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Teaching Juveniles How to Plan for the Future

Guide for Curriculum Unit 94.01.04
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“Never Alone” is a typical diversion curriculum, designed to provide resources for young offenders who are incarcerated at the Juvenile Detention Center. The plan book is divided into five different interdisciplinary units; 1) Introduction on freedom, 2) Who am I? 3) Why am I here? 4) Where am I going?, and 5) How do I get there? This flexible curriculum is designed for “reluctant learners,” a very unique population of students. The reluctant learner is described as a delinquent offender, who is apprehended for persistent brushes with the law, and/or behaviors that are excessively violent and destructive. Also, he exhibits poor social and adaptive skills, erratic attendance, different abilities and grade levels, and is temporarily placed for a short or long indeterminate period. The teacher is unaware of whether the student is a status or severe offender. Juveniles’ charges are confidential and not accessible to the classroom teacher. Therefore, classes are grouped heterogeneously; indeed, the common bond is incarceration and institutionalization.

Due to the uncertainty of the daily routine of my classes, the most effective classroom management activities are those that are individualized and can be completed on a daily basis. The suggested plan book serves as a structured tool for a revolving population, which organizes the search for personal identity, and acquires that knowledge of the “total self.” By using the plan book system, the following skills are developed; math, language arts, vocabulary, functional living, decision-making, responsibility, organizational, and appropriate behaviors. As the student begins to work on the plan book, he/she will log/record critical incidents to assess and reflect his/her own personal growth. Strategies for the unit include: hands-on experiences, visual/auditory stimuli, role-playing, current events, cooperative learning, social network, role development, activities, individualized plan book, recreation and education.

(Recommended for Social Studies and Math, grades 4-11)

Key Words

Juvenile Delinquency Concept Theory Self-esteem Building Adolescence Empowerment Slavery Afro-American

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