sexual dynamics are always present and prison is an unnaturally sexually segregated environment, the presence of sexual energy is normal and to be expected. The focus, however, should be about learning. It is important for the instructor, inside students, and outside students alike to know that they have to be aware of any sexual signals they may be sending – whether advertently or inadvertently – and that they need to divert any sexual attention they may receive.



It is important that we keep in mind that, in an environment of relative sexual deprivation, seemingly innocent behavior can be easily misinterpreted. For example, in one Inside-Out class, a male inside student expressed the need for a pen. A female outside student loaned him one. To her, this was no big deal. To him, it was a signal that she “liked” him. He passed her a note, which was intercepted by the prison social worker, that essentially invited her to keep in touch with him, explaining that he would soon be getting out and enrolling at the university – and that he would need some help in taking the necessary steps to get started there. This explanation, however, followed quite a bit of language that made it clear that his intentions were mixed, at best.

Based on this note (which the outside student never saw), the inside student was summarily excused from the class for the rest of the semester and could have been given a disciplinary charge. Additionally, the outside student was nearly invited not to return to the prison; it took quite a bit of advocating on her behalf to keep her in the class. Though it seems like a ridiculous and petty incident, it is a perfect illustration of how easily misinterpretation can happen, as well as how serious institutions can be about following the rules.

It is essential for us to address these issues openly with the students, to stay alert to signs of inappropriate behavior or attachments forming during class, and to follow up promptly at the first sign of anything that may be problematic.

Diana, a former outside student, put it well when she said to a group of outside students (and this is somewhat paraphrased), “Yes, you may come to know people on the inside, you may come to care about one of the inside students, but you can’t keep in touch. However, you can use that passion to drive your work on these issues. We’re not here to help individual people or to develop lasting relationships, but what **can** flow from this experience is being able to do something on a larger level.”

Manipulation

In society at large, the conventional wisdom about people in prison is that they are “master manipulators” and one cannot be too careful or wary when dealing with “them.” Given that this image is ubiquitous, and may be a consideration for educators, prison administrators, and outside students (and their parents) as they contemplate this class, we feel it is important to address the “master manipulator” issue. But we prefer to frame it differently.

“The single most striking thing that I observed was that the people we lock up are just hungry. They are hungry for human attention, human contact, and humanity. Men and women both viewed us with hunger. They were all hungry for someone to understand their needs and wants and I feel sad and discouraged that they were humans stripped of love and shoved in a box.”

Whether in prison or in the outside world, all of us, at one time or another, resort to manipulation when we want or need something and don not know or cannot figure out how to get it in a way that is direct and in keeping with social norms. Just like those on the outside, people who are incarcerated have many very legitimate needs. Some of those needs, whether emotional, economic, social, medical, or legal, existed before they were locked up. Now in prison, individuals may well have more needs and probably fewer resources than before. And since, for the most part, there are very few resources available in prison, asking directly for something in a socially normative

way sometimes does not get one very far. It would make sense then that some of those in prison regard people from the outside as potential resources through whom they may be able to get some of their needs met. Usually, it does not mean they are “master manipulators.” Often, it just means they are reacting normally within a very abnormal context.

However, this perspective does not excuse anyone from trying to get around the rules. At the same time, the instructor and outside students may want to be aware of being asked for seemingly small favors that can have unseen implications. It is important to say “no” if we are asked to do something that falls outside the rules, without generalizing from that one experience to everyone else in prison. The bottom line is that, by being extra clear about the rules and parameters at the beginning of the course, with inside and outside students alike, we can diminish the likelihood that any of the students will be willing to ask for, or take, an ill-advised risk.

Special Class Sessions

Briefing and Debriefing

For the first and last class sessions, the inside and outside students meet separately. It is optional for the third session to be separate, though it is recommended. The schedule is deliberately structured in this way because it is important for members of each group to have the opportunity to express their anxieties, concerns, and questions about the Inside-Out experience without feeling as if they have to edit themselves. (See The Inside-Out Curriculum for details on conducting each session.)



Photo by Ryan S. Brandenberg

First Class Session

The primary purpose of the first session is to introduce the syllabus, parameters, rules, and other issues related to the course, as well as to unearth assumptions, questions, and fears that students may be bringing to the course. It is also a chance for the students in each respective subgroup to become acquainted with one another and begin building a sense of group cohesion. (We might think that the incarcerated students would already know each other, but that is often not the case. The same is often true for the outside students.)

The first session also gives us the opportunity to welcome the students to the Inside-Out program, describe the classroom experience, talk a bit about the history of the program, and introduce ourselves to the group. It is a good time for us to share some of what brings us to this work and why we feel it is important work in which to be involved. We have found that the expression of the instructor's passion about and commitment to these issues often serves as a point of inspiration for the students.

A major topic to be addressed with all students is the policy that the class will be **semi-anonymous** (first names only are used) and **confidential** (what is said in class is not to be repeated outside of class, at least not in any way that can identify the speaker). This policy is meant to protect the privacy and safety of both the inside and outside students. (See more on this policy in the section, "Rules, Parameters, and Boundaries of the Inside-Out Program.") Two things that we do not want to happen are:

- For inside students to look up outside students after their release, or vice versa. Even if nothing bad happened, the risk of that possibility would probably be enough to shut down the program. And we can be sure that, if such contact occurred and a relationship developed between former students, someone in the system would find out about it, probably sooner rather than later.
- For outside students to be subpoenaed to testify against inside students based on something they have shared in class, or for outside students to try to find out information on the charges for which any of the inside students are being held.

Outside Students

For outside students, a large part of the first session involves introductions and other activities designed to explore some of the attitudes they are bringing to the class. Typical outside student concerns that emerge during the first class session include:

- Questions regarding what the prison will be like.
- Curiosity about the crimes for which the inside students are serving sentences. **It is extremely important that we make clear that finding out about people’s criminal histories IS NOT the purpose of the class and is not appropriate (even though some inside students may voluntarily choose to disclose this information, though we ask them to avoid doing so).** It may be helpful for us to share general statistical information for the particular correctional institution regarding demographics, convictions, sentence length, etc.

Points that we must be sure to convey and have a conversation about with the students in this first session include:

- That the success of the class is based on building a peer relationship between inside and outside students. The inside students are not objects of study or people we are “helping.” They are students who, like every student, are bringing their own experiences and perspectives to the classroom.
- That this relationship has very clear boundaries (for specifics, see “Rules, Parameters, and Boundaries of the Inside-Out Program”), and these boundaries **must** be respected for the safety of outside and inside students alike, as well as for the protection of the Inside-Out program.

It may be worthwhile to acknowledge that students might find themselves feeling attracted to each other or wanting to develop friendships. While these feelings are quite normal, these relationships **cannot** be pursued. Any involvement would jeopardize the program for everyone, including the countless students who might be denied the opportunity to participate in the future. (See “Class Composition and Student Interactions.”)

- That the rules of the institution **must** be followed and respected at all times.



Inside Students

Typical inside student issues that emerge during the first class session include:

- The concern that they will be inadequate in comparison to the “really smart” outside students with whom they will be studying.
- The concern that they will be judged by the outside students.
- The concern that they will be asked to disclose their charges or conviction. **We must make it very clear that they will NOT be asked to disclose this information, and that, in fact, they are encouraged not to, in general, and certainly if they still have open charges against them or a case that is still active.**
- The concern that they will be objects of study rather than equal participants in the classroom experience.

“My world views and thought process has changed dramatically. I have thrown out the labels that are placed on people and have grown to understand that everyone comes from a different context and background.”

The points that the instructor must be sure to convey in this first session parallel those for outside students, listed above. (For specifics, see “Rules, Parameters, and Boundaries of the Inside-Out Program” and “Class Composition and Student Interactions.”)

Third Class Session

This session, occurring after the two groups have come together for the first time (which happens during the second week), is a chance for inside and outside students to reflect back on the sometimes complicated feelings, questions, and concerns that arose during the previous week’s class.

“It is one thing to discuss issues of criminal justice with other prisoners, but the expansion of one’s ideas, beliefs, and concepts are better challenged and stimulated by those who are outside of the process.”

One issue we must be sure to address in this debriefing with both the inside and outside students is to **check to be sure if any of the students know one another or have had any prior relationship outside of prison**. Not only does a previous relationship undermine the semi-anonymity and confidentiality of the class, it also is a **huge** red flag for corrections administrators and, if not disclosed, could result in the outside student being

banned from the prison permanently, the inside student getting in trouble with the administration, and the program being jeopardized. Depending on the type or degree of relationship, it is then best for the instructor to talk with the prison liaison about the situation and subsequently encourage either the inside or outside student to withdraw from the class.

Outside Students

Typical issues, thoughts, and comments expressed by the outside students include:

- That the inside students seem much smarter than they thought they would be.
- A new awareness of some of the issues the inside students face in their lives.
- An awareness of the racial / ethnic makeup of the prison.

Inside Students

Typical issues, thoughts, and comments expressed by the inside students include:

- College students seem more normal than they expected and seem to care about issues related to incarceration.
- They didn't know learning could be so much fun.
- That the class was like an oasis for them, in that the time went quickly, and that they didn't feel as if they were in prison for a brief period.

"This whole experience has had an enormous effect on me. The issues that were addressed in class seeped into every inch of my being. The issues have consistently reinforced my desire and need to work for social justice."

Final Class Session

This last session is an opportunity for each group to look back on the semester and to reflect on an experience that many students will have found transformative. This session is extremely informative and useful to hear how the course measured up to the students' original expectations, what surprised



them, what they learned about themselves, about communication, and about other people, what stereotypes and assumptions were challenged, and how they want to use what they've learned in the rest of their lives.

Outside Students

Typical thoughts that outside students express include:

- They have come to appreciate more deeply what they have in their lives in terms of family, school, and resources.
- They recognize that they are much more similar to the inside students than they are different from them.
- The recognition of some of the problems that are part of the criminal justice system.
- A sense of empowerment and recognition of themselves as potential agents of change in addressing these and other problems.
- A realization that, because they now know people who are affected by the system, these issues are no longer purely theoretical for them.



Inside Students

Typical thoughts that inside students express include:

- They didn't realize they were so smart themselves.
- An interest in further education.
- How disturbing it was to recognize themselves in some of the texts. Sometimes inside students see themselves in the statistics or in the stories of others, and they feel uncomfortable because it hits so close to home. These are moments that need to be addressed with great sensitivity. However, if this kind of recognition happens, then one goal of the class has been met: for inside students to be able to take their individual experience and put it in a larger framework.
- If the inside students are men, the issue of what it was like to be in class with women often emerges, highlighting the different and sometimes liberating gender dynamics that ensued over the semester.

“My brain never stopped processing information as each student was able to add a piece to the steadily growing mosaic. For me, this is what a college class is all about. I left class with my mind racing to place all of the pieces discussed into their proper places.”

The Group Project

The first semester that Inside-Out was taught with women in the Philadelphia county jail system, the instructor learned that the city was in the process of designing and building a new women's prison. As it seemed like an interesting "teachable moment," a group project was incorporated into the final few weeks of the semester, offering the class an opportunity to explore the issues laid out in the curriculum in a very particular, focused way. The group was assigned the project of designing their own "ideal correctional facility for women," which would cover everything: administration, programming, policies, management, security, as well as the actual physical design of the prison.

"I think our class did more than just think of a group project. We actually created a way to make a change together."

In five subgroups, students developed their particular areas, and then reported back to the whole group on what they had created. The small groups essentially did the "pre-thinking" for the larger group, providing a set of solid starting points for discussion about each specific area. Over a period of two or three class meetings, the group as a whole then moved towards consensus on the final plans for the correctional facility.



Every semester, we work on a project of this sort, but the very first semester that we did the project stands out for a particular reason. That semester, the class had completed everything but the physical design – and it was the last day of class. The instructor asked if anyone had an idea for a stepping-off point, and one of the inside students came up, took the chalk, and proceeded to sketch a design of the ideal correctional facility. As she created the design, she talked the class through the process, explaining each piece of it in detail.

It was a powerful experience for the instructor and a pivotal moment for the student, who had had a strong artistic interest as a child, but who had put that part of her life on hold when she became involved in a lifestyle of addiction for more than a decade. Since then, that student achieved an associate's degree from Community College of Philadelphia and a bachelor's degree from Temple University in Art Education.

The report that the class completed that semester was submitted to the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners of the Philadelphia Prison System. In fact, a report is produced each semester, focused on one issue or another, and submitted to the administration. There is no way of knowing if these reports have had any impact. It is our hope that they have been – and will continue to be – read and considered with the seriousness that they deserve.

Having the inside and outside students work together to complete a project of this kind is an integral part of Inside-Out. Some of the reasons include the following:

- Given that some of the conversation in class will be about analyses and critiques of various systems, it is important to respond to those critiques in a productive, constructive, proactive way, so that the students take from the class the recognition that they can make a difference in the world.
- The act of working on and completing the project illustrates the power and possibilities for cooperation and collaboration involving people inside and outside of the prison.
- The project moves the Inside-Out conversation from theory to application in the real world.

Ideally, as in the example above, the project can be developed into a semi-professional report for submission to the appropriate administrators. (See The Inside-Out Curriculum for examples of these reports.)



One of the challenges of the project is for it to be conducted in a truly collaborative way. As previously described, portions of the project are worked on by different subgroups and then brought to the full class for further consideration. As with any collaborative process, students are challenged to not hold on too tightly to – or be too territorial about – their ideas, for the good of the whole.

“After this course, I realize fully that my theoretical knowledge is only as good as what I do with it. The struggle for me is often frustrating – seeing injustice, trying to change things, sometimes failing and wondering whether anything I can do will make a real difference in people’s lives. This course did not eliminate my frustrations. It intensified them. It forced me to look closely at things I may never be able to change. But in facing that, I was able to move past my frustration, to clarify my interests and abilities, and to imagine different ways of being and moving and speaking this world.”

It is important to get a student volunteer to compile the final project into a report that can be copied and distributed at the closing ceremony. Usually, for logistical reasons (i.e. access to e-mail), an outside student performs this task, and then speaks briefly at the closing ceremony, giving an overall explanation of the project to the guests. Whether it is an inside or outside student, the individual can then be compensated for the effort by having to do one fewer paper for the class.

The Final Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony, which is held during the next to the last class of the semester, is an opportunity for participants to celebrate the conclusion of their semester and for correctional and academic officials to recognize their achievement. This event can be as creative as the instructor and group want to make it. (For much more detail about the Closing Ceremony, see The Inside-Out Curriculum.)

The ceremony occurs in two parts. First, there is an open ceremony, in which prison and college/university administrators speak, along with the instructor and, most importantly, a representative student from the inside and one from the outside. Afterwards, in the second part of the ceremony, a final exercise is held for only the class and the instructor, during which the students achieve a sense of closure and bid each other farewell. Assuming a two-hour time frame, each portion of the ceremony would take about an hour.



Advance Preparation

Like everything else connected to teaching a class in prison, close attention to details and logistics is necessary in order to have a successful closing ceremony. The summary below is explained in detail in the checklist that is part of The Inside-Out Curriculum. We need to:

1. Secure a room in advance; we cannot always assume that the closing ceremony will take place in our regular classroom, as appropriate space may be an issue.
2. Find out in advance if the prison will allow food to be served and what needs to be in place for that to happen.
3. Create and copy the program of events.
4. Invite guests approximately six weeks in advance, request RSVPs, and remind guests the week before the ceremony.
5. Ask guests to speak, making sure they have a good sense of the reason for the ceremony, so that their remarks will be appropriate.
6. Assign students the tasks necessary to produce the class reflection booklet, giving them sufficient time to complete it.

7. Design, print, fill out, and sign all certificates, making sure to have the correct spelling of everyone's name.
8. Assign students the tasks necessary to produce the final report, giving them sufficient time to complete it.
9. Prepare closing comments prior to the ceremony.
10. Involve the students in choosing their inside and outside student speakers ahead of time. The inside students choose a representative to speak for them, as do the outside students. They can decide what process they would like to use in choosing their speakers. Often, the easiest and most democratic approach is through a simple majority vote.

Part 1: Open Ceremony

It is important for both continuity and symbolism to conduct this ceremony in the same circle format as the class was conducted throughout the semester. Everyone – including the guest speakers, the student speakers, and the instructor – needs to keep remarks to 3-5 minutes. Background music is always a wonderful addition, as are creative expressions (poetry, art, original music, spoken word) offered by the students.

“Those tears, that laughter...you...will resonate with us for a very long time. You are imprinted on our hearts and you have already begun to reshape our lives. We don't yet know the form that reshaping will take, and we can only guess at the indelibility of the imprint. But we do know, that when we go outside today, you will be inside us. That takes a bit of the edge from the sadness of leaving you.”

Part 2: Closed Ceremony

After the first part of the closing ceremony is over and the guests have left, the students and the instructor conduct their own closure exercise.



It is important for us to name the emotional impact of the end of the class. It is always a difficult experience. The students as individuals and the class as a whole have created bonds, and the inside and outside students will not see one another again. Bringing this reality up is a way of both helping students process their feelings and reiterating the importance of this rule. In addition, during this session, the instructor needs to remain alert to make sure that people are not exchanging contact information.

A typical closing exercise is simple yet moving. What often works well is simply to go around the circle, asking each student to answer a question like: “What will you take into your life from this experience?” The responses consistently illustrate the transformative power of this experience – on many levels – in the lives of those who have participated.

Here are some examples:

“This was only the beginning of a journey of self-exploration and self-realization.”

“Walking out of that place every week was hard. It was hard because that was the moment that forced me to face the fact that not all of us were allowed to leave. ...If prison were anything other than [what] it is, it would be a lot less traumatic to walk out that door and leave someone behind it.”

“I have learned so much about so many different issues, including everyday life. This class has been more than ‘just a class.’ It was [a] process of getting to know and understand the issues that so many [people] have to deal with every day of their lives. It was also a process of getting to know myself and realizing who and what I am.”

“One of the things I felt leaving the group this past week was one of passion, the need to know more. Like the why’s and the how’s. Why are we as a society going in the direction that we are and how did we get on this track?”

“While I... like the intellectual and ideological discussions, it is the emotional payoff that I value most. Buried in prison, I sometimes forget how kind, compassionate, funny, and loving people can be. This class is a reminder of what I need to remember most.”

“Every week I get more frustrated. ... I am ready to act. I tell as many people whose ear I can catch about the prison. ... I expected to become frustrated and I actually looked forward to it. What I did not fully expect was how heightened my awareness would become. ... I feel like everyone should be able to see what I see. I guess this increased sensitivity is the best thing that could have ever happened to me.”

“...This class was not like anything I had experienced before. I did learn quite a bit, but it was the ‘interpersonal stuff’ that I valued the most. I really feel like I connected with people, on a human level. What a change it is to be treated with kindness and respect. I was made to feel valued and worthy of compassion. My classmates not only wanted to hear what I had to say, but trusted me enough to share of themselves.”

“...The group has reaffirmed my hope in humanity and our society a little. ...I will walk away from this experience with the gift of hope, something that got lost along the way in this place.”

“As I am interviewing for positions in the criminal justice system, I cannot help but to think of my former classmates and how the decisions I make may have a profound effect on their lives.”

Taking Inside-Out Further

The Inside-Out experience is often so inspirational that participants want to extend its effect by working on projects that flow from the class discussions. The Graterford Think Tank, described briefly below, was the first major initiative of this kind. Since its inception, dozens of other think tanks have been created throughout the Inside-Out network, all with the desire to continue the work that was started in the class.

Think Tanks

During Summer 2002, approximately 18 students (both undergraduate and graduate) from Temple traveled to Graterford Prison each Friday to have class with a group of men incarcerated there. Due to the depth of the experience and the commitment of all of those involved, the combined group created a project focused on public re-education about crime and justice issues that had multiple dimensions. This “extension” project, as it was originally called, was not an academic exercise developed for the course, and had the potential to be long lasting. Indeed, the group – named the Graterford think Tank – has continued to meet weekly since that time. It

was the experience of the Think Tank that inspired the idea of approaching the Soros Foundation for a fellowship to develop Inside-Out into a nationally replicable program. The Think Tank has been fully involved with The Inside-Out National (now International) Training Institute from the very beginning.

Think Tanks are groups of Inside-Out alumni (both incarcerated and non-incarcerated) and/or trained faculty who meet regularly on a volunteer basis at a correctional facility. The groups form organically, based on local interests and initiatives, and are a testament to the civic engagement, human connection, and sense of agency that Inside-Out courses inspire.

“Inside-Out is one of the richest experiences I have had in my life. ...This class is not just a course at Temple or simply three credits and a grade. This is my life and the lives of others. Inside-Out does not stop here. I am ready to forge onward, and make my contributions to the reform of the criminal justice system.”

“...With enlightenment comes responsibility. We are all responsible. What is the next step after all this dialogue is done?”

To date, there are dozens of Think Tank groups internationally. Think Tanks operate with the Inside-Out model, which facilitates learning via community building across social difference. Think Tanks develop their own projects, which may include leadership development, re-entry programs, training Inside-Out faculty, or community workshops on topics such as restorative justice, conflict resolution, and racial inequality.

As an example, the following describes the mission and current projects of the Graterford Think Tank:

The goal of the Inside-Out Think Tank at Graterford is to elevate public awareness about issues of crime and justice. Participants in the Think Tank – men incarcerated in Graterford and outside community members – have combined their respective life experiences, knowledge, and insights about crime, prison, victimization, and justice to create a dynamic within which these issues can be explored. Through a collaborative, multidimensional approach, the Think Tank aims to deepen the conversation – and transform ways of thinking – about issues of crime and justice and their impact on society as a whole.

Activities include:

- *Theme-based workshops offered to community representatives, public officials, neighborhood organizations, and students, faculty, and staff from area colleges and universities. Thousands of individuals have attended these workshops since they were initiated in 2003.*
- *A series of mural projects in partnership with the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, SCI-Graterford artists, victims and victims' advocates, and community representatives. The theme of this set of murals is "Healing Walls."*
- *Refinement of the core Inside-Out curriculum and development of the training program for international replication of the approach. The Think Tank serves as an integral part of the training process, providing support, insight, and encouragement to instructors during the international training institute.*



Securing and Expanding the Inside-Out Program

Stakeholders

Developing an Inside-Out program requires working with various stakeholders who know nothing about Inside-Out and may question its purpose. In order to communicate effectively with them and as part of a course development process, we may want to think through the short, medium, and long-term benefits of Inside-Out to various stakeholders.

We believe Inside-Out can affect the following stakeholders below because the program:

- **For Outside Students:** Provides an opportunity to contextualize and rethink what they have learned in the classroom about incarcerated men and women, and provides a learning experience that will help them become more critical, analytical thinkers, inspiring them to make a difference in their chosen fields.
- **For Inside Students:** Provides an exciting learning opportunity that will inspire greater educational and personal ambitions; affords an opportunity to recognize their capacity as agents of change in their own lives and in the broader community; and offers support in taking a step towards building positive lives outside prison, thereby avoiding a return to incarceration.
- **For Instructors:** Develops skills in experiential pedagogy and in working with non-traditional students; enhances the provision of transformative education opportunities in prison as well as in other contexts; provides the opportunity to contextualize and rethink theory in a “real world” environment; creates an opportunity to have an impact on one’s discipline as students go out into the world; deepens the sense of one’s own change agency through connecting theory to the real world; and offers a framework for more deeply understanding one’s academic field of expertise.
- **For Colleges and Universities:** Provides an experiential learning opportunity for students while also providing a chance for involvement in the community; affords faculty an opportunity to develop skills in alternative pedagogical approaches; expands and deepens the college or university’s relationship to the community; enhances academic program offerings; and uses resources to bring greater benefits to the local community.

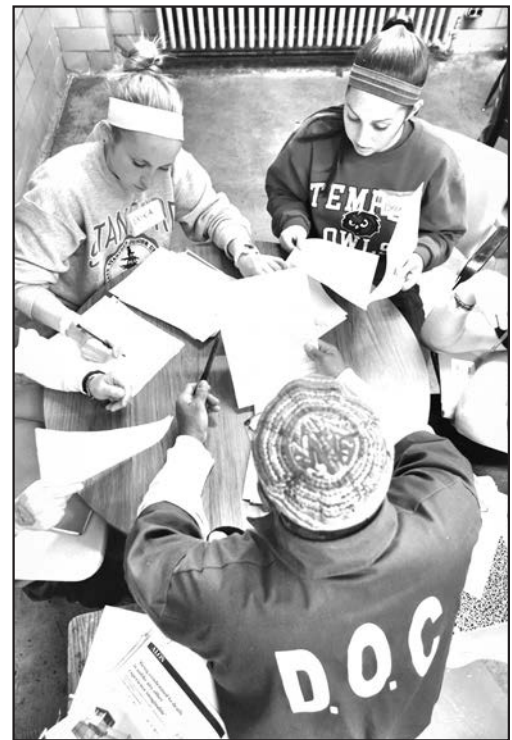


Photo by Ryan S. Brandenberg

- **For the Prison System:** Provides a quality, low cost educational and personal growth opportunity (as well as an effective management tool) to people who are incarcerated; improves prison safety for those incarcerated and corrections staff alike; strengthens the relationship with an institution of higher learning; increases the institution’s ability to make a difference in the lives of people in prison and enhance public safety; and increases prison access to educational resources, including current research and thinking on correctional issues.
- **For the Criminal Justice System:** Increases efficient and creative use of community resources to enhance the mission of rehabilitation; provides additional education and training for criminal justice professionals; encourages new criminal justice professionals to think outside the box; and helps to create a more humane, just, and restorative criminal justice system.
- **For Community Organizations:** Provides valuable partnerships and expertise in the criminal justice and associated fields and can build trust and relationships with corrections facilities and staff.
- **For Society at Large:** Deepens the conversation – and transforms ways of thinking – about issues of crime and justice.

Developing Support on Campus for an Inside-Out Program

There are a number of ways for us to garner support for starting an Inside-Out program on a college or university campus. The approach we take will be influenced by a host of factors, including the size of the institution, the kind of institution (e.g. community college, four-year liberal arts college, research university), pre-existing courses that are offered featuring a hands-on pedagogical approach, the support that the instructor has from the home department, and the college or university’s level of interest in creative teaching initiatives.

“I look at this experience as something I could look back on years from now and say, ‘I was a part of it all.’ Both the process and the content were balanced to achieve the maximum effect. The program has enlightened me beyond what I thought was possible. I’ve learned more this year than I’ve learned in [my] seven years [in college].”

Inside-Out classes can be considered under the rubric of “experiential learning,” “service learning,” “community-based learning,” or a similar designation. Colleges and universities throughout the country are tremendously diverse in terms of how much “hands-on” education is offered in their curricula. At institutions with a more developed history of providing courses in this genre, the idea for an Inside-Out program should easily find the support that it needs. In settings with less experience in this approach to learning, it will be important to have a good amount of information about the program to share with faculty and administrators.



One way that we can think about offering an Inside-Out course for the first time is to present it as a class to be piloted for a semester, including a subsequent evaluation. Once the results of this assessment are determined (in whatever fashion makes sense in a particular setting), we may want to take the necessary steps toward institutionalizing the course.

An issue of concern that is raised sometimes with a pedagogical approach of this kind relates to the academic rigor of the course. This approach certainly represents a different kind of learning, as it incorporates hands-on experience and a tremendous amount of interaction. It is not the kind of course in which a “canon” of information is disseminated to the students. Rather, the course allows space for exploration, analysis, critique, and direct application of the issues under consideration.

Because of its interactive approach, students become invested in the issues to the extent that they become inspired to learn more – even beyond what is being presented.

Additionally, the courses that are offered through the Inside-Out program are very demanding in terms of the amount of reading required and the number and kinds of papers assigned. These reflection papers have multiple parts, including sections for reactions and observations, with the central focus on an analysis of the material from the prior week. Each paper requires students to incorporate the readings as part of their analysis. These courses are actually quite writing intensive.

Research about the efficacy of Inside-Out is in the process of development and will be made available through the Inside-Out network via the listserv in which those who have been trained take part. Information on the effectiveness of this approach on both inside and outside students will help in securing the support necessary to establish the program in new settings.

Given the nature of community-based learning, and the location of this learning activity in particular, institutions often want to have some form in place addressing liability. (See Appendix for a sample form.) It is also important to know that individuals going into prison for voluntary activities are usually covered by the prison’s insurance/liability policies.

Finally, it is helpful for us to develop a task force or advisory board that includes key faculty and administrators from our academic institutions. A group of this kind can assist not only in supporting the effort, but also in advising us about some of the issues and concerns related to the program.

Assessment and Evaluation

In many fields, increasing emphasis is being placed on designing programs based upon a strong theoretical foundation and then subjecting the programs to process and outcome evaluations. The more well known the Inside-Out program becomes, the more we will be asked to provide information documenting the efficacy of the program. We strongly recommend that the following tools for assessment be developed for new programs:

- The extent to which Inside-Out has been implemented as originally designed.
- Whether Inside-Out has achieved its goals and objectives in terms of benefiting inside and outside students, as well as other stakeholders.
- Whether there are ways of strengthening Inside-Out to better achieve its goals and objectives.

Inside-Out offers a simple evaluation instrument at the end of each semester (see Appendix for example) that is completed by both inside and outside students for the instructor's use. This evaluation asks students to rate the various aspects of the course and then offer written feedback in response to a few short questions.

Additionally, we have developed an instrument for us as instructors to complete at the end of each semester (see Appendix) to assist in our own self-evaluation. This instrument is fairly comprehensive and, we hope, will be helpful to us all in examining what and how we did over the course of the semester.

Carefully thinking through issues involved in evaluating the class could be very helpful. Truly thorough evaluations are expensive and rare, but at the very least, we recommend devising pre- and post-class questionnaires for students. We also are interested in collaborating with anyone interested in developing other instruments – both quantitative and qualitative. Additionally, as part of an ongoing international network, we would like to have instructors share the results of these evaluations with others involved in Inside-Out classes around the world.



Follow-Up Consultation / The International Network

As courses develop, questions may arise about the logistics of setting up programs. The Inside-Out Center is able to provide support, as well as an international network of instructors, to assist with these questions. Areas in which instructors may want the most support include:

- Developing positive relationships with correctional facilities
- Developing credibility within one's educational institution
- Pacing the class in a way that builds a sense of cohesion and keeps the class moving
- Ensuring the class is sufficiently academically challenging
- Handling students who bump up against the rules, either by excessively questioning them or disregarding them

In order to maintain the community we have created together in our training, we began an Inside-Out listserv after the first training in July 2004 so that instructors could exchange experiences, challenges, and creative ideas with one another.

Our newest initiative for instructor support is our new Inside-Out Resource Community. The Inside-Out Center is utilizing a learning management system known as Canvas to provide a resource collection, a discussion forum, and a collaborative workspace. Canvas is similar to Blackboard, Sakai and other learning management systems used by many universities and colleges. Once your training is complete, you will be invited to register for and enroll in this online community space. Within the online space, a select number of experienced instructors will be designated as mentors, who can help address some of your specific questions related to starting up and carrying out an Inside-Out class.

The Inside-Out Center makes every effort to provide spaces in which our global family of instructors can find support, encouragement, and the resources they need to facilitate transformative learning experiences for students on both sides of the prison walls.

"The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program ... provides what I've come to believe is an indispensable forum for members of the prison and outside communities to come together to teach and learn from one another about issues, concerns, and truths about crime, punishment, and the criminal justice system...I'm convinced more than ever of the potential for Inside-Out to become a life transforming experience for more than just a few of us."

Appendices

Instructor Contract

This agreement specifies the expectations and responsibilities of instructors who teach Inside-Out courses through The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program®. Fundamentally, instructors are expected to uphold the core values of the program by:

- Furthering equality and respect between and among inside and outside students;
- Following the principle of “do no harm” in all Inside-Out activities and protecting all participants’ rights, safety, and dignity;
- Assuring the primary purpose of Inside-Out as an education program that promotes an open, fair, and engaging learning environment;
- Helping all participants recognize their capacity as ethical actors and change agents.

Additionally, instructors agree to adhere to the following essential criteria that constitute an Inside-Out course:

- The course will be oriented toward dialogue in a seminar style, rather than a lecture format;
- The instructor will strive for something close to an equal number of inside and outside students, for the sake of balance in the classroom;
- The instructor will strive for equal course requirements for all students;
- Both academic and experiential knowledge will be respected and deployed in class work and discussion;
- Assignments and in-class protocol will encourage collaborative learning and teamwork skills;
- Assignments and in-class protocol will encourage self-awareness through ethical reflection.

Specifically, the instructor agrees to abide by the following:

1. Instructors will disseminate the Student Contract and conduct the class in such a way that all participants respect the student contract rules. The program’s continuity is always more important than personal contact between participating individuals
2. Instructors will, themselves, follow all applicable rules of the Student Contract and respect the privacy and safety of all of their students.

3. Instructors will act fairly toward all participants. A person's point of view, their status as an inside or outside student, their race, color, creed, or any other factor, will not interfere with this commitment to fairness.
4. Instructors are obligated to respect the rules of both their academic institution and the correctional institution hosting the class and are entrusted not to jeopardize the Inside-Out program by failing to work within parameters set by these institutions or by the Inside-Out program.
5. Instructors may modify the student contract, curriculum, and procedures of the Inside-Out program as appropriate, but always consistent with the core values, as reflected in the Inside-Out Training Institute and Instructor's Manual.
6. If difficult challenges arise in the course of conducting a class, the instructor will seek advice through Inside-Out channels, with the understanding that representatives of the program will be available to provide assistance.
7. Instructors will avoid treating students, prison officials, and all program participants in ways that promote particular labels and/or impose stereotypes.
8. Instructors will cooperate with requests for information and communication with The Inside-Out Center and regional "hub" leaders. Instructors may be asked to provide a copy of their syllabus to their hub leader and participate in hub-wide conference calls or meetings. Instructors will respond to annual surveys and be open to participating in Inside-Out instructor peer support and mentoring within their particular hub.
9. As scholars, Inside-Out instructors are welcome to engage in research about the program (e.g. regarding courses, think tanks, curricula, etc.) with appropriate Internal Review Board approvals from participating institutions. We ask that any research efforts be consistent with Inside-Out pedagogy and therefore not intrusive to the learning process. Please refer to "Perspectives on Ethical Inquiry" on The Inside-Out Center website (under Research) for more information. Additionally, the Inside-Out Evaluation and Research Committee is available as a resource regarding scholarly inquiry about the program; contact the Center for assistance. For the purpose of disseminating to our network, please share publication information with The Inside-Out Center.
10. Publications, presentations, and correspondence stemming from the instructor's Inside-Out courses will include proper citation of The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program®.
11. The materials developed for The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program® are copyrighted and meant for the exclusive and sole use of instructors who will be teaching classes under the umbrella of the Inside-Out program. Use of these materials for any other purpose, without prior written permission from The Inside-Out Center, constitutes copyright infringement. These materials include the Instructor's Manual, the Inside-Out Curriculum, the Inside-Out Website, and the Inside-Out Training Curriculum, including all attendant handouts and materials.

The Inside-Out Center will support the instructor and the mission of the program by:

1. Responding to instructors' inquiries and providing support through the Center and the state coordinator structure. Support includes: providing a listserv for network-wide communication; connecting new instructors with other trained instructors in their state as well as others in the network in the same discipline (upon request); providing access to an online resource of course syllabi, reading lists, group project ideas, etc. (to be available early 2017).
2. Collecting information about Inside-Out courses and other program activities and making this information available to instructors.
3. Contacting an instructor if concerns should arise about his or her failure to meet expectations, in an attempt to clarify or resolve these concerns.
 - a. In the event that there is a dispute about the terms and compliance with instructor expectations, the Inside-Out Center will take appropriate action. Such action may include, upon the voluntary agreement of all parties, making a restorative justice circle available to resolve the matter.
 - b. The Inside-Out Center reserves the right to terminate program relations with any instructor. If termination occurs, the Center may notify both the participating correctional facility and the academic institution that The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program and The Inside-Out Center no longer has an affiliation with the instructor.

By my signature, I agree to the expectations outlined above:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____ School: _____

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program Policy on Non-Programmatic Contact

Q. If an Inside and Outside student develop a connection during their Inside-Out course, is it appropriate (and permissible) for them to exchange personal information and be in touch after the class, as they might with any other peer?

A. No.

Q. Why?

A. Two reasons.

Reason #1: DOC Ethics Policies for Staff and Volunteers

Corrections officials have a host of concerns to consider in running a prison safely for everybody. Clear rules help them do that. This is taken straight from a typical Department of Corrections (DOC) staff/volunteer handbook:

Employees: executive service, management service, classified, and unrepresented employees of the department, temporary employees, **volunteers** and contract service providers. (*Emphasis added.*)

Inmate/Offender: any person under the supervision of a federal, state, city or local correctional agency who is **in custody or on parole, post-prison supervision or probation status.** (*Emphasis added.*)

Relationships with Inmates/Offenders: ...All employees shall confine their relationships with inmates/offenders, or their family and friends, to those activities which are within the scope of the employee's duties. – Oregon DOC Code of Conduct (*Emphasis added.*)

Does it seem strange to define “volunteers” as “employees?” Does it seem strange to categorize outside students as “volunteers?”

In general, there are two categories of outside people permitted in prison, “employees/volunteers” and “friends/family.” A key difference: **Friends/family do not go past the visiting room.**

The DOC almost always categorizes outside students as volunteers in order to make Inside-Out possible under their rules. That's because decision-makers at the DOC think Inside-Out is important and want it to happen.

But outside students are not volunteers, are they?

Not really, from Inside-Out's point of view. The program considers outside students as peers – with the inside students – in an academic learning experience.

But, for the DOC, the designation is necessary and has real ramifications. You need to be willing to live with that. If you can't, Inside-Out is not for you.

If a person violates this contact rule, it is considered by most if not all prisons to be a security concern. If Inside-Out causes a security concern, the institution may decide to stop hosting it. If one institution stops hosting the class due to security concerns, others may join them. And if this happens, it could be the end of a program that has touched and inspired tens of thousands of people, and has the potential to reach thousands more. Do you want to be that person?

Most times, the Inside-Out contact rule parallels prison rules regarding approved contact with volunteers coming in from the outside. It is important for instructors and students (inside and outside) to know the actual rules of the facility as well as Inside-Out policy. Often, even if the contact rule isn't already a formal rule of a correctional facility, it is nonetheless key to the administration agreeing to allow Inside-Out to take place. *Regardless of rule variations from one correctional facility to another, the Inside-Out contact rule stands for all students.*

Reason #2: Leadership

Because of prison volunteer contact restrictions, any person found by the prison to have violated the rule on non-programmatic contact will likely face a sanction.

For inside folks, this could include going to the "hole" or transfer to a different prison. For people on parole, it could mean re-incarceration.

For outside folks, it could mean being permanently barred from that specific prison or that whole prison system. It could mean additional sanctions from the college or university. Depending on the seriousness of the violation, it could affect graduation, transcribing, and recommendations for further schooling or employment.

In either case, the person's ability to develop their leadership abilities through Inside-Out and related programs can be seriously compromised.

This sounds like an appeal to self-interest. It's not. Inside-Out's mission is, in part, to nurture future leaders who will help their (inside or outside) communities develop creative approaches to crime, justice, and social change.

Inside-Out exists as it does because many, many specific incarcerated people and people from outside have worked hard for decades to make a difference without being personally in touch. You would not be here without them.

Looking ahead, who knows what change you might be part of in 10, 20, or 30 years?

If you care about justice issues, please preserve your credibility, your reputation, and your colleagues' trust in your ability to follow ethics guidelines, so that you can play a leadership role in the future.

Q. So what does this policy mean in practical terms?

As long as a student is incarcerated or under criminal justice supervision (e.g. on parole), s/he and his/her outside classmates may not independently:

- Exchange last names or personal contact information.
- Correspond via snail mail or (where available) e-mail during or after the duration of the course.
- Communicate by telephone or through visits during or after the duration of the course.
- “Friend” one another on social networking sites such as Facebook.

Q. What IS allowed?

With the approval of your instructor, education manager, or Inside-Out supervisor, participation in prison or community-based Inside-Out-sponsored events, programs, and related efforts is permitted.

Q. What if I see a classmate on the street, and one of us may be under CJ supervision?

If you're happy to see them, be happy. If you are interested in being involved in any Inside-Out projects, perhaps you will have the opportunity to collaborate. Chance encounters don't inherently break the contact rule, but continued relationships outside of programmatic involvement do.

Q. What if coincidentally we join the same church or get jobs at the same place?

If you are on CJ supervision, protect yourself by letting your parole officer know. If you were an outside student, let your instructor know. This has happened – in fact, former classmates have been employed together at The Inside-Out Center itself.

Q. What if, after completing an Inside-Out course, I am ethically opposed to this policy?

Talk to your instructor, an Inside-Out staff person, or the prison education manager about it. If you have an idea for a better approach, one consistent with DOC policy that will protect the program, put it in writing, and send it to Inside-Out. We will read and consider any good faith suggestion.

Q. What if I am asked something that I think violates the policy, but I'm not sure if it does or I don't want to be rude?

You could say, "I'd like to check with the instructor about this. I don't want to jeopardize the program or get either of us in trouble." If the request is not legitimate, the person will probably drop it.

But some things are on the line and are judgment calls, so if you're in doubt, it's worth asking. A typical example: An outside student may have a copy of an article relevant to class that s/he has offered to give an inside student. But the inside student is worried about violating the policy against accepting things carried into prison. If the inside student accepts the document, it could become a problem. But if the students ask the instructor about it and the instructor agrees the article is valuable, the instructor will probably find an institutionally acceptable way to make it available to the inside student.

Q. What if I am, for some reason, absolutely committed to being in touch with a particular person while one of us is still under criminal justice supervision?

If you're committed enough to jeopardize the program, and to accept the potential personal consequences that could result for you or someone else, then be committed enough to talk to the instructor, the Inside-Out staff, and the education manager first, so they can encourage you to reconsider or at least try to find a way to proceed that causes the least damage to the program and the individuals involved.

In closing...

Just to be crystal clear, the policy detailed here applies only if and while one classmate is incarcerated or under criminal justice supervision (i.e. incarcerated or on parole).

We encourage you to think of your classmates as colleagues, and to think of your potential working relationships stretching into the future. If you follow these ethics policies, and you continue to educate yourself and develop yourself as a leader through Inside-Out and/or other programs and involve yourself in activities promoting education and justice in your communities, inside and outside of prison, you may well find opportunities for continued collaboration down the road.

Guidelines re: Media and Inside-Out

Any time Inside-Out is in the media, we want to emphasize that it is part of a growing international program that has been in existence since 1997. We want to avoid the impression that the particular course being written about is a local or one-time phenomenon. This is important for a couple of reasons. First, it helps to shield both the college/university and the correctional system from the potential accusation that it is doing something risky or inappropriate. In the bigger picture, we want to present Inside-Out as the leading edge of a movement that is now international in scope, which aims to broaden and deepen the way we think about crime, justice, and social issues.

Press releases, interviews, etc. need to be limited to **local press only (including colleges/universities)**. **Any contact with international, national, or sizable regional media outlets must be referred to The Inside-Out Center.** There are many thorny issues regarding widespread coverage, and we need a well-developed strategy that emanates from the Inside-Out central office. ***The last thing we want is for widespread and/or inaccurate coverage of Inside-Out to threaten its continuation – which could happen, given the fragile nature of the program.*** National or international coverage has potential hazards, including reactions from victims or victims' groups, misrepresentation of the program, or a possible deluge of responses that could overwhelm our infrastructure. Whatever we do needs to be **very** carefully crafted.

Information to include in press releases, interviews, etc.:

1. Background information: Founded by Lori Pompa in 1997, through Temple University, based on the suggestion of a gentleman, Paul Perry, who was incarcerated at SCI-Dallas. National (now, international) replication has been ongoing since Summer 2004, with 52 trainings (as of 2/18).
2. Replication information: Number of professors (627), colleges (250+), 45 states and 10 countries, courses-to-date (app. 650), students-to-date (over 30,000), etc. We are working to keep this information updated.
3. If multiple colleges/universities in a state are participating in Inside-Out, they all must be named.
4. Discuss impact of program both on outside and inside students. Please attempt to avoid labeling language (e.g. words like “inmate,” “prisoner,” “convict,” “criminal,” etc.) and ask the reporter to do so, as well.
5. Name the participating prison system and offer a representative or administrator the chance to comment. Also, in press releases or interviews, talk about the approval process, what it involved, and why the program seemed valuable to the prison / prison system.
6. Include information on how to contact The Inside-Out Center (insideout@temple.edu or 215-204-5163). It is recommended that Lori Pompa, the Founder and Executive Director, speak with the reporter to provide context as well as to fact check (lpompa@temple.edu). Please ask the reporter to include the link to the Inside-Out website in any online version of the article (www.insideoutcenter.org).

Procedure to follow:

1. Please let The Inside-Out Center know if you are planning on sending out a press release or **if you have been contacted by the media.**
2. Let any other instructors in your state know.
3. Check in, not only with the press people at the Department of Corrections (if your class is in a state institution), but with the highest level person who was involved in approving the program. You need to make sure that you are giving them the opportunity to frame the program in a way that does not cause problems for them. Allow your DOC contacts to see what you are sending out in advance.

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program®

Perspectives on Ethical Inquiry

Produced by the Inside-Out Center's Evaluation and Research Committee

Leading the conversation about program evaluation and research concerning the people and organizations involved with transformative, higher education in correctional facilities.

October, 2017

Open Letter from the Inside-Out Evaluation and Research Committee

To the Evaluation and Research Community:

The following document was created by The Inside-Out Center's Evaluation and Research Committee. Committee members include trained Inside-Out instructors who represent numerous social and behavioral science disciplines and have substantial evaluation and research expertise, as well as staff from The Inside-Out Center.

Perspectives on Ethical Inquiry is intended to be a resource for people who seek to engage in research about or with the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. This document may be helpful for Inside-Out instructors who are approached by others who propose to study or evaluate aspects of their Inside-Out courses, students, or host institutions. *Perspectives* is also intended to summarize the Center's perspective for experienced instructors who wish to evaluate some aspect of the Inside-Out teaching, learning, or hosting experiences.

In the following pages, we open with the mission statement of the Inside-Out Evaluation & Research Committee, provide a summary of the committee history, and discuss ways in which existing Human Subjects requirements—foundational to the Belmont Report—are infused with enhanced meaning in the context of program evaluation and research on the Inside-Out Program.

Thank you for taking time to consider *Perspectives* in the context of your preparation for teaching or inquiry on Inside-Out. We believe that the philosophy underlying the Inside-Out pedagogy has much to offer proposals that assess this program, as well as the impacts on the contexts where it takes place and/or the people who participate in it. If you have questions, would like information about prior program evaluation and research, or would like to be put in touch with a member of the Evaluation and Research Committee, please contact David Krueger, the Center Liaison for the Evaluation and Research Committee, insideout@temple.edu, 215-204-5163, 1938 Liacouras Walk, MB 299-06, Suite 301, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA).

Sincerely,

The Inside-Out Evaluation and Research Committee 2018-2019

Sarah Allred (Berry College)
Nina Johnson (Swarthmore College)
David M. Krueger (The Inside-Out Center Liaison)
Jim Nolan (West Virginia University)
Michelle Ronda (Borough of Manhattan Community College)
Ernest Quimby (Howard University)
Jerry Stahler (Temple University)
Barb Toews (University of Washington Tacoma)

Executive Summary

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program® creates a dynamic partnership between institutions of higher learning and correctional systems in order to deepen the conversation about, and transform our approaches to understanding crime, justice, freedom, inequality, and other issues of social concern. The Program brings college students and other non-incarcerated people together with incarcerated people to study as peers in a seminar behind prison walls. The core of the Inside-Out Program is a semester-long academic course, meeting once a week, through which 15 to 18 “outside” students and the same number of “inside” students attend class together inside prison. All participants read a variety of texts and write several papers; during class sessions, students discuss issues in small and large groups. In the final month of the class, students typically work together on a class project. Many stakeholders—from higher education faculty, to corrections professionals, to funders—are interested in gathering evidence of the impact of Inside-Out programs on participants. We offer this set of perspectives on research and evaluation of Inside-Out in the spirit of encouraging ethical inquiry into this work.

The Evaluation and Research Committee of the Inside-Out Center was asked to craft a perspective on program evaluation and research that reflects the mission, vision, and spirit of the Inside-Out education experience. The purpose of this type of learning is to study together in a manner that enables participants to encounter each other, especially across social barriers, as collaborative learners, and to facilitate meaningful reflection and deep learning. Inside-Out courses are designed to create transformative learning opportunities that emphasize dialogue and invite participants to take leadership in addressing crime, justice, and other issues of concern. From this base, the Evaluation and Research Committee offers this document as a means to help frame how program evaluation and research can echo the core features of the Inside-Out program.

The perspectives shared in this document align fully with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations designed to establish basic protections for all human research participants, and specifically those pertinent to program evaluation or research involving people who are incarcerated (45 CFR Part 46, Subpart C). In addition, these perspectives are intended to elevate the spirit of the Inside-Out mission and vision for those who propose program evaluation or research on Inside-Out. In offering these perspectives, we hope that the essential preparations for program evaluation or research—training in research with human participants, Inside-Out instructor training, along with a firm grasp of the Inside-Out mission and vision—culminate in protocol that exceed human subjects

requirements in ways that honor the general issues raised here. Thus, *Perspectives* is offered less as a practical or instructional guideline for inquiry, but more so as a general call to evaluators/researchers to be mindful of how they approach the endeavor of researching and evaluating Inside-Out and other higher education programs where participants include people who are incarcerated.

Program evaluation and research pursued in the spirit of the *Perspectives* will contain a variety of specific features, but taken together, the Committee hopes such projects challenge traditional methodologies that may reflect destructive, existing oppressive power structures within academic and correctional institutions.

Introduction

Mission Statement of the Inside-Out Evaluation and Research Committee

The Evaluation and Research Committee has three interrelated goals. Taken together, these represent the mission of the Committee:

- To serve as an advisory body to The Inside-Out Center on the directions of and priorities for program evaluation and research;
- to serve as an advisory body to scholars interested in conducting program evaluation or research on Inside-Out (inquiries that come directly through The Inside-Out Center or through trained instructors); and
- to form working groups that will do project-oriented work that will assist in the committee's advisory role to the Center.

A Call to Deepen the Conversation about Program Evaluation and Research

The Evaluation and Research Committee was asked to craft a perspective on program evaluation and research that reflects the mission, vision, and spirit of the Inside-Out education experience. This learning experience is grounded in a pedagogy that brings people together, inside and outside of prison. The purpose of this type of learning is to study together in a manner that enables participants to encounter each other, especially across social barriers, as collaborative learners, and to facilitate meaningful reflection and deep learning. Inside-Out courses are designed to create transformative learning opportunities that emphasize dialogue and invite participants to take leadership in addressing crime, justice, and other issues of concern. From this base, the Evaluation and Research Committee offers this document as a means to help frame how program evaluation and research can echo the core features of the Inside-Out program.

The perspectives shared in this document align fully with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations designed to establish basic protections for all human research participants, and specifically those pertinent to program evaluation or research involving people who are incarcerated (45 CFR Part 46, Subpart C). In addition, these perspectives are intended to elevate the spirit of the Inside-Out mission and vision for those who propose program evaluation or research on Inside-Out. In offering these perspectives, we hope that the essential preparations for program evaluation or research—training in research with human participants, Inside-Out instructor training, along with a firm grasp of the Inside-Out mission and vision—culminate in protocol that exceed human subjects requirements in ways that honor the general issues raised here. Thus, *Perspectives* is offered less as a practical or instructional guideline for inquiry, but more so as a general call to evaluators/researchers to be mindful of how they approach the endeavor of evaluating Inside-Out and other higher education programs where participants include people who are incarcerated.

Assessments of Program Processes and Outcomes

The Inside-Out Center invites and engages in program evaluations for a variety of reasons. To begin, Inside-Out seeks to stay apprised of the quality of interactions and relationships with various stakeholders of the program, maintain academic standards, and engage in strategic program development that can be incorporated in instructor training. Based on findings from existing inquiries, feedback from students, instructors, and institutional administrations, the Inside-Out program continues to create a transformative post-secondary learning experience that emphasizes collaboration, dialogue, and academic skill and capacity development. In addition, program assessments and student evaluations reveal that the program creates structured opportunities to formally reflect upon, engage in sustained dialogue about, and take leadership in confronting crime, justice, and other related issues of social concern.

Anecdotal and program evaluation reports of outcomes in these settings consistently suggest educational benefits and often transformative effects on participants. As more instructors are trained, and as the number of courses offered across the country increases, there is a growing need to obtain more evidence about how the program is operating, how it is affecting student and host participants, and where there are areas of possible improvement.

Background

The Inside-Out Evaluation and Research Committee was organized in response to the need to understand characteristics of program participants, where the program is implemented, how the program is implemented across settings, and the effects of the program on Inside and Outside students, instructors, and host (i.e., academic and correctional) institutions. The Committee was also convened to fulfill three related purposes, as noted in the Mission Statement above: to serve Inside-Out as an advisory body concerning the directions of and priorities for program evaluation and research, to serve as an advisory body to scholars interested in conducting program evaluation on Inside-Out, and to form working groups that do project-oriented work that will assist in the Committee's advisory role to the Center (e.g., create logic models of classes, think tanks, etc.).

The Committee was formed in 2007. Now, as then, the committee is comprised of faculty trained as Inside-Out instructors and with extensive combined expertise in program evaluation and research, as well as staff from the Inside-Out Center.

The Committee convenes via conference call as needed and annually for in-person, lengthier meetings to work on ongoing projects and revisit priorities. Members seek to foster effective communications between the Center and interested evaluators/researchers in a variety of ways. *Perspectives* is one such mechanism, as well as member rotations in the capacity of community liaison. When Committee members serve as liaison, they operate as point person for inquiries to the Center from the community regarding existing scholarship, reports, instruments, etc. that may be accessible but relatively difficult to find.

Perspectives on Ethical Inquiry vis-a-vis Federal Regulations on Human Subjects

Committee members developed *Perspectives* for multiple purposes summarized above. In what follows, *Perspectives* selectively addresses existing Federal guidelines on research with human subjects and how the mission and vision of Inside-Out can be reflected in program evaluation and research practices. What follows is not intended to be exhaustive but illustrative of the meaningful applications of the Inside-Out philosophy in the design and implementation phases of program evaluation and research.

Existing Federal Regulations Concerning the Protection of Human Subjects

The following section provides a discussion of the Inside-Out perspective on ethical inquiry and frames the focus around the tenets of the Federal guidelines for research involving humans set forth by the Department of Health and Human Services that concern research involving human subjects in general and people who are incarcerated in particular. These Federal guidelines were signed into law under the National Research Act (Pub. L. 93-348) on July 12, 1974. For reference, readers are directed to the following link for the full text of these guidelines: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/documents/OHRPRegulations.pdf>

The discussion of *Perspectives* is intentionally crafted around three overarching, ethical principles identified in the Belmont Report of 1979. The Belmont Report provides a summary of the basic principles that underlie required conduct as specified in the National Research Act (Pub. L. 93-348). The three main principles include respect of persons, beneficence, and justice.¹

¹ In July of 1974, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research was created with the enactment of the National Research Act (Pub. L. 93-348). The Belmont Report (1979) summarizes the basic ethical principles identified by the Commission in the course of its deliberations.

The Inside-Out mission, vision, and pedagogy inform the Center's interest and concern with the nature and form of program evaluation and research in a variety of ways. First, as a reminder, the program's elements privilege the significance and role of dialogue and balance among the contributions of students. Next, the program offers training activities that highlight the effect of a composite of disparities and power positions for learners. Also, the program pedagogy is sensitive to the history of egregious ethics violations committed in the context of research on or about people who are incarcerated (e.g., Hornblum, 1999). Taken together, the Center encourages inquiries that ultimately maintain the integrity of the learning experience as well as the established trust among student and instructors that result, in part, from fidelity in program implementation. *Perspectives* is a key mechanism in this effort.

In this manner, *Perspectives* carries the Center's interests and concerns forward and offers a translation of program tenets through the lens of program evaluations and research ethics. The examples provided here include but are not limited to, how to talk about, relate to, speak of, create genuine opportunities for voluntary participation, and structure inquiries concerning Inside-Out students, processes, and institutions. Overall, *Perspectives* may complement instructor training, and offer investigators the general elements of the Inside-Out nomenclature, value orientation, and norms of Inside-Out as they relate to evaluation and research. Inside-Out anticipates that evaluators/researchers will respect the spirit and nature of the Center's values, norms, practices, and beliefs that underpin the Inside-Out program and pedagogy. At their core is a deep and unyielding recognition of the inalienable right of all humans to be treated consistently and equally with respect, to be heard, and to be recognized as someone capable of sharing valid, positive contributions to the social milieu.

For clarity, the committee uses the following working definitions of research and evaluation. *Research* means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, *designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge*. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this document, whether they are conducted or supported under a program which is considered research for other purposes. For example, some demonstration and service programs may include research activities. *Evaluation* refers to a systematic strategy for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer basic questions about a program. Evaluation is a strategy that helps to identify effective and ineffective services, processes, practices, and approaches.

Overview of Applicability

As noted above, the Inside-Out *Perspectives on Ethical Inquiry* builds upon the three "basic ethical principles" identified in the Belmont Report as cornerstone values of good research: respect of persons, beneficence, and justice. Inside-Out affirms these principles, and *Perspectives* offers examples of how such principles may be applied in the context of Inside-Out program evaluation or research. These principles refer "to those general judgments that serve as a basic justification for the many particular ethical prescriptions and evaluations of human actions," are "generally accepted in our cultural tradition," and "are particularly relevant to the ethics of research involving human subjects" (United States, 1978).

The following discussion of the applicability of these principles to research and evaluation with and about Inside-Out includes excerpts from the Belmont Report.

1. Respect for Persons

Both Inside-Out and Federal regulations emphasize respect for the individual as a paramount concern. According to the Belmont Report of 1979, respect involves acknowledging that all humans have the right to act on their own behalf as autonomous agents. People who have a diminished cognitive or developmental ability to act on their own behalf in this manner are to be protected.

Inside-Out strives to treat all individuals and institutions involved with the highest degree of consideration and respect. To demonstrate this value, investigators are encouraged to adopt practical applications that have a meaningful analytical role. For example, consider whether there are analytical purposes for comparing participants (e.g., Inside versus Outside students) or institutions (colleges versus prisons) and whether such comparisons are grounded in a substantive or a theoretical rationale related to anticipated differences. To do otherwise, suggests that the analytical categories used for comparison are warranted due to some underlying, overarching –albeit poorly measured—difference. For example, a study that compares Inside students with Outside students on attitudes toward law enforcement officers conveys, albeit inadvertently, that there is a *prima facie* case for casting Inside and Outside students as inherently different, divided, or separate.

Inside-Out recognizes that differences between human beings are an interesting and natural part of social life and are a common object of inquiry in the pursuit of knowledge about human social behavior. Also, such differences may be identified and utilized effectively for purposes of sifting through additional variables which result from or have an impact on participation in Inside-Out. However, the program is concerned that the atheoretical use of labels may prevent evaluators/researchers from recognizing potential similarities, complexities of identity, and nuances of meaning in study information.

As in the program's instructional settings, the Center is hopeful that people who pursue research and program evaluations will pursue protocols whose elements convey an intent and volition to deconstruct presumptions about difference that have the potential to reinstitute stereotypes, social distancing, and othering.²

²By “othering” we mean to single out an individual or group as different, often used to exclude the voice of the targeted person or group or to implicitly orient conversation or dialogue in a way that dismisses possible complexities of identity, thought, and perspective.

Next, the guideline of “respect for persons” may also consider the use of class time, regardless if the researcher is present. More respectful research strategies would have minimal impact or no negative impact on the structure, content, or overall flow of Inside-Out course sessions as would normally be carried out if there were no research activity being conducted or researcher present. Course sessions are designed to build upon levels of trust and mutuality, and contain important, pre-planned templates for interaction, learning, and reflection. Evaluators/Researchers must be cognizant that study interventions may alter or disrupt class sessions, and therefore avoid activities which may detract from the quality experience deserved by those who are present for the purpose of learning, not to be studied. Likewise, observational methods may warrant additional consideration, to the extent that they may involve the presence of people who are involved with research but create distractions due to their presence. Evaluators/Researchers must anticipate and avoid undue inconveniences that their study may impose on prison staff or procedures.

It is hoped that program evaluations and other inquiries have the net effect of facilitating the empowerment and personal independence of participants, to the extent possible, as participants will likely receive little else in return for their time. Empowerment, at minimum, may include the genuine feeling that people as study participants have contributed meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge about an important topic, process, or issue under investigation. As opposed to participants feeling like subjects under study, an empowering experience can allow and encourage participants to speak as change agents. Inside-Out expects that Informed Consent will include a clear discussion of the ways and means by which participants may or may not benefit or be affected by the research. Autonomy, at minimum, may include the realization that people feel they have a sincere opportunity to decline or accept the opportunity to participate in a study, or to withdraw at any time with no fear of repercussion from any source.

As an opportunity for empowerment, evaluators/researchers may wish to obtain input from multiple sources (e.g., Inside Students, Outside Students, staff) concerning methodology and project design. In addition, they may engage participants (students, staff, etc.) as co-creators of knowledge as well as experts in developing aspects of the study, providing perspective on ethical issues or concerns, interpreting results, or discerning ways in which the study may be most successful without jeopardizing the prison environment. When possible, participants and co-creators of research may be offered the option to receive the results of the study.

Lastly, in addition to typical Human Subjects applications and confidentiality requirements, Inside-Out encourages evaluators/researchers to anticipate other possible threats to a “respect for persons.” Requests or requirements for confidentiality in correctional institutions should be taken with all due seriousness and attention because incarcerated persons have limited control over their living environment as well as the people with whom they interact. The choice to participate in research or the information shared by an incarcerated participant or correctional staff may involve factors that the evaluator/researcher may not be aware of or privy to, such as unintended effects or repercussions upon the participant or others in the institution. In addition, research may create situations in which research participants can be singled out or identified based on recorded comments, even if first or last name is not used.

These heightened threats to confidentiality are particularly possible when the evaluator/researcher is drawing information from a small sample size. Under such circumstances, it is ideal for the evaluator/researcher to be constantly attentive and responsive to the complicated challenges of maintaining confidentiality and the well-being of participants in all stages of the research process, in response to requests by both individual participants and administration of the facility in which research is taking place or is based. Such challenges may be addressed in a variety of ways, including the combination of participants from multiple settings (e.g., inquiries that involve people from more than one facility or more than one course at the same facility).

2. Beneficence

Inside-Out affirms the Federal mandate to be concerned with intentional acts of goodness and kindness to persons involved in the research process. According to the Belmont Report of 1979, beneficence involves situations wherein evaluators/researchers are expected to go “above and beyond” formal requirements to maximize benefits and minimize harms to study participants. Although opportunities for implementing beneficence may not always be clear, such actions often involve voluntarily thoughtfulness and serious forethought about the pros and cons of study participation from the perspective of both the participants and the broader community.

In the context of Inside-Out evaluation/research, one application of the principle of beneficence relates to the program’s language policy. The Inside-Out language policy is consistent with the language policies adopted by some scholarly journals (e.g., *Disability and Society*) that are sensitive to how the use of language may position or frame groups of people in particular discourses. Although Inside-Out believes that evaluators/researchers would never knowingly submit articles which contain offensive, disabling, or prejudicial language, it recognizes that in the implementation of efforts to describe a study it is not always apparent when language may be problematic.

As a general guide, evaluators/researchers are encouraged to examine labels used to represent analytical categories for the possibility that they hold pejorative or inaccurate meanings. Evaluation reports or research articles that contain derogatory words or labels, even if these words are based upon professional or legal classifications, are inconsistent with the value perspective and philosophy of Inside-Out. Words such as “inmate,” “criminal,” “offender,” “prisoner” or “ex-con” offer some clarity in their use, but tend to create social and psychological distances between individuals and social groups and undermine the overall Inside-Out pedagogical goals of dissolving barriers. Given Inside-Out’s explicit goal of reducing social distance and othering, it is advised that evaluators/researchers refrain from using terms that label or mark people using words that have the potential to create the psychological salience of a difference and ultimately stereotypes and prejudices. Inside-Out recognizes that there is no universal consensus as to what is and is not offensive, disabling, or othering, but encourages evaluators/researchers to demonstrate personal and cultural sensitivity in their use of language. However, as of May 2016, the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs has implemented agency-wide policy to avoid terms that further stigmatize the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated (see Mason, 2016). The use of person-first language is preferred (e.g. a person who is incarcerated, people who live in prison, etc.)

3. Justice

In the context of Inside-Out, the concept of justice pertains to the reasonable and balanced consideration of who benefits or is encumbered by program research and evaluation. According to the Belmont Report of 1979, justice involves situations wherein we consider the fairness involved in the distribution of benefit and harm.

In the context of Inside-Out research, one application of the principle of justice relates to the program's preferences for *transparency*. Transparency involves engaging in thorough and clear discussions with all people and groups who may be impacted by research on Inside-Out. Such discussion will, at minimum, pertain to Informed Consent. Inside-Out expects appropriate consent to be pursued for all inquiries and to exceed the issuance of a written consent statement to study participants. Inside-Out wants evaluators/researchers to plan occasions to talk with participants in a genuinely confidential context about any questions or comments that they may have about the research.

Inside-Out understands that at times, it is not feasible or desirable to talk directly with study participants about all aspects of a study (e.g., hypotheses, expected findings). In such instances, Inside-Out anticipates that evaluators/researchers will develop some general form of checks-and-balances procedure for ensuring that participants' rights to privacy and rights-to-know are not compromised. One option may involve participatory research—beginning with proposal development and continuing through report writing—that involves those with evaluation/research expertise as well as expertise on the perspectives of subjects.

Transparency is also a principle of research that relates to the staff and administration of the institutions involved, in particular correctional institutions. Evaluators/researchers must solicit written consent and assure that evaluation/research does not compromise the guidelines set forth by the institution. For this reason and more, transparency with the institution is important because evaluators/researchers must be able to form and maintain open lines of communication with facility representatives and establish trust. In addition, the institution may be aware of possible risks or harms to incarcerated participants that may result from participation in evaluation/research.

Tensions, Constraints, and Ethical Dilemmas to Anticipate

Because of the complexity and structure of the Inside-Out program, there are several possible tensions or constraints that may be present in undertaking research or program evaluation. In the interest of taking proactive measures to acknowledge and address the unique nature of the program as relates to research, the issues of instructor as evaluator/researcher, methodological concerns, and reporting of findings are addressed below. These specific concerns may not be encountered in all inquiries, nor are these concerns exhaustive of all possibilities that evaluators/researchers must be attentive to. The Committee is willing to serve as an advisory body for evaluators/researchers who find that they have encountered ethical constraints or dilemmas during their research that are not covered below.

A. *Instructor as Evaluator/Researcher* – On occasion, some individuals may desire to teach Inside-Out courses and engage in research or program evaluation involving their own classes. When instructors consider this dual relationship vis-à-vis students, they may reflect upon the perspective of students and their sense of the voluntary nature of the inquiry.

First, standard Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements will, in some instances, address the inherent role conflict that exists when seeking to involve one's own students in evaluation or research. What follows is a non-exhaustive list of points to consider.

1. *Conflict of interest* – For pedagogical purposes, it may be very useful to collect information or feedback from one's students regarding teaching methods, knowledge of material, or general reactions to the class. However, utilizing students as participants in a formal evaluation/research project has the potential to cause confusion among those students about the teacher role and may result in some people feeling duped about the purpose of the overall course, coerced to participate, or something else. As stated above, IRB's will examine this and may not permit evaluation/research if it is conducted by the instructor of the course. In addition to other considerations, it may be worthwhile to explore the range of available means for ensuring the ability to opt in or opt out of the inquiry anonymously.
2. *Ethical Neutrality* – for individuals who have completed the Inside-Out training and have become instructors, there are likely very strong feelings about the benefits of this type of educational process. Further, there may be anecdotal information that reinforces one's beliefs about the positive effects of Inside-Out courses. As an investigator, it is important to set aside one's personal feelings or judgments so that these will not interfere with being objective, distort observations, or bias any conclusions drawn from the research process.
3. *Responsibility to Scientific Community* – related to #2 above, it is important to thoroughly and accurately describe and disseminate the research process, findings, and conclusions. Inside-Out is not concerned with the outcome of results, to the extent that they are generated by studies that involve solid methodology and adhere to all Federal regulations and embrace the spirit and intent of the *Perspectives on Ethical Inquiry*.
4. *Specific Methodologies with Ethical Implications* – less participatory methodologies may lead to special concerns as they relate to inquiry about the Inside-Out program.
 - a. *Interviews* – Due to the nature of face-to-face interviews, anonymity is not a viable promise. Thus, confidentiality of participants' personally identifying information is paramount. Prior to conducting interviews (or distributing surveys), carefully consider how the content of the interview/survey may be protected from others who may see the interview taking place, overhear the content of the discussion, or peruse participant answers to survey items. Also, in the transcription process and the reporting of findings, consider applying the Inside-Out practices of first name uses. Last, interviewers would want to be sensitive to the importance of their demeanor during the interview, and be aware of body language, props, speech tone, etc. that may create the ambiance of a therapeutic or interrogative session.

- b. *Observational research* – While one can take on many different observer “roles” (complete observer, disguised observer) it seems that the most likely observer role that one may take in conducting research on the Inside-Out program is that of a “participant observer.” While this role permits for much greater understanding of the process, event, or persons being observed it may also make it more difficult to be completely objective as well as comprehensive in recording, interpreting, and reporting findings. It would thus be important to acknowledge these potential tensions or challenges at the outset of the project.
- c. *Creating Opportunities for Voluntary participation.* Voluntary participation is complicated when study opportunities are presented to people who have limited ability to decline requests to participate regularly, and who have limited privacy. Perspectives invites evaluators/researchers to consider options for how potential subjects may have the ability to take part or decline and maintain their anonymity or confidentiality. For example, perhaps potential student participants can be issued study materials (e.g., surveys with no identifying information requested) in plain envelopes marked with a unique number and then asked to complete the content outside the class session. Provided teachers are unable to associate particular students with the numbered packets, have all students return their packet—whether completed or not—in a subsequent class session. If all students return their packet and someone other than the instructor handles the collection, then subject participation may be anonymous to the instructor.

B. *Additional Consideration.*

1. *Participant groupings and their labels.* Understanding the Inside-out Prison Exchange program—its fidelity in matters of implementation, impacts on the learning contexts and/or the people who participate in it, and more—is of great interest to many. When creating proposals, evaluators and researchers are reminded that the Center describes Inside-out courses as specifically designed not to take advantage of those who are incarcerated. “Inside” students and “outside” students engage in collaborative learning, and the Inside-Out pedagogy emphasizes the value and equality of participant voices in the semester-long exchange. Thus, program evaluators and researchers are encouraged to integrate the following:
 - a. a consideration of the analytical role of participant labels that may be applied (e.g., “outside” or ‘inside’) and a discussion of any *prima facie* case for examining comparatively various participant groupings.
 - b. A reflection on the implications of the inclusion or exclusion of participant groups, and whether such occurrences are grounded in theoretically grounded hypotheses or practical purposes.
 - c. (if applicable) all students (i.e., Inside and Outside) as eligible participants because the Center is supportive of inquiries that mirror the learning pedagogy.

Taken together, the above considerations are intended to support evaluators and researchers in their efforts to exceed human subjects requirements in ways that honor the spirit and design of the Inside-Out learning pedagogy.

Conclusion

Inside-Out believes that multiple constituents will benefit when *Perspectives* is considered prior to and during protocol development and report writing related to program evaluation/research on Inside-Out. First, *Perspectives* sensitizes investigators to the Inside-out mission, vision, and teaching pedagogy. Across these elements, the program reflects a value of co-creators among instructors, inside students, and outside students in the process of learning, a feature compatible with some research methodologies and replicable to varying degrees in the process of program evaluation and inquiry.

Second, *Perspectives* will enhance project outcomes and reporting to the extent it encourages collaboratively pursued and implemented activities. *Perspectives* offers a reminder that, as in collaborative learning, program evaluation/research informed and pursued by multiple, relevant constituents—research experts, trained instructors, students, host representatives, etc.—offers tremendous potential for valid, efficacious insights on programmatic characteristics, processes, outcomes, and areas of needed enhancement. Thus, *Perspectives* encourages inquiry that resembles participatory methods (e.g., Participatory Action Research) as much as feasible, a general methodology that is consistent with the Inside-Out pedagogy for learning. Third, *Perspectives* offers a resource for people who need additional information about existing program evaluation and research or have questions related to potential projects.

Next, the Evaluation and Research Committee believes that due diligence in the incorporation of these perspectives will benefit student participants in or institutional hosts for Inside-Out courses. For example, *Perspectives* may contribute positively to an interest in program evaluation that involves transparency and balance in focus. Just as Inside-Out courses privilege equally the insights, contributions, and experiences of all students, so too program evaluations/research on Inside-Out may be equally concerned with impacts on all students or both host facilities (i.e., college/university and correctional facility). In addition, *Perspectives* promotes clearer or more helpful communication between colleges and correctional facilities to the extent that methodologies are considerate of all stakeholders. Program evaluation and research pursued in the spirit of the *Perspectives* will contain a variety of specific features, but taken together, the Committee hopes such projects challenge traditional methodologies that may reflect destructive, existing oppressive power structures within academic and correctional institutions.

Last, *Perspectives* is a means for the Inside-Out Center to reaffirm the inherent value, rights, and agency of people and institutions affiliated with the Inside-Out Program. In the context of program evaluation or research, on behalf of the Center, the Evaluation and Research Committee members extend their appreciation to those who reflect upon and incorporate into their projects the perspectives and issues raised herein.

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FAQ Concerning Evaluation and Research

By The Inside-Out Evaluation and Research Committee

Q. What is the Inside-Out Evaluation and Research Committee?

The Inside-Out Evaluation and Research Committee is an advisory body created to conduct project-oriented work and to support The Inside-Out Center and scholars conducting program evaluation or research. The Committee created a short list of FAQs to address frequent topics of interest. Please refer to the Inside-out *Perspectives on Ethical Inquiry* (2017) document or contact David Krueger, Center Liaison for the Evaluation and Research Committee, davidkrueger01@gmail.com if you have further questions.

Q. Do I have to submit my research proposal to the Evaluation and Research Committee for approval?

No. The Committee was created to serve as a resource for the Center and for people who seek to engage in research about or with The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. The Committee has communicated, largely through the *Perspectives* document, ways in which evaluators/researchers may exceed IRB requirements compatible with the Inside-Out pedagogy. The Committee strongly encourages researchers to review this document prior to drafting a proposal or contacting Committee members with questions.

Q. Will the Evaluation and Research Committee provide me with feedback?

In the past, the Committee has provided feedback on a few proposals. This feedback was requested mainly because the evaluator(s)/researcher(s) wanted to know if there was ongoing inquiry examining a similar topic. As a component of regular Committee activities, however, the Committee does not review proposals or manuscripts. The Committee welcomes, however, the opportunity to respond to specific questions about proposal/manuscript elements.

Q. Do I have to apply for Human Subjects Approval if I consider my project a type of program evaluation?

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committees are the appropriate entity to make this determination (i.e. whether a proposal is defined as exempt from review, requires a full board review, or is eligible for an expedited review). If you have any questions, we strongly suggest that you contact your institution's (educational and correctional) IRB committees.

Q. What is the Inside-Out Center's view on research or evaluation that includes only Outside students or only Inside students?

The Center describes their courses as specifically designed not to take advantage of those who are incarcerated. "Inside" students and "outside" students engage in collaborative learning, and the Inside-Out pedagogy emphasizes the value and equality of all participant voices in the semester-long exchange. For this reason and more, the Center is supportive of evaluation/research projects that mirror this design in inquiries (i.e. whatever is asked of one group is asked of the other).

Updated Research 2018

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Working with Trauma in Carceral Intergroup Settings

Instructor Resources

Inside-Out was designed to accommodate for carceral dynamics and, given the likelihood that instructors will encounter trauma of some kind within the context of an Inside-Out class, we encourage using this resource as a starting point to explore one's own trauma informed and responsive practices.

What is Trauma?

Definitions

- Any event(s) which overwhelms our core capacity to cope. Results in an experience of personal threat to our safety and/or the integrity of our identity.
 - ▶ Trauma may include:
 - ◇ Multiple and/or chronic exposure to developmentally adverse interpersonal victimization
 - ◇ Physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse and neglect
 - ◇ Domestic and community violence

International Society for the Study of Trauma and Disassociation

Unresolved Trauma Impacts

- Impaired ability to self-regulate
- Impulsive/reactive behavior
- Intense emotions driving behavior
- Diminished capacity to reason
- General sense of trouble

Transformation Yoga Project: Trauma & Prison Yoga Training 2017

Carceral Research

- 96% percent of incarcerated individuals considered high-risk in Denver had traumatic brain injury
- They were punched in the head in fistfights – or shot, knocked around as children, beaten by spouses or struck by cars.
- National statistics indicate 67 to 80 % of individuals who are incarcerated have a traumatic brain injury.
 - ▶ For the general population, the rate is 6 to 8.5 %.

Neurological Researchers from the University of Denver, March 2015

Types of Complex Trauma

- Compounded Trauma – impact of unresolved trauma (past) and exposure to ongoing trauma
- PTSD
- Incarceration Syndrome – Exposure during incarceration to ongoing trauma
- Secondary Trauma – impact of working with victims of trauma
- Moral Injury – psychological damage that service members face when their actions from combat contradict their morality

Transformation Yoga Project: Trauma & Prison Yoga Training 2017

Trauma Sensitive Applications and Considerations

Trauma Practice Definitions

- Trauma-Informed: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
 1. Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
 2. Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
 3. Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
 4. Seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.
- Trauma-Responsive: Stephanie Covington (2017) – “Policies and practices in place to minimize damage and maximize opportunities for healthy growth and development in all populations at risk” and “Creating an environment for healing and recovery”
- Trauma-Informed: Stephanie Covington (2017) – having knowledge around trauma

Some Practical Trauma Informed Practices

- **Space** – Intentionality on creating a safe space. There needs to be enough space in between participants. Awareness of lighting, smells, accessible doorways. Students can decide where to set up their chairs or working spaces.
- **Consent** – Trauma sensitive spaces emphasize consent and are mindful about the environment in the space. Do we say it’s ok to say no, but have nonverbal pressure to complete the tasks? Do we praise others for reaching a goal?
- **Invitational Language** – The teacher/ facilitator simply asking permission is not enough, as some individuals may not feel comfortable saying “no.” It is important to emphasize that the class is for the students, however they use it.
- **Pace** – In a trauma informed dialogue, the pace is sometimes slower.
- **Customize** – We need to be thoughtful in preparation / debriefing sessions to adapt, brainstorm, and implement specialized strategies reflective of the classroom space.

Emily Cox (2018)

Sample Letter to Prison Administrator:

Dear _____:

[The first paragraph could contain something personal, if at all possible. If I haven't already met the person to whom I am writing, and don't have other relationships with individuals in the system, it would help me to do some research. Do I have any newspaper articles written about a program this person has supported? Is this person on record as having expressed a need for programming? Am I aware of something positive this person has done? Mentioning something along these lines can be a good way of building the beginning of a relationship.]

I am writing to let you know about a project you may find interesting, which began at Temple University and in the Philadelphia Prison System in 1997 and is now an international educational program: The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program.

The mission of Inside-Out is to create a dynamic partnership between institutions of higher learning and correctional systems, in order to deepen the conversation about and transform approaches to issues of crime and justice.

Inside-Out brings college students together with incarcerated men and women to study as peers in seminars behind prison walls. The program provides a life-altering experience that allows undergraduate students to contextualize and rethink what they have learned in the classroom, gaining insights that will help them to better pursue the work of creating a more effective, humane and restorative justice system.

At the same time, Inside-Out challenges men and women on the inside to place their life experiences in a larger social context, rekindles their intellectual self-confidence and interest in further education, and encourages them to recognize their capacity as agents of change – in their own lives as well as in the broader community, both inside prison and out.

The fundamental component of Inside-Out is a semester-long Criminal Justice course through which 15–18 undergraduate students and the same number of incarcerated men or women attend class together inside prison. Class meets once a week for 15 weeks; the students read a variety of texts, and explore some of the core issues of crime and justice, including such topics as what prisons are for, why people commit crime, a critical analysis of the criminal justice system, punishment vs. rehabilitation, the myths and realities of prison life, and issues of victims and victimization. During the final weeks, the group collaborates on a project, developing new ideas to address these issues. The Inside-Out approach has been used to teach classes in many other subject areas, as well, through disciplines that span the arts and humanities, the social sciences, and the study of law.

Over the years, tens of thousands of university students and incarcerated students have participated in the program, and the instructors, college students, and incarcerated students alike testify to the power of the Inside-Out experience. As one student wrote, “I didn’t expect to learn so much. I didn’t expect to grow and change as a result of the process. ...As I reflect on the power of this course, I am awestruck and humbled.”

Part of the beauty of Inside-Out, at least as it has been implemented in Pennsylvania, is that the program has no direct costs to the prison system or the incarcerated students. The cost of instruction will be borne by the college or university, which feels that Inside-Out is a valuable addition to our course offerings.

As an instructor at [local college or university here], I would be very interested in starting an Inside-Out program in collaboration with [name of prison here]. If you think it would be of interest to you, I would very much enjoy meeting with you or an appropriate person whom you may designate.

I will call your office in a few days to follow up.

Sincerely,

Sample Clean Check Form for Prison:

Information for Prison Site Visit

Please complete all of the following, writing legibly and clearly:

Last name _____

First name _____

Middle initial _____

List previous names _____

Address _____

Home telephone _____

Work telephone _____

Height _____

Weight _____

Eyes _____

Hair _____

Sex _____

Race _____

State and # of driver's license _____

Soc. Sec. # _____

Date of birth _____

Place of birth _____

Sample Liability Waiver:

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

Dept.: _____ Course No.: _____

Instructor: _____ Phone: _____ Semester: _____

Student Waiver

When a student participates in a course or program involving experiential learning at _____ College/University, s/he understands that there are certain risks in connection with such activity and must agree to the following:

1. I agree to release _____ College/University (and all its officers, employees and agents) from responsibility in all manner of actions and causes of action – i.e., suits, debts, accounts, judgments – including all claims arising out of incidents involving personal injury of any kind by reason of participation in this class or program.
2. I assume any and all risks arising from my participation in the experiential activity involved in this course or program, including, without limitation, the risks of bodily injury or property damage, the unavailability of emergency medical care, or the negligent or deliberate act of another person.
3. I accept responsibility and will reimburse _____ College/University for any damages or expenses that arise out of or relate to my own negligent or intentional action or omission.

This waiver is intended to be legally binding.

The undersigned expressly acknowledges that s/he has read and understands this Agreement and Release and signs it freely and voluntarily.

[Note: if the student is not 18 or older, a signature from the parent or guardian is also required.]

Name of Student (print)

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Parent (if applicable)

Sample Student Evaluation:

Please rate the following items by circling the appropriate number (1 = low; 5 = high):

	Pretty Bad	Not Great	Okay	Good	Great
1. Ice-breakers / community-building exercises	1	2	3	4	5
2. Topics discussed in class (in general)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Small group discussions	1	2	3	4	5
4. Large group discussions	1	2	3	4	5
5. The books used for the course (in general)	1	2	3	4	5
6. Weekly writing assignments	1	2	3	4	5
7. Final paper	1	2	3	4	5
8. Idea of doing the Group Project	1	2	3	4	5
9. Final Report on the Group Project	1	2	3	4	5
10. Tour of the facility (if applicable)	1	2	3	4	5
11. Participation of class members	1	2	3	4	5
12. Your own participation in class	1	2	3	4	5
13. Overall format of the class	1	2	3	4	5
14. Closing ceremony	1	2	3	4	5
15. Inside-Out as a learning experience	1	2	3	4	5

Suggestions: _____

Sample Instructor Evaluation:

Think over the last semester in terms of what you had planned for your course. How close to your original plans for the course did the actual experience come? Please take a look at the following questions in evaluating your experience. Hopefully, this process will help in your future course development.

1. How well did the screening process work? Was the group well balanced and diverse on various levels (e.g. age, race/ethnicity, educational background, etc.)?
2. Did you have any difficulties getting into and/or out of the institution? Were there any problems that arose during the semester – or things that fell through the cracks?
3. Were there difficulties with any attitudes of students going into the institution?
4. Did anyone have a problem with the guidelines/parameters of the program? Were only first names used throughout the semester? Did everyone follow the rules about having no contact beyond the classroom?
5. How were the briefing and debriefing sessions? Did you find them helpful to the overall process? Did the students?
6. Did you provide an overview of the criminal justice and prison systems? In what form? Did you find that to be helpful to setting the context for the experience?
7. Which icebreakers did you use? Were they successful in reaching their goals?
8. How did the first combined class go? Was the interaction comfortable? Are there some things that you could do in the future that might further facilitate this experience?
9. Was it clear to the inside students that they were not the objects of study or “help?” Did you have any difficulties with any outside students who seemed to have a need to be of assistance to the inside students? Subtle objectification can often be a downfall of a class of this kind, which becomes evident sometimes through language and expressions. Did you find that the outside students were sensitive to these issues? If not, were you able to address any difficulties that arose?
10. Did the assigned readings for the course match up with the themes each week? How were they incorporated into the discussion? Did you get any feedback from the students – both inside and out – about the choice of readings?
11. How were the group dynamics throughout the semester? Do you feel that you adequately facilitated the dynamics of the group to maximize the experience for all participants?

12. Do you feel that you were able to create an atmosphere in which the participants felt safe enough to be open and explore issues together? Did you keep the experience “contained,” providing those involved with the sense that you had things appropriately under control?
13. How was the level of dialogue in the class? Did you have any challenging individuals who made it difficult for you or the rest of the class? If so, how did you address this issue?
14. What kinds of assignments did you give throughout the semester? Did your assignments require incorporation of the readings/class discussions? Did you assign too many/too few papers? Did you assign a final paper/project? If so, did it help students to fully integrate the experience?
15. Did you include a tour of the facility? If so, what was the reaction to that – by both the inside and the outside students?
16. What kinds of projects did the class work on? Were they effective? Did the participants seem fully engaged in the work? Would you use the same kinds of projects in the future? Did the projects speak to some of the larger structural/institutional issues?
17. How did you deal with grading, especially in regards to the inside students?
18. How was your closing ceremony? Did it work out the way that you and the group had planned? Is there anything that you would do differently next time? Are there things that you did for this closing that you would definitely continue into the future?
19. One of the challenges of this kind of course is keeping things in balance. A dimension of this is keeping everything moving at the same time – an awareness of individuals, an awareness of the dynamics of the whole group, the theme to be covered that week, the logistical issues for a given session, as well as knowing and being prepared for what’s coming next, moment to moment. How do you think you did on all of that?
20. Another very important area is striking the balance between the experiential and the academic learning. Often, instructors can tend to lean in one direction or another, as the blending of the two can be very tricky. If it’s too academic, the spirit of the experience can suffer; if it’s too experiential, appropriate depth can be lost – and then, this pedagogical approach may begin to be scrutinized for its “academic rigor.” How do you feel you did in this area? If some fine-tuning is necessary, do you have some ideas of how to do that?
21. Have you taught this course before? If so, how was it this time in comparison with other times that you’ve taught it? Compare it, as well, with other classes that you’ve taught on campus. Are there ways that each can inform the other?
22. All in all – how do you feel you did with the class this semester? Are there elements that you definitely don’t want to change? Are there any dimensions that need attention? If so, what might you do to make the experience all that it can be?

Reflections from an Outside Student:

Dear Inside-Out Instructor,

Hello, my name is Sharon and I am a former outside student (summer 2005) and current Graterford Think Tank member. This letter aims to describe the impact of Inside-Out on students so that, when you are finished reading this, you will have a better idea of what to do to create the “Inside-Out experience.” As you can imagine, this is a really difficult task, as it is nearly impossible to verbalize such a powerful experience as Inside-Out. But, I will do my best to describe my own experience and transformation in hopes that it will convey key points and themes essential, in my opinion, to the overall experience. It should be noted that my opinions are by no means representative of all students, as each person travels their own journey in this program. Take whatever pieces of this paper that fit right in your heart on your own Inside-Out journey and leave what does not.

The very nature of the class itself will generate some major breakthroughs. As an outsider, my first breakthrough was when I began to put faces to statistics. At that time, I was enrolled in summer sessions and was also taking an Institutional Racism course and had a sort of hyperawareness of race issues. I remember walking into the Inside-Out classroom for the first time and conducting a racial head count. Of the seventeen insiders present, twelve were African American, two were Latino, and only three were Caucasian. All of the statistics I read about regarding the overrepresentation of people of color in our prisons suddenly came to life. Reading about this gross example of discrimination was disturbing, but seeing it rocked me emotionally as well.

So, some of the most powerful experiences in Inside-Out will just happen by themselves, not requiring extra effort from students or instructors. Not only will racial discrimination become a reality, but stereotypes too will fall all on their own. With the only comparison being media portrayals of insiders, I remember how struck I was by how articulate and educated my classmates seemed. They were better spoken than many Temple students I had classes with. Similarly, I have heard many insiders discuss realizations they had about outsiders. Prior to class, they did not realize that anyone on the outside actually cared about them, especially enough to drive out to a facility. The dissipation of these stereotypes will happen on their own and it will lead to the development of respect and trust among insiders and outsiders. While instructors do not need to do anything to initiate this dynamic, it is essential for you to maintain this respect and trust.

If one word could summarize what instructors must create in order for the Inside-Out exchange to take place, I would say reality. This word is both an umbrella term for all the wonderful changes and interchanges that can happen as well as a foundation term that allows any of these experiences to take place.

First and foremost, there must be a safe environment that allows the truth to surface. No one will open up if they feel judged or not listened to. This safe environment can be easily maintained as long as all participants adhere to the basic group boundaries (like listening when someone else is talking, speaking to the group and not the facilitator, etc.) outlined in the early sessions. Once people feel free to express themselves, really amazing things can happen!

Because of this safe environment, people begin to share personal thoughts and experiences. I remember an inside student talking about how his daughter graduated high school the past weekend and how distraught he was that he could not share that with her and his family. As he spoke, I noticed that he was wearing a wedding ring. Another man talked about how he was from Western Pennsylvania and, since his family was poor, he rarely saw them and, due to the distance, they had trouble getting involved with advocacy. Then, it hit me, some of these men will be here for life; not only do they not see their families very often now, some of them will never see them as a free man. I teared up while they told these stories and remember it vividly almost a year later. And, in an effort to pass the voices of these men on, I have told this story on a number of occasions.

It was really important for me to hear these stories. Books will tell me that prisons rip families apart, but only people who have lived through it can convey what that really feels like. Inside-Out paints the whole real picture and I believe that is what makes it so powerful. One inhumanity after another begins to surface. We examine the price of incarceration at all levels. Most people can rationalize one, two, or even three inhumanities as coincidence or circumstantial; but, when I saw the whole picture, I began to really question the system as a whole.

The way that it worked for me was that I began to make connections between the Criminal Justice system and other social problems, like the link I mentioned earlier with racism. As a group, we made these links together. I began to see how politics, economic factors, class, unemployment, job training, education, lack of mental health and drug treatment programs, and stereotypes in general are inherently linked to the prison system. Before taking the class, I had believed that the conditions in prison, like disease, violence, and rape were fundamentally wrong and violated people's human rights. When I participated in the Inside-Out exchange, I began to question whether it is fundamentally, morally wrong to incarcerate people.

I see my transformation as the process of questioning the present, making connections, and arriving at my truth. For me, the truth was that prisons are a social problem and a microcosm of all the social problems in our country. Also, I realized that none of us were different from one another. Just because we were all members of the human race, we were connected, with no one being any better or worse than the other. And that meant that, not only do we need each other, but we have a responsibility to one another. This responsibility entails standing up for each other when there are gross violations of humanity, prisons being one. The long-term impact of Inside-Out is that my transformation continues as I discover new facets of this responsibility.

Every student will arrive at different conclusions, experiencing their own transformations. What is important is not what the conclusion is but that they continue the transformation process, never closing their minds or hearts to reality and what it means to them.

And here is a little piece of advice: do not worry if people get jaded, frustrated, or feel some hopelessness. Inside-Out students are, some for the first time, taking a look at difficult issues and that can be extremely uncomfortable. They will feel a series of overwhelming emotions and the natural human response for these is typically frustration. However, these unwelcome emotions are necessary because people have to identify problems before they can even begin to arrive at solutions. So, I believe that getting a bit jaded is healthy. As long as they do not stay in this stage and it does not burn people out, I feel that it is nothing to worry about.

In closing, I would like to congratulate you for, to put it bluntly, making a difference. As we all know, there are many problems in the world and programs like Inside-Out offer people a solution. In order for us to see change, it is essential that programs like this one continue to develop and grow. So I thank you for, as Mahatma Gandhi said, “being the change you want to see in the world.”

Very truly yours,

Sharon
Former Outside Student
Graterford Think Tank Member
Spring 2006

Sample Student Paper:

A Positive Conflict: Life Changing Experiences

Joanna 12/03

One day a week for an entire semester, I visited the Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center. It was at this facility where I was educated in a classroom with my peers – and a group of convicted drug offenders. As I learned and grew with these prisoners, I never imagined that I would later intern for the same agency that put each of them behind bars: The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. It seems contradictory that, on the one hand I learned with these individuals, and on the other I worked for the office that sought their imprisonment.

The course in which I was enrolled, Drugs and Urban Society, was composed of students from Temple University and prisoners from the Correctional Center. During class, we would discuss the many elements of the criminal justice system and converse at length about our personal views and opinions. The prisoners offered the most enticing perspective of the criminal justice system during our discussions. They would elaborate on such topics as an unfair and biased system, lack of adequate representation, and seemingly discriminatory drug laws. I began to empathize with the prisoners and started to feel like I should be the individual to get involved in defending offenders and trying to change drug laws in our country. Little did I know that several months following these feelings of sorrow toward the prisoners, I would struggle with my viewpoints as I embarked on an internship at the District Attorney's Office.

Instead of visiting prison on a weekly basis, as I did for class, I now found myself dealing first-hand with the other side of the adversarial system. I became an integral part of the District Attorney's Office where I would help its staff seek the punishment of drug offenders within the Dangerous Drug Offenders Unit. It was the duty of this unit to prosecute high-powered drug dealers in Philadelphia. As an intern, my role was pivotal. I spent my days gathering information about offenders, retrieving ballistics and lab reports, and aiding an Assistant District Attorney with his court cases. Through my efforts to rid the city of its most dangerous drug offenders, I felt empowered. As I continued to help prosecute drug offenders, however, I began to realize the contradiction I was feeling between the two most powerful experiences of my life.

When I participated in these two opposing situations, I realized that I was thinking in contrasting and contradictory ways. As I sat in prison discussing the many problems surrounding the criminal justice system, I began to sympathize with the offenders. I felt that they should receive drug treatment instead of time behind bars. The drug offenders would talk about their early days as drug users. They would place blame for their illegal behavior on experiences such as unfortunate childhoods, abuse, poverty, and poor educations. I believed that their backgrounds should have been taken into consideration throughout the course of their trial. However, when I was interning, my feelings were radically different. At the District Attorney's Office, my mindset was unlike the way it was in class. As an intern,

my thoughts from class still lingered, but I was more concerned with the task of putting Philadelphia's drug offenders behind bars. Although I wondered about the prior experiences of the offenders that led to their conviction, I had to put my feelings aside and help prosecute. I would often recall my experiences in prison and think about how I thought prosecutors were unfair and only out to convict people. I never would have imagined that a few short weeks later, I would be assisting the system. Looking back, it was a challenge for me to balance the contradiction I felt, but it ended up being an extraordinary learning experience.

At the conclusion of my internship, I reflected on my past experiences. I was now aware that life does not give you just one way to view a situation. Choices must be made even if they include both positive and negative outcomes. Furthermore, I gathered the notion that life is not simple and making choices is never an easy task – instead it is daunting. Relating these eye-opening experiences to the field of law, I realized that our criminal justice system is more controversial than I first envisioned. The prosecution and defense may always be against each other, but it is nearly impossible to ignore the facts and emotional outcomes related to the opposing side. Although my encounters contradict one another, they proved to be valuable stepping-stones for my career path. I have been exposed to two sides of the criminal justice system – one that occurs behind the prison walls and one that happens inside the courtroom. Without both views of the system, I can assert that I would have lacked the necessary insight and open-mindedness to become a fair and non-judgmental criminal attorney. There are moral issues that must be faced every step of the way, and I am grateful that I had to chance to experience them first-hand and up close.