



University of
New Haven

University of New Haven
Digital Commons @ New Haven

Criminal Justice Faculty Publications

Criminal Justice

6-2015

Administering a Victim Impact Curriculum to Inmates: A Multi-Site Replication

Christopher M. Sedelmaier

University of New Haven, csedelmaier@newhaven.edu

Mario Thomas Gaboury

University of New Haven, mgabouri@newhaven.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.newhaven.edu/criminaljustice-facpubs>

 Part of the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

Publisher Citation

Sedelmaier, Christopher Michael, and Mario Thomas Gaboury. "Administering a victim impact curriculum to inmates: a multi-site replication." *Criminal Justice Studies* 28.2 (2015): 226-238.

Comments

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Criminal Justice Studies* in June 2015, available online:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1478601X.2015.1014037>

This report is cited in the article and attached below:

Gaboury, M.T., & Sedelmaier, C.M. (2007) *Impact of Crime on Victims (IOC) Curriculum Development Project: Final Evaluation Report*. Rockville, Md.: NCJRS.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Administering a Victim Impact Curriculum to Inmates: A Multi-Site Replication

Christopher Sedelmaier, PhD
University of New Haven
South Campus Hall 313
300 Boston Post Road
West Haven, CT 06516
Phone: 203-479-4509
Email: CSedelmaier@newhaven.edu

Mario Gaboury, PhD, JD
University of New Haven
South Campus Hall 107
300 Boston Post Road
West Haven, CT 06516
Phone: 203-932-7254
Email: MGaboury@newhaven.edu

Biographical Notes

Christopher M. Sedelmaier, Ph.D, is an associate professor in the criminal justice department of the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences at the University of New Haven, and coordinator of the university's Crime Analysis concentration. He uses his experience working with large data sets to teach research methods, statistics, and crime analysis. His research interests include crime prevention, crime in time and space, policing, and program evaluation research. His Faculty Webpage is found at: <http://www.newhaven.edu/5833/>

Mario Thomas Gaboury, J.D., Ph.D, is Dean of the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences at the University of New Haven. Dr. Gaboury joined the full-time faculty of criminal justice in 1996, served as Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice, and also previously served as Associate Dean of the college. From 2007-2009 he held the Oskar Schindler Humanities Foundation Endowed Professorship. He is also formerly Deputy Director, Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice. His current research focuses on Victimology, victims' rights, global human trafficking, victim impact education, restorative justice, and community policing. His scholarly articles have appeared in the following journals: *Victims and Offenders*; *Forensic Nursing*, *Offender Rehabilitation*; *Comprehensive Psychiatry*; *Traumatic Stress*; *International Perspectives on Victimology* and, *Child and Youth Services*. He is co-author of *Crime Victim Right and Remedies* (2010, 2nd Edition) (<http://www.cap-press.com/isbn/9781594605789>). His Faculty Webpage is found at: <http://www.newhaven.edu/5816/>

Abstract

While restorative justice has been the topic of much research, a specific type of program included in restorative justice, Impact of Crime on Victims programs, has not been widely studied or assessed for effectiveness. This study examines Impact of Crime (IOC) on Victims Curriculum Development Programs. Offenders from programs in California, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia were participants in this research. A four state evaluation methodology was developed in order to assess the effectiveness of these programs in educating offenders about victims' right and victim facts, as well as increasing their sensitivity to victims' difficulties. The findings in this evaluation lend support to previous studies, indicating efficacy for IOC programs. Suggestions for future research are briefly discussed.

Keywords: impact of crime on victims, victim impact, victim awareness, restorative justice, victims' rights, victim blaming

This article summarizes an evaluation conducted on the Impact of Crime on Victims Curriculum Development Program. The underlying project involved the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Office of Victim and Survivor Services (CDCR), updating and revising the Impact of Crime on Victims (IOC) curriculum it originally developed in 1984. This curriculum educates inmates about the impact of crime on victims. The curriculum development project, as well as this evaluation effort, were supported by a grant from the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice (OVC).¹

The basic logic-model for the program posits that insight gained from these classes will contribute to increased knowledge and sensitivity on the part of participants and, potentially, reduce offending behavior. Since the original program was first commenced in California, where it has been offered for 26 years, the same or similar IOC programs have been adopted by some facilities in as many as 73% of state correctional departments in the U.S. according to a 2004 National Institute of Correction survey (National Institute of Corrections, 2004). Clearly there are significant resources being expended nationwide for IOC programs and these endeavors warrant systematic evaluation, which is the purpose of this research effort.

CDCR was selected by the OVC to lead this curriculum revision project. After a widely circulated solicitation to participate as a project site, a total of four states (California plus 3 others) agreed to participate in this curriculum revision project. Those states, in addition to California, were Ohio, Tennessee and Virginia. One aspect of state

¹ Project funded by the Office of Victim Services – United States Department of Justice Grant Number: 2005-VF-GX-K026

participation in this curriculum development project was their participation in an evaluation of the IOC curriculum. This was required by OVC and is consistent with the need for evidence-based programming in corrections.

Despite the expenditure of resources nationally on IOC programs noted above, very little evaluation research has been conducted on these programs and, until recently, virtually nothing has been published in peer reviewed journals. The evaluations and studies that have been conducted, which have been generally supportive of the program's efficacy, have been of wide-ranging quality. In 2004 one of the first published pieces looked at a Connecticut Department of Correction sample (Monahan, Monahan, Gaboury and Niesyn, 2004). This previous research was helpful in that in large-part the methodology employed for that study was replicated in the current study. The authors' university Institutional Review Board, as well as those for the participant states' departments of corrections reviewed all protocols and provided appropriate human subjects approvals.

Restorative Justice and Victim Awareness Offender Education Programs

Restorative justice encompasses many aspects of crime that are often neglected by the criminal justice system. According to restorative justice there are four primary stakeholders when a crime is committed: the victim, the offender, the community as a whole, and the government. Restorative justice encompasses many programs and practices in order to meet the needs of all four types of stakeholders. All of these programs and practices are aimed at repairing the harm that was caused by the crime. The restoration process can range from minimally restorative to maximally restorative depending on the degree to which the restoration contributes to the needs of the four types of stakeholders. Restorative justice programs include victim offender dialogue, conflict resolution,

offender reentry programs, victim awareness (or impact) training, victim impact panels, offender family reconciliation, restorative justice boards, and victim impact training. The programs discussed here – victim impact and awareness programs – are primarily aimed at

IOC classes, often also called victim awareness classes, were first initiated as a pilot program for juveniles by the California Department of Corrections in 1984-1985. The Department later developed it into the full curriculum-based program in 1986. This curriculum has formed the basis for virtually all such programs in the U.S. since its inception. Currently programs variously address juvenile and adult offenders in both institutional and community settings. The motivation underlying the initial development of victim impact and awareness programs was the recognition that many offenders were completely unaware of and unmoved by the impacts of their crimes upon victims (California Department of Corrections - Youth Authority, 2002; English, 2005; English and Crawford 1989). Developing offender sensitivity to the plight of victims was and remains a central focus of IOC Classes. According to an OVC publication, the goals of Awareness Classes include the following:

- (1) Teach offenders about the short-and long-term trauma of victimization;
- (2) Increase offenders' awareness of the negative impact of their crime on their victims and others;
- (3) Encourage offenders to accept responsibility for their past criminal actions;
- (4) Provide victims and victim service providers with a forum to educate offenders about the consequences of their criminal behaviors, with the hope that it will help to prevent future offending;
- (5) Build linkages between criminal and juvenile justice agencies and victims and victim service organizations (US Department of Justice, 2005).

Typically, these institutionally-based corrections IOC Classes programs occurred almost exclusively in prisons and other detention settings, were developed with comprehensive curricula, were not limited to one type of offender (as are the drunk driving

Victim Impact Panels), were 40-hours in length occurring over a 10-12 week period, and covered many victimization topics, including property crime, violent crime, robbery, assault, child abuse, elder abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, homicide, drunk driving, and gang violence, hate and bias crime, and drug-related crime (California Department of Corrections - Youth Authority, 2002). Various techniques are used to present the impact of crime on victims, including victim/survivor guest speakers; videotapes and film footage of victims; current news articles; and actual victim impact statements that address the physical, emotional, financial and spiritual impact of crime. Awareness classes also typically include 'homework assignments' and a 'community service project' component.

Awareness classes were designed to help offenders recognize the impact of their criminal and delinquent actions on their victims, their own families, their communities, and themselves. Although these programs are generally delivered by professional correctional staff members trained as instructors, crime victims and survivors are also engaged in program and course development, and also often serve as guest speakers. It should be noted that awareness classes have evolved into various types of programs across the country. According to Seymour (1989) although most programs utilize the standard 40-hour curriculum, programs in her survey range from a two-hour course, to 12 one-hour modules, to the full 40-hour curriculum. In 1998, the OVC supported the development of a standardized, 40-hour curriculum entitled 'Some Things Impact a Lifetime' (MADD and California Department of Corrections - Youth Authority, 1998) as an attempt to re-introduce a more standardized model for the Awareness Class curriculum. The program was implemented by the Connecticut Department of Corrections under the name Victim

Offender Institutional Correctional Education System (VOICES) program, and followed the typical 40-hour model described above.

In 2004, the National Institute of Correction (NIC) distributed a large scale survey to the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.), all the U.S. territories and protectorates, and the federal corrections departments of the U.S. and Canada. Responses were received from a total of 50 jurisdictions, including 47 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., Guam and the Correctional Service Canada. Fully 73% of U.S. jurisdictions reported that they conducted what were termed ‘Victim impact education/empathy’ programs in the report (National Institute of Corrections, 2004, p. 10). It should be noted that both Guam and Correctional Service Canada also indicated they conducted such awareness classes (National Institute of Corrections, 2004, p. 17). To provide a benchmark for this, seventeen years ago, Seymour (1989) conducted the first national survey in the U.S. and reported that awareness classes were conducted in only approximately ten percent of the U.S. 50 states. This is a significant increase in programs in a relatively short span of time.

Despite the expansion of these programs, IOC classes had been the subject of a relatively small number of unpublished evaluation reports up to the time of the launch of the current project; an initial, comprehensive literature review conducted in 2005 at the beginning of this project found no published peer reviewed journal articles, other than Monahan, Monahan, Gaboury and Niesyn (2004). The results of that study gave substantial support to the hypothesis that awareness classes increase offenders’ ‘knowledge of victimization facts’, ‘knowledge of victims’ rights’, and also increased ‘offender sensitivity to the plight of victims’. These three measures, or factors, were significantly

and positively different for a treatment group of offenders who were exposed to the awareness class program as compared to a matched comparison group that was not. A fourth factor measured in that study, 'victim blaming', did not appear to be significantly affected by the awareness class program. This presents an interesting area for future research, particularly as the reader will note strikingly similar results in this instant, four-state research project.

The Washington State Department of Corrections in the U.S. evaluated its Awareness Class program in 1990. An unpublished assessment (Stutz, 1994) followed 75 pre-release offenders who completed the program and 75 who did not. Assessment measures included a pre-/post-education attitude questionnaire (although these results were not specifically reported), re-offense rates, restitution payment, and community placement violations. There was some evidence that lower re-offense rates and higher restitution payment rates resulted from attendance in the Awareness Classes; however, comparisons of community violation rates were equivocal.

Another unpublished evaluation report was conducted in the U.S. state of Maine (Turner 2004). This study reported on a sample of 129 offenders who participated in classes offered in one correctional facility during a three month period in 2004. This research involved an array of both qualitative and quantitative measures. The qualitative results, which involved data provided by participants, staff presenters and victims, were characterized as 'uniformly positive', while the 'qualitative data created an entirely different impression', which were not positive regarding the program's impact (Turner 2004, p. 13). The author recognized that the quantitative instruments employed may not have been appropriate to the task of measuring changes in attitude resulting from the

program as they were actually measures used primarily to predict future criminal behavior and recidivism. It should also be noted that no direct behavioral measures of recidivism were used in this study.

Other research has supported the efficacy of Awareness Classes. Schiebstad (2003) indicated similar gains in knowledge and attitudes occurred in a graduate paper that reported on an evaluation of Awareness Classes in the state of Iowa, U.S. Putnins (1997) studied the effects of Awareness Classes on ‘sociomoral reasoning maturity’ in delinquents and found significant, positive differences in the group exposed to the classes as compared to controls. Putnins noted that this extends knowledge and attitude research in this area in that this moral reasoning measure is empirically related to prosocial behaviors.

While published research examining restorative justice and victim impact training (VIT) had been limited in the past, in recent years several studies have emerged.

Jackson (2009) conducted a study evaluating the effect of victim impact training on offender guilt, shame, and empathy. In this study he found that the length of participation in VIT had less of an impact on the development of guilt, shame, and empathy than did gender. Jackson explains that according to the results of this study females are more likely than males to benefit from restorative justice programs.

Bergseth and Bouffard (2007) studied the long-term impact of restorative justice programs for juvenile offenders. In this study it was found that restorative justice referrals for juveniles were associated with better outcomes for as long as three years after the initial referral. Juvenile offenders who participated in restorative justice programs were less

likely to have police contact later and were less likely to display delinquent behavior than juveniles who were referred to traditional juvenile court.

In a study of offenders convicted for driving while intoxicated Crew and Johnson (2011) examined the effect of victim impact panels on the likelihood for offenders to reoffend. Their study consisted of 1,533 cases (657 offenders participating in victim impact panels and 876 offenders not participating). It was found that participation in victim impact panels was not the strongest indicator of reduced future offending; rather number of prior convictions for drunk driving was the strongest indicator for reoffending.

Victim-offender dialogue is another area of restorative justice that has received recent attention in research. Umbreit, Armour, Vos, and Coates (2010) conducted an exploratory study of 26 homicide offenders and 27 victims' family members. In their study they found that high satisfaction was associated with the process and outcome of victim-offender dialogue.

In examining evaluations of restorative justice programs in prisons Dhami, Mantle, and Fox (2009) discovered that there are mixed findings with regard to the effectiveness of the programs. They explain that in a study conducted by Petrellis (2007) 89% of offenders reported an increased understanding of their crimes, but only half indicated that they experienced an increase in remorse for the crime they committed. Dhami et al. concluded that due to the lack of scientific vigor in most of the evaluations of restorative justice programs, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of these programs. The current project seeks to contribute to improving this body of literature.

Methods and Data

In the fall of 2005, the OVC awarded funding for the California Youth Authority to take the lead on this national-scope project to further the work in this area, including enhanced curriculum development and program evaluation. The newly-revised “Some Things Impact a Lifetime” curriculum, retitled “Victim Impact: Listen and Learn (United States Office of Justice Programs - Office for Victims of Crime, 2009),” was the result of collaboration with an advisory board including 12 victims or survivors of crime, and finalized with the assistance of past instructors and students. The program was administered at a total of ten participating correctional facilities in four states beginning in the summer of 2006. While individual site start dates varied, the 40-hour curriculum was delivered at each site over the course of roughly eight weeks, including testing time. Curriculum facilitators received training prior to each site’s launch date to promote inter-site uniformity of content delivery. Program coordinators solicited voluntary participation from the inmate pool at each of the ten sites. Once the participant slots filled, volunteers matching the participants on race, sentence length, and behavioral record were sought from the same inmate pools to construct comparison groups – in other words, program coordinators found as near a match as possible for each of the program participants in order to build a comparison group as similar as possible to the participant group. The comparison group subjects would not be exposed to the program, but would be subjected to the same testing that the participant group subjects experienced. In each case, inmate volunteers were briefed on the project and asked to sign informed consent forms before their addition to either the participant or comparison group.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Table 1 provides a breakdown of usable participant and comparison cases by state. For a case to be considered ‘usable,’ it had to satisfy two criteria: both pre-test and post-test data were collected from the individual, and the individual left eight or fewer items unanswered on both data collection attempts. The eight-item cutoff was agreed upon after a small number of subjects at one of the collection sites missed a single page of the instrument containing eight response items. Furthermore, some subjects either failed to complete or chose not to complete a post-test questionnaire. These subjects were also eliminated from the final data set. While subject attrition is always a concern, there were no apparent systematic differences between the completers and non-completers.

[TABLES 2, 3 ABOUT HERE]

While random assignment to participant and comparison groups would have been preferable from a research design perspective, institutional realities precluded this option. To ensure that the participant and comparison groups were demographically similar, the researchers conducted statistical comparisons of the groups based upon age (Table 2) and racial composition (Table 3). Age information was missing for one percent of subjects ($n = 5$), and race information was missing for four percent of subjects ($n = 16$). There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups; any differences between the two groups’ scores on the instrument are unlikely to have been attributable to group age or racial characteristics. Furthermore, there was some concern that the matched comparison group might not have as much “room to improve” as did the participant group, but diagnostics bore out distributional similarity between the two groups’ pre-test performances. Similarly, the possibility existed that antisocial personalities might appear in different proportions in each group, but given the attention that correctional staff paid to

creating the matched sample this scenario seemed rather unlikely – research staff stressed the importance that the comparison group pool be comprised of individuals that met the entry standards for inclusion in the participant group, including acceptable behavioral records.

Ten sites in total participated in this project. One of four participating sites in Ohio was excluded from the final analysis as it was discovered that an early draft of the questionnaire was mistakenly used at the site, rendering the data collected at that site incomparable to the data collected at the remaining nine sites. Nearly one-half of the total usable sample was supplied by the Tennessee sites. Individual state contributions precluded reliable single-state analyses, but global analysis was still possible. Inter-site curriculum delivery was reasonably consistent with regard to timing and material covered; all program personnel received the same training and instruction at the same time, and no problems with content delivery were reported that would suggest a threat to analysis.

Prior to the curriculum launch at each site, both curriculum participants and comparison subjects completed a 50-item questionnaire² to provide baseline measurements for several factors of interest. These factors consist of the individual's knowledge regarding victim rights and facts about criminal victimization; the individual's sensitivity to the victim's plight; the individual's opinions regarding personal accountability for criminal actions; and the individual's opinions regarding the victim's personal responsibility for their victimization. Immediately following course completion, participants and comparison subjects were once again administered the questionnaire.

² The full instrument is available for download at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/downloads/VictimImpact/files/Pre-PostTest.pdf>

Each item on the questionnaire was presented as a statement for which the respondent was asked to provide a measure of agreement on a six-point Likert-style scale. A six-point scale was chosen to remove the neutral response option. This change was requested by program administrators to discourage respondents from simply choosing a neutral response rather than actually considering the response item at hand. Reversal items were also included in the questionnaire to further encourage thoughtful consideration of response items; some items were phrased such that an indication of agreement was more desirable, while others were phrased such that indication of disagreement with the statement was more desirable.

Likert-style scales are useful for measuring intensity of opinion along a continuum, but they are not well-suited to items with a single ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ response. Items intended to measure the respondent’s knowledge regarding victims’ rights and facts about victimization have two possible outcomes – either the respondent answers correctly or incorrectly. However, these items are spread throughout the instrument mixed among more typical opinion items. In order to provide a visually consistent instrument, knowledge items retained the six-point scale format. These items were later recoded as binary-response items for analytic purposes, with the three ‘correct’ and three ‘incorrect’ options collapsed into single ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ categories.

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

Prior to analysis, the evaluators each categorized the fifty individual questionnaire items into one of four factors – knowledge-based items (e.g., victim rights and victimization facts); sensitivity to victim plight; victim blaming; and self-accountability (Table 4). After rating the items separately, the evaluators met to reconcile any differences

in categorization. This meeting resulted in creating a 22-item knowledge-based item factor, an eight-item Sensitivity to Victim Plight factor, a seven-item Victim Blaming factor, and an eight-item Self-Accountability factor; the remaining five items failed to fit into any of the four broad categories.

Initially, any item within the remaining forty-five that over eighty-five percent of respondents in *both* groups answered ‘correctly’ on the pretest were excluded from analysis as it was felt that these might mask any change in the items where there was significant room for improvement in at least one group. The analyses described in this article, however, included those items to alleviate potential concerns that their removal might artificially exaggerate group differences. It should be noted that restoring those items changed neither the statistical significance nor the direction of results within any of the factors compared to the initial truncated analysis.

The scores within each broad category were summed to create factor summary scores. For the two ‘knowledge’ factors, the summary score represents the number of ‘correct’ responses; for the remaining factors, higher scores represent more favorable or desirable attitudes and opinions.

Analysis

The within-group summary scores for each factor were compared using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. This test is a nonparametric analog to the two-group difference in means test sometimes referred to as the paired-sample Student's t-test, and as such is less likely to yield misleading results based upon the rigid distributional assumptions that must be satisfied for the paired-sample Student's t-test. Rather than measuring the difference between the pre-test and post-test raw scores for each subject, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank procedure tests the null hypothesis that the median difference between pairs of observations is equal to zero. Cases are ordered from smallest absolute difference between pre-test and post-test scores and greatest absolute difference between pre-test and post-test scores, then assigned ranks beginning at a rank of 1 for the smallest absolute difference. All positive-direction ranks are summed together, as are all negative-direction ranks; the Wilcoxon test statistic W is the smaller of those rank sums, which can then be converted to a Z -score. The Wilcoxon test was deemed more appropriate in this case because Likert scale data are ordinal-level data; one cannot be certain that the 'distance' between scores for one subject is the same across subjects. The results of this analysis are summarized in the following table.

[TABLE 5]

Curriculum participants demonstrated statistically significant improvement regarding knowledge-based items following completion of the course. The comparison subjects showed no change in performance, and appeared to be equally likely to improve upon a second measurement as they were to perform more poorly upon retest – notice the

similar number of positive and negative ranks. This lack of change in comparison subjects regarding knowledge factors was encouraging, as they received neither the course materials nor instruction that might lead to change. The comparison group's lack of change combined with the participant group's improvement suggests that the program participants retained the factual knowledge passed along through the curriculum.

Program participants also demonstrated marked improvement on 'sensitivity to victim plight' scores while the comparison group scores did not improve statistically. This is important to note. One of the program objectives was to reinforce the idea that being victimized is a traumatic and painful experience; that more than half of the program participants showed improved scores on retest suggests that the message is getting through. Again, the lack of significant change in the comparison group is both expected and encouraging. A statistically significant improvement in the comparison group might have suggested that the respondents were 'gaming' the instrument – supplying responses which they believed that the administrators wanted to hear rather than answering honestly.

Neither the participant group subjects nor the comparison group subjects demonstrated statistically significant changes in either direction regarding victim blaming opinions. It should be noted, however, that pre-test scores on this factor were already fairly positive. More than 85% of subjects in each group supplied favorable responses during the pre-test administration of the instrument on five of the seven questions included in this factor. It may be the case that there was not much room for improvement on this factor from the outset.

The results of the self-accountability opinion analysis were somewhat unexpected. While the participant group showed no statistically significant change in score, the

comparison group demonstrated significantly lower scores upon retest. One possible explanation for this finding is that participation in the curriculum may have had a prophylactic effect upon the participant's views regarding personal responsibility; rather than having indifferent or poor attitudes deteriorate over time, the curriculum may have helped the participants to maintain the status quo. The comparison subjects, lacking the exposure to messages and experiences aimed at promoting self-accountability provided by the curriculum, may be allowed to figuratively stew in prison and further rationalize their own criminal actions. Instead of at least considering the possibility of assuming responsibility for their actions, they may slip further into a blame-shifting mindset.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this evaluation research provide substantial support to the hypothesis that IOC programs produce increases in specific aspects of offender knowledge of and sensitivity to the plight of crime victims; offenders exposed to the program demonstrated increases in knowledge regarding victimization facts and victim rights and were more sensitive to the plight of victims after completing the program when compared with their non-participating counterparts. The significant findings involving these factors in this four-state study replicates the findings of an earlier study conducted on a Connecticut sample (Monahan, Monahan, Gaboury and Niesyn, 2004).

Consistent with the 2004 Connecticut study, attitudes regarding victim blame did not appear to be affected by the program in the same manner as knowledge and sensitivity were. Although one might expect that the observed increased sensitivity to victims' plight might relate to decreased victim-blaming sentiments, this was not seen here. It is important to note that: (1) it is very difficult to change victim-blaming attitudes in general in other

population segments (see, e.g., Underwood, 2004), so it is not clear that we should expect different results (or less entrenched victim-blaming attitudes) in an offender population, and (2) if changes in knowledge and sensitivity (the other factors) are enough to bring about more pro-social behavior (i.e. reductions in future re-offending compared to those who did not receive such programming), then there is still ample justification for such programs regardless of the difficulty in changing victim-blaming sentiments. The relationship between factual knowledge, sensitivity to victim plight and victim-blaming clearly requires more study, as do the intermediate and longer term behavioral results of this program.

The unusual finding reported herein on the fifth factor, self-accountability, deserves some attention. Again, this factor was newly-created for this project, and as such lacks a comparison measure from the aforementioned Connecticut study. Based upon the this sample, it appears that despite no positive gains on this factor for program participants, offenders who participated in the IOC program did not feel *less* accountable regarding criminal behavior, as their comparison counterparts did. Again, this finding warrants future research in this important area.

One of the realities of conducting human subjects research is the possibility of subject attrition. The bulk of case attrition in this study came as a result of human error, when a single site administered a draft version of the questionnaire. As a result, that site was completely removed from the study. Among the remaining sites, subject attrition arose primarily within the comparison group. The overall number of cases lost was small, but did result in a smaller comparison group. In some cases, comparison subjects simply opted out as was their right under the conditions of the study. This always seemed to be a possibility: participants might view re-test as part of their “graduation” from the program,

even though they were reminded of their ability to opt out, but comparison subjects had little impetus to complete the re-test other than their continued participation. While there was no statistical evidence of systematic bias, it is possible that the lost subjects might have been “different” from those who remained. However, it seems somewhat unlikely that all of the “best” performers among the comparison group would have opted out en masse. On three of four factors, there was no significant change among the comparison subjects from pre-test to post-test; had the comparison group scores significantly decreased – or improved – across the board, there might be more concern that the pool might be biased. While caution in interpretation is always prudent, these results seem encouraging. Replication efforts with current inmates would help to bear out the findings of this study.

The current study focused upon factual knowledge and attitudinal measures. Future research should certainly consider the intermediate and longer-term behavioral outcomes following curriculum completion. For example, future studies might consider inmate behavior while incarcerated (e.g., disciplinary infractions) and following release (e.g., recidivism). This was pursued in the Connecticut study (Gaboury and Sedelmaier, 2007), and the four states participating in this project were strongly encouraged to conduct long-term follow-up work along these lines. These data have yet to become available. However, for this first level of evaluation on this four-state sample, previous findings supporting the efficacy of IOC class programs regarding knowledge retention and attitudinal changes were replicated.

References

- Bergseth, K.J., & Bouffard, J.A. (2007). The long-term impact of restorative justice programming for juvenile offenders. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 35, 433-451.
- California Department of Corrections, Youth Authority. (2002). *Impact of Crime on Victims Classes/Panels for Offenders*. Sacramento, California, U.S.A.: California Youth Authority.
- C'de Banca, J., Lapham, S.C., Liang, H.C., & Skipper, B.J. (2001). Victim impact panels: do they impact drunk drivers? A Follow-up of Female and Male First-time Repeat Offenders. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 61, 615-621 [Electronic Version].
- Crew, B., & Johnson, S. (2011). Do victim impact programs reduce recidivism for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated? Findings from an outcomes evaluation. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 24, 153-163.
- Dhami, M.K., Mantle, G., & Fox, D. (2009). Restorative justice in prisons. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 12, 433-448.
- English, S.J. (2005). Former Assistant Director, California Youth Authority, Personal Communication, July 16, 2005.
- English, S.J., & Crawford, M. (1989). *Victim Awareness Education is Basic to Offender Programming: A Model Course*. Sacramento, California, U.S.A.: California Youth Authority. (Technical Paper, available from the California Youth Authority, 4241 Williamsborough Drive, Suite 214, Sacramento, CA 95823, U.S.A.)
- Jackson, A.L. (2009). The impact of restorative justice on the development of guilt, shame, and empathy among participants in a victim impact training program. *Victims and Offenders*. 4(1), 1-24.
- MADD & California Department of Correction - Youth Authority. (1998). *Some Things Impact a Lifetime: Victim Impact Classes/Panels for Offenders*. Washington, D.C., U.S.A.: U. S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime Grant No. 96-MU-MU-KO03. (Available from MADD National Office, 511 E. John Carpenter Freeway, Suite 700, Irving, Texas, 75062. U.S.A. Phone 800-438-6233.)
- Monahan, L.H., Monahan, J.J., Gaboury, M.T., & Niesyn, P.A. (2004). Victim voices in the correctional setting: Cognitive Gains in an Offender Education Program. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*. 39, 21-33.

- Petrellis, T. (2007). *The restorative justice living unit at Grande Cache Institution: Exploring the application of restorative justice in a correctional environment*. Ottawa: Correctional Services of Canada.
- Putnins, A.L. (1997). Victim awareness programs for delinquent youths: effects on moral reasoning maturity. *Adolescence*, 32, 709-715.
- Schiebstad, I. (2003). An evaluation of victim impact classes. Unpublished paper. Saint Ambrose University, Social Work Program, Davenport, Iowa, U.S.A.
- Seymour, A. (1989). *Victim Services in Corrections*. Washington, D.C., U.S.A.: Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice.
- Stutz, W.A. (1994). *Victim Awareness Educational Program Evaluation*. Unpublished paper. Washington State Department of Corrections, Division of Community Corrections, Victim Services Unit, Post Office Box 4119, Olympia Washington, 98504-4119 U.S.A.
- Turner, W.M. (2004). *Evaluation of the Impact of Crime Program*. Unpublished paper. Northeast Research Service, Post Office Box 422, Blue Hills, Maine 04614, U.S.A. (Report prepared in cooperation with the Center for Juvenile Justice of the Southern Maine Community College and the Maine Department of Correction, Correctional Recovery Academy.)
- Umbreit, M.S., Armour, M., Vos, B., & Coates, R.B. (2010). Family survivors of homicide meet the offender. *Journal of Community Corrections*, 19(1/2), 25-34.
- Underwood, T. (2004). Victim blaming theory and research: impact on professional practice. *International Perspectives in Victimology*, 1(1), 35-52.
- U.S. Department of Justice. (2005). 'Victim Impact Classes.' *Restorative Justice Fact Sheet*. Washington, D.C.: Office for Victims of Crime. (http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/rest-just/CH5/8_vctimp.htm)
- U.S. National Institute of Corrections. (2004). *Corrections-based Services for Victims of Crime*. Longmont, Colorado: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections Information Center (<http://www.nicic.org/pubs/2004/019947.pdf>)

U.S. Office of Justice Programs. Office for Victims of Crime. (2009). *Victim impact: Listen and learn: facilitator manual*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime.

Tables

Table 1. Sample Breakdown by State

State	Sites	Respondents		Total
		Participant	Comparison	
California	2	34	14	48 (13%)
Ohio	3 ^a	48	37	85 (23%)
Tennessee	2	93	86	179 (49%)
Virginia	2	28	26	54 (15%)
Total	10	203	160	366 (100%)

a. One of four sites in Ohio was excluded from analysis.

Table 2. Subject Group Mean Age

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Participant	201	35.65	10.39	1.32	0.188
Comparison	160	34.21	10.18		
Total	361				

Table 3. Subject Groups by Racial Composition

Group	Participant	Comparison	Total	Phi	Sig.
White	102	81	183	.033	.822
African-American	78	71	149		
Other	10	8	18		
Total	190	160	350		

Table 4. Questionnaire Items by Position and Factor Classification

Knowledge (22)		Sensitivity to Victim Plight (8)	Blaming (7)	Accountability (8)
2	26	1 ^a	7 ^a	13 ^a
4	27 ^a	3	8 ^a	14
6	31	5	11	21
9 ^a	33	18	19 ^a	23
12 ^a	34	35	28 ^a	29
15	37	38	32 ^a	36
16	40	46	39	41 ^a
17 ^a	42 ^a	50 ^a		47 ^a
22	45			
24	48			
25	49			

a. Item eliminated from original analysis – both groups scored $\geq 85\%$ correct/favorable on pretest.

Table 5. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test Results

	Rank Direction	Participant Group (N=203)			Comparison Group (N=163)		
		N	Mean Rank	Z	N	Mean Rank	Z
Knowledge	Negative	57	95.74	-3.855** ^a	72	71.54	-1.407 ^b
	Positive	123	88.07		62	62.81	
	Tied	23			29		
Sensitivity to Plight	Negative	53	105.93	-4.469** ^a	65	71.65	-0.300 ^b
	Positive	136	90.74		69	63.59	
	Tied	14			29		
Victim Blaming	Negative	61	97.13	-0.749 ^a	60	61.65	-0.507 ^b
	Positive	98	69.34		58	57.28	
	Tied	44			45		
Self-Accountability	Negative	73	92.29	-1.436 ^a	77	67.93	-2.263* ^b
	Positive	102	84.93		53	61.97	
	Tied	48			33		

*: $p \leq 0.05$, **: $p \leq 0.01$

a: Based on negative ranks

b: Based on positive ranks