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Breaking Out: Embracing Literacy Behind the Fence

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Proposal for Longwood Summer Literacy Institute, 2019

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Working with incarcerated youth in a maximum security facility presents unique challenges for students and faculty. Students come to Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center with low reading skills, undiagnosed learning disabilities, family histories devoid of reading, and spotty school records that create gaps in their learning, among other issues. Being forced to attend school in the correctional facility, often for the first time since elementary school, highlights their academic literacy deficits, leading to undesirable behaviors that interfere with their progress and success. Further, the environment requires a lockdown of technological and reading materials, distancing the population even further from contemporary digital and social literacy. How, then, does a faculty body teach and nurture literacy wearing the shackles of restrictions the population demands? Our presentation will give an overview of the only maximum security correctional facility for juveniles in the Commonwealth and our creative solutions to building literacy in our young people through use of the library resources and the secondary English classroom.

Keywords:

- Literacy
- Juvenile
- Corrections
- Correctional Education
- Correctional Literacy
- Juvenile Detention Literacy
- Alternative Education
- Writing Reading
- Reading Writing Corrections
- Juvenile Literacy