Innovation Literature Review: Station Rotation for Incarcerated Adult Learners

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Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to establish a research-based foundation for implementing a Station Rotation Blended Learning Model within Windham School District's (WSD) adult correctional education programs. This review synthesizes peer-reviewed studies, institutional reports, and scholarly analyses addressing blended learning, differentiation, digital literacy, adult learning theory, and instructional best practices in restricted or alternative learning environments.

WSD educators serve a diverse population of incarcerated adults whose academic histories and motivational needs vary widely. Traditional workbook-driven instruction limits differentiation and engagement. Research consistently indicates that adults learn best through structured, collaborative, and interactive experiences. This review demonstrates that Station Rotation can serve as an equitable and attainable instructional model for improving academic outcomes in secure environments.

Review of the Literature

The Need for Instructional Transformation in Adult Correctional Education

Research highlights that incarcerated adult learners often struggle with academic confidence and inconsistent schooling. Traditional workbook-driven approaches reinforce passive learning, whereas adult education research emphasizes autonomy, scaffolding, and collaboration. These findings align with WSD's need to transition toward flexible, differentiated learning environments. Recent correctional education research further indicates that structured

learning models increase academic persistence by as much as 30%, reinforcing the urgency for redesigning instruction for incarcerated adult learners (Torlone & Vryonides, 2016).

Connection to Innovation Plan:

This evidence supports adopting a more interactive and responsive instructional model, such as Station Rotation.

Blended Learning as a High-Impact Model for Adult Learners

Blended learning enhances engagement, pacing, and instructional clarity. Tucker (2021) identifies blended learning as highly adaptable, allowing teachers to guide small groups while supporting independent work. AVID Open Access (2023) shows that blended environments improve learner autonomy and efficiency. Additionally, blended learning has been linked to measurable improvements in learner persistence, with some studies reporting increases of up to 25% in course completion rates (AVID Open Access, 2023; Oledan, 2025).

Connection to Innovation Plan:

These findings support implementing Station Rotation as a feasible blended model in correctional classrooms.

Station Rotation as a Structured Approach to Differentiation

The International Journal of Instruction (2022) demonstrates that station-based models allow effective differentiation. Tucker (2021) explains that rotations reduce cognitive overload, enabling deeper understanding. This aligns with WSD's need to support learners at multiple TABE and GED readiness levels. The consistency of these findings across multiple contexts highlights a growing consensus that station-based models are particularly effective for supporting diverse readiness levels within the same classroom (Ermiş & Ateş-Çobanoğlu, 2025).

Implementing Station Rotation in Low-Connectivity or Secure Settings

SCT Education Journal (2021) shows that blended learning improves engagement even without continuous internet access. Tucker (2021) reinforces that instructional design is more important than connectivity. This directly supports WSD's use of offline tools such as Kolibri, Aztec, and Study Buddy devices. These findings collectively show that even minimal digital access, when structured intentionally, can significantly enhance learner motivation and academic progression in secure facilities (Pearson, 2012).

The Impact of Small-Group, Teacher-Led Instruction

Small-group instruction yields the strongest gains in blended settings. AVID (2023) highlights immediate feedback, while Tucker (2021) emphasizes improved rapport and learner confidence. This trend reflects broader instructional research showing that targeted teacher-led scaffolding remains the most influential factor in learning, particularly for adults requiring remediation mastery **(**DelliCarpini**,** 2006**)**.

Connection to Innovation Plan:

The teacher-led station is validated as the cornerstone of effective rotation models.

Peer Tutoring as an Evidence-Based Component of Adult Learning

Topping (2005) shows that peer tutoring enhances comprehension and confidence. Correctional education literature emphasizes reduced anxiety and stronger persistence. Peer-supported learning also reduces affective barriers by fostering community, accountability, and confidence among incarcerated adults who may have experienced previous academic failure (Topping, 2005).

Connection to Innovation Plan:

Peer tutoring strengthens collaboration and supports academic skill development.

Technology-Supported Learning and Digital Literacy Skill Development

Badejo and Chakraborty (2022) found that nearly 90% of incarcerated learners reported increased motivation when technology was integrated. Digital literacy supports reentry success and self-efficacy. Digital literacy has been repeatedly cited as one of the strongest predictors of post-release employment outcomes, underscoring its essential role in correctional reentry preparation (Badejo & Chakraborty, 2022).

Connection to Innovation Plan:

The technology-enhanced station in the rotation model increases autonomy and engagement.

Documented Outcomes of Blended and Station-Based Instruction

Studies consistently show improved math performance, engagement, and autonomy in blended learning. These outcomes align with WSD's goals to increase TABE and GED completion rates. Together, these outcomes demonstrate that blended station-based approaches not only strengthen content mastery but also build learner autonomy, a critical contributor to long-term academic persistence (Tucker, 2021).

Conclusion

The literature strongly supports implementing a Station Rotation Blended Learning Model in WSD's adult correctional programs. Blended learning improves engagement, motivation, and academic outcomes, even in low-connectivity environments. Teacher-led small groups, peer tutoring, and offline digital tools are validated as effective approaches for adult learners. Station Rotation aligns with best practices and meets the unique needs of incarcerated adults, offering a feasible and high-impact instructional model. Taken together, the literature provides compelling evidence that the Station Rotation model is not only feasible in secure

correctional environments but uniquely suited to the instructional, motivational, and rehabilitative needs of incarcerated adult learners.

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