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# The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program: Attitudes Towards Prisoners as Reported by College Students

Laurel M. Sabadosh

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**The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program:  
Attitudes Towards Prisoners as Reported by College Students**

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the  
*School of Criminal Justice and Criminology*

By

Laurel Sabadosh

Under the mentorship of Dr. Chad Posick

ABSTRACT

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program involves students from Georgia Southern University and inmates from Smith State Prison who interact and hope to receive a deeper understanding of the justice system through experiential learning. This style of learning has demonstrated greater effectiveness in learning outcomes and a more positive student experience compared to classical, lecture-based learning. No previous research has compared changes in perceptions of students in the Inside-Out Program to a lecture based course of the same content. The purpose of this study was to investigate changes in students' attitudes towards prisoners over eight weeks between participants in the Inside-Out Program and a corrections class. In opposition to previous research, no significant differences were reported in attitudes towards prisoners between groups. Future investigations should continue to examine the transformed opinions of students in experiential and classical learning courses, while using a larger sample size and a longer time period between assessments.

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SCHOOL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CRIMINOLOGY

University Honors Program

**Georgia Southern University**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	1
LIST OF TABLES.....	3
LIST OF FIGURES.....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
METHOD.....	9
RESULTS.....	12
DISCUSSION.....	13
REFERENCES.....	18
APPDENICIES	
A    ATTITUDES TOWARDS PRISONERS SCALE .....	20
B    IRB APPROVAL .....	23
C    REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	24

LIST OF TABLES

DEMOGRAPHICS.....16

LIST OF FIGURES

ATTITUDES TOWARDS PRISONERS.....17

## INTRODUCTION

Experiential learning is a learning process in education in which students engage in the application of their course content. Kolb (1984) believed that experiential learning involves a continuous process where the learner brings individual learning needs and experiences to their learning environment and learning communities. Sigler & Tyran (2017) provided support for the idea that experiential learning creates conditions that can lead to changes in the learner's brain. The researchers stated that this style of learning is used across multiple disciplines to change the student brain by emotionally engaging in the course concepts and having a closer connection to the subject they are learning. It appears that experiential learning allows people to connect to what they are being taught and helps create a structure for combining new information with past experiences (Sigler & Tyran, 2017). The benefits of experiential learning compared to lecture-based or classical teachings has also been examined. For example, Fanta & Boubacar (2016) found that the students within the activity based-learning group experienced a significantly greater gain in in-class performance scores compared to the discussion based-learning group. Taken together, these findings suggest that experiential learning is an effective way to increase knowledge and understanding of a topic.

One particular subject in which experiential learning may be useful is criminal justice. Considering that correctional facilities are commonly associated with negative societal opinions, it is important for criminal justice students to have a true understanding of the prison system, and the incarcerated. In fact, research has demonstrated that a positive attitude towards prisoners is important in securing the success of prisoners after release (Kjelsberg, Skolund & Rustad, 2007). Furthermore, Burke and Bush (2013) have

demonstrated that criminal justice students find experiential learning in academic coursework to be beneficial to their education. Therefore, understanding how experiential learning may shape students' perceptions towards the justice systems is important.

Few studies have examined the attitudes and perceptions of students throughout the transformational process of experiential learning. One study, conducted by Miner-Romanoff (2014), examined student perceptions of juvenile offenders after they completed viewing a video of incarcerated juvenile offenders recounting their experiences of institutionalization, sentences, challenges, programming and fears prior to their release. Assessments containing seven quantitative questions and one qualitative question were provided to participants before and after viewing the video. Results demonstrated that 70.7% of the participants reported a more positive opinion and response regarding punishment and rehabilitation following the video, compared to their initial views. Furthermore, over half of the participants increased their support for incarceration alternatives, mental health treatment, and education for the juveniles from pre- to post-assessment (Miner-Romanoff, 2014). These findings emphasize the idea that even a short bout of experiential learning can have a positive change in perception through better understanding of the criminal justice system.

Longer experiential learning opportunities for criminal justice students, such as the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program are in need of further investigation. During this fifteen-week program, university students and prison inmates are able to interact weekly to discuss ideas and share insights on sentencing, punishment, and incarceration. The goal of this program is to provide a deeper understand of the Criminal Justice System in effort to “empower 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 safer and more just society for all” (Pompa & Crabbe, 2004, p. 3). While research specifically focused on the Inside-Out Program is scarce, a few researchers have examined the program.

Hilinsky-Rosick & Blackmer (2014) explored the feelings and reactions of university students who participated in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. The researchers gathered a total of 151 reflection papers from four separate semesters written by the students enrolled in the course. The findings suggested that the program had a profound impact on the students across semesters and was consistently identified as one of the most valuable courses that the participants had taken (Hilinsky-Rosick & Blackmer, 2014). An additional study by Allred (2009), conducted a qualitative and quantitative study examining the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. The students had self-reports they filled out during the program and researchers used qualitative data from class papers. When compared to other course styles, the program’s structure was found to have the greatest educational value (Allred, 2009). While the study did note the benefits of the program, several limitations may have underestimated the overall academic value of the Inside-Out Program. Specifically, those involved in Allred’s (2009) study took one survey during the middle of the course. The lack of a pre-and post-test comparison, makes it impossible to determine if there was a significant change in learning outcomes. Additionally, university students and the inmates met twice, allowing them to only get a small glimpse into the program.

While the previous research contributes to our understanding of the value of experiential programs such as Inside-Out, there is currently no research involving the transformed opinions of students who have participated in this program. Therefore, the

purpose of this study is to investigate students' opinions and perspectives on the correctional justice system before and after becoming involved in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program compared to those in the Correctional lecture class. The current study hypothesizes that students will report a more optimistic view and a better understanding of the justice system and the inmates in the correctional facility after participating in this program. In contrast, those who participated solely in the lecture class will not have a changed view of the justice system or the inmates in a correctional facility.

## METHOD

### Variables

The independent variable within this study is the *type of learning* the participant is experiencing. The first type of learning that the participant can be involved in is experiential learning, which would involve the students in the Inside Out Prison Exchange Program. The students involved in this type of learning are receiving a hands-on experience with the prison system and interacting with the inmates first hand. They are being taught by a professor, but also learning from speaking with those involved in the prison system and witnessing how the prison system works through involvement. The other type of learning that the participants can be involved in is classical learning, or lecture. The students involved in classical learning are those who are participating in the Correctional lecture class. The students participating in this type of learning are being taught by the same professor daily on the prison system through lecture slides, papers and communication.

The controlled variable in this study is the *type of content* the student is learning. In both the experiential learning and the classical learning groups, they are being taught about what life for inmates is like on a daily basis within the system. All of the participants are also learning about the prison system and how it operates.

The dependent variable in this study is *student opinion* on the prisoners and the prison system and whether it is changed after being involved in one of the two independent variables. The study is interested in seeing whether the independent variable, or the type of learning the participant is experiencing effects the opinions of the students in regards to prisoners and the prison system.

### Participants and Procedures

Participants were recruited from the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program (IO; N=10) and two correctional classes (CC; N=29) at Georgia Southern University. Surveys were provided to students at the start of the semester, and again 8 weeks following the start of class. The post-test was administered at this time point so that students in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program would have completed 8 visits to the prison. Students in the correctional class were also asked to complete the questionnaire at this time for consistency. The questionnaire included demographic questions along with questions assessing students' attitudes towards prisoners. The demographic variables of interest included gender, school classification (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), and race (White, African American, Asian, and Other.). On the questionnaire, participants provided a 4-digit code that they created in order to compare the two answers they delivered. This information was only available to the two researchers in this study, making their responses confidential to the researchers and anonymous to anyone else. The Institutional Review Board at Georgia Southern University approved all research procedures and all participants provided informed consent prior to participation.

### Measures

The survey (Appendix A) contained a total of 39 questions; 3 demographic and 36 from the Attitude towards Prisoners Scale (ATP Scale; Melvin, Gramling & Gardner (1985). The items on the ATP scale consisted of statements describing different attitudes towards prisoners in jails and prisons in the United States. Participants were asked to respond to each statement using a 5-point Likert scale with anchors of strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5). The statements included both positive statements (e.g., some

prisoners are pretty nice people) and negative statements (e.g., you never know when a prisoner is telling the truth) which were reverse scored. A total score for the ATP was calculated by summing the scores for all items, and then subtracting a constant of 36. This total score has a potential range from 0 to 144. Lower scores indicate more negative attitudes and higher scores reflect more positive attitudes towards prisoners or ex-prisoners. The ATP scale has shown high internal consistency across contrasting groups including graduate students working in prison reform, aftercare counselors, law enforcement officers, psychology students, community samples, and prisoners themselves. Furthermore, the ATP scale has demonstrated good test-retest ( $r = .82$ ) and split-half ( $r = .84$  to  $.92$ ) reliability.

#### Statistical Analysis

All data was imported and analyzed using SPSS Statistical Software version 24 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL). Descriptive statistics were performed on participants' demographic data. An Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used for the ATP scale to control for baseline differences and potential for regression to the mean (Vickers & Altman, 2001). Specifically, an ANCOVA was used to examine group differences in mean post-test scores of the ATP scale while controlling for pre-test scores. Effect sizes (ESs) are presented as partial eta squared ( $\eta^2_p$ ) for all results.

## RESULTS

Upon analysis, one participant reported an ATP score outside of three standard deviations of the mean. This participant was deemed an outlier, and removed for all subsequent analyses. Descriptive statistics (Table 1) revealed that of those who participated in the study, 27 (69.2%) were male and 12 (30.8%) were female. Regarding race, 24 (61.5%) responders identified as White, 12 (30.8%) as African American, and 3 (7.7%) identified as 'other'. 9 (23.1%) students belonged in the sophomore class, 18 (46.2%) were juniors, and 12 (30.8%) were seniors. The ANCOVA analysis for the ATP scale (see Figure 1) revealed no differences between the IO and CC groups at post-test ( $p = .372$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .022$ ), while controlling for baseline differences.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate changes in students' attitudes towards prisoners over eight weeks between participants in the Inside-Out Program and a corrections class. It was hypothesized that students will report a more optimistic view and a better understanding of the justice system and the inmates in the correctional facility after participating in this program. In opposition to the hypothesized results, there were no significant differences reported between IO and CC groups over the course of 8 weeks. The results from this study do not concur with previous studies that found significant differences between experiential learning groups and lecture based groups after taking part in the class (Fanta & Boubacar, 2016; Burke & Bush, 2013). Although the results were not significant, we do see that the IO group had higher attitudes at the baseline and both increased slightly, though not significantly over 8 weeks. When examining the changes in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program alone, there seemed to be a positive increase in prison opinion, though not significantly over 8 weeks. Although there was limited research regarding the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, the research found that the course had a overwhelming impression on the students across semesters (Hilinsky-Rosick & Blackmer, 2014) and the structure was found to have the highest educational value (Allred, 2009). Several limitations may have prevented the current investigation from reporting similar findings to previous research.

When examining the changes in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program alone, there seemed to be a positive increase in prison opinion, but it was not significant.

Although there was limited research regarding the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program,

the research that was done did find significant results (Hilinsky-Rosick & Blackmer, 2014; Allred, 2009).

### Limitations

There are many potential limitations within this study that are worth noting. First, although the courses should be similar in course content, there are many differences between the classes that could not be accounted for. Different professors taught the two different types of courses. Although the topics of their classes were the same, they could be taught different ways and the material could have been expressed differently. Additionally, the questionnaires were passed out at completely different times and in different settings. The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program participants received their surveys the first day of class. The correctional classes received their surveys after participating in the class a few times.

Second, upon administration of the post-test survey the participants were in class for only eight weeks, rather than the whole semester. The short amount of time between data collection may not have allowed for significant changes to individuals' perceptions of prisoners. Although the time the participants engaged in the classes is still longer than previous similar research, future investigations should consider either longer amounts of time between pre-and post-assessments, or include assessments across more time points.

Finally, the small overall sample size may not have been sufficient for statistical power. Furthermore, there were much fewer participants in the IO group than the control. Future research should include larger sample sizes.

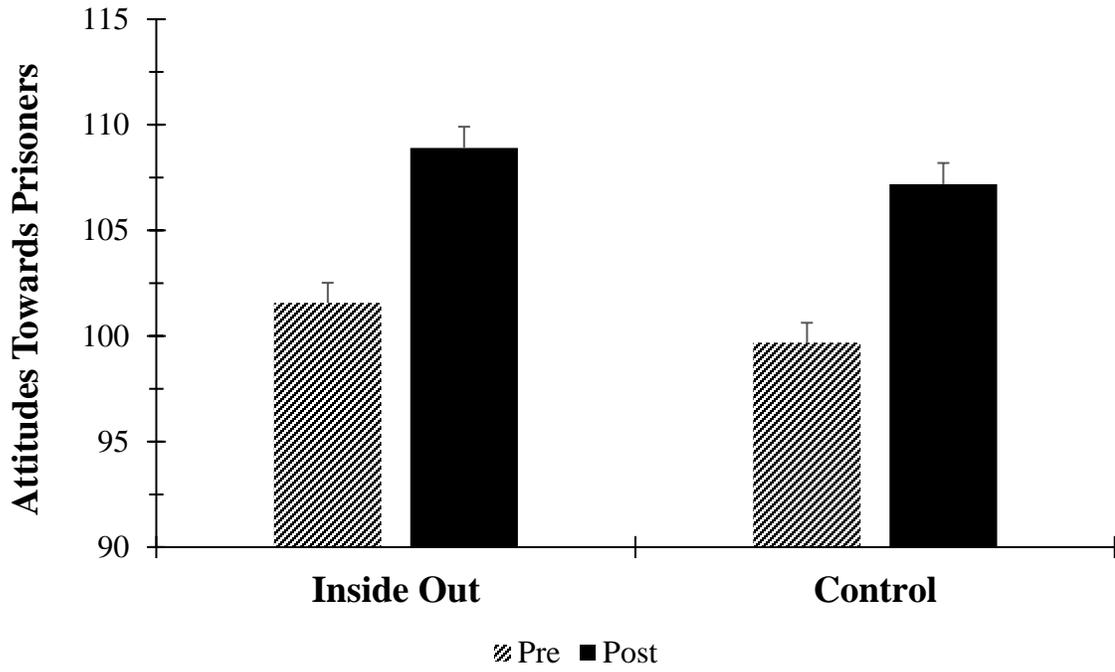
### Conclusion

Our findings suggest that the experiential learning and classical learning can improve, though not significantly. The findings saw that the IO group might have more positive attitude at the beginning. The sample size of this study is a large limitation and future studies should use more participants.

Table 1  
*Sample Demographics*

Characteristic	Inside Out	Corrections	Total
<i>N</i>	11	28	39
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	10	17	27
Female	1	11	12
<u>Race</u>			
White	4	20	24
African American	4	8	12
Other	3	0	3
<u>School Classification</u>			
Freshman	0	0	0
Sophomore	1	8	9
Junior	3	15	18
Senior	7	5	12

Figure 1  
*Attitudes Towards Prisoners*



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**Appendix A.**

## ATP SCALE

The statements listed below describe different attitudes toward prisoners in jails and prisons in the United States. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions.

You are asked to express your feelings about each statement by indicating whether you (1) Disagree Strongly, (2) Disagree, (3) Undecided, (4) Agree, (5) Agree Strongly. Indicate your opinion by writing the number that best describes your personal attitude in the left-hand margin. Please answer every item.

## Rating Scale

1	2	3	4
	5		
Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
	Agree		
Strongly			
	Strongly		

1. Prisoners are different from most people
2. Only a few prisoners are really dangerous
3. Prisoners never change
4. Most prisoners are victims of circumstances and deserve to be helped
5. Prisoners have feelings like the rest of us
6. It is not wise to trust a prisoner too far

7. I think I would like a lot of prisoners
8. Bad prison conditions just make a prisoner more bitter
9. Give a prisoner an inch and he'll take it a mile
10. Most prisoners are stupid
11. Prisoners need affection and praise just like anybody else
12. You should not expect too much from a prisoner
13. Trying to rehabilitate prisoners is a waste of time and money
14. You never know when a prisoner is telling the truth
15. Prisoners are no better or worse than other people
16. You have to be constantly on your guard with prisoners
17. In general, prisoners think and act alike
18. If you give a prisoner your respect, he'll give you the same
19. Prisoners only think about themselves
20. There are some prisoners I would trust with my life
21. Prisoners will listen to reason
22. Most prisoners are too lazy to earn an honest living
23. I wouldn't mind living next door to an ex-prisoner
24. Prisoners are just plain mean at heart
25. Prisoners are always trying to get something out of somebody
26. The values of most prisoners are about the same as the rest of us
27. I would never want one of my children dating an ex-prisoner
28. Most prisoners have the capacity for love
29. Prisoners are just plain immoral

30. Prisoners should be under strict, harsh discipline
31. In general, prisoners are basically bad people
32. Most prisoners can be rehabilitated
33. Some prisoners are pretty nice people
34. I would like associating with some prisoners
35. Prisoners respect only brute force
36. If a person does well in prison, he should be let out on parole

## Appendix B

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Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs		
<b>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</b>		
Phone: 912-478-5465		Veazey Hall 3000
		PO Box 8005
Fax: 912-478-0719	IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

**To:** Sabadosh, Laurel; Posick, Chad

**From:** Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs

**Initial Approval Date:** 1/8/2018

**Expiration Date:** 12/31/2017

**Subject:** Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research – Expedited Process

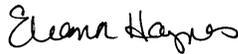
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After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H18082** and titled **“The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program: Attitudes Toward Prisoners as Reported by College Students”** it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable. You are authorized to enroll up to a maximum of 200 subjects.

*Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research. Description: The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of the Inside-Out Program to see if there is a change in the students’ thought process after experiencing life within a prison.*

If at the end of this approval period there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Haynes  
Compliance Officer

## **Appendix C**

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The experiential learning theory is vital to understand for this study in order to see if our hypothesis stating that “those who participate in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, experiential learning, will have a larger change in their opinions of the justice system and those within the prison system, compared to those who are taking a lecture class, classical learning” is accurate. The oldest definition of experiential learning was written by Aristotle in 350BC, “for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them” (as cited in Wolk et al., 2011). The Experiential Learning Theory was originally created by Dewey, Lewin and Piaget (1938), but the theorist Kolb popularized and expanded the theory and expanded upon it. Kolb (1984, pg. 18) defined experiential learning as, “a particular form of learning from life experience; often contrasted it with lecture a classroom learning.” Kolb (1984) believed that experiential learning involves a continuous process where the learner will bring individual learning needs and experiences to their learning environment and learning communities. Within the experiential learning theory there are four statistically prevalent learning styles that have been both researched and clinically observed (Kolb 1984). Learning styles include diverging, assimilating, converging and accommodating. The current study compares experiential learning with classical lecture-based teaching, to determine whether opinions transform more in the experiential learning students than the lecture-based students.

#### *Benefit of experiential learning across discipline*

Yorio & Feifei (2012) researched the overall effect of service-learning has on its expected learning outcomes. Their hypothesis was supported as findings revealed that service-learning does have a positive effect on understanding social issues, personal

insight, and cognitive development (Yorio & Feifei, 2012). The researchers used a formula to find differences in how the mean gain and the mean difference effect size metrics were calculated. Yorio & Feifei (2012) hypothesized that there would be a positive effect of service-learning on a student's understanding of critical issues.

Sigler & Tyran (2017) provided support for the idea that service-learning creates conditions that can lead to changes in the learner's brain. The researchers stated that service-learning is used across multiple disciplines to change the student brain by emotionally engaging in the course concepts and having a closer connection to the subject they are learning (Sigler & Tyran, 2017). Sigler & Tyran (2017) stated that "emotional engagement is critical in learning as it relates to changing the brain (p. 22). This idea is important to understand because if a person becomes more attached to a topic or situation, they are more likely to be influenced by that topic and therefore possibly change their outlook. Sigler & Tyran (2017) also examined structured service-learning reflection activities, such as papers the conduct that describe their thoughts and feelings during their experience of service learning. The results from this found that this type of activity allows people to connect to what they are being taught and help create a structure for combining their new learning with their past experiences.

Leeson, Ogier & Brammall (2015) applied self-efficacy constructs to the service-learning field in order to validate an innovative self-learning assessment suite. The assessment suite used in this study included a 12-item Service-Learning Self-Efficiency on Program and Implementation, a 9-item Service-Learning Belief Inventory and a 10-item Overall-Service Learning Self-Efficacy on Program and Development and Implementation scale (Leeson, Ogier & Brammall, 2015). The overall goal of Leeson,

Ogier & Brammall's (2015) research was to create a comprehensive picture of the impact of service-learning experience on a program development. The results from Leeson, Ogier & Brammall's (2015) study found that there is a connection between service-learning and student learning outcomes in terms of self-efficacy, cultural awareness and competency skills.

Research completed by Whitley et al., (2017) consisted of three undergraduate students' that were involved in a physical activity-based service learning course. Service learning is a type of experiential learning where students become engaged in cycle of service and reflection (Whitley et al., 2017). Throughout the study, data was collected in numerous different ways including demographic questions, pre- and post-service interviews, reflection journals, post-service written reflections, and participant observations. The independent variables within this study included interest in learning, level of effect and degree of adaptability. The data was analyzed using comprehensive deductive and inductive analysis procedures, along with the creation of detailed narratives summarizing students' individual experiences and outcomes. After the data analysis, the study found that students' growth and development improved their interpersonal skills, increased knowledge of social justice issues and enhanced self-learning. Although these results from the study suggest that there was exponential growth within the students involved in this study, the number, depth and complexity of these outcomes varied significantly.

Hill (2017) researched experiential learning within the nursing education. Hill (2017) redesigned the module 'advanced history taking and physical examination with clinical reasoning', adding experiential learning into the module with the purpose of

“encouraging students to apply their theoretical knowledge in a practical way within the learning environment” (Hill, 2017, pg. 934). then it was evaluated by the student participants. The research evaluated the experiential learning style and experiential teaching style, which is related to this current study. Hill’s (2017) research established positive feedback and found that experiential learning has provided a successful teaching education when applying it to clinical skill achievement.

Miner-Romanoff (2014) researched student perceptions of juvenile offenders after they completed an online experiential learning task. 43 students viewed a video of incarcerated juvenile offenders recounting their experiences of institutionalization, sentences, challenges, programming and fears prior to their release (Miner-Romanoff, 2014). Once the video was viewed, the participants responded to seven quantitative questions and one qualitative question which revealed that the perception regarding punishment and rehabilitation of 70.7% of the participants were changed to have a more positive opinion and response (Miner-Romanoff, 2014). Over half of the participants increased their support for incarceration alternatives as well as support for mental health treatment and education for the juveniles (Miner-Romanoff, 2014). The findings from Miner-Romanoff research emphasize the idea that experiential learning can have a positive effect in regards to a better understanding of concept and a change in opinion.

Burke & Bush (2013) explored the attitudes and perceptions that Criminal Justice students have regarding service learning. 54 undergraduate students were asked to reflect on their service learning classes, out of class activities and discuss if there were any barriers that made service learning classes problematic (Burke & Bush, 2013). The study focused on students’ experiences during their service-learning class along with their

perceptions of this type of teaching. Burke & Bush (2013) hypothesized that students who take service learning classes would have a different academic experience than those who have not taken this type of class, which is similar to this current study's hypothesis. Findings from Burke & Bush (2013) indicated that the students did find service learning experiences beneficial to their education, but there are barriers preventing students from continuously participating in service learning experiences including time, money and family obligations, which should be considered when examining service-learning research.

Most relevant to the current study are the numerous examinations comparing the experiential learning theory to lecture-based or classical teachings. Fanta & Boubacar (2016) examined the effectiveness of an activity-based teaching versus a discussion-based teaching in regards to the students' performance (Fanta & Boubacar, 2016). The researchers randomly selected two sections in Principles of Macroeconomics to participate in the activity and the rest of the sections remained a control group using lecture-based teaching. The results revealed that the students within the experiential groups experienced a significantly higher gain in their in-class exercise scores. This study along with multiple others have shown that there is an interest in experiential learning and the importance of involving students in multiple ways during their time in class.

#### *Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program*

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program is a fifteen-week experiential learning course held in a high security prison. This program includes college students and inmates incarcerated in the facility at the time. The group of university students and those who are incarcerated meet once a week for two hours. In order for university students to

participate in this program, they must pass a background check and complete an application provided and accepted by the professor at that University teaching the class. Those who are incarcerated become accepted into this program through good behavior during their time within the high security prison. During this program, the university students and the prison inmates discuss ideas and share insight on sentencing, punishment, and incarceration. The goal of this program is to provide a deeper understand of the Criminal Justice System in effort to “empower those who are part of our criminal justice system – those incarcerated and those working it in, both now and in the future – to find ways to build safer and more just society for all” (Pompa & Crabbe, 2004, p. 3).

#### *Research Involving the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program*

While research specifically focuses on the Inside-Out Program is scarce, a few researchers have examined the program. Hilinsky-Rosick & Blackmer (2014) explored the feelings and reactions of university students who participated in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. The researchers gathered a total of 151 reflection papers from four separate semesters written by the outside students who attended the university. Hilinsky-Rosick & Blackmer (2014) used an open coding strategy that identified passages that pertained to student attitudes towards punitiveness and empathy. The findings suggested that the course had a profound impact on the students across semesters (Hilinsky-Rosick & Blackmer, 2014). The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program was consistently identifying as one of the most valuable courses that the participants had taken (Hilinsky-Rosick & Blackmer, 2014). Unlike this current research, Hilinsky-Rosick & Blackmer

(2014) researched this topic with numerous participants and multiple times, but still supported the hypothesis in the current study.

Allred (2009), conducted a qualitative and quantitative study examining the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. The students had self-reports they filled out during the program and researchers used qualitative data from class papers. When comparing course structure, content and readings, the structure was found to have the greatest educational value (Allred, 2009). Allred stated, "What we got from it was academically good, but our gains from this class went so far beyond" (Allred, 2009). While the study did note the benefits of the program, the limitations associated within the study may have underestimated the overall academic value of the Inside-Out Program. Specifically, those involved in Allred's (2009) study took one survey during the middle of the course. The lack of a pre-and post-test comparison, makes it impossible to determine if there was a significant change in learning outcomes. Additionally, university students and the inmates met twice, allowing them to only get a small glimpse into the program. This is viewed as a limitation because there could have been a much more significant change in their opinion and viewpoint if they had more experience in the program before taking the survey.

Previous research has found that experiential learning or service-learning strongly influences a student's learning and helps them improve and better understand the information that has been provided. Research has also found that students who participate in the Inside-Out Program, in particular, develop a better understanding of the justice system, as well as a changed opinion of the prison system and those incarcerated. In view of previous research, the purpose of this study is to compare student opinions and

perspectives on the correctional justice system before and after becoming involved in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. The current study hypothesizes that students will report a more optimistic view and a better understanding of the justice system and the inmates in the correctional facility after participating in this program. In contrast, those who participated solely in the lecture class will not have a changed view of the justice system or the inmates in a correctional facility.