BREAKING INTO PRISON: ART EDUCATION IN ACTION

By

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This Capstone Project is dedicated to all the incarcerated individuals needing opportunities to educate and express themselves, and to the educators that are trying to provide them.

“As the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves become dehumanized.”

-Paulo Freire

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Summary of Capstone Project
Presented to the College of Fine Arts of the University of Florida
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Chair: Jodi Kushins
Major: Art Education

This capstone study examines information about the use of art education in Florida prisons. The project’s objectives raise important questions about the role and status of art education in Florida prisons. Additionally, incorporated in the findings is a discussion concerning the need for establishing long-term, publicly funded art education in today’s corrections environment.

Case study and qualitative/quantitative research methods were used to look at individuals involved with this issue and the group as a whole. Data collection included: direct observation, interviews and questionnaires. These materials informed my final capstone project; a synopsis of this capstone study is the form of an op-ed article currently under review at several conventional and online news organizations and a video interview of a former student imprisoned for 20 of his 42 years.

Conclusions drawn from the research suggest that art programs for incarcerated individuals can help them develop better mental outlooks. Expressive therapy and art education reduces violence within the prison system as well as decreases parolees’ recidivism. This project
is a call for art educators to *break into prison*, taking their creative inspiration and expressive therapy strategies to incarcerated men and women. Without such efforts, few art programs will ever be offered in state prisons.
The prison is perhaps the last bastion of a totalitarian society that exists in the Western world. With their civil rights and privacy having been for the most part eviscerated, American prisoner are left to the devices of a cadre of administrators and guards. These officials regularly make important and many times punitive decisions affecting not only the prisoner but by default, the prisoner’s family. Many argue that strong disciplinary measures are warranted as the prisoner is incarcerated in order that retribution for crimes is realized. Others see prisons as an opportunity to rehabilitate so that the incarcerated individual may return to society and become a productive citizen.

My research analyzes prevailing policies and attitudes toward prisoners and the kinds of art education opportunities currently afforded to the incarcerated in the state of Florida. The study also offers the reader a glimpse into what it’s like to be a prisoner, as well as an attempt to document and analyze some opinions held by selected individuals about the inclusion of art education in the state prison system. Highlighting existing opportunities that utilize art education as a therapeutic, vocational, and self expressive means of approaching education in prisons is another part of the findings. Finally, I hope that by adding to the discussion and findings that support making the prison system a more humane and functional place, this study will help ameliorate the dehumanization of the oppressed and, by default, the oppressor as well.
Statement of the Problem

The US incarcerates a higher percentage of its population than any other country in the world.¹ Could this dreadful statistic be a result of an education problem in our country? Are our standardized testing-centric curriculums failing to inspire and encourage students to stay in school resulting in high dropout rates of young people who are sometimes more prone to anti-social and criminal activities? While originally intended to protect US citizens, current penal system laws and policies are burdening us in untold ways. They do not solve the crime problem in the US, they do not reduce recidivism, and they often hurt innocent children and families while wreaking havoc on American society. My study looks at these issues with an eye to redeeming qualities of art education. I argue here that art education has a role to play in the US prison system, and that this role serves the public good. I place this study within a larger question, that is: Why aren’t federal and state governments more proactively involved in educating the incarcerated when education itself is proven to reduce crime (Crispo, 1997; Pew, 2008; Steurer, 2001)?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate how art education in the prison environment can benefit the incarcerated individual, the prison staff, and society as a whole. My study delves into the resistance to having these programs implemented. I describe some of the barriers to inclusion of art education programming in prisons, along with what selected educators and therapists have done to circumvent the roadblocks to establishing art education programs in prisons. A video-recorded interview with a former student aide incarcerated for 20 of his 42

¹ According to Roy Walmsley, consultant to the United Nations and an Associate of the International Center for Prison Studies (ICPS), King’s College, London, the United States has the highest prison population rate in the world, 743 per 100,000 of the national population. This statistic is from Walmsley’s World Prison Population List (9th Edition) and latest available as of May 2011. Retrieved from http://www.prisonstudies.org.
years is a seminal aspect of my findings. His experience as an orphaned teenager working with an art educator/therapist, as well as his education and experience within the confines of the Florida prison system, informs this research and provides valuable insight for future prison educators to utilize.

**Rationale and Significance of the Study**

At the root of this study’s rationale and significance is the concern I have that our society incarcerates far too many people and does not provide adequate education and expressive opportunities for individuals once they are incarcerated. This is a recipe for failure, as evidenced by the unprecedented high recidivism rates we are seeing. Prisons are for the most part closed, self-governing environments. Therefore, metaphorically speaking, educators need to take the initiative and *break into prison* to facilitate the establishment of art education as well as general education programs within state-run prisons in the US.

Shedding light on problems associated with resistance to prison education programming raises issues regarding public tax dollars dedicated to crime prevention. One would think such information would convince public officials and the public-at-large that continuing the policy of embroiling 1 out of every 31 American citizens into some form of correctional control (Pew, 2008) is counterproductive, and doing irreparable harm to our society. The *incarceration epidemic* is having negative effects on prisoners’ innocent family members (particularly their children), as well as society in general as the taxpayer has the financial burden of footing the bill for keeping people in prisons. The taxpayer is also burdened with the task of having to contend with parolees who have not been adequately trained for any vocation other than perhaps more criminal endeavors. The money society can save by mitigating recidivism through prison

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2 Estimates vary, but research suggests that nearly seven in 10 formerly incarcerated persons will commit a new crime, and half will end up back in prison within three years (U.S. Bureau of Judicial Statistics, 2009).
education seems self-evident, yet I know that such considerations are not engrained into public sentiment about prisoners.

**Definition of Terms**

**Art Therapy.** Art Therapy is a type of psychotherapy that encourages the expression of emotions through artistic activities such as painting, drawing, or sculpture; psychotherapy based on the belief that the creative process involved in the making of art is healing and life-enhancing. (Retrieved from http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/art+therapy?s=t)

**Corrections.** The term “corrections” is generally used as a truncated version of the expression “corrections institution.” Corrections institution has replaced the noun “prison” or even “penitentiary” in today’s society when referring to large federal or state facilities that house incarcerated people.

**Department of Corrections (DOC).** Every state has a Department of Corrections funded by state tax payers that is charged with the administration of its prison system. The DOC houses people convicted of felonies who are serving over one year prison terms. In August 2012, the Florida Department of Corrections housed 100,272 inmates in its 55 state prisons (including seven private prisons), and supervised almost 115,000 active offenders on community supervision at 156 probation offices throughout the state (Retrieved from http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/Quickfacts.html)

**Expressive therapy.** Also known as expressive arts therapy or creative arts therapy, expressive therapy is the use of the creative arts as a form of therapy. Unlike traditional art expression, the process of creation is emphasized rather than the final product. Expressive therapy is predicated on the assumption that people can heal through use of imagination and the various forms of creative expression.
**Incarcerated population.** Incarcerated population is the population of inmates confined in a prison or a jail. This may also include halfway-houses, bootcamps, weekend programs, and other entities in which individuals are locked up overnight.

**Offender.** Offender is the title generally given all prisoners by prison administrators, law enforcement officials and often the media. In prison, incarcerated individuals may be referred to as inmates or prisoners; however, in much of the documentation one will read about prisoners the term “offender” is frequently used.

**PSCE Post-Secondary Correctional Education**

**Recidivism.** Recidivism is generally defined as a formerly incarcerated person returning to prison within a 3-5 year period after having initially served time for a prior offense. Many times recidivism occurs as a result of a minor infraction that would not result in any prison time at all if the “offense” had been a first time transgression. Recidivism for negligible offenses is often cited as one of the foremost reasons the incarceration rates in this country have soared over the last 20 years.

**Literature Review**

If it is a foregone conclusion that art education, art therapy, and education in general helps the prison environment in terms of reducing stress levels for prisoners and prison staff, then why aren’t federal and state governments clamoring to get these programs started en masse? The stalled action on this front becomes more of a mystery when one considers established

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3 According to the Pew Center on the States 2011 study, *State of Recidivism*, in some states, released offenders who break the rules of their supervision are routinely punished with a short prison stay. California, for example, has for years taken this route, an approach that has helped to keep its prison population the highest in the nation. (Retrieved from http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/sentencing_and_corrections/State_Recedivism_Revolving_Door_America_Prisons%20.pdf)
findings that education not only decreases prisoner depression and violence but also greatly lessens recidivism, thereby saving states money (Crispo, 1997; DOJ, 2012; Gussak, 2009).

**Prison Education Overview**

Currently, we have 2.3 million people in prison in this country with one in 100 adults in jail or prison on any given day. The US has more than tripled its prison population over the last twenty years. We lead the world in imprisoning a higher percentage of our populace than any other country (Walmsley, 2009). Large incarcerated populations in our country are imposing significant financial burdens on tax payers as state spending on corrections from 2005-2009 grew faster than any other expenditure category. Our states are spending a combined $52 billion annually on corrections and related activities (NASBO, 2010). These statistics warrant the questions as to why this incarceration escalation is happening in our country and what needs to be done to mitigate it. Recidivism alone has a lot to do with the increased incarceration rates. The task of trying to diminish recidivism leads right to the education dilemma as there is irrefutable proof that educating the prisoner segment of our population reduces recidivism and creates a prison environment that is much less prone to violence and other dangerous maladies (Crispo, 1997; DOJ, 2012; Pew, 2008; Steurer, 2001). Estimates vary, but research suggests that nearly seven in 10 formerly incarcerated persons will be convicted of a new crime, and half will end up back in prison within three years (BJS, 2009; Langan & Levin, 2002).

The US is not educating prisoners at a very high rate. Research suggests that 35 to 42 percent of prisons offer some form of post secondary corrections education (PSCE) (Erisman & Contardo, 2005; Stephen, 2008) but within those percentages only a small amount are earning two- or four- year post secondary degrees. According to a 2010 survey the Institute for Higher Education Policy conducted amongst 43 participating states, approximately 71,000 incarcerated
persons were enrolled in some form of post secondary education program, representing only 6 percent of the incarcerated population. Roughly half of these students were enrolled in vocational programs (Gorgol & Sponsler, 2011). A 2009 report entitled “The Effects of Postsecondary Correctional Education: Final Report” explains what could very well be the root cause of our prison education predicament and the reason for the resistance to education in prison to this day:

A new chapter in correctional education was ushered in with the creation of the Pell Grant program in 1972. The Pell Grant awarded federal student aid for postsecondary education based on financial need, a criterion met by most inmates. However, changing attitudes toward crime in the 1980s and early 1990s stirred debate regarding the appropriateness of higher education for inmates, leading ultimately to a provision in the 1994 Violent Crime Control Act ending Pell eligibility for state and federal prisoners. (Winterfield et al, 2009, p. 2)

About Art Education in Prisons

While the benefits of art education and art therapy in prisons appear obvious (Grant, 2009; Gussak, 2009; Kornfeld, 1997; Mullen, 1999) many criminologists have not regarded the advantages of prison art programs as worthy of quantitative analysis (Grant, 2010). Despite criminologists’ lack of consideration in this area of study, there have been many studies by therapists that show the benefits of art education and art therapy in prisons (Breiner et al, 2011; Ferszt et al, 2004; Grant, 2009; Gussak, 2009; Hartz & Thick, 2005).

Art Therapy in Prisons (ArtTherapyinPrison.com) is an effort lead by Dave Gussak Chair of Art Education at the Florida State University. Dr. Gussak has written and researched extensively on art therapy in prison. One of his studies conducted in 2003 highlighted the successful collaboration between psychologists and art therapists and demonstrated how they
were able to improve in the participants’ anger management skills. It was decided that art therapy would be incorporated into an existing manualized\textsuperscript{4} cognitive-behavioral treatment (CBT) based anger management program offered to inmates in the general population who have a history of anger problems or interpersonal violence. There were two primary ways in which art therapy was found beneficial within the CBT format:

First, art therapy techniques were used to help participants engage in the therapy process by helping group members access emotions that are difficult or uncomfortable to express and/or by calming participants who were nervous or distressed about being in the group or are experiencing unrelated stressors. Second, art therapy tasks were used to present and complement the CBT material so that it could be more readily understood by participants with varying learning styles, intellectual abilities, personality traits, and other individual differences that impact their ability to process the material. As well, regardless of the type of antisocial cognition offenders may possess—hostile, predatory, or both—art therapy directives seemed to help participants understand how their thoughts and beliefs about themselves and others influence their behavior. (Breiner et al, 2011, p 17)

A study Dr. Gussak spearheaded in 2009 sought to quantify the benefits of art therapy with prison inmates at corrections facilities in North Florida. The study’s objective was to determine if art therapy could help improve mood, socialization, problem solving, and internal locus of control in both the male and female inmates (Gussak, 2009). The study used the Formal Elements Art Therapy Scale (FEATS), which is a measurement system for global variables in art developed by art therapist Linda Gantt in 2001. Using FEATS and the PPAT (draw a person

\textsuperscript{4} Manualized Therapy - Used to measure therapy outcome to ensure uniformity across therapists & minimize variability (Retrieved from http://quizlet.com/14534117/clinical-psychology-technology-evidence-based-manualized-practices-flash-cards/).
picking an apple from a tree) assessments in his research, Gussak found that “despite some shortcomings the art therapy seemed to benefit the male and female inmates that did participate. During the exit surveys, the responses to the art therapy process were generally positive” (Gussak, 2009).

Another study done by a group conducted in 2004 was concerned with the fact that the number of women entering prison has continued to escalate over the past two decades. Many of those women were in bereavement though health care research paid little attention to incarcerated woman who were grieving. Individual 1-hour art therapy sessions were offered to eight incarcerated bereaved women for a period of eight weeks. According to the authors, seven of the women described positive outcomes following the art therapy intervention and recommended that the program be continued and increased in length (Ferszt et al, 2004).

A program funded by the State of Florida, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Department of Corrections and organized by educator Carol Mullen (1999), revealed numerous positive results. Ms. Mullen and her team developed an arts-based educational program inside a female correctional facility in a rural area of Florida whereby the value of learning through the arts in a prison setting is demonstrated at personal, interpersonal, and social levels (Mullens, 1999). Ms. Mullen concluded her research paper with a very telling summary in the form of a personal reflection when she wrote:

The women's eagerness to create propelled the program forward. Unlike many students "in the free world" who question the value of artistic expression until "seduced," incarcerated women are ready to be immersed. But, they are rarely given the opportunity. Artistic learning can benefit female inmates and their children by facilitating reflection and increasing feelings of self- and cultural worth. However, public communities have
serious misgivings about the ability of such programs to generate lasting changes. As a step in this direction, our circle of women helped one another in their transformation. (p. 159)

Other studies and findings suggest that for low self-esteem participants, art therapy can be an effective treatment intervention to raise self-esteem (Franklin, 1992). A study done on female juvenile offenders by art therapists Liz Hartz and Lynette Thick (2005) concluded with the following summation that seems relevant to much of the incarcerated population:

. . . art therapy is an effective intervention for raising the self-esteem of female juvenile offenders, a population characterized not only by criminal behavior but also by extensive histories of trauma and childhood maltreatment. These findings also support common clinical observations that art therapy develops mastery, builds social connection, and evokes greater self-awareness. Art therapy cultivates these factors, crucial in raising self-esteem, in a way that engages most of this characteristically resistant population. This identifies art therapy as a valuable treatment modality for female juvenile offenders who struggle with pervasive issues of low self-esteem and for whom the development of greater self-esteem is pivotal for healing and rehabilitation. These results indicate that art psychotherapy and art as therapy address different components of self-esteem. These differences have implications for effective treatment planning and deserve further study. (p. 78)

Cost Benefits

While specific data showing the cost benefits of art education in prisons has not been developed, the empirical data citing the cost benefits of adult education in prisons is very
conclusive. A 2012 Department of Justice (DOJ) report entitled; *Rising Prison Costs: Restricting Budgets and Crime Prevention Options* included the following data about these cost benefits:

In 2001, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy evaluated the costs and benefits of a variety of correctional, skills-building programs. The study examined program costs; the benefit of reducing recidivism by lowering costs for arrest, conviction, incarceration, and supervision; and the benefit by avoiding crime victimization . . . The benefit-to-cost ratio of residential drug abuse treatment is as much as $2.69 for each dollar invested in the program; for adult basic education, the benefit is as much as $5.65 . . . The study clearly indicates these inmate programs result in significant cost savings through reduced recidivism, and their expansion is important to public safety. (p. 5)

A study conducted by TaxWatch and the Center for Needs Assessment & Planning did a Costs-Consequences Analysis (CCA) for Florida's Workforce Development Programs that showed “that every dollar of public investment in correctional education returned $3.20” (Crispo, 1997, p. 1). These cost benefits were realized as a reduction in recidivism by persons who received various types of education while incarcerated. With hard statistics like these, one has to wonder why our federal government does not allow incarcerated individuals in state or federal prisons to receive federal grants or loans. Many of my students that had earned a GED were stymied by the result of the 1994 crime bill and could go no further with their formal education. As Sean Pica, executive director of Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, a New York-based non-profit group that works on prisoner reentry issues stated, “restoring Pell grants to prisoners should be a priority as practical matter” (Abdul-Aim, 2010, para 32). Abdul-Alim also reports Jeff Mellow, professor of criminal justice at the Prisoner Reentry Initiative of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, as declaring; “The research is very consistent that post-
secondary education has a much greater effect on reducing recidivism among this population than getting your GED” (Abdul-Aim, 2010, para 16).

**Art Educators Working with Prisoners**

**ArtSpring**

The ArtSpring (ArtSpring.org) program based in South Florida was founded in 1992 by professional chorographer and art educator, Leslie Neal. The organization has national recognition for the longest ongoing arts-in-corrections programming in Florida. Her interest in community-based art programs fueled her initial desire to work with incarcerated woman. The program was later expanded to include arts-based educational programming to develop self-exploration and effective life skills for incarcerated men and youth as well as other at-risk populations in underserved communities. The ArtSpring mission is to “empower participants to redirect their lives, resulting in a healthier and safer society” (ArtSpring.org, 2013).

Through email, Leslie Neal noted art-oriented programs in prison usually depend on a series of grants or private donations. This is how ArtSpring is funded. She also pointed out that because of the recent trend towards privatization in prison management there actually seems to be an increased acceptance for art programs being introduced into the state prison system. When asked why the privatization of prisons is leading to a more receptive attitude by prison administrators for art programs, Ms. Neal responded that the DOC (Department of Corrections) needs to begin to improve their recidivism rates to resist privatization, but they have no monies to offer rehabilitative educational programs - GED, drug and alcohol counseling, and so on. However, an interesting result of this threat of privatization, according to Ms. Neal, is that the DOC now needs to rely on volunteers from the community to come inside and teach the inmates, which is presently occurring at many state facilities. She further commented that prior to the
privatization threat; the prevailing attitude amongst DOC administrators to outside educators and volunteers was rather negative (L. Neal, personal communication, May 5, 2013).

Ms. Neal made clear that ArtSpring has never cost the State of Florida any money and indicated that she is not sure she would want state funding, particularly through the Department of Corrections. Her experience with the Arts in Corrections (AiC) program (one of the few DOC art education programs to receive state support) was terminated after a great deal of work by herself and other educators to institute the statewide program. The program began in the summer of 2007 with considerable support from the new Florida DOC Deputy Secretary, Laura Bedard. Ms. Bedard, and the Deputy Secretary, continued to support this initiative until the AiC disbanded in 2009 due to bureaucratic and administrative changes (Campbell, 2010). Specifying that these types of bureaucratic shakeups are typical within the DOC, Ms. Neal is of the opinion that it’s the insulated nature of the DOC system that tends to make innovative programs like AiC susceptible to impulsive new administrators terminating them, often with little notice or mutual consent of other professionals involved (L. Neal, personal communication, July 8, 2013).

Nonetheless, ArtSpring has remained intact and a very successful program. It is a great example of the concept of an art educator taking the initiative and breaking into prison taking innovative ideas and expressive curriculums to the people within the prison walls. One notable comment Ms. Neal made during the interview is that no one, as far as she knows, that was involved in the ArtSpring program for one year or more has ever recidivated (L. Neal, personal communication, May 21, 2013).
Inmate Mural Arts Program (IMAP)

One outcome of the Arts in Corrections initiative was the establishment of the Inmate Mural Arts Program still in place at several of Florida’s corrections facilities, mainly in North Florida and South Georgia regions (D. Gussak, personal communication, July 11, 2013).

A team was created that consisted of Gussak and two graduate art therapy students from Florida State University . . . Borrowing from initiatives and techniques instituted by the Philadelphia Mural Project this team developed and executed a large, community mural using inmate artists from a moderate-maximum security, faith-based correctional facility for adult men, Wakulla Correctional Institution. The goals for this project were to improve the participating inmate’s socialization and problem-solving skills, skills necessary to facilitate reintegration upon release from the institution (Campbell, 2010).

Gussak feels the use of art education and therapy is gaining wider acceptance amongst today’s prison administrators because of the numerous successful programs and studies in recent years showing that expressive therapies and art education does indeed reduce recidivism rates (D. Gussak, personal communication, July 11, 2013).

The above are just a few of the amazing programs with an arts concentration that are taking place today in Florida and Georgia prisons. Dr. Gussak’s website is a repository of his research and artwork created by incarcerated individuals at http://arttherapyinprison.com. Please see Appendix 1 for a comprehensive list of current prison art education programs.
Methodology

I used a combination of case study research framed in part as narrative research\(^5\) for this paper as well as the accompanying video and op-ed article. My research was conducted via phone interviews, email questionnaires, as well as face-to-face interviews recorded with a video camera. I gathered data that includes the opinions and experience of people about the use of art education in prisons as well as statistics about prisons’ use of art education, recidivism rates, incarceration rates, finances, prison conditions, and prison growth rates.

I spoke with and recorded my interview with former student aide at TCI, Shawn Griffith. The interview took place on May 18\(^{th}\), 2013 in Sebring, FL and took about an hour and a half. The final edited version is approximately 15 minutes long and can be viewed on my ArtEdNow channel on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-ax71-fDwY.

I also sent an initial email questionnaire sent to Leslie Neal of ArtSpring on May 5\(^{th}\) followed by two phone interviews, one was recorded and took place May 21\(^{st}\) and another, whereby notes were taken, took place May 28\(^{th}\). I sent an email questionnaire to art educator and folk art expert, Kristin Congdon on May 24th. I conducted a phone interview with David Gussak, Art Education Department Chair at Florida State University, on July 11\(^{th}\). The interview was documented with manual notes.

Both Leslie Neal’s and Kristin Congdon’s questionnaires queried what precipitated their interests in becoming involved in prison art program, what types of prison art programs they were involved with and what barriers to art programs in prisons they experienced. The phone interview with David Gussak discussed the programs he’s been involved with over the years,

\(^5\) Narrative research deals with the human experience. A narrative provides links, connections and meaning to human activity. The stories told bring together the diverse aspects of the human experience. Narrative as data acquired through research may utilize storytelling, life history, in depth interview, biography or focus groups. (Retrieved from https://wikis.tamu.edu/display/qualiwiki/Narrative+Approach+to+Education+Research)
namely the Arts in Corrections (AiC) program, Inmate Mural Arts Program (IMAP), as well as the state of art therapy and art education in today’s prison environment. We also discussed his research and latest book, *Art On Trial* (2013), recently published by Columbia University Press. The book delves in to Dr. Gussaks’s expert witness involvement in an artist’s murder trial.

I initiated email correspondence on July 7th with Kelvin Badie, the Daytona State College School of Adult Education Assistant Chair. The email was sent in order to corroborate other research documented in this paper that the adult education program at Tomoka Corrections was no longer being offered.

**Data Collection Procedures and Analysis**

I collected data about participants using interviews, examinations of records, policy analyses, conversations and interviews with former students to inform my research. The types of data collection were as follows: documents and artifacts (writing by a former student aide and prisoner); archival records (prison records of the participant and policy documents); interviews (notes, video recordings, and transcripts of interviews with participants): plus direct observation (transcripts of conversations and email with participants). As mentioned above, I also made use of video and audio recording during my phone interview and during the interview with Shawn Griffith, my former student, and Leslie Neal the founder of the ArtSpring arts in prison program.

**Data Analysis Procedures** As I collected information, I attempted to interpret the data as a whole looking for common threads as to why the participants felt art education was needed, or not, within the prison system. For example, I found shared concern for the barriers to setting up art curricula in prisons. Similarly, policy analysis was analyzed in much the same way. The prison system is fraught with policies with unclear objectives. I analyzed policy to find those that facilitate education for inmates and which impede it. I also analyzed the data collected from the
video recorded interview as well as other audio recordings of educators, email correspondence, notes, and phone interviews. Subsequent interpretation used some descriptive analysis.

**Discussion**

**Personal Experience**

While art programs can be found in some prisons, my personal experience and research suggest that art education, and education in general, is subject to the discretion and sometimes the whims of wardens, administrators and other officials. My experience at Daytona State College (DSC) is a good example of how programs are easily terminated and diffused at the impulse of many different entities. DSC did not receive funding through the state corrections coffers to teach at Tomoka Corrections Institution (TCI). DCS received its financial support for its TCI adult education program through the Florida Department of Education Workforce Development Education Program. Workforce education programs are intended to meet state and local workforce needs, help individuals improve their skills and achieve economic self-sufficiency, and provide Florida businesses with trained workers (OPPAGA, 2010).

It is interesting to note that there is no mention of prisoner education in the Florida Legislature’s most recent Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability (OPPAGA) report. The program I was working with at TCI lost education funding because in the beginning of 2012 Florida’s Governor Scott made it mandatory that adult education students in the workforce programs pay for their Adult Basic Education (ABE) and GED classes. The students imprisoned at Tomoka Corrections have little to no money; therefore, the new policy requiring students to pay for their own ABE and GED classes precipitated the termination of the Daytona State College education program at Tomoka Corrections. This move by Governor Scott
has also diminished the program in adult education colleges throughout the state (Rockwell, 2012).

TCI did not have an ongoing art program of any kind that I knew of. However, several years prior to my time there, Al Black, one of the Florida Highwaymen⁶ painters, was allowed to set up a studio while incarcerated. Black produced a good body of work while he was at TCI and his many murals are located along the halls of the administration buildings (Monroe, 2009).

Prisoners will make art whether there are formal art programs or not. As art educator Phyllis Kornfield affirmed it in her book, *Cellblock Visions* (1997), “One of the few defenses an inmate has against the dehumanizing effects of incarceration is what is known as ‘art.’ In one form or another, almost all prison inmates are either making it or buying it” (p.9). It was a common occurrence at TCI to see art created for friends, families, and for prisoners’ own obvious needs to express themselves. One individual I got to know at Tomoka Corrections who created a lot of art on his own with materials given to him by his family was 32-year-old artist, Curtis Shuler. Because of efforts by Shuler’s wife, Melissa, his artwork can easily be seen online. On the website, Justice4Juveniles (http://Justice4Juveniles.Wordpress.com) Josh Phillips (2012) wrote the following about Mr. Shuler;

Curtis is serving a life term, without any possibility of parole, because he was charged as a principle participant in a murder that took place during a carjacking. Though the then 16-year-old Curtis had a number of friends and family who testified he was at his home when the crime occurred he was still given a life without parole sentence. This also happened despite the fact the jury only found him guilty of attempted burglary,

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⁶ The Florida Highwaymen were a group of self-taught African-American Florida landscape painters originating in the mid 1950s in Ft. Pierce, FL. Shunned by local galleries they sold their work out of their car trunks along Florida’s roadways, hence their name. Today, their work is widely collected and considered iconic by many.
specifying they did not feel he carried, displayed, or used a firearm when the crime occurred. (2012, para 3)

Mr. Shuler had completed his GED at TCI and is yet another example of a talented and industrious person unable to continue his education past the post-secondary level due to the 1994 crime bill. In conversations I had with Mr. Shuler, he explained to me the satisfaction and personal benefits he received from creating artwork for himself and for other inmates, and the fact that because of his circumstances, his ability to make art reduced much of his stress and frustrations (C. Shuler, personal communication, 2011). Following are a couple examples of Mr. Shuler’s work (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Figure 1: “Oppression” (acrylic painting) Curtis Shuler
Tomoka Corrections Institute also has an auditorium equipped with musical instruments of which the warden had made off limits the entire year and a half I was working there. All that is left in terms of any education at TCI is the Faith-Based Initiative, which is an all-volunteer effort that teaches basic GED education courses and Christianity.

My findings lean toward the conclusion that art programs are not part and parcel of the prison education funding that comes from state and federal prison budgets. Unless they do, art education will continue to be meted out in fits and starts relying on funding from an array of sources making the establishment of continuous programs a never ending battle and ephemeral at best.
What makes for a strong prison art education program

My research and experience working with Daytona State College at Tomoka Corrections as well as discussions with educators has shown that prison art programs are dependent on a dedicated and focused individual or group that is also affiliated with an institute of higher learning. Educators interested in working with the incarcerated should consider contacting a local college or university about existing prison education programs. Affiliating with colleges and universities gives educators and non-profit groups a strong support system and in turn allows the educational institution the ability to involve their arts, education, and departments in important pedagogy and research regarding prison education initiatives (Friere, 1998; Gussak, 2010; Dace et al, 2010).

Implicit in the Executive Summary of a booklet produced by The Education Justice Project, University Of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign entitled Prison Higher Education Programs: An Incomplete Assessment (2010) is the need to have local colleges and universities become more involved in the effort of increasing access to higher education for the incarcerated. The booklet is an overview of 34 programs (see appendix) providing post secondary education opportunities in prisons around the country. Many programs include arts curricula and all are associated with an area college.

Most of the programs discussed in the Education Justice Project booklet utilize volunteers. Volunteering at a prison is one way for an art educator to familiarize themselves with the prison system and could lead to involvement with an existing prison arts program. Initially, Leslie Neal of ArtSpring began her work in prisons as a volunteer (L. Neal, personal communication, May 5, 2013).
My personal experience and discussions with educators working in the prison system suggest that contacting the assistant warden directly at a state facility is the best way to find out about volunteer opportunities. While there may not be existing art programs at a particular facility of interest, there are generally other academic, vocational, or life skills programs an art educator can volunteer to work with. Developing a volunteer art program could be as simple as asking the warden if a drawing class could be offered to interested inmates. It would behoove one to offer a lesson plan in the form of a written proposal to the assistant warden. With initiative, a simple volunteering effort could lead to implementation of an arts program (L. Neal, personal communication, May 5, 2013). If one is interested in volunteering at a federal facility, the Federal Bureau of Prisons website recommends contacting the closest federal facility and speak with the local Reentry Affair Coordinator (http://bop.gov/jobs/volunteer.jsp). As with the adult education program I was involved with at Tomoka Corrections, any inmates interested in education programs are vetted by the administrators, therefore, prisoners that had not received any recent disciplinary reports are the only ones considered for the education programs.

Hindrances to establishing ongoing art education prison programs

The programs that the Education Justice Project highlights, as well as programs like ArtSpring, are dependent on grants and private funding, which is sporadic at best. The programs the Education Justice Project discusses in their booklet have not enjoyed steady and constant support since the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act eliminated the use of Pell grants for most incarcerated individuals. Because the funding is so sporadic, the lack of a federal funding initiative appears to be the biggest obstacle in keeping the post secondary programs up and running on a consistent basis and “institutionalizing” education programs with

7 Disciplinary Reports, commonly referred to as D.R.’s, as defined by the Florida Parole Commission (FPC) are reports received by inmates for violations of Department rules in prison. (http://fpc.state.fl.us/Glossary.htm)
the Department of Corrections is recommend (Dace et al, 2010). This is unfortunate because in my experience and according to the Education Justice Project, wardens and administrators are open to having these programs available to inmates.

**Appealing to the Source**

Incarcerated persons are ineligible for nearly all federal and state need-based financial aid programs; are overwhelmingly enrolled in vocational and other nonacademic certificate programs; and are prohibited from taking advantage of Internet-based educational programs and resources. Although the political and moral rationales for PSCE policies are diverse and complex, the outcome is that incarcerated persons have few options for education beyond the secondary level. (Gorgol & Sponsler, 2011, p. 16)

The 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act has fostered, by default, a bevy of erratically funded prison art programs. Most have been funded through non-profit entities using sporadic grant and private funding. Perhaps a solution to getting “institutionalized” postsecondary college level art education programs in prisons would be to offer visual art oriented programs via a postsecondary vocational curriculum. Research indicates that Correctional Education Administrators (CEA) are looking to technology as an innovative way to deliver postsecondary correctional education (PSCE) (Gorgel & Sponsler, 2011). Therefore, if visual art education is going to become established in prison systems as part of the federal and state corrections budgeting, perhaps it needs to be introduced as part of a computer based vocational program initiative. Merging technological/vocational learning with art in order to have art accepted in education curricula is nothing new. The Massachusetts Drawing Act of 1870, spearhead by educators and leading businessmen of the day, fulfilled a need at the time for designers to work in the textile industry. The Act established Massachusetts as the first state to
mandate drawing education in public schools (Bolin, 1995). This same logic can be applied to the prison system as it would be the shortest distance between two points in terms of getting something established now that does not need an act of Congress to facilitate (i.e. rescinding the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act).

My own experience, combined with research for this project, has me thinking that what may be viable is art education in the form of a computer-based curriculum that uses computer graphics programs like Photoshop as well as art history lessons, perhaps like SmartHistory.com by the Kahn Academy, to create an in-depth art curriculum alongside other secondary or post secondary self-learning (or with limited supervision) activities. At Tomoka Corrections, I witnessed first-hand the excitement and inspiration students felt when they were able to use the classroom computers. The students would become enthralled using the basic graphics programs such as Microsoft Paint and word processing with MS Word. The students experienced feelings of accomplishment using the basic technology we had. The expressive and therapeutic benefits using this technology were evident to me and studies show that working with computers can produce many therapeutic and as well as brain enhancing results (Aamod & Wang, 2007; Parker-Bell, 1999).

Internet access is a different story. Despite Gorgel & Sponsler’s seemingly insistent findings that postsecondary education in prisons has to be via online delivery (Gorgel & Sponsler, 2011) my experience and discussions with networking and Internet specialists differ on this matter. Longtime networking specialist, Tony Roberson of Computer Dynamics Network Services, Inc., is as equally adamant that Internet access for prisoners will not happen in the near future. According to Mr. Roberson the possibility for numerous security breaches is far too great (T. Roberson, personal communication, November 6, 2012). Also, the fact that there is a
widespread ban on prisoner access to the Internet and that nearly all states prohibit Internet use by prisoners, is testament to the notion that getting Internet access for education in prison is probably not going to occur in the immediate future (Leher, 2013). However, research is clear on the fact that CEAs (Correctional Education Administrators) is looking to technology as an innovative way to deliver postsecondary correctional education (PSCE) (Gorgel & Sponsler, 2011). A way to get past this apparent impasse and contradiction of needs is to create a comprehensive and systematic way to bring an array of educational programs via computer that would use an intranet (stand-alone) environment (T. Roberson, personal communication, November 6, 2012).

In order to begin this process a line of communication needs to be established. It is my understanding that if one wants to communicate with prison officials it is best to begin with an email or phone call to the warden or assistant warden. Also, I have found through research that CEAs (Correction Education Administrator) in the prison system are responsible for implementing PSCE programs on a statewide level (Gorgel & Sponsler, 2011). According to their website at www.ceanational.org, The Correctional Education Association (CEA), founded in 1945, is a non-profit, professional association serving educators and administrators who provide services to students in correctional settings. The CEA is the largest affiliate of the American Correctional Association.

**Conclusions and the Lingering Questions**

Perhaps the most perplexing question we have to consider has to do with fiscal common sense, or lack thereof. Why aren’t prison education programs being implemented in our prison systems when it has been proven time and again that prison education saves the tax payers money (Cripso, 1997; DOJ, 2012; Gorgel & Sponsler, 2011; Steurer et al, 2001)? My research
and related projects endeavor to become tools used for convincing prison and government officials, as well as other educators, of the societal benefits to establishing art education in today’s prisons. Once convinced of the importance of making art education a part of the prison experience, it is my hopes this research will inspire people to action.

Phyllis Kornfeld is an art educator that has worked with prisoners for over 20 years. She notes that in the scores of prisons she worked in the one thing they all had in common was a vital, flourishing art world (Kornfeld, 1997). I noticed this too when I was teaching a Tomoka Corrections as prisoners are resourceful and will use anything as a canvas, including their cellmate’s back if they’ve mustered up the ability to make tattooing tools and have a willing cellmate. As I stated above, prisoners will make art whether we have formal art programs in prison or not. Why not use technology as the catalyst to allow for channeling of this obvious need for expression and creativity, while at the same time giving the student a useful technological skill they may be able to utilize on the outside while satisfy prison administrators’ emphasis on vocational job training.

Once again, metaphorically speaking breaking into prison is what needs to be done in order to convince officials and the public that continuing the policy of embroiling 1 out of every 31 American citizens into some form of correctional control (Pew, 2008) is counterproductive and doing irreparable harm to our society. We know exactly what the silver bullet is so why aren’t we using it? Moreover, how can we continue to refer to our country as the land of the free if we don’t use education to help end the United States incarcerating a higher percentage of its population than any other country in the world?

Summary

As I began working within the prison system, I started to see just how entirely removed
from mainstream society it is. It exists on the margins and operates almost independently from society with its own rules and codes of conduct, from the administrators down to the prisoners. It is a place we would rather forget exists, and by default, we forget about the people that end up there.

At best, this study can be used by other scholars, educators and even prison administrators to aide in the establishment of art education programs in prison. At the very least, I will be satisfied if this research becomes a record of the state of our society as it relates to the education and incarceration of perhaps some of the most confused, entrapped, educationally and financially challenged, neglected and persecuted of us. In the end, I would hope that my research delivers a modicum of proof to the reader that our country’s prison problem is the result of an education problem. Without restructuring how prisoners are treated and educated to include expressive therapy and art education, we will always be burdened by costly over-populated prisons that too often foster more criminal behavior. The syllogism is really that simple.
Appendix 1

Current Prison Art Programs and Prison Art & Education Websites

Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project

Auburn’s spirit will continue to be felt in a dozen statewide prisons after a $50,000 grant for the school’s prison education project was awarded Aug. 30 (2012). The National Endowment for the Arts gave the grant to the Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project. The decade-old project brings approximately 50 artists from around Alabama to six different correctional facilities to teach approximately 15 courses. Courses include poetry, Southern literature, African-American literature, short story writing and multimedia art (Retrieved from http://www.theplainsman.com/view/full_story/20195919/article-Grant-allows-Prison-Arts---Education-project-to-continue).

ArtSpring Inc. http://ArtSpring.org

ArtSpring, Inc. was founded as Leslie Neal Dance, Inc. (LND) in 1992 and is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization in Florida. Their mission is to use arts-based educational programming to develop self-growth and effective life skills for incarcerated women, men and youth as well as other at-risk populations in underserved communities. The faculty empowers participants to redirect their lives, resulting in a healthier and safer society. (Retrieved from http://artspring.org/about.htm)

Art Therapy in Prison http://arttherapyinprison.com

This site hosts art therapy research and art created by incarcerated individuals that have been involved in Dr. David Gussak’s art education and therapy programs. Dr. Gussak began his work in prison as an art therapist in 1991, and is currently Chair of the Art
Education Department at Florida State University. Since arriving at FSU in January 2002, he has created and expanded correctional placements for the art therapy students.

(Retrieved from http://arttherapyinprison.com/?page_id=355)

**Cellblock Visions** http://www.cellblockvisions.com

Cellblock Visions is a lively collection of inmate artwork, created behind bars, from county jail to death row – the alternative art world flourishing today in American prisons. Men and women inmates, having no previous training, turn to art for a sense of self-respect, respect for and from others, a way to find peace. They transcend the cramped space, limited light, and narrow vistas. They triumph over security bans with ingenious resourcefulness - extracting color from shampoo, making paint out of M & Ms and sculpture out of toilet paper (Retrieved from http://www.cellblockvisions.com).

**Changing Lives through Literature** http://cltl.umassd.edu/home-flash.cfm

Changing Lives, which began in 1991, was the idea of Robert Waxler, who is a Professor at the University of Massachusetts in Dartmouth and his friend Robert Kane, now a court judge. The program began with roughly eight incarcerated men who came together every two weeks to talk about literature. As that year went successfully, in 1992, a professor at Middlesex Community College in Lowell, Massachusetts began a similar program. In 1994, Professor Taylor Stoehr began a program in Dorchester. Those three programs have seen thousands of students come over the years. (Dace et al, 2010, p. 10)

**Community Partners in Action** http://www.cpa-ct.org

The CPA Prison Arts Program has been organizing an Annual Show each spring since 1978. The show focuses on artwork produced by participants in the program’s

Incarcerated Youth at Play http://www.actorsshakespeareproject.org/IYAP

ASP works with incarcerated youth, ages 12-17, who are part of the Massachusetts DYS in secure lock-up facilities. In the month of August, during the DYS school vacation, two of ASP's actor/teachers work with a group of youth. They meet 3 times a week for 3-hour sessions, doing theater games, text work, journal writing, etc. around Shakespeare's texts as they relate to the children's own stories. The project culminates in a performance of Shakespeare texts, journal monologues, music, etc. created by the youth and attended by all the children in the facility, including their caregivers and invited guests (Retrieved from http://www.nea.gov/resources/accessibility/rlists/corrections.html).

InsideOUT Writers http://www.insideoutwriters.org

The mission of InsideOUT Writers, performed by professional writers, is to teach creative writing to at-risk and incarcerated youth to discourage youth violence and build in its place a spirit of honest introspection, respect for others, and a love of learning. They distribute the best of that writing to other youth, parents, schools, libraries, government officials, and to the general public. The program helps young people express their negative feelings through writing, rather than through violence (Retrieved from http://www.nea.gov/resources/accessibility/rlists/corrections.html).
While my research reveal these types of very important actions, I have also found that most ongoing government subsidized education programs are slated for vocational, or to a lesser degree, general post-secondary college coursework that does not include art programming or creative expression (Gorgol & Sponsler, 2011).

**Ohio University College Program for the Incarcerated**

http://www.ohio.edu/ecampus/future/cpi.htm

Running since 1974, this program started as one onsite at a maximum-security institution, and ran correspondence with three other prisons. At this point, however, the program is strictly correspondence, and there are students involved from all over the country. The program encourages students to enroll who want to earn credit for a degree at Ohio or another university; to fulfill prerequisites for advanced courses; or to meet requirements for continuing education or job advancement. Students may pursue an Associate in Arts & Humanities Emphasis Major (A.A.), as well as several other Associate’s degrees.

**The Prison Arts Coalition** http://theprisonartscoalition.com/gallery

The Prison Arts Coalition (PAC) is an independent space providing information and resources for people creating art in and around the American prison system (Retrieved from http://theprisonartscoalition.com).

**Prison Creative Arts Project** http://www.lsa.umich.edu/pcap/

The Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP), founded in 1990, operates in Michigan correctional facilities, juvenile facilities, high schools, and communities in the state. The program has facilitated thousands of workshops in the arts to date, including theatre, creative writing, art, dance, music, and video. PCAP is housed in the Department of English language and Literature, and supported by English and the School of Art and Design at the University of Michigan. (Dace et al, 2010, p. 15)
**Prison Studies Project** [http://prisonstudiesproject.org](http://prisonstudiesproject.org)

Established through Harvard and Boston Universities, and founded by Kaia Stern and Bruce Western, the Prison Studies Project began to offer college courses in Fall 2008 at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution-Norfolk. Since then, undergraduate Harvard students commute to the facility to study with the Boston University students at the prison. (Dace et al, 2010, p. 17)

**The William James Association** [http://williamjamesassociation.org/prison_arts/](http://williamjamesassociation.org/prison_arts/)

Begun in 1977, the program selects and hires professional visual, literary and performing artists to teach in California’s state prison facilities. The Prison Arts Project also trains artists and coordinates Artist-In-Residence programs for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (Retrieved from [http://www.nea.gov/resources/accessibility/rlists/corrections.html](http://www.nea.gov/resources/accessibility/rlists/corrections.html)).
Appendix 2: Informed Consent Letter

**Informed Consent**

**Protocol Title:** The positive influence art educators can have on prisoners.

**Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.**

**Purpose of the research study:** The purpose of this study examines effects art educators and education in general has had on your life as a 42 year old man once incarcerated in Florida prisons.

**What you will be asked to do in the study:** You will be asked to consent to being interviewed and videotaped. The interview will be conducted by the researcher, Robert Sullivan. The interview will consist of questions and discussions about your education experiences while incarcerated. The interview will also consist of a discussion about your recent self-published book, *Facing the US Prison problem 2.3 Million Strong: An Ex-Con’s View of the Mistakes and the Solutions*. The video will be posted on Youtube and Vimeo.com with public access.

**Time required:** 1 - 3 hours

**Risks and Benefits:** No foreseeable risks. Benefits may include publicity for your book and publishing company, Speak Out Publishing, as well as an opportunity to reach the education community, particularly at the University of Florida College of Fine Arts, with your message of the need for prison reform in the United States.

**Compensation:** You will be paid for your gas mileage to and from the interview for participating in this research.

**Voluntary participation:** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

**Right to withdraw from the study:** You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:**
Robert Sullivan, UF Graduate Student, PO Box 2212, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170.
Jodi Kushins, Visiting Asst. Professor, University of FL Art Dept., PO Box 115800, Gainesville, FL 32611

**Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**
IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 352-392-0433.

Please note that neither identity nor remarks will be confidential.

**Agreement:**
I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the interview and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: Shawn Griffith, Signature ___________________________ Date: ________________
Principal Investigator: Robert Sullivan, Signature ___________________________ Date: ________________
### Appendix 3: University IRB Forms

**UFIRB 02 – Social & Behavioral Research**

**Protocol Submission Form**

*This form must be typed. Send this form and the supporting documents to IRB02, PO Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611. Should you have questions about completing this form, call 352-392-0433.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Protocol:</th>
<th>The positive influence art educators can have on prisoners.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Investigator:</td>
<td>Robert J. Sullivan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree / Title:</td>
<td>MA Art Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-Investigator(s):</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (If PI is student):</td>
<td>Dr. Jodi Kushins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree / Title:</td>
<td>PhD/Visiting Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>Art Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Funding (A copy of the grant proposal must be submitted with this protocol if funding is involved):</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scientific Purpose of the Study:** The objective of this study is to find meaningful data that will support art education in prisons by videotaping an interview with the investigator’s former student aid, Shawn Griffith. The investigator, Robert Sullivan, worked for nearly 2 years as an adult education instructor at Tomoka Corrections in Daytona Beach where Mr. Griffith worked with Mr. Sullivan as his student aid. Mr. Griffith is 42
years old and spent 20 consecutive years in Florida's prison system. Mr. Griffith had a lifelong mentor, the late art educator Dr. Allen Kurzok, who had a profound influence on him, which this study endeavors to explore. Mr. Griffith was recently released from prison and has since published a book and has been a featured guest on many talk radio programs throughout the country, sharing his experiences in the correctional system.
References


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Parker-Bell, B. (1999). Embracing a future with computers and art therapy. *Art Therapy:*


Author Biography

Robert Sullivan graduated from University of South Florida with a B.A. in Art in 1979. His studio concentration was mainly drawing and print making. While there he was introduced to a vibrant group of instructors and artists through the Graphic Studio where artists like Robert Rauschenberg, Jim Dine and James Rosenquist worked. After college he worked as a technical illustrator. While working in this capacity he was introduced to computer graphics which took him to North Carolina and New York City where he made a living in the emerging electronic graphics industry while also creating drawings and paintings. He has exhibited in Florida, North Carolina and New York City. A mixed media piece (computer graphic, pen and ink, colored pencil) entitled Venus.dgn was selected for the Tenth Annual Henley Southeastern Spectrum in Winston-Salem, NC, by Susan Krane, then curator at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, for a nationwide museum tour. For the last several years he worked as an adjunct reading teacher at Daytona State College teaching adult education classes at the local campuses as well as at Tomoka State Corrections Institution in Daytona Beach, FL. He is currently enrolled in the online MA Art Education program at the University of Florida which allows him to engage with other like minds about today’s education system and art world. Upon graduation he would like to be able to utilize his background working and/or developing art curriculum for schools, museums, community centers and prisons while also researching and writing about subjects he feels are interesting and important, as well as continuing his exploration in creating art.