

**EDJJ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES**

**Facilitator's Manual to Accompany the EDJJ Professional  
Development Modules**

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

Today, professionals involved with students in the juvenile justice system experience a number of serious challenges. These students impose extreme demands on educators and other professionals struggling to discover effective ways to teach and rehabilitate them. Elrod and Ryder (1999) aptly point out that part of the problem is that many correctional professionals lack the necessary training needed to perform their jobs well. Although some states have established certification requirements and provide follow-up training programs for juvenile justice practitioners, ongoing, well-coordinated, and system-wide professional enhancement is rare. Often teachers, administrators, and other correctional professionals enter the juvenile justice system without adequate preparation for their jobs. Regardless of their expertise, experience, and knowledge in subject area content, they are seldom prepared for the demands of the setting in which they serve youth who exhibit delinquent behavior. University training programs are often criticized for not preparing these professionals for the specific responsibilities that they have to assume to provide services to delinquent youth. In many instances, they find themselves limited in dealing with students in settings such as detention centers and juvenile and adult correctional facilities, which are characterized by high turnover rates. Teachers in these settings usually work in classes that consist of students representing a wide range of ages, disabilities, grade levels, and behavioral and social deficits.

Juvenile justice practitioners spend a considerable amount of time attempting to determine how they should respond to the continuum of delinquent behavior; how they

should adjust their time, energy, and resources to youth who leave the setting in two weeks vs. those who are there for long-term periods; how to plan for the effective transition of these youth; how to develop resilience in these youth; and how to reduce recidivism. Unlike public school settings, teachers in these settings often have to interact with many other professionals, e.g., counselors, psychologists, direct care staff, court workers, probation officers, and parole officers. The job of these teachers is not limited simply to teaching academics, but also to preparing these youth for vocational success and transition into the community. With the increasing responsibilities and challenges these professionals face, they do not receive sufficient opportunities for continual professional growth and enhancement. There is an urgent need for ongoing coordinated professional enhancement opportunities for administrators and practitioners in these systems to develop a habit of reflective practice.

Ongoing professional development is critical for professionals to meet the challenges of the evolving and growing needs of students in the juvenile justice system. Despite a general consensus on the need for professional development programs in these systems, there is disagreement on how to provide opportunities to juvenile justice personnel. The juvenile justice system needs to develop a sustainable professional development program that assures quality preparation of professionals and serves as a *preventative model of teacher attrition*. The literature indicates that if professionals have opportunities for collaborative research, training, and technical assistance, they are more likely to develop effective responses to the needs of our children and youth.

There is ample evidence to support the fact that well-prepared and committed teachers produce more successful learners (Wenglinsky, 2000). Effective professional

development makes a difference in student outcomes only when activities and processes are directly related to student learning, when practitioners use specific instructional strategies in classrooms to impact student achievement, and when transition specialists assume responsibility and are accountable for producing positive transition outcomes for students. The National Center for Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (EDJJ) professional development initiatives are designed not only to improve the quality of professionals but also to increase the educational, vocational, and transitional outcomes of students involved or at risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Policy makers and legislators emphasize the importance of teacher quality as a critical factor in improving student outcomes. A Department of Education study (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999) suggests that, although most teachers receive some professional development each year, most professional enhancement opportunities consist of in-service training for one or two days which generally does not result in meaningful and relevant gains in student learning. Although educators have multiple options for professional development, lack of funding, time, substitute teachers, and commitment often impede successful implementation of professional development programs (Bellanca, 1995).

If effectively implemented, professional enhancement experiences go through the following phases:

- *Building a Conceptual Framework.* During this phase, professionals acquire new knowledge and information and build a conceptual framework. As they experience expansion and depth in their knowledge, they get excited about changing their

instructional practices to produce positive student outcomes. This is a perfect time for the facilitator to develop and implement activities that include establishing professional goals, providing a rationale for the professional development experience, and conducting needs assessments. This may help professionals in developing insights about their professional needs, personal professional goals, and specific student learning outcomes associated with this experience. The facilitator should encourage professionals to develop measurable goals for student performance and to establish an ongoing tracking system.

- *Observing Exemplars.* During this phase, facilitators provide specific instructional examples that develop a practical understanding of research and content. Professionals develop connections between evidence-based research practices and implications for practice. By observing and listening to these examples, they tend to adopt new innovative strategies that promote student success. To enhance application of relevant research, facilitators may engage in activities that highlight promising practices, practical experiences, and integrate life experiences with the mastery of the content.
- *Reflection and Incubation.* It is important that professionals allow themselves opportunities for self-reflection. After gaining new information from professional development opportunities, professionals engage in the process of self-evaluation, where they review their own instructional practices and processes, thereby producing effective changes. The purpose of this phase is to reflect upon practices that may emerge from the development of new ideas. The facilitator may include the use of journals or practitioner-based cases for group discussion and reflection.

- *Application.* In this phase, the facilitator employs strategies that enhance application of new knowledge into individual and collaborative plans of action for curricular and instructional change. Professionals should be encouraged to develop individual professional enhancement plans that include specific information on goals and objectives, strategies that they will employ to achieve these stated goals, and resulting outcomes. Timelines for application of professional enhancement experience should be established. Adult learners may benefit from collaborative action research and mentorship/peer coaching experiences. Mentorship programs will not only assist the professionals in promoting their confidence and efficacy but also reduce attrition rates of qualified teachers and staff and assist in maintaining a stable workforce of professionals in the system. The facilitator should emphasize that professional enhancement activities must result in participants' satisfaction and positive student outcomes. Very few professionals develop enhancement plans directly related to student outcomes.
- *Dissemination.* During this phase, the facilitator encourages the sharing of application activities and practical wisdom with peers. The facilitator may include opportunities for team planning, mentoring or partnering with a colleague, and participating in a professional network.

EDJJ offers technical assistance, training, and professional development opportunities designed to expand skills of professionals which, in turn, build the agency's training capacity. The *EDJJ Professional Development Series* is developed based on the *Correctional Special Education Training (C/SET)* modules. The series reflects best

practices in adult learning and follows the *facilitation model* of instruction. The modules are based on extensive research and best practice. They offer the most current information and have undergone a rigorous review process resulting in several revisions and modifications. EDJJ has redefined teaching and learning in the juvenile justice system by producing this highly relevant, useful professional development series. For the last decade or more, EDJJ personnel have been involved in producing and sponsoring high quality, in-depth, and research-based information for special education in the juvenile justice system. The EDJJ professional development team is committed to providing participants with highly practical training that can be implemented immediately when they return to their own settings. The purpose of these professional development experiences is to provide participants with relevant content and the instructional tools and strategies that will immediately impact their students. The EDJJ professional development activities provide not only current information on the content and subject matter but also opportunities to interact, network, and collaborate with other professionals.

## Goal

The goal of the National Center for EDJJ is to provide ongoing, continual, outcome-based professional development experiences to professionals who are committed to lifelong learning. EDJJ is determined to meet the needs of highly motivated individuals who have committed their professional lives to serve youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice systems. The *EDJJ Professional Development Series* is designed to empower these professionals by presenting current knowledge in a specific area, providing opportunities to develop and elaborate upon that knowledge base, encouraging

them to share real life experiences with colleagues and peers, and helping them enhance their personal and professional satisfaction. EDJJ seeks continually to improve these modules to ensure excellence and state-of-the-art practices in professional development.

#### Rationale for the Professional Development Series

One of the goals in *Goals 2000* states: "The Nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century." (The National Education Goals Panel, 1991). EDJJ provides information, technical assistance, and training resources to professionals involved in fulfilling their responsibilities and obligations to youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system. Evolving characteristics of incarcerated youth, changes in institutional policies, and research on best practices intensify the need for continual professional development. Teachers, administrators, and other professionals without prior experience or proper ongoing professional development do not find themselves adequately prepared for effective supervision, treatment, or care of youth with disabilities. Continuing professional development is crucial for professionals involved in the juvenile justice system to ensure the academic, social, and emotional success of youth, to prevent stress and burnout among professionals, and to create more stable organizational, educational, and correctional climates conducive to positive behavioral change.

The EDJJ professional development activities assist in building accountability into the juvenile justice system through (a) establishing needs-based professional development for sites, (b) determining program effectiveness and quality of services, (c)

promoting long-term commitment to the processes of professional development, (d) assisting in systematic coordination of professional development activities, and (e) presenting research-based practices, services, and programs. Prior to the implementation of the professional development process, EDJJ staff/facilitators will establish accountability measures for each site to ensure that professional development services are rendered in an effective and efficient manner; and they will evaluate performance by including student outcome measures such as mastery of objectives in individualized transition plans, successful educational program completion by youth, and reduced rates of recidivism.

## Objectives

EDJJ professional development objectives include the following:

- Create opportunities for professional enhancement for teachers and administrators in the juvenile justice system
- Present comprehensive and current information relevant to correctional special education.
- Provide teachers and administrators with training materials and methods that are found to be effective.
- Provide the training sites with access to technical assistance, training resources, supports, and guidance.
- Provide opportunities for technical assistance and professional development via distance education, on-line modalities, and alternate formats.

- Encourage professionals involved in the juvenile justice system to develop professional enhancement plans of lifelong learning opportunities.
- Advocate for accountability to enhance professionalism and the quality of juvenile justice training.
- Promote collaborations and linkages among agencies and organizations that address the needs of youth at risk.
- Serve as a resource for building the capacity of juvenile justice training programs.
- Continue to develop, modify, and disseminate EDJJ resources.
- Offer individualized professional enhancement opportunities to meet the needs of professionals involved in serving youth in the juvenile justice system.
- Enable professionals to integrate evidence-based practices and apply concepts and skills in real life situations.
- Provide research-based best practices in the areas of transition, curriculum development, assessment, and public policy.

#### Targeted Audience

This instructional manual is designed to facilitate the use of the *EDJJ Professional Development Series* for all professionals serving students who are involved in or are at risk for becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. This may include individuals from the areas of education, law enforcement, social work, parole, probation, rehabilitation counseling, the judiciary, social service agencies, and parents. The EDJJ staff understands the critical issues and needs of professionals serving these youth.

## Overview

*The EDJJ Professional Development Series* includes a set of eight content and training modules:

- Module 1. History of the Criminal Justice System -  
Will Drakeford and Kristin Friedman
- Module 2. Characteristics of Incarcerated Youth with Disabilities -  
Karen J. Carney
- Module 3. Overview of Special Education -  
Megan McGlynn
- Module 4. Overview of IDEA -  
Carl J. Liaupsin and Lili Garfinkel
- Module 5. Assessment of Individuals with Disabilities in the Juvenile Justice System -  
John Hosp, Michelle Hosp, and Kenneth W. Howell
- Module 6. Curriculum for Individuals with Disabilities in the Juvenile Justice System - Jeffery Johnston
- Module 7. Instructional Methods and Strategies -  
Joseph Calvin Gagnon
- Module 8. Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities in the Juvenile Justice System - Heather Griller-Clark

Although each facilitator will emphasize different aspects of the content and instruction, we encourage facilitators to adhere to the basic principles of adult learning. The content of each of these modules can be adapted to a varied length of instructional time ranging anywhere from a three-hour workshop to a three-day continuing education course. For example, a facilitator may need to spend more time on teaching effective transition strategies than on providing an overview of IDEA, depending on their participants'

background and prior knowledge and the needs of the site administrators. Some facilitators may consider supplementing their instructional activities with additional resources--invite a guest speaker to the workshop, include participant field experiences or activities, or suggest additional readings or observations. Each facilitator is encouraged to tailor their instruction to the needs of their participants.