

# NEWSLETTER



Chaire **UNESCO** de recherche  
appliquée pour l'éducation en prison





## A WORD FROM THE CHAIRHOLDER

For the past several months now, correctional institutions, universities, colleges, and research communities have seen their activities disrupted by the arrival of COVID-19. In the face of such upheaval, we would like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts about the effects of this health crisis on education in prisons, which have led to challenges but also to the development of a technopedagogical expertise that is certainly relevant to optimizing access to education in prisons.

The current pandemic has highlighted several issues, particularly with respect to access to education in prisons. While the systematic presence of formal and informal education programs is not a given internationally, it is not surprising that the sudden arrival of COVID-19 has accentuated inequalities and inequities in terms of access to education, particularly in the penal system. More than ever, the current context highlights the fragility of certain achievements and the predominance sometimes given to other priorities.

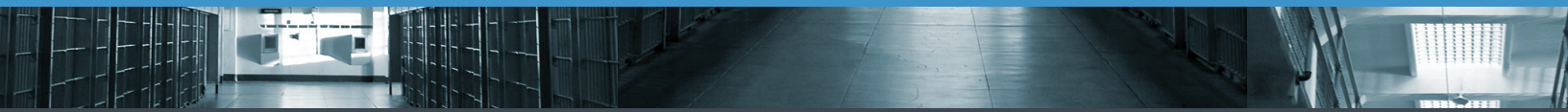
An initial observation allows us to note that the way of understanding the effects of prison education on the socio-professional reintegration of detainees, which already shaped educational structures, previously established institutional models of education, and program delivery, also affects access to prison education during a pandemic. Unsurprisingly, the pandemic is an even greater impediment in countries that had not already established systematic prison education programs. It is also clear that the challenges posed by COVID-19 on a daily basis in prisons do not facilitate new educational initiatives. At the same time, countries that already had structures in place to promote access to education as well as several established programs may in some cases have been able to limit the effects of COVID-19 on access to education, despite inconsistent availability from one country to another.

It is also apparent that the management of the pandemic itself differs from country to country, and even from region to region, and that the implementation of restrictive health measures such as social distancing affects the accessibility of education in prisons. In other words, countries that have opted for less restrictive health measures or for maintaining educational activities in general have in many cases been able to maintain the delivery of prison-based programs. However, the strict confinement imposed in some countries has inevitably further isolated prisoners.

At the same time, access to technological resources in prison education also affects the availability of programs in the context of the pandemic. Indeed, we know that the use of communication technologies in prisons poses several management and security challenges. Yet, as [Nichols](#), cited below, points out, access to these technological resources has contributed to maintaining access to education in some cases. This is particularly true in the United States, where a few post-secondary programs have been maintained thanks to technological support.



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While the debate surrounding access to digital and communication technologies in prisons has been going on for several years, it is bound to intensify in the coming months, as all educational institutions, which are often partners in prison education, have shown that hybrid modes of teaching make it possible to maintain distance education services even in times of generalized confinement. What seemed unlikely in terms of distance education a few months ago is now integrated into the professional expertise of educational institutions. In this regard, we can imagine the lasting impact of these technopedagogical innovations stemming from COVID-19 and the significant momentum to set up IT-based educational services in prisons. Clearly, the benefits of digital communication technologies, so much more than just pedagogical tools, go beyond the classroom and also make it possible to decompartmentalize prisons and maintain links with the outside world.

Obviously, the promotion of the use of digital technology in prisons should not be to the detriment of face-to-face teaching. Indeed, several studies attest to the importance of the concrete and significant relationships that are created during face-to-face teaching and show that these relationships are an undeniable factor in successful social and professional reintegration. In this regard, whether through the emotional labour accomplished by the teaching resources alluded to by [Flores and Barahona-Lopez](#), through the creation of a “sphere of civility” problemized by [McAleese and Kilty](#), or through the implementation of “moral laboratories” illustrated by [Phillips, E. & Williams, R](#), the contributions of face-to-face teaching go beyond the content of the courses themselves. It is not a question of pitting face-to-face teaching against distance learning, but rather of considering the complementarity of the approaches and technological means employed in order to optimize access to education for prisoners.

In summary, it is also in the context of the pandemic that the UNESCO Chair in Applied Research for Education in Prison will continue the challenging research carried out in the framework of the project [“Meaning and Effects of Education in Prison: The Experience and Perspective of Incarcerated Learners”](#) as well as the new project on [“Digital Education, New Technologies, and Education in Prisons”](#). We believe that the dedicated work which can enable more detainees to have access to education programs in prisons must remain a priority. Finally, we hope you find this newsletter informative and enjoyable.

Happy reading!

**Geneviève Perreault**

*Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair in Applied Research for Education in Prison*



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE UNESCO 2020 CHAIR

The last few months have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Chair and her team continue to endeavour to advance and disseminate research and practices related to prison education. We are also pleased to announce two new projects undertaken by the Chair as described below!

We will take this opportunity to follow up on some of the projects announced in previous newsletters. We hope you enjoy reading this issue!

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

**The symposium on “Innovative Practices and Research in Prison Education”, originally scheduled for May 25–27, 2021 in Montreal, Canada, has been transformed into a series of webinars. These will be held in the winter and spring of 2021, on Wednesdays:**

- February 3
- February 24
- March 3
- March 24
- April 14
- May 5

The webinars, which will take place from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. (GMT -5, New York and Montreal time), will be recorded and available on the Chair’s website.

Please save these dates in your agendas!



## ACTIVITIES AT THE CHAIR

### DIGITAL EDUCATION, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND EDUCATION IN PRISON

There is a growing global consensus on the need for the use of new technologies in prisons for the purposes of education, maintenance of family contacts, and the development of current life skills. It has increased with the current COVID-19 health crisis, which in many cases has resulted in the cancellation of courses in prisons. However, the introduction of digital technology in prisons poses major challenges and requires that educational concerns be reconciled with the constraints of the penal system, including internet security considerations and the obsolescence or absence of computer resources.

#### The project and its partners

Faced with this challenge, the UNESCO Chair in Applied Research for Education in Prison, in collaboration with Collège La Cité, has launched a one-year project (September 2020—August 2021) with a grant from the Partnership Development Fund of the Réseau des cégeps et des collèges francophones du Canada (RCCFC). This initiative consists of bringing together the main partners to design a pilot project for digital education in the Canadian penal system, which would be implemented in a second phase in two provinces (Quebec and Ontario).

An advisory committee has been set up and brings together:

- UNESCO Chair in Applied Research for Education in Prison (Project Leader): Véronique Béguet, Co-chair and Director of Outreach and Partnerships
- Collège La Cité (partner): Lise Frenette, Manager, Special Projects Support Services
- Correctional Service Canada (CSC): Emmanuel Rutimbo, Director, Reintegration Programs
- Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEES) (Quebec Ministry of Education and Higher Education)
  - Josée Mercier, Education Specialist, Adult Education and Vocational Training
  - Bernard Lachaine, Assistant Director, Centre de services scolaires de la Rivière-du-Nord (Rivière-du-Nord School Board)
  - Nathalie Denis, Pedagogical Advisor, Pedagogical Resource Services for the Centre de services scolaires de la Rivière-du-Nord (Rivière-du-Nord School Board)
- CSC and MEES: Line Chenard, Provincial Coordinator, Educational Services in Federal Prisons
- Ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec: (Quebec Ministry of Public Security)
  - Véronique Dallaire, Consultant, Direction générale des services correctionnels

(Correctional Services)

- Stéphanie Borgia, Coordinator, Fonds central de soutien à la réinsertion sociale (Central Support Fund for Social Reintegration)

#### Project Objectives

This project aims to contribute to the development of digital technology for education in prisons (a movement that is both national and international) and to ensure that prisoners have access to an expanded educational program in French (a challenge on a Canadian scale). This involves:

- Documenting the current status of distance and digital education in prisons in Canada and around the world.
- Participating in the shift toward digital technology (with current events being a cruel reminder) by applying it to a specific subgroup, the prison population, whose right to education is a fundamental right ratified by the United Nations.
- Through the pilot project ready to be implemented by the end of the 12 months, contributing to an offer of service in French in the prison environment. In this regard, the project meets a Canadian requirement: that of offering services in both of the country's official languages (French and English). However, this objective can be difficult to achieve for francophone linguistic minorities in predominantly anglophone provinces (and vice versa, but this case does not concern us



here).

## The implementation of the project

The pilot project will be jointly created by the partners and collaborators following an approach consisting of a series of key steps:

1. Enumeration and documentation: to provide an overview of the Canadian situation as well as the state of digital education in prisons around the world; to identify pilot projects and solutions that have been implemented.
2. Creation of a portrait of the issues at stake in digital education in prisons, taking into account the realities, constraints, and objectives of the various educational and penal system environments.
3. Exploration of solutions for each of the issues.
4. Designing the pilot project and carrying out the steps required for its implementation in at least one institution located in either of the two provinces concerned.

## Calling on everyone

If you are involved in prison distance education or use online or offline digital materials, we encourage you to get in touch. We would like to hear about your experience. Please contact

Véronique Béguet at the following address:  
[veronique.beguet@collegemv.qc.ca](mailto:veronique.beguet@collegemv.qc.ca).

## PERCEPTION OF INCARCERATED LEARNERS AS TO THE MEANING AND EFFECTS OF EDUCATION IN PRISON

We are pleased to finally be able to announce that the project “Meaning and Effects of Prison Education: The Experience and Perspective of Incarcerated Learners” has been funded by the College and Community Social Innovation Fund, managed by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. This grant, totalling \$238,850 over two years, will allow us to conduct qualitative research on the prison education experience of people in the provincial penal system in Quebec.

In addition to involving a group of field experts—people who have participated in education programs during a previous period of incarceration—at all stages of the research process, our project will shed light on a prison education experience that is still largely unknown to the research community.

We can also announce with enthusiasm and pride that the Continuité-famille auprès des détenues (CFAD) team is joining the project as a partner. We will benefit from their experience and support in the recruitment of prison

education experts as well as respondents from within the penal system.

The project officially began in mid-August 2020. The first research activity took place on September 23 when we brought together the project partners. As this is a social innovation project, it was important for us to bring together our partners working in the field. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the research needs and interests of each partner to ensure that we had a good understanding of each one's reality as well as the issues on which our project could shed new light. The research team and the partners were delighted by this friendly and productive meeting, which bodes well for the future!

Those present at the meeting were:

- Frédéric Armstrong, Co-researcher, Co-chair in Research, UNESCO Chair in Applied Research in Education in Prison

- Daniel Baril, Director General, Institute for Cooperation in Adult Education

- William-J. Beauchemin, Social Innovation Lab Manager, Exeko

- France Bédard, Director Opex' 82, regions: Laval, the Laurentians, Lanaudière

- Lyne Bisson, Co-researcher, Professor of Social Work, Cégep Marie-Victorin

- Sonia Bradette, Pedagogical Advisor, Centre

de formation générale des adultes de la Rivière-du-Nord (Centre for General Adult Education in Rivière-du-Nord)

- Bernard Chéné, Coordinator in Research, Accountability and Program Evaluation, Ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec (Quebec Ministry of Public Security)

- Johanne Pion, Director General, Continuité-famille auprès des détenues (CFAD)

The recruitment of field experts is progressing well and we hope to be able to begin interviews with detainees as soon as the health situation allows us to do so. To be continued!

## FOCUS II—REFERENCE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATION IN PRISON

### 2.1 Updating and maintaining the website

We are still thinking about updating the website. In the meantime, you will be able to find all relevant information about the Chair and its various committees.

### 2.2 Monitoring of research and documentation

The Chair's team continues to monitor the literature, as evidenced by the literature review available below.

### 2.3 Zotero Group Library

Zotero is a free and open source bibliographic management software. In particular, it allows you to save bibliographic records with a single click (using the application for your browser) and to organize your sources, articles, monographs, etc. It also allows you to insert citations in your texts without difficulty and to generate a bibliography automatically from the sources you cite in your text! No more wondering whether to put a comma or a period after the author's name! Moreover, by logging into your account in the software, you will always have access to your references, no matter what computer you use.

Although Zotero is not the only software of its kind (we are thinking about EndNote, for example), its appeal, in our opinion, is that it allows us to share libraries with the community easily and for free.

We therefore invite you to use this software for your daily work and to register for our virtual library available through Zotero's services, by following the link below. This will give you access to an impressive and regularly updated list of prison education resources.

[https://www.zotero.org/groups/2438569/unesco\\_-\\_education\\_prison](https://www.zotero.org/groups/2438569/unesco_-_education_prison)



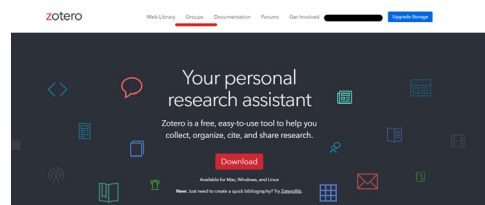
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## STEPS TO FOLLOW

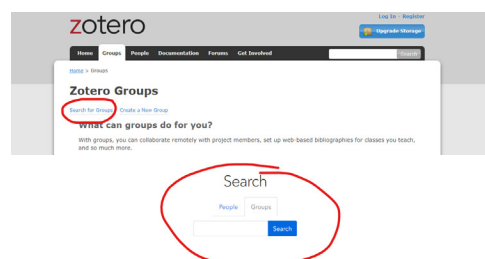
The first step to accessing our virtual library is to open a Zotero account by visiting: <https://www.zotero.org/>. You will then be able to download the software and install the extension for your browser. Please note that the Zotero website is in English, but the software is available in most languages.

Once logged into your account, you will be able to use all of Zotero's features, including access to group libraries.

You will have access to the different groups via the Zotero home page by clicking on the "Groups" link:



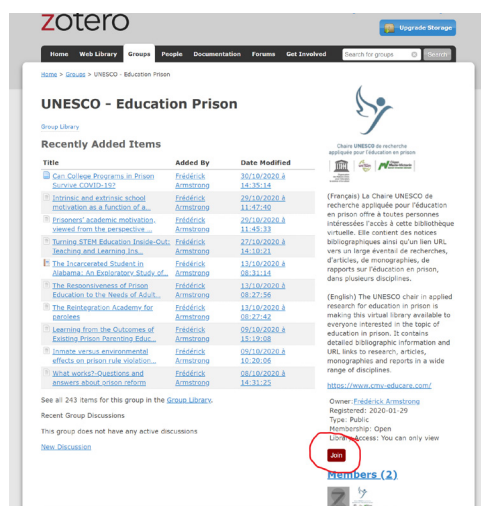
On the next page, you will be able to search for groups by keywords:



The virtual library of the Chair can easily be found with the keywords "education in prison," or you can simply follow the following link:

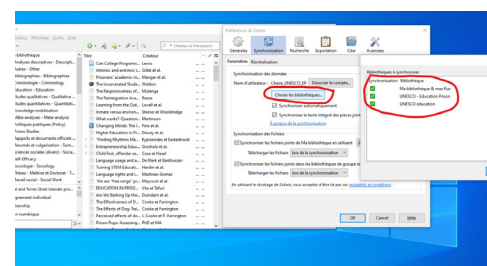
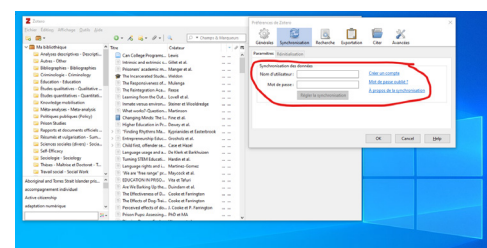
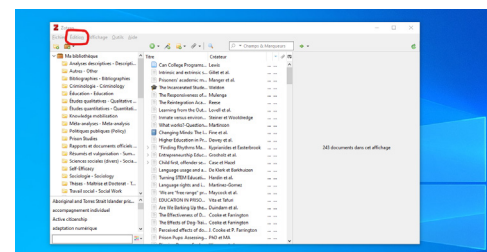
<https://www.zotero.org/groups/2438569/unesco-education-prison>

Once on the group page, simply click on "Join" to join the group library:



Once your subscription to the group library has been confirmed, you will have access to all the sources compiled by the Chair's team, categorized by discipline, region, issue, etc. You will also be able to synchronize the library on all your computers using the Zotero software.

To do this, simply log into your Zotero software and click on the Edit > Preferences menu. In the Preferences window, click on the Synchronization menu and synchronize your software to your Zotero account. You will then be able to select which libraries Zotero synchronizes:



Once the synchronization starts, the virtual library of the Chair will be added to your Zotero program and you will have access to real-time updates.

We hope you find this tool useful and we welcome your feedback!





## FOCUS III—COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

### **Call for proposals from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

As part of the Call for Proposals for the Future of Higher Learning in Prison, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has invited organizations located in the United States and its territories to submit project proposals focusing on the future of higher education for incarcerated students.

These funds, which will range from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000 over two years, will support innovation and the development of new approaches in existing programs.

The results of this contest will be announced on Friday, December 11, 2020.

For more information (in English):

<https://mellon.org/programs/higher-learning/call-proposals-future-higher-learning-prison/>

### **A Message from the Correctional Education Association**

The Correctional Education Association (CEA) is an international non-profit organization with a mission to enhance correctional education in prisons and jails through professional training, networking, and providing research-based support for its members. Even through this year of the pandemic, CEA has continued to provide training and information to assist its members with virtual and technology-based education concepts which could be used to continue the rehabilitation of offenders without face-to-face contact. Sharing innovative rehabilitation ideas has proven to be beneficial to leaders and teachers serving daily behind the walls. Through partnerships with other education and correctional associations, CEA has maintained a strong voice for its membership. Find out more about CEA at <https://ceanational.org/>.

*Kim B. Barnette, Ed.Sp., President*

## UN PORTRAIT DE LA RECHERCHE RÉCENTE

La section qui suit donne un portrait non exhaustif de la recherche la plus récente qui porte sur l'éducation en prison. Les articles et les monographies cités ont été publiés entre juin et octobre 2020. Cette sélection représente bien la diversité des approches et des disciplines qui s'intéressent à l'éducation en prison. N'hésitez pas à nous faire part de vos propres recherches et à nous partager des sources!

### ARTICLES

#### JOURNALS DEDICATED TO EDUCATION IN PRISON

*Binda, H., Weinberg, J. D., Maetzener, N., & Rubin, C. (2020). "You're almost in this place that doesn't exist": The Impact of College in Prison as Understood by Formerly Incarcerated Students from the Northeastern United States. Journal of Prison Education and Reentry, 6(2), 242-263.*

<https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/jper/vol6/iss2/13/>

This qualitative study examines the immediate and lasting impact of liberal arts higher education in prison. Semi-structured interviews conducted with eight (8) men, who participated in college programs in medium and maximum security institutions in the northeastern United States of America, allowed the research team to report some of the mechanisms of personal transformation related to education in prison. Three main outcomes emerged: 1) increased self-confidence; 2) increased sense of community and interconnection; 3) increased leadership and social awareness. Based on feedback from former students, Binda et al. recommend revising prison education programs around four central elements: 1) academic rigour; 2) the professor's respect for students; 3) discussion-based learning; 4) respectful relationships between college and prison personnel.

*McAleese, S., & Kilty, J. M. (2020). "Walls are put up when curiosity ends": Transformative Education in the Canadian Carceral Context. Journal of Prison Education and Reentry, 6(3), 275-293.*

<https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/jper/vol6/iss3/2/>

In this article McAleese and Kilty draw on Wright and Gehring's (2008) thesis that prison education facilitates the creation of a "sphere of civility" where students can discuss diverse issues in an oppressive environment. Their goal is to show that a prison classroom can be conceptualized as a "performative space" where students and teachers engage in a transformative learning process. Analysis of McAleese's interviews and Kilty's experiential knowledge suggest that prison education in Canada is marked by two main themes: (1) prison logic structures educational programs and imposes institutional constraints on educators, and (2) these institutional constraints shape students' experiences. In this context, building a transformative and performative learning context in prison is difficult. However, the authors suggest that the Walls to Bridges program creates connections between inmates and the broader community, which somewhat expands the performative space for education in prison.



## EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

*Flores, J., & Barahona-Lopez, K. (2020). "I am in a constant struggle:" The challenges of providing instruction to incarcerated youth in southern California. International Journal of Educational Development, 76, 102192.*

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102192>

Flores and Barahona-Lopez interviewed fifteen (15) teachers who work in four juvenile detention centres in Southern California. These teachers report three major obstacles to their work. First, students have a low level of education. Second, the teachers have to devote much of their time to emotional labour at the expense of teaching time. Third, teachers must contribute to the safety and security mission of the detention centre, again at the expense of their teaching. Flores and Barahona-Lopez conclude that, despite all their good will, teachers are subject to the structural constraints of the detention context.

*Flores, J., Barahona-Lopez, K., Hawes, J. & Syed, N. (2020). High points of learning behind bars: Characteristics of positive correctional education experiences for incarcerated girls. International Journal of Educational Development, 77, 102210.*

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102210>

Following a 24-month ethnographic study conducted at a youth detention centre in El Valle, California, the research team conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with 15 girls at the centre. The team found that the girls they met were very appreciative of the school. One thing that stands out is that the small class sizes—in contrast to the girls' past experience—allow for the building of personal relationships between teacher and student and more one-on-one interaction. This structure also gives the girls the impression that they can be fully engaged in their studies. Although the team does not claim that all incarcerated girls will have a positive educational experience or that education in detention is, overall, positive, Flores et al. note that the success of an educational program in prison is likely related to the opportunity to build a positive student-teacher relationship.

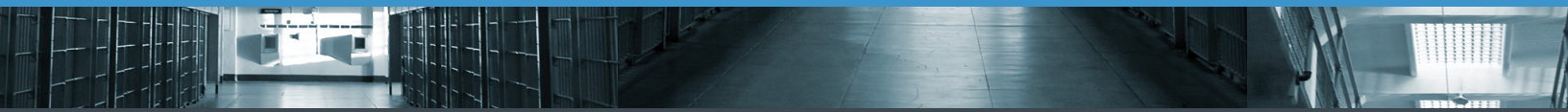
*Ismaila, S. (2020). Availability of Reformatory Education Programmes for Prisoners in North West Nigeria. UMT Education Review (UER), 3(1), 01–25.*

<https://journals.umat.edu.pk/index.php/uer/article/view/562>

Conducted among 1,338 respondents (1,068 inmates, 200 prison officials, 50 lawyers and 20 human rights activists) in 13 Nigerian prisons, Ismaila's survey revealed that among the indicators of reformatory education, only religious education was present. Prisoners in northwestern Nigeria therefore do not have access to (1) premises, staff, or reading materials, (2) mechanisms that promote motivation and continuity in schooling, (3) adult education or (4) vocational training. The author recommends that Nigerian prisons be equipped to provide education that can contribute to the rehabilitation of prisoners.



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*Little, R. (2020). Paying the price: Consequences for children's education in prison in a market society. International Journal of Educational Development, 77.*

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102212>

Based on the argument that financial considerations and market values are at the heart of decisions about the conditions of children's detention and the services that will be provided, Little highlights some of the risks associated with the commodification of prison justice. Although the rate of youth incarceration has decreased significantly—a result welcomed by those advocating for improved conditions for youth—Little argues that this decrease is (1) primarily due to financial considerations; and (2) is not related to improved conditions, particularly in the area of education, but rather the opposite. The author concludes by reiterating the importance of education in detention and emphasizes the dangers of being limited to financial considerations in determining the value of custodial conditions.

*Phillips, E., & Williams, R. (2020). "It's not just an idea": Practicing the good life in a high security prison. Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 0(0), 120.*

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2020.1794750>

What happens when people from different backgrounds meet to discuss the "good life"? What does transformative pedagogy mean in this context? These are the questions that interest Phillips and Williams in this article, which documents the experience of "The Good Life and the Good Society" course as part of the Learning Together\* action research project. In this course, which brought together 12 students from Cambridge University and 13 students from a prison (including a staff member), participants asked themselves questions about "the good life" and "the good society". The authors' findings: more than just ideas, they shared experiences and ways of looking for "the good life". By confronting difference, participants saw some of their prejudices crumble; without being able to discuss the implications of this experiment for education in general, the authors suggest that this program created "moral laboratories" that opened up a learning space free of the hierarchies and assumptions that generally structure knowledge. \*<https://www.cctl.cam.ac.uk/tlif/learning-together>

*Sousa, E. da S., Albuquerque, L. C., Pinho, A. P. M., & Fontenele, R. E. S. (2020). Beliefs about education in prisons: Teachers' perceptions. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 28(0), 86.*

<https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.28.4686>

(Article in Portuguese [Brazil]). As part of this exploratory research, both descriptive and qualitative, Sousa et al. interviewed eight teachers in the metropolitan region of Fortaleza—Ceará in Brazil. According to the team, the results of the analysis indicate that teachers' behaviour in prison is guided by three types of beliefs: behavioural, normative, and perceived control. In addition to improving knowledge about teaching in prison, the research team emphasizes that their research shows the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.





## EDUCATION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SCIENCES

*Manger, T., Hetland, J., Jones, L. Ø., Eikeland, O. J., & Asbjørnsen, A. E. (2020). Prisoners' academic motivation, viewed from the perspective of self-determination theory: Evidence from a population of Norwegian prisoners. International Review of Education.*

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-020-09855-w>

The psychosocial science research team is using the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) (Vallerand et al. 1989) and self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 1985) to measure and analyze the academic motivation of a population of 529 (29 women, 500 men) prisoners in Norway. The goal of Manger et al. is to provide a model that can describe the motivations of incarcerated learners based on a small number of factors. The team concludes that a five-factor model, including intrinsic motivation, three types of extrinsic motivation (namely identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation) and amotivation provides a good account of the data collected. It was found that younger inmates have a more "controlled" motivational profile, i.e., young people are motivated by the presumed benefits and advantages of education, while older inmates have more autonomous motivations. This finding suggests that it is particularly important to encourage young people to enroll and pursue education in and out of prison. It also shows that more educated prisoners do not necessarily have more autonomous motivations than others, a finding unexpected by the Manger team.

## LEGAL SCIENCES AND CRIMINAL LAW

*Jäggi, L., & Kliever, W. (2020). Reentry of Incarcerated Juveniles: Correctional Education as a Turning Point Across Juvenile and Adult Facilities. Criminal Justice and Behaviour.*

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854820934139>

Based on longitudinal data associated with 569 incarcerated youth (91% male) from the Pathways to Desistance Project, Jäggi and Kliever's study tests the idea that student motivation (teacher bonding, school orientation, time spent studying) and performance (grades) are correlated with desistance by comparing youth incarcerated in youth institutions to those in adult institutions. The results of the study show that, for both types of correctional institutions, attachment to school, not grades, is predictive of better reintegration and reduced recidivism. These results indicate that the quality of the school experience, particularly its ability to generate positive relationships between the student and the school institution, is an important element of rehabilitation.

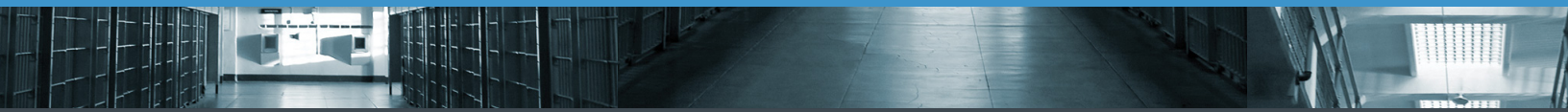
*Marchetti, E., & Nicholson, B. (2020). Using A Culturally Safe Creative Writing Programme to Empower and Heal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men in Prison. The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice, n/a (n/a), 1–19.*

<https://doi.org/10.1111/hojo.12383>

Barbara Nicholson designed the Dreaming Inside program, which aims to provide a space for reflection and creation for incarcerated Aboriginal Australians as well as Torres Strait Islander people. According to the authors, the goal of the program is not to teach a literacy class, but to provide an opportunity for cultural (re)connection



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as well as to build self-esteem and self-confidence through creative thinking and writing. After conducting 30 interviews with Dreaming Inside participants, the authors believe that such a culturally safe artistic and creative activity can offer significant therapeutic benefits for Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islander people. In particular, the presence of Aboriginal elders and tutors would have motivated the men to participate in the program and to open up on subjects they would not otherwise have addressed.

Although the Dreaming Inside program was not designed as formal (or even informal) education by its creators, the Chair's team considers it to be part of what we call education in prison. We also feel that it is important to share this study since too little research is directly concerned with members of indigenous peoples.

**Robinson—Edwards, S., Kennedy, M., Yardley, E., & Kelly, E. (2020). *The Arts, Rehabilitation or Both? Experiences of Mentoring Artists in Prison and Beyond*. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*.**

<http://www.open-access.bcu.ac.uk/9357/>

Shona Robinson-Edwards, Elizabeth Yardley, Morag Claire Kennedy, and Emma Kelly provide us with a window into the experience of artistic mentorship in the criminal justice system from the perspective of the mentors. While the effects of art in prison are documented, the authors note that our understanding of mentoring, this classic form of informal education, is still poorly developed.

## MONOGRAPHS

**McMay, D. V., & Kimble, R. D. (2020). *Higher Education Accessibility Behind and Beyond Prison Walls*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.**

<https://www.igi-global.com/book/higher-education-accessibility-behind-beyond/239915>

Along with more than 20 researchers, Dani V. McMay (State University of New York at Fredonia, USA) and Rebekah D. Kimble (Via Evaluation, USA) have compiled a collective publication that examines program development and pedagogical tools related to higher education in prison and for ex-prisoners. Drawing on the expertise of an international team, Higher Education Accessibility Behind and Beyond Prison Walls offers prison administrators, teachers, and staff an overview of best practices for prison education and education for ex-prisoners.

## MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

**Darolia, R., Mueser, P. R., & Cronin, J. (2020). *Labor Market Returns to a Prison GED*. *Institute of Labor Economics (IZA)*.**

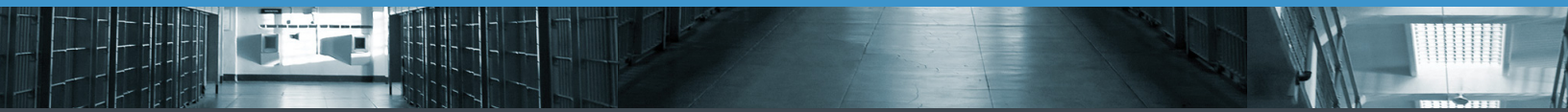
<https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/13534/labor-market-returns-to-a-prison-ged>

Darolia et al. start from the premise that programs that aim for a General Educational Development (GED) diploma, the equivalent of a high school diploma, are one of the most popular approaches to improving the employment prospects of prisoners and, indirectly, increasing their chances of reintegration into society. Based on a public database, Darolia et al. show that obtaining a GED diploma in prison can have a positive short-term impact for former inmates returning to the labour market. This impact is particularly positive for those who had little work experience prior to incarceration and for those who have access to post-release support. The team suggests that





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obtaining a GED diploma can be seen as a sign of accomplishment and rehabilitation. However, it is noted that these benefits must be balanced with the costs of GED programs and that more research is needed to understand the effects of the GED beyond its labour market impact.

*Steurer, S. J. (2020). How to Unlock the Power of Prison Education [Policy Report]. Educational Testing Service.*

<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED607341>

Director of the Correctional Education Association from 1986 to 2015, Stephen Steurer offers a series of recommendations to improve educational services in prisons. Although research shows that education plays a significant role in reducing recidivism rates, Steurer notes that no systematic plan for prison education is currently in place. Underfunded, under-researched, and unstructured, prison education programs need to improve in at least three areas, according to Steurer: (1) training and programs for teachers; (2) public policy on prison education, including funding, and guidelines for the entire U.S.; and (3) research. Steurer concludes by forcefully reiterating that American society is not devoting the resources necessary to fulfill its “moral obligation” to provide adequate and appropriate educational services for incarcerated persons, even if these services have been shown to be cost-effective for society as a whole.

## REFLECTIONS AND RESOURCES RELATED TO COVID-19

*Nichols, Clinton (2020). On lockdown and locked out of the prison classroom: The prospects of post-secondary education for incarcerated persons during pandemic. Interface, 12(1), 310–316.*

In this article, Clinton Nichols, Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Dominican University (River Forest, Illinois), provides an overview of the state of prison education in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic and suggests that some of the innovative responses to the pandemic may unfortunately have the effect of closing classes rather than making them available to detainees. In response to the pandemic, some prisons in Maine have facilitated internet access and Southside Virginia Community College, in collaboration with staff at the Lunenburg Correctional Center, has developed a system that houses incarcerated students in a separate wing of the prison. Nichols notes, however, that these important innovations are exceptions. Most jurisdictions have moved away from prison education programs or toward correspondence education. However, as Lyle May, from his experience as a correspondence student, points out, correspondence education is fraught with difficulties and potentially gives too much power to prison staff.

While the long-term effects of the pandemic are still uncertain, it can nevertheless be assumed that advocates of prison education will face three major challenges. First, there will be budget cuts in prisons, and administrations will not always have the funds to improve educational infrastructure to meet health constraints. This may lead them to turn to cheaper alternatives and distance education. Although it is known that access to distance education and training via the internet can improve access to education in prisons, these methods do not allow as much meaningful contact between students and teachers and subject prisoners to more supervision. Second, the medical situation in prison will continue to be an obstacle to quality education and, above all, to face-to-face teaching for a long time to come. Third, prisoners and prison staff may not be high on the priority lists for an eventual vaccine. This, once again, will slow the return to quality education in prison.

Nichols concludes by pointing out that the current situation may provide an opportunity to build partnerships to ensure that innovations developed to address the pandemic do not have the unintended effect of reducing the frequency and quality of face-to-face educational services.

*Lewis, Nicole (2020, mai 4). Can College Programs in Prison Survive COVID-19? The Marshall Project.*

<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/05/04/can-college-programs-in-prison-survive-covid-19>

In her column, Nicole Lewis describes the short-term effects of the pandemic on college education in U.S. prisons. While several prison college education programs have managed to save, at least in part, the winter 2020 semester, several others have seen the semester and graduation simply cancelled. Moreover, while some colleges have found solutions to get around the fact that they can no longer enter prisons, many are concerned about the effects of the pandemic on a critical component of prison education: face-to-face teaching.

In addition to these known effects on recidivism or prison budgets, prison education offers an opportunity for prisoners to stay away from “prison politics” and the negativity that comes with it. The human contact with the teaching staff helps to reduce tensions and create a sense of community that many prisoners find nowhere else. Without face-to-face teaching, the contribution of education in prison is therefore greatly diminished.

Experts agree, however, that what happens next involves a “heartbreaking equation.” Face-to-face teaching has stopped for very good reasons and returning to prison could put teachers and students at risk of contracting COVID-19. On the other hand, a confinement that drags on over time would mean that inmates would no longer have access to the community they need for months at a time. As a result, many fear that the conditions for college education in prison will become even more difficult than they were at the onset of the coronavirus crisis..

## WEBINAR AT THE UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), as part of the UNESCO learning cities’ responses to COVID-19, organized a webinar on education in prisons on May 13, 2020. The webinar was very well attended from all regions of the world. In addition to the moderator, Marie Macauley (Program Specialist, UIL), the following presenters participated in the webinar:

- Timothy Ireland (Senior Lecturer, Federal University of Paraiba, Brazil) gave an update on the current situation, pointing out that few prisoners are currently receiving services. Possible solutions: education through new technologies; radio in prisons.
- Matteo Cassini (Justice Defenders, United Kingdom) presented the organization’s activities, mainly in Uganda and Kenya: partnership with the University of London for distance learning in law for both prisoners and staff; peer education; human rights advocacy. Wishes to expand the organization’s activities in neighbouring countries.
- Marc-Olivier Barsh (UNESCO, Global Network of Learning Cities), short, pre-recorded message on learning cities and education in prisons during COVID 19.
- Paal Christopher Breivik (Senior Advisor, Department of Education and Guardianship, Norway): Use of digital technology is creating a revolution (iPad for maintaining family ties, communication with teachers, chat/Q&A).
- Lisa Krolak (Chief Librarian, UIL): “Books beyond bars” and an example of renovating a reading space in an Argentinian prison. Caution: the technological shift is important, but there is a risk of concentrating all resources on technology alone.





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- Timothy Ireland finally wrapped up the webinar by highlighting four important points: involving prisoners (what do they want?); education not only for prisoners, but for staff as well; peer education; and better strategies (consider distance education and radio).

The webinar recording and a summary are available online at the following addresses (respectively):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfF0wY\\_tpjk&t=1758s&ab\\_channel=UILUNESCO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfF0wY_tpjk&t=1758s&ab_channel=UILUNESCO)

<https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/learning-cities/unesco-learning-cities-responses-covid-19-outcomes-webinar-13-may>

## *Information on COVID-19 through the European Prison Education Association*

The website of the European Prison Education Association features a section entitled “Corona in Prison Education.” It contains a variety of announcements and reflections about the impact of the pandemic on prison education.

The texts are all available in English and are compiled on the following website: <https://www.epea.org/category/corona/>

## *COVID-19 Action via the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison.*

Along the same lines, on its web page the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison is compiling a list of resources and reflections on the impact of COVID-19 on higher education in prison. It includes a variety of appeals and calls to action, best practice guides and resources to deal with the pandemic, testimonials from faculty and students, and various resources to promote the health and well-being of incarcerated people.

For more information and a complete list of resources:

<https://www.higheredinprison.org/info/covid-19-action>

## *Webinar: Coronavirus in Prisons in Europe*

The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies is organizing a webinar on the Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on European prisons. This virtual conference will be held on the Zoom platform and will bring together Matt Ford (England and Wales), Research Analyst at the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, Emma Jardine (Scotland), Policy and Public Affairs Manager at Howard League Scotland, Cécile Marcel (France), Director at the Observatoire International des Prisons, and Alessio Scandurra (Italy), Coordinator of Antigone’s Observatory on Prison Conditions.

Date: December 3, 2020, 9:30—11:30 a.m., UK time (GMT)

For more information (in English):

<https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/event/2020-12-03/coronavirus-prisons-whats-happening-across-europe>





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