



**Presenter:** Daniel Costello

**Session & Time:** Poster\_I / 11:00 to 12:00pm

**Room:** Guzman Lecture Hall

**Discipline:** Counseling Psychology

**Faculty Mentor:** Carlos Molina

**Digital Portfolio URL:**

**Title:** Education Behind Bars: Overcoming Barriers to Improve Outcomes

**Abstract:**

This thesis explores the transformative potential of correctional education in reducing recidivism and improving post-release outcomes for incarcerated individuals, nearly 68% of whom lack a high school diploma. Without foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking, reintegration into society becomes daunting, perpetuating cycles of poverty and incarceration. Despite its proven effectiveness, access to correctional education remains inconsistent, particularly for marginalized populations.

To address this gap, this project develops two specialized tutoring manuals: one for inmate peer-to-peer tutors and another for external volunteer tutors. The manuals provide culturally sensitive, practical strategies for teaching foundational skills and fostering personal growth. Peer tutors benefit from approaches that leverage shared lived experiences and offer clear, actionable teaching methods. Volunteer tutors receive tailored guidance to navigate the unique challenges of working within correctional facilities, emphasizing meaningful engagement and effective communication.

By addressing the differing motivations and needs of these tutor groups, the manuals aim to enhance the quality and consistency of correctional education. This work ultimately seeks to empower incarcerated learners, reduce recidivism, and contribute to a more equitable and impactful education system within correctional settings.