

# NEWSLETTER



**UNESCO** Chair in Applied  
Research for Education in Prison



United Nations  
Educational  
Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



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## **Geneviève Perreault**

Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair in applied  
research for education in prison

**The Chair team is pleased present the first 2021 issue of our Newsletter, a testament to a busy year, despite the constraints imposed by the pandemic. In addition to the regular sections of the Newsletter, this issue includes a section (affectionately referred to as "*the Canadian Report*" by one of our veteran members) on national issues related to prison education.**

The Chair was instrumental in organizing a series of international webinars that introduced us to a community of practices and researchers as well as several prison education projects. Our series kicked off with a panel presenting the importance and relevance of libraries in prisons, with examples from Chile, Cambodia and Sri Lanka offered by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). Next, fellow researchers came to present PLAN (the Prisoner Learning Academic Network), a dynamic network highlighting a range of educational and research initiatives, mostly developed in the UK. In the third webinar, we focused on the prison teaching profession with our colleagues from France, allowing us to explore everything from the recruitment structure to the profession itself. Our fourth webinar traveled to South America to explore prison teaching initiatives for youth and the importance of providing reintegration programs. Finally, our fifth webinar focused on the strong or generic skills promoted by the Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICEA) through an art project for women in the process of social reintegration, the Entr'Elles project, carried out by a group of women and overseen by the Société Elizabeth Fry du Québec.

These webinars gave us an opportunity to capture the importance of prison education through poignant and powerful stories. One of those stories is included in this newsletter. Overall, the content of the webinars and the many comments from participants have confirmed the presence of a community facing the same issues, despite different scientific orientations and socio-political situations. These webinars were indeed more than just learning opportunities, they were truly meaningful encounters. We would like to thank all the presenters and participants.

Lastly, we close this publication with our usual literature review, allowing you to discover recent research or new projects in the field of prison education. [Enjoy your reading!](#)



## CONFERENCES, ROUND TABLES, WORKSHOPS

### Announcement – Société de criminologie du Québec

In November 2021, the Société de criminologie du Québec will organize the **40th Conference of the Société de criminologie du Québec**, in partnership with the Ordre professionnel des criminologues du Québec.

*Title: Adaptabilité, innovations, collaborations et engagement: construire l'avenir ensemble [Adaptability, Innovation, Collaboration and Commitment: Building the Future Together]*

## NEWS

### In the U.S.

On April 7, The Georgetown College website reported the creation of a bachelor's degree program for 25 incarcerated students at the Patuxent Institution (Jessup, Maryland). The project, spearheaded by the [Georgetown Prisons and Justice Initiative \(PJI\)](#) and associated with the Prison Scholars Program, will begin during the 2021-2022 academic year. The program strives for the same rigour and excellence as the program offered on Georgetown College's main campus, so admission will be competitive. The Prison Scholars Program hopes to position itself as a model for successful and effective reentry.

For more information, please go to:

<https://college.georgetown.edu/news-story/georgetown-to-launch-bachelors-degree-program-at-maryland-prison/?fbclid=IwAR30U675FvrxhLvACZSAZBuwJoH9QWrCL8Ot5Wai8iSS-bg2A3euCKDKoQGY>

## Portrait of a researcher: Sergio Grossi, PhD



Sergio Grossi<sup>1</sup> has researched and worked as a social educator in prison with adolescents deprived of their freedom, people experiencing homelessness, asylum seekers, people suffering from mental illness, and sex workers who have been victims of human trafficking. His current research is developed in dialogues between adult education, prison sociology, and critical criminology, analyzing educational concepts and practices in social reintegration projects that are defined as alternative.

In his latest research, he studied the model proposed by the "prisons without police" of the Associations for the Protection and Assistance of Convicts (APACs) in Brazil. The APACs were created in 1974 in Sao Jose dos Campos, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Today, they serve an average of 3,500 people, spending around 1,050.00 Brazilian reais (250 euros) per month per person hosted. The Social Reintegration Centres of the APACs have been described as a peaceful and aesthetically pleasing environment, with a relaxed atmosphere that neither demoralizes nor generates anger. Convicts wear their own clothes and are called by their names; they maintain their identity and are considered citizens and holders

of rights who are serving a sentence. The spaces have been described as not overcrowded; they are clean and free of unpleasant odours, with an architecture designed to carry out educational activities geared towards reentry into society.

The absence of violence and armed security personnel, according to official speeches, is achieved through a security policy based on structuring fewer tense relations between officials and people deprived of their freedom. This is accomplished through respect for human rights and the dignity of people, which is made possible by sharing clear, known rules. Convicts are responsible for managing the keys to the "prison", as well as for cleaning, organization, discipline, and security, in a co-management effort with APAC officials, volunteers, and administrative staff.

The APACs embrace the project of educating society through the proposal of reducing prison boundaries, bringing society closer to the structures. Educating society is also the process of shifting responsibility from the technicians alone. Responsibility is shared with society as a whole, rather than pointing to "professionals" as solely accountable for the success or failure of the social reintegration process.

There is a gradualness of the educational proposal. It is not possible to change life immediately or magically, they explain; in fact, we see that convicts are at different levels of reintegration. The returnees progressively access semi-open and open regimes that allow more freedom, making progressive reintegration into society possible during the sentence, rather than merely after it has been served.

Several potential points for improvement and issues have emerged, such as difficulties in accessing formal employment for ex-convicts. Although these are not covered here, for the sake of conciseness, they have been addressed in [separate articles](#).

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1. Sergio Grossi holds a PhD in Educational Sciences from the University of Padua and the Universidade Federal Fluminense in Rio de Janeiro. He holds a degree in Philosophy, Cognition and Psychology from the University of Bologna, where he also obtained a master's degree in Management and Planning in Educational Interventions in Situations of Social Emergency. Part of this master's degree was completed at the University Paris X (Nanterre). Sergio Grossi holds a PhD in Educational Sciences from the University of Padua and the Universidade Federal Fluminense in Rio de Janeiro. He holds a degree in Philosophy, Cognition and Psychology from the University of Bologna, where he also obtained a master's degree in Management and Planning in Educational Interventions in Situations of Social Emergency. Part of this master's degree was completed at the University Paris X (Nanterre).



## A LEARNER'S TESTIMONY : RYAN RAISING


*Editor's note – Ryan Rising holds a bachelor's degree from the Undergraduate School at Santa Barbara University. He was a panellist on one of the webinars organized by the UNESCO Chair in Applied Research for Prison Education, held on April 7. This webinar focused on prison education for juvenile inmates. His presentation highlighted his own experience with the impact of educational programs on incarcerated individuals. He agreed to share his experience with us.*



**Editor** – First, let me thank you for agreeing to share your experience with the readers of the Chair Newsletter. Can you tell us about your background before you received the training?

**Ryan Rising (Ryan)** – Of course. I was incarcerated from the age of twelve until the age of 32. I was kind of stuck in the revolving door of the system. Every time my sentence ended, I knew that I would be going home, and I would not have any type of resources or help. I would be back in the same neighbourhood and back to doing drugs and hanging out with all those friends in the neighbourhood that law enforcement had labelled as gang members. I knew that would land me back in jail.

**Editor** – At what point did you become aware of this cycle?



**Ryan** – In 2013, I found myself incarcerated at New Folsom State Prison in Sacramento. It was like an awakening that took place in all of us inmates. We were tired of being locked up in these disgusting conditions. We all decided to put an end to all the hostilities we had towards each other and banded together to protest the lack of rehabilitation programs. We all went on a hunger strike and fasted for 59 days to get programs and an end to cruel and unjustified solitary confinement.

**Editor** – What programs were you then able to attend?

**Ryan** – After that hunger strike, I was allowed to enroll at Lassen Community College. The first two courses I took were Drug of Abuse Pharmacology and College Success. These two courses changed my life forever.

**Editor** – What changes did these courses produce for you?

**Ryan** – After taking Pharmacology of Drugs of Abuse, I am happy to say that I have never used drugs again. The knowledge I gained about all the drugs I was using really made me grow, and I gained a new respect for my body, and chose to never use drugs again. Success in college was a personal growth course that not only taught me how to be an amazing student in school, but also taught me how to be an amazing student in life. I fell in love with knowledge and when I got my grades - it was the first time in my life I got two A+'s, I felt smart for the first time in my life.

**Editor** – What happened to you afterwards?

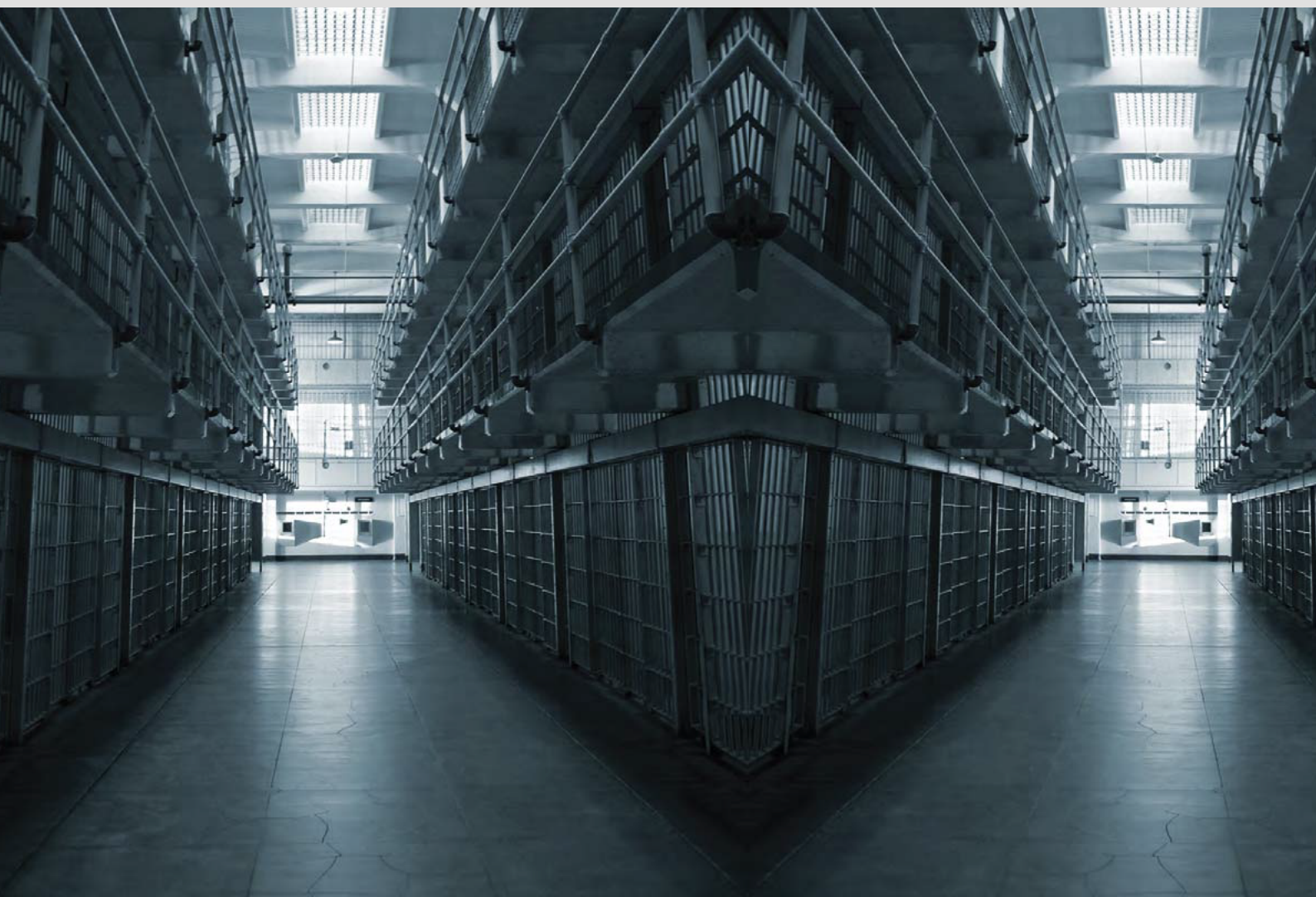
**Ryan** – My parole in 2015 came quickly. I had no support from the prison system and no resources, and I was labelled as transient. Prior to taking and passing classes, I was overwhelmed with anxiety before parole. I had no goals of any kind and felt like I would be doing what I had always done. I would be "out of my cage" to play and see friends and family just for a while, and then I would be sent back to prison for some minor charges.

The big difference was that this time I had college credits, and a few months before I got out, I was connected with Berkeley Underground Scholars, a program dedicated to helping formerly incarcerated people return to the community through higher education. I was mentored by formerly incarcerated students and given my first job as an ambassador. I was invited to multiple conferences and given tons of opportunities.

**Editor** – So you continued your studies after your release?

**Ryan** – Yes. I worked hard and graduated with a degree in Behavioural Science with an emphasis in counselling. I then transferred to the University of California, where I am currently developing the Underground Scholars Program and helping other formerly incarcerated students gain their "release from the revolving door of incarceration" through higher education. I am now using my story to generate knowledge that will eventually end mass incarceration and to develop programs that educate our communities and help build bridges for others to follow in generations to come, to end this cycle of incarcerating our families and wasting their human capital. This is my story and I work hard every day to create the plan to "de-incarcerate the world."

# CANADIAN AFFAIRS SUPPLEMENT



## **Geneviève Perreault**

Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair in applied research  
for education in prison

### **This section focuses on national issues related to prison education.**

First, the research team working on the *Meaning and Effects of Education in Prison project* was able to complete its first step by completing its literature review and conducting semi-structured interviews with former students in prison settings. This innovative approach to research validated some of the information and improved the methodological approach, thus solidifying the foundation for the future. A summary of the project's progress is provided below.

In this first newsletter of 2021, we also thought it would be appropriate to report on the Correctional Investigator's survey of education and vocational training programs in federal penitentiaries. Despite the excellent programs provided by the Correctional Service of Canada, issues and challenges remain. We are also publishing the Correctional Service of Canada's response to this report.



## **Lyne Bisson**

Social work techniques teacher

## **Frédéric Armstrong**

Chair coholder-research

### UPDATES ON THE "MEANING AND EFFECTS OF EDUCATION IN PRISON" PROJECT

Following the last newsletter, which outlined the beginnings of the Meaning and Effects of Education in Prison: The Experience and Perspective of Incarcerated Learners project, the following is a summary of our first phase of data collection, which is planned to take place in five provincial correctional facilities in Quebec, when conditions related to the pandemic permit. This first phase of the project consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews with ex-inmates who had participated in formal or non-formal education programs while in detention, in order to allow the researchers to become familiar with the experience of participating in education programs while in detention; to gather their opinions on the meaning and effects of these programs in relation to their current situation; to gather their suggestions on the logistical aspects of interviewing students participating in education programs while in detention; and to gather suggestions on the topics to be addressed during these interviews. The purpose of this paper is to report on the highlights of these interviews, to relate them to the literature on the subject, and to highlight the methodological contribution of engaging people who have first-hand experience with the subject of our study.

In focusing on the meaning and effects of education, we want to report on inmate learners' perceptions of the meaning of education in prison - what is it for? Why enroll in prison school? etc. - We believe that learners' perceptions of education in prisons are important to us. We believe that learners' perceptions can be of great relevance to program improvement. This postulate is based on the analytical framework provided by François Dubet, who developed a sociology of experience within the broader current of interactionism, integrating the participants' perspective on the meaning and effects of different educational programs (Brassard and Martel, 2009; Deniger and Roy, 1998; Dubet, 1994; Janosz et al, 2001; Potvin and Leclercq, 2014) More prison-specific, our analysis also draws on the general theory of prison education formulated by Kirstine Szifris and colleagues (2018), who posit three sets of mechanisms that contribute to the success of prison education programs: hooks for change, skill acquisition, and the creation of a safe space. This first phase allowed us to test these by juxtaposing them with the testimony of a group of former inmates who individually served as consultants to our project.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE INTERVIEWS WITH FIELD EXPERTS

With the help of specialized organizations, we recruited eight people who had served time in the provincial detention system and who had participated in training programs. In a perspective of recognition and empowerment, we chose to designate them as "field experts". This allowed us to value their experience and their contribution to the project. A first individual interview allowed us to get to know each other, to discuss the meaning and effect of education in prison and to test our intuitions about education in prison. A second meeting took place with six of them and allowed us to validate the recruitment protocol and the interview scheme for the field phase.

The eight field experts have diverse educational backgrounds ranging from grade two to postgraduate degrees. Some have had multiple detention episodes in various provincial institutions, while three field experts have both provincial and federal detention experiences. Their participation in formal or non-formal education programs is diverse: school programs, employability activities, vocational training, but most of them describe it as decisive, with positive effects on their socio-professional reintegration capacity. All of them express great pride in the path they have taken during and after their detention.

They agreed to participate in our project to contribute to the improvement of custodial conditions as well as to improve the services and the offer, to make society aware of custodial conditions and to testify to the importance of the programs and the huge difference between the programs offered at the federal and provincial levels. Finally, some saw this project as an opportunity to advance knowledge, for which they told us they were immensely proud.

The content of this first phase therefore aims to juxtapose the testimony of field experts on the meaning and effects of education programs in prisons and the knowledge gathered in the literature. These initial experiences gathered from people incarcerated in the Quebec provincial prison system represent a pool of knowledge that sheds unique and interesting light on the following themes: the availability and accessibility of programs, the motivations for participating in educational programs, the perception of school space, the effects of participating in educational programs, and suggestions for improving the programs.

### **1.1 A program offer that is appreciated, but insufficient and not easily accessible**

The people interviewed all stressed the importance and positive effects of education in prison, insisting that the range of courses on offer is not sufficient and that access to training is too difficult. In any given year, the average period of detention in provincial detention facilities is about 60 days. Access varies by facility, by time of year, and by length of sentence.

The training needs of the people we met were not always assessed and the assessments that were done were cursory. Many would have liked to have had access to more skills training, i.e., programs that would have made it easier to secure employment. In fact, the brevity of the sentence excludes certain programs from the overall training offer. (Lalande, 2019). This observation is consistent with the testimony of the field experts who demand access to these programs for accused individuals awaiting sentence. Transfers between institutions or to other higher security sectors often put an end to participation in programs, since the offer varies from one institution to another, and there seems to be no mechanism to ensure the training can be continued.

### **1.2 The desire to change one's life as a primary source of motivation**

According to the field experts we met, the reintegration process begins with an initial personal decision to "take charge", which is the main driving force for some, both in prison and after release. Education, in this context, is a means to change without being the cause of change, although we hypothesize that the small successes experienced through participation in educational programs serve as reinforcement to the initial decision.

The compensation offered for participating in training programs is also an important motivating factor, although it is often less than what can be earned by working in the laundry, for example. But the fact that formal education can contribute to better socio-professional reintegration seems to have been significant for some of the experts. The desire to pass the time was also mentioned by several respondents.

There are, however, barriers to motivation. Lack of a clear aspiration, not understanding the purpose of the training and learning without knowing how it will be useful are major barriers to perseverance. Learning disabilities that affect self-esteem can also be barriers to perseverance, as can substance abuse and overmedication.

### 1.3 Perception of school space and the role of professionals : a key factor in the positive impact of education programs

In their general theory of prison education, Szifris et al. suggest that the school space is a "safe space" and that this is an important factor in the success of these programs (Szifris et al., 2018). The evidence from the field experts supports us in exploring this hypothesis. School is perceived as an enjoyable place, prioritizing the status of learner as opposed to prisoner. However, contrary to what can be found in the literature (Binda et al., 2020, p.259; Curtis et al., 2021; Evans et al., 2018; Novick, 2019; Szifris et al., 2018, p. 57), the role of education as a meaningful or positive socialization context remains to be investigated, given that the experts we interviewed did not note the creation of a "community" among the group of students in schools in detention and even seemed surprised to hear that it was a possibility. In our view, the truly short provincial sentences could explain this fact.

Other studies highlight the importance of the role of staff in the reintegration of inmates (Arbour et al., 2019; Lalande, 2019), showing how the positive effect of professional speakers is a major contributor to inmates' participation in educational programs. On this point, experts confirm: the relationship with teachers and trainers is positive and significant. For many, they embody the human side of prison. The vast majority spoke of the importance of the teachers in their progress thanks to their availability, their support, their encouragement, their supervision.

### 1.4 Multiple positive effects of program participation

The literature documents several positive effects of participation in education programs. Training helps to enhance a limited educational background, improve the daily lives of inmates by breaking monotony (Stevens, 2001), providing a foundation for renewed self-esteem (Andrews and Andrews, 2003), as well as an opportunity for self-awareness and self-questioning (Lafortune and Blanchard, 2010). It also improves employment prospects (Cho and Tyler, 2013; Duwe and Clark, 2014), reduces prison misconduct (Duwe et al., 2015; French and Gendreau, 2006; Pompoco et al., 2017), and at least moderately reduces recidivism rates (Bozick et al., 2018; Davis et al., 2013). Field experts support these findings but mention other effects that cluster around three main themes: daily life in detention, self-esteem and sense of competence, and usefulness in relation to the current situation.



#### a) Effect on daily life in detention

On the effects on the detention itself, there is almost unanimous agreement. Participating in any kind of training allows one to get out of one's cell, to get into a routine or to distract oneself. Being able to see other inmates is also appreciated. Several people emphasize that participating in programs acts as a prevention against deviant behaviour; it avoids illegal actions, promotes the reduction or cessation of consumption, and helps to be on one's "best behaviour". Finally, the compensation offered for participation in education programs contributes to improving custodial conditions.

#### b) Self-esteem and sense of competence

Many report a positive effect on their self-esteem and sense of competence. They have learned to persevere despite difficulties, and they take a lot of pride in this. The realization that they are capable of succeeding, when they had never succeeded before, has given them a sense of competence that has motivated them to continue their journey. The change in status from inmate to student also had a positive impact on their self-esteem. And for some, participation in education programs has led to greater self-awareness, particularly through the guidance of teachers.

#### c) Usefulness in relation to the current situation: contribution to rehabilitation

Several field experts spoke of the positive effects of prison education after detention. Because of the programs attended, some were able to continue their education. The ability to add to one's resume was also raised as a positive. Accessing employment through prison-based training was also named as a factor in avoiding turning to criminal activity. These thoughts are reflected in the prison education literature, which shows that rehabilitation programs, including vocational education and training (VET) programs, have a significant impact on employability and recidivism (Bozick et al., 2018; Davis et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2000).

In this regard, the support of a professional outside the prison seems especially important. The field experts who were pursuing their training outside the prison all pointed out the importance of support and guidance from probation officers or educational partners. Some of them also expressed indignation that this type of service is not available to all individuals released from prison.

### 1.5 Suggestions for improving the availability and implementation of prison education programs

The people we interviewed were full of suggestions for improving prison education programs. To improve access to and delivery of programs, our field experts recommend an effective assessment of educational needs at the beginning of the sentence, prioritized access, and improved delivery of skills training leading to employment. Regarding training conditions, psychosocial support should be more available for participants, and the addition of a room where they can study and do homework is also desired. The field experts also suggest ensuring continuity of training during transfers and offering defendants the opportunity to participate in training. Finally, at the end of the program, it is advisable in their view to ensure a follow-up, to create bridges with outside training and to establish partnerships with companies in order to promote job integration.

## CONTRIBUTION OF THE METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE TO INVOLVE PEOPLE WHO HAVE ALREADY GONE THROUGH THIS EXPERIENCE

Although only partially representative of the many experiences of educational participation in prisons, this first phase of interviews is part of a highly relevant methodological approach and allows us to reflect briefly on the contribution of these interviews. Firstly, gathering the testimonies of the field experts enabled us to increase our knowledge of our research object. By relying on their knowledge, experience and insight, we will have a better understanding of the reality experienced by our future respondents, thereby ensuring better preparation for the field interviews, which will address sensitive subjects. Secondly, these meetings enabled us to support several elements of the literature, which allows us to believe that the indicators we will use during the analysis are appropriate.

On a practical level, we also observe positive effects on our preparation for the field. Indeed, during a qualitative approach, it is crucial to quickly create a bond of trust during the interviews. The specificity of the population we wish to discuss with - marginalized people who are deprived of their freedom - makes this bond of trust even more important. Feedback from the field experts on our approach has allowed us to validate our approach and to learn about the attitudes of listening and caring to be promoted when recruiting participants and during the interviews, emphasizing the importance of considering them as students rather than as prisoners. It is also important to value their participation and to convey to participants that what they say may help to improve things.

In addition, these meetings were extremely helpful in developing our interview outline, facilitating the selection of themes, and clarifying their level of relevance. The fact that six field experts also made comments on the first version of the interview outline we will use allowed us to improve it.

These interviews also highlighted some of the representativeness and recruitment challenges we will face in the semi-structured interviews. For example, we found that experts do not distinguish between education and correctional programs, nor do they distinguish between federal and provincial experience with education programs. In addition, it will be especially important to successfully recruit participants for whom participation in programs has not been positive.

Another aspect revealed by the meetings with the field experts, and which will be particularly useful during the interviews, is the fact that the interviewers will be confronted with difficult and moving life stories. The testimonies of the people we met show resilience and great determination to overcome the multiple obstacles associated, on the one hand, with a difficult past, often marked by academic difficulties and criminal behaviour, and on the other hand, with their new status as prisoners or ex-prisoners. This leaves no one indifferent and the interviewers will have to show empathy, letting themselves be touched by some of the stories, while maintaining the necessary professional distance to remain objective.

Finally, several field experts mentioned that they felt a sense of pride in participating in a research project that aimed to improve education programs in provincial correctional facilities. Many said they were touched by the process of gathering the views of people directly affected by our research, but who are often excluded from studies. In this sense, this methodological approach can contribute to their empowerment and thus further promote reintegration. At the end of the first phase of the project, we are now ready to carry out the data collection phase, when prison education programs will resume on a more systematic basis.

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427800037004001>



Published during the COVID-19 outbreak in Canada, the Correctional Investigator's report is unlike previous editions. In addition to the usual thematic chapters, now grouped under the title "National Issues - Major Cases and Updates", there are three national investigations that address systemic issues, issues that go beyond case studies or specific events that occurred during the review year and have bearing on the federal correctional system as a whole. Of these systemic issues, the investigation of education programs and job training in federal penitentiaries will be the focus of our review. We will then present the response of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Service of Canada to the report.

## LEARNING BEHIND BARS: AN INVESTIGATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN FEDERAL PENITENTIARIES.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted, more than any other recent phenomenon, the impact that technology can have on teaching. The Internet can always fail and there are inherent limitations to distance education and videoconferencing, both in the transmission of knowledge and in the building of meaningful human relationships between learner and teacher that contribute positively to learning. Nevertheless, overall, it works. Distance is no longer an insurmountable obstacle to education. Moreover, the pandemic also highlights the effects of inequalities in terms of access to and mastery of digital technologies and the Internet. Despite significant progress in technology-enhanced education, this progress is useless if the learner does not have access to the appropriate infrastructure and tools or if they do not have the basic knowledge necessary to use the new technologies. In short, the fight for access to education now requires a more equitable distribution of digital learning tools and a more effective transmission of basic digital knowledge.

According to the Correctional Investigator, this is even more true in the prison environment:

*In Canada, those behind federal prison walls have long been deprived of most technological advancements in learning. The current state of inmate access to information and technology is backward and obsolete. [...] There appears to be little motivation to improve, evidenced by the lack of progress over the last two decades. (p.67)*

This is also true of the industrial workshops operated by the CORCAN program, whose facilities, described by the Investigator as outdated, do not provide an appropriate learning environment for offenders. Indeed, offenders do not have the opportunity to learn to use the tools that are used in the community, which hinders their eventual reintegration into the labour market.

Considering these findings, the Investigator reiterates that the benefits of education and job training are well known, as most inmates will eventually return to the community. In this context, "it is in the best interest of not only those who are incarcerated, but to all Canadians, that they be offered the basic tools in order to eventually contribute to the Canadian workforce and economy in law-abiding ways." (p. 68).

The challenge is significant, as "nearly three quarters (72%) of federally sentenced individuals have some need for education or employment; 54% of the incarcerated population have less than a grade 10 education and 62% of federally sentenced men were unemployed at the time of their arrest." (p. 68). Generally speaking, then, it can be assumed that prisoners' experience of education or work has not been positive. This makes it even more difficult to get them back into the system, even though we know that education in prison offers inmates "a safe space to become learners, students and apprentices." (p. 68).

Of course, CSC offers various training programs. In 2018-19, 68% of offenders upgraded their education and 60.8% completed vocational training prior to their first release. The Investigator notes, however, that of these 60.8%, some will have completed a single credit or course (e.g., food safety), which is unfortunately not enough to improve their employment prospects. The Investigator further notes that, despite CSC's efforts, the \$64 million spent on inmate training (3% of the total budget) does not appear to be sufficient to meet the needs (p. 68).

Furthermore, the Investigator points out that "for nearly two decades, CSC has remained steadfast and impervious to expanding or updating inmate access to technology and information behind bars." (p. 69). He also notes that in 2011-2012, CSC "outright rejected" his Office's recommendation to increase the use of computers for inmates. In the view of the Investigator, several other recommendations made over the past ten years have not been adequately addressed. In this context of great need and apparent reluctance on the part of CSC to develop the means to improve the situation, the Investigator set himself the task of closely examining learning in federal institutions, in order to assess the barriers to training for inmates and to highlight promising practices that contribute, among other things, to reintegration into the labour market.

His investigation was conducted on two fronts. First, the Investigator reviewed existing CSC policies, services, and interventions related to academic and vocational learning, as well as relevant literature focusing on the impact of education in prison. Next, the Investigator interviewed 75 inmates and 41 CSC staff in the five administrative regions (13 institutions) to discuss the various prison education programs. Several findings emerged from this investigation.

## FINDING 1 : CSC LEARNING POLICY OUTDATED.

Under CSC's strategic framework, CSC's primary goal for formal education is "to offer individuals the ability to attain a high school education" (p. 73). In other words, once this goal is reached, CSC is no longer required to assist inmates in pursuing their education. Of course, inmates are not prohibited from pursuing higher education, but they are not entitled to additional assistance to do so. The policies are also silent on innovative learning technologies and eLearning for inmates. Moreover, although CSC has an obligation to make efforts to identify learning problems in inmates during their training, this obligation is not accompanied by a requirement to employ instructors trained to identify such problems. This suggests that many learning problems go undetected.

In terms of professional training, CSC's policy "does not adequately address the need to ensure that prison employment opportunities match current labour market trends" (p. 73). The policy focuses on the programs currently offered and provides no guidance for updating or adapting training to meet the current labour market. As with the education policy, CSC's professionalization policy and strategy makes no room for the integration of digital learning tools or for learning basic digital skills.

More than ever, post-secondary education and skills related to information technology are necessary for professional success. Policies related to learning need to be updated and expanded to include education and skills that are necessary for the current job market. The Investigator believes that CSC should also rethink its policies to reflect the fact that academic training contributes to vocational training and vice versa. Indeed, CSC needs to recognize that the labour market has changed, that education is more important than ever, and that "jobs in industries that historically have not required any postsecondary training has diminished considerably." (p. 74).

## FINDING 2 : OUTDATED TECHNOLOGY PRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE.

Staff and inmates agree that the most significant difficulties are due to "outdated technology, lack of Internet access, and a misguided focus on security." (p. 74).

### "Archaic" hardware and software

The computers and software used by the inmates are outdated and, apart from books in the library, the only source of information available to the inmates is on the Digital Reference Library, which includes categories of information such as general information, relevant legislation, various documents on CSC policies, Office of the Correctional Investigator reports, Parole Board of Canada information, external relevant reports, and information on self-represented litigants. There is "no interactive content, no learning modules and no ability to create/save documents." (p. 75). These resources are not complete or kept up to date. Despite all this, CSC expends a lot of effort and resources in maintaining an infrastructure that is obsolete. The Investigator does mention several promising and essential pilot projects, but at the same time emphasizes that these initiatives must be implemented in all federal institutions.

### No Internet accesses

Another major obstacle to education in prison is the lack of access to the Internet. Only a few schools still offer paper-based remote education. The choices available to prisoners who wish to pursue correspondence education are therefore severely limited. On the other hand, many high school courses that are not currently offered in prison (e.g., chemistry, biology, or physics) would be facilitated by Internet access. At a time when the Internet may be the only place where information necessary for successful completion of an educational program is readily available, the Investigator suggests that CSC may not currently be able to meet its legal obligations with respect to reintegration.

### Tools no longer being used in the community

The Investigator reports that many of the tools used in the CORCAN facilities do not match what is used in the community. Learning to use these machines does not serve rehabilitation and makes some of the CORCAN training programs seem like make-work, essentially futile job training (p. 76).

### Exploratory projects that must be further developed and applied to the entire federal network

The Investigator cites several pilot or exploratory projects that provide inmates with secure tablets that allow them to, for example, exchange emails with designated individuals, take courses, or participate in correctional programs. These initiatives are important, but the Investigator believes they need to be expanded and enhanced. Inmates not only need to communicate with their loved ones; they also need to learn how to use the Internet to effectively reintegrate into a labour market where everything "is based on constant connectivity." (p. 77).



### FINDING 3: INMATES ARE NOT ACQUIRING THE SKILLS REQUIRED FOR TODAY'S ECONOMY

Today's labour market requires more and more qualifications, including post-secondary education. Yet the Investigator identifies several barriers to pursuing post-secondary education in federal penitentiaries. In addition to the lack of Internet access noted above, incarcerated students must finance their own education, which is not always easy to do, especially since access to government grants is complex. While post-secondary education is not prohibited, prisoners who wish to pursue it do so "often with limited to no assistance from CSC." (p. 78)

The Investigator also notes that the vocational training offered in CSC institutions often does not allow inmates to acquire "job-ready or marketable vocational skills" (p. 80). While the CORCAN shops in Collins Bay (welding) and Matsqui (various construction trades) provide a stimulating and career-building work environment, including tracking the hours worked by inmates registered as apprentices with the provincial ministry, the services are not meeting the demand, either from the inmates or the labour market. The Investigator also deplores the fact that it was reported to him that "production was sometimes prioritized over training for apprenticeships". (p. 81)

Aside from these promising examples, the Investigator points out several limitations of prison-based vocational training. Many inmates are still working on outdated machines and are not acquiring marketable skills in the community. Some inmates report that they go to the shop to pass the time rather than to learn skills. The number of work releases, which allow inmates to return to the community for employment, has been steadily declining over the past 10 years. The jobs offered by CORCAN in women's institutions unfortunately reproduce gender stereotypes (e.g., sewing, jewelry, floral design) and do not match the aspirations of women, who want more options such as construction, accounting, computer trades, etc. (p. 83)

#### Promising employment opportunities

The Correctional Investigator does, however, mention a dozen initiatives and programs that contribute to the education of people in federal corrections. These projects, listed on pages 78-79 of the report, range from Wall to Bridges, a series of college courses that bring together students from the community and the prison to an initiative by CORCAN staff at Collins Bay Institution, who have tailored their training to meet the demands of the local market, to book clubs, debate clubs and poetry workshops.

#### FINDING 4: CSC'S PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DRIVE WAITLIST PRIORITIZATION.

Currently, federal institutions do not have the space to meet the demand for training. As a result, spaces are distributed according to an order of priority that the Investigator describes as "reasonable". He notes, however, that "CSC staff indicated that individuals can be moved down the waitlist to maximize the number of individuals that are offered at least one program prior to their release date." This leads the Investigator to suggest that this practice appears to serve only to achieve the objectives set out in the Departmental Results Report without regard to the real needs of the inmates. He recounts, for example, an instance where an individual with significant educational needs was placed lower on the waiting list for academic training because he had already participated in a water safety program. The Investigator also notes that staff members are finding it frustrating that individuals are being removed from education programs to attend mandatory correctional programs.

Considering this prioritization of correctional programs, the Investigator concludes that:

*Program assignments should not be based on ensuring performance indicators are met, but rather on need and ensuring individuals returning to the community have completed as many relevant interventions as possible.*

#### FINDING 5: LITTLE IS DONE TO FORMALLY ACCOMMODATE THOSE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES.

Whereas disabilities and learning difficulties in prisoners are a recognized problem by CSC and funding is available to screen for them, some teachers are unaware that these resources are available and struggle to intervene once diagnoses are made. This is because teachers are not trained either to screen for problems or to treat them. Teachers interviewed by the Office say they do the best they can but regret not having the appropriate tools. One person trained in special education noted that all CSC teachers should be trained in special education or in how best to help people with learning disabilities.

## FINDING 6: ACCESS TO NECESSARY TOOLS AND RESOURCES OFTEN CHALLENGING.

While CSC policy states that classrooms must be equipped with the necessary academic items for learning (e.g., pencils, paper, recorders), staff and students told the Office that these items are often not available. It was also noted that learning materials are getting old, and some inmates wait a long time to get glasses. In addition, the libraries are not adequately equipped and do not meet the standards set by CSC policy. Moreover, access to libraries is said to be "overly complicated" and requires at least two weeks' notice (p.86).

## CONCLUSION

The Investigator concludes his assessment of training in federal penitentiaries by reiterating one of CSC's primary objectives (Article 3 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act):

*[CSC must help in] assisting the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens through the provision of programs in penitentiaries and in the community.*

While it is true that CSC offers several educational and vocational training programs that the Investigator commends, he has doubts about CSC's ability, or even willingness, to provide effective rehabilitation or reintegration into society "particularly given the current lack of focus, outmoded technological capacity and limited resource allocation" (p. 86). More resources and updated policies, especially to support learning about new digital technologies, are needed to improve the situation.

## MINISTER OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CSC

The Minister of Public Safety is committed to improving outcomes for federal offenders by enhancing opportunities that contribute to the rehabilitation of offenders and their successful reintegration into the community, while ensuring public safety. He acknowledges that increased education programming, enhanced employment skills training, and obtaining the skills to be gainfully employed are key contributors to successful reintegration.

The CSC committed to carefully reviewing and considering all recommendations made by the Investigator. It notes that several initiatives related to the Investigator's recommendations are already planned and therefore announces that the panel recommended by the Investigator will not be established at this time, but that this issue can be revisited once the current initiatives have been evaluated. They will provide an update on relevant developments in their report to the Minister of Public Safety in June 2021.

CSC is also committed to modernizing education programs and recognizes the importance of digital literacy and competence. The Minister is committed to ensuring that "initiatives that develop this skill are being implemented by CSC" (p.110). A digital education pilot project will be implemented at the Bath facility (Kingston, Ontario) before the end of this fiscal year. CSC notes, however, that the expansion of online learning and training activities is challenging "due to the significant age and condition of CSC's informatics infrastructure" (p.110). There is also a need to ensure that the technology is secure. In short, these improvements depend on the availability of resources.

Pointing out the existence of several programs and intervention strategies, the Minister reiterates the need to implement "modern education and employment training opportunities at various institutions that support evolving employment trends" (p.111), which helps prepare offenders for reintegration. The Minister is making this work a priority and "is committed to overseeing that these successes are implemented at the national level." (Ibid)



# An overview of research and practices

*The following section provides a snapshot of the most recent research on prison education. This selection is representative of the diversity of approaches and disciplines involved in prison education.*


*Please feel free to share your own research and sources with us!*

## ARTICLES – JOURNALS DEDICATED TO PRISON EDUCATION

Dewey, S., Codallos, K., Barry, R., Drenkhahn, K., Glover, M., Muthig, A., Roberts, S. L., and Abbott, B. (2020). *Higher Education in Prison: A Pilot Study of Approaches and Modes of Delivery in Eight Prison Administrations*. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 71(1), 5789  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26915042>

In this study, Susan Dewey and her team surveyed civilian "nonuniformed staff" and administrative staff in eight prisons in the United States to ask them whether they thought the delivery of various psychosocial and educational programs offered in prison settings were consistent with evidence-based practices and indicators of success. Based on an analysis of the qualitative data and their field observations, Dewey's team makes ten recommendations for improving approaches and modes of delivery in correctional education, namely:

1. Prioritizing sustainable education in a humane institutional environment through the recruitment of staff willing to engage in cross-professional dialogue
2. Investing in a range of job-driven vocational partnerships as part of positive engagement and collaboration with the public
3. Incentivizing and celebrating successes to increase motivation as part of individualized education planning that centres prisoners' diverse needs and learning styles
4. Fostering a peer-driven learning environment by including current and former prisoners in education and programming initiatives
5. Enhancing collaborations with local universities
6. Utilizing state-specific research and evaluation as central aspects of decision-making and policy implementation in conjunction with evidence-based practices determined elsewhere

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7. Providing educational opportunities for prisoners of all sentence lengths, ages, and conviction types to foster an engaged institutional environment
  8. Increasing access to and use of technology to ensure that education and programming prepare prisoners for employment and success in a technologically based society
  9. Cultivating a team-based approach to education, mental health services provision, programming, reentry, and security among all prison staff to ensure continuity of support and services
  10. Developing a clear mission consistently endorsed and adhered to by all prison administrators and workers to increase communication and receptivity to new ideas

*Lovell, B. J., Brown, A., Esterman, A., and Steen, M. (2020). Learning from the Outcomes of Existing Prison Parenting Education Programs for Women Experiencing Incarceration: A Scoping Review. Journal of Prison Education and Reentry, 6(3), 294315.*  
<https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/jper/vol6/iss3/5/>

In this first exploratory review of the literature on the topic, Lovell et al. explore the outcomes of various parenting education programs offered to women in prison around the world. The objectives of the review are to determine:

1. The scope, structure, and content of parenting education programs offered to women in prison over the past 10 years
2. The outcomes for participants in these programs
3. What can be learned for future research and program development

#### **Results are as follows:**

1. Most programs include a combination of group discussions, teachings, role plays and videos. Many trainings focus on parent/child relationships, while others focus on general parenting skills and competencies. The age of the children involved in the programs vary greatly.
1. It appears that, in the short term at least, these training sessions have positive effects on attitudes towards parenthood, knowledge, behaviour, stress linked to visits and parent/child contact. Evidence from qualitative studies suggests that women come away from these trainings enthusiastic and with a renewed maternal identity. Rigorous research on this topic is scarce. It is therefore difficult to determine which elements of these trainings are most beneficial.
2. The analysis shows that programs that target the specific needs of incarcerated mothers are a good starting point for imagining the future of parenting education programs in the prison context. Those who organize these programs should take the time to interview women to identify their needs and expectations, while respecting the fact that some women have a troubled relationship with parenthood and parenting education.

Windhauser, K. J. (2020). *Teaching Humanities Research in Under-Resourced Carceral Environments*. *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, 6(3), 269274.

<https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1163&context=jper>

Here, Windhauser shares a case study about adapting humanities training at the Taconic Correctional Facility in Bedford Hills, New York. According to Windhauser, humanities curricula must be adapted to prison realities, especially for exercises that require students to conduct a literature search. Indeed, prison faculty face two recurring challenges in teaching independent research skills:

1. Faculty need to develop strategies for teaching incarcerated individuals to search, evaluate, and select the right sources for a research assignment when students do not have access to most existing sources
2. Without these resources, incarcerated students are deprived of one of the most important independent, self-employment exercises in college education


Windhauser then describes the exercise and its results. After training students to define a research question, keywords, and select relevant knowledge areas, the instructor enters the chosen keywords into the appropriate database(s) and selects the top ten articles, ranked according to relevance. The instructor then provides a copy of these articles to the students. They were then asked to analyze this sample and select the most useful sources to build their research project. Despite some challenges, this method partially addresses the lack of direct access to documentary sources and allows incarcerated students to acquire some of the independent research skills that are necessary for college studies in the humanities and general education. Some were even able to exchange sources among their respective samples, a significant and unexpected benefit. The author concludes that the benefits of these modified exercises far outweigh their cost to the instructor.

## EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Case, S., and Hazel, N. (2020). *Child first, offender second – A progressive model for education in custody*. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 77, N.PAG-N.PAG.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102244>

Critical of the traditional criminological approach based on risk management and criminological needs, Case and Hazel propose an alternative conceptual framework that focuses on the young offender (a 'Child First' approach) that views pro-social identity formation in the young offender as the primary vehicle for change and reintegration. Rather than promoting education based on the criminological assumption that educational deficits are a criminological risk that must be managed and intervened upon, Case and Hazel draw on the Positive Youth Justice<sup>1</sup> model to place the child at the centre of their rehabilitation.




Rather than providing training to reduce the risk of recidivism or to address past problems, the approach suggested here emphasizes child-appropriate education, where the positive aspects of education, such as the promotion of pro-social activities, employability, and academic success are emphasized. Furthermore, by providing children with a constructive, customized, co-constructed, consistent, and coordinated education, the authors believe that young offenders will be more likely to develop a pro-social identity. The authors therefore propose a radical overhaul of the paradigm in which prison education is only one way of managing criminological risk, among others.

Recognizing the difficulties of implementing such an approach, the authors encourage policymakers around the world to learn from the UK's Youth Justice Board, which adopted the "Children First, Offender Second" principle in 2019 and prioritizes a theory of change that involves building a pro-social identity.

**Hardin, J., Haushalter, K., and Yong, D. (2020). *Turning STEM Education Inside-Out: Teaching and Learning Inside Prisons. Science Education and Civic Engagement - An International Journal*. [Project report]**

<http://new.seceij.net/category/summer-2020/>

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program allows on-campus students to share a class with incarcerated students. Regular students will, for example, take a history class in prison with their incarcerated counterparts. While the catalogue of humanities courses is well stocked, the disciplines collectively referred to as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) are woefully underrepresented in Inside-Out programs. In this brief article, Jo Hardin, Karl Haushalter, and Darryl Yong share their experience teaching these subjects in a medium-security prison and describe how the Inside-Out approach differs from other approaches. Their experience shows that the emancipatory pedagogy (Freire, 1970) fostered by the Inside-Out program takes students out of the lecture setting, helping students from different backgrounds to recognize that they face the same challenges. The authors then note that participation in the Inside-Out program helps to undo the idea that people's ability to succeed in a STEM course is innate and that some people simply do not have what it takes to succeed. Ultimately, the authors found that the Inside-Out experiment injected a dose of humanity into STEM education. In doing so, their teaching helped show that learning science was not the exclusive domain of a privileged minority.




Nkoana, W., Williams, H., Steenkamp, N., Clasby, B., Knowler, H., and Schrieff, L. (2020). *Understanding the educational needs of young offenders: A prevalence study of traumatic brain injury and learning disabilities*. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 78, 102261.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102261>

The research team conducted a comparative assessment between 25 young offenders and a control group (N=56) in South Africa to determine the prevalence of learning disabilities in the South African young offender population. In the comparison, Nkoana's team found that young offenders were significantly more likely to be affected by learning disabilities than the control group. They also found that the young offenders had a significantly lower verbal IQ than the control group. The research team points out that one of the benefits of custodial education is that it reduces recidivism and crime rates among young offenders. One of the factors that may affect the ability of youth to effectively engage in detention education is the prevalence of neurological problems such as learning disabilities and head injuries. In essence, young offenders experiencing these neurological problems face difficulties that can impact the learner-teacher relationship, knowledge acquisition, and, more broadly, the likelihood of a successful rehabilitation process. According to Nkoana et al. the results of this prevalence study suggest that young offenders are therefore more likely to have learning disabilities. As such, the team suggests that rehabilitation and custodial education mechanisms should be adapted to quickly identify young offenders with learning disabilities and develop strategies to address their specific needs. Since the importance of access to educational programs during incarceration is well known, Nkoana et al. reiterate that it is important to identify the factors that may or may not contribute to the academic success of young offenders.

Reese, R. (2020). *The Reintegration Academy for parolees*. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 1477971420959087.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1477971420959087>

Most people involved in prison education know that the main challenge is not necessarily within the confines of the prison walls. Indeed, continuing the education begun in prison is often difficult for those in the process of reintegrating into society. Reese's article describes the genesis and characteristics of the Reintegration Academy, a program that has been coaching groups of parolees at California colleges through academic orientation, soft skills, and career development training since 2009. In this series of insights grounded in real-world practice, Reese discusses the challenges and successes of this program. He concludes by noting that, ten years after its inception, the Reintegration Academy is now an integral part of a new movement for the reentry of incarcerated people, which emphasizes the importance of a second chance and the transformative power of education.



*Thouin, Caroline. Understanding the Implications of Partnerships in Vocational Correctional Education Programs: A Case Study of the Relationship between A Community College and County Sheriff's Department. Community College Journal of Research and Practice, Feb. 11, 2021, 118.*

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2021.1886197>

In this case study, Caroline Thouin outlines the partnership between a community college and a county sheriff's department by posing the following research question: How can the partnership between a college and a sheriff's department affect the day-to-day decision-making and implementation of a vocational program? Through a series of interviews and analysis of several documents, Thouin observes two key themes emerging. First, she finds that the community of care formed by this partnership has succeeded in creating a clear division of labour and responsibility, which allows for effective decision-making where all stakeholders feel mutually committed. However, as a second theme, the author finds significant cultural differences between the partners. While both claim to work for the rehabilitation of inmates, the sheriff's office emphasizes law enforcement, and the college wants to help inmates contribute positively to their communities. In addition, many of the sheriff's documents use the term "inmates" rather than "students" to refer to those enrolled in the program. Thouin further suggests that the partnership might be more effective in providing students with the skills necessary for release if both partners shared the same discourse on prison education. She also suggests that college staff could help change the culture of the prison institution by providing training to prison staff to help them see program participants not as criminals who need to serve their time, but as people who need opportunities to improve themselves and contribute to their community. To avoid the problems that can arise when two partners do not share the same culture, Thouin recommends that they agree on a common mission, which should be updated regularly, to ensure an effective partnership.

*Warner, Laura, et Jade Schwarz. "Educators as Empowerers: A Small-Scale Study of Opportunities to Expand the Scope of ITT Programmes, with a Particular Focus on Prison Education". Research in Teacher Education 10, No. 1 (2020): 4752.*

<https://repository.uel.ac.uk/item/88z96>

Having described education as a vector of empowerment, the authors of the article emphasize the importance of rethinking teacher training in the United Kingdom by focusing on the specific needs of incarcerated learners. In particular, they lament that teacher training focuses primarily on training offered in so-called mainstream schools and offers little practical information on specialized and alternative areas of education. At a time when general education services are already under pressure, the authors ask how education can be promoted in prison. They suggest that teacher training should be adapted, including the addition of practical training in areas outside the regular school setting to develop teachers' knowledge and experience. While it may be argued that so-called regular education should be prioritized, the need for training in prisons, which has been proven to be effective, should not be ignored. The authors conclude that teacher training needs to be adapted to improve education services in prisons.





## LEGAL SCIENCES AND CRIMINOLOGY

Andvig, E., Koffeld-Hamidane, S., Ausland L. H., and Karlsson B. (2020). *Inmates' perceptions and experiences of how they were prepared for release from a Norwegian open prison.* *Nordic Journal of Criminology*, 0(0), 118.


<https://doi.org/10.1080/2578983X.2020.1847954>

Building on the findings that the Norwegian "open prison" model is both exceptional and understudied, Andvig and colleagues present findings from a qualitative, exploratory study to describe the perceptions of inmates in an open prison that prioritizes their preparation for release. Twenty-seven men, ranging in age from 20 to 60, participated in three focus groups to address the subjective experience of inmates and offer an answer to the following research question: Which aspects of incarceration in an open prison can improve or hinder preparation for release? This study found that inmates perceived themselves to be better prepared for release because they felt treated humanely by open prison staff. In particular, inmates value the reciprocal relationship with staff, which enhances the sense of equality, respect, and trust (p. 10). The open prison also seems to promote an atmosphere of empowerment that helps inmates feel more positive about the future. However, the fear of being sent back to a closed prison seems to constrain inmates in their preparation for release. The team concludes that it is important to protect the open prison system and is concerned that budgetary restrictions in the Norwegian correctional system will undermine the reintegration process made possible by open prisons.

Grosholz, J. M., Kabongo, J. D., Morris, M. H., and Wichern, A. (2020). *Entrepreneurship Education in the Transformation of Incarcerated Individuals: A Review of the Literature and Future Research Directions.* *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 64(15), 1551-1570.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X20928020>

Drawing on theories of entrepreneurial cognition, planned behaviour, and criminal desistance, the research team led by Jessica Grosholz describes how prison-based entrepreneurship education programs should influence inmates' ability to recognize entrepreneurial opportunities, but also their cognitive transformation and prison misconduct. Grosholz et al. then offer six proposals that emerge from this theoretical framework highlighting the potential links between the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and various reintegration processes. In short, it is assumed, but not demonstrated, that entrepreneurship education will have a positive impact on the lives of inmates, on their desistance and on their reintegration process. The team concludes that the potential transformation of inmates through the discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of business opportunities, as well as the way inmates deal with fear of failure, risk aversion, and identity change, are prospective topics in entrepreneurship and prison education research.



Kyprianides, A., and Easterbrook, M. J. (2020).  
*"Finding Rhythms Made Me Find My Rhythm in Prison":  
The Role of a Music Program in Promoting Social Engagement and  
Psychological Well-being Among Inmates.*  
*Prison Journal*, 100(4), 531554.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885520939316>

Arabella Kyprianides and Matthew Easterbrook's research, which follows in the footsteps of social cure research<sup>1</sup>, aims to evaluate the "socially healing" properties of the activities of Finding Rhythms (FR)<sup>2</sup>, a charity that organizes musical activities in prisons in the United Kingdom. This multi-method investigation (pre- and post-intervention questionnaires and qualitative interviews) reveals that participation in FR creates a sense of belonging to the group, addresses psychological needs, and improves the well-being of participants (N=104, in 13 prisons). Secondly, the qualitative interview analysis shows that the benefits of RF do not only emerge in the context of RF activities. Indeed, it appears to have an impact that carries over into prison life in general, particularly by eroding intergroup hostilities within the target population. Through this study, the authors claim to provide a quantified demonstration of the effects of this type of program and to contribute to the social cure literature by showing that the development of a new group identity can contribute to the well-being of inmates.

Maycock, M., McGuckin, K., and Morrison, K. (2020).  
*'We are "free range" prison officers', the experiences of Scottish  
Prison Service throughcare support officers working in custody and  
the community.* *Probation Journal*, 0264550520954898.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0264550520954898>

Highlighting the pressures associated with the fact that correctional officers must, simultaneously, keep prisons safe and help rehabilitate inmates, Maycock, McGuckin and Morrison explore

- The role the physical prison environment plays in officers' perceptions of their identities and their work
- The potential contribution of officers' work outside the walls. In doing so, the research team wishes to draw attention to an innovative throughcare program developed in Scotland and operated by Throughcare Support Officers (TSOs)

After a series of interviews with TSOs (N=20), they conclude that the experience of these correctional officers, operating in the community, does not fit the Goffmanian image of a self-enclosed "total institution" that completely regulates the lives of its members, whether inmates or officers. Working in the community, but as employees of the Scottish prison system, TSOs have the opportunity to reflect on the limits of the prison setting in the rehabilitation process and the challenges of reintegration. Their testimony also highlights how a continuum of care, from incarceration to post-release follow-up, can contribute to the desistance and reintegration of offenders. The TSOs' perspective thus raises serious questions about the role of the prison space in the rehabilitation of inmates and the experiences of those who work within it. By exploring this innovative approach, the research team hopes to promote diversity in approaches to reintegration.

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1. The social cure theory states that belonging to or identifying with a group or social network has a major impact on the physical and mental health of individuals. See Jetten, Jolanda, Catherine Haslam, and S. Alexander Haslam. *The Social Cure: Identity, Health and Well-Being*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015.

2. Finding Rhythms, <http://www.finding-rhythms.co.uk/>



## MISCELLANEOUS SOCIAL SCIENCES

**Prasov, O., and Abakumova, Y. (2020). *Principles and Problems of Financial Provision of Education to Persons Sentenced to Imprisonment. Baltic Journal of Economic Studies*, 6(4), 141148.**  
<https://doi.org/10.30525/2256-0742/2020-6-4-141-148>

In this article, Prasov and Abakumova describe the principles that guide the funding of education, including prison education, in several countries around the world (Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Finland, the Netherlands, Canada, Poland, Germany, Ireland, Great Britain, the United States, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Russia). In presenting this picture, the authors highlight the quality of services in Finland, Germany, Sweden, France, and the United States and the problems in the former Soviet republics, point out that prisoners retain their right to education, and note some of the impediments, particularly in terms of policy, to education in prison. Acknowledging budgetary constraints in several countries, the authors recommend a focus on providing distance education for prisoners who do not have access to prison-based education.

**Mulenga, K. M. (2020). *The Responsiveness of Prison Education to the Needs of Adult Prisoners at Mukobeko Maximum Prison in Zambia. Multidisciplinary Journal of Language and Social Sciences Education* (2664-083X, Online ISSN: Print ISSN: 2616-4736), 3(2), 146167.**  
<https://journals.unza.zm/index.php/mjlsse/article/view/237>

In this qualitative study, Mulenga interviewed ten prisoners, four teachers, and four administrators at the Mukobeko maximum security prison in Kabwe District, Zambia. The objectives of the research are to assess (1) the responsiveness of prison education services to the needs of prisoners and (2) the involvement of prisoners in the education and teaching processes. Following semi-structured interviews, Mulenga reports that inmates believe that educational services meet their needs, particularly because they believe that these services provide them with the academic and vocational literacy necessary to obtain employment upon release. Administrators also report that education helps lower recidivism rates. Mulenga does not provide quantitative data to support these claims, however. Nonetheless, descriptions of the sense of empowerment and hope for the future that comes with education are particularly useful for advancing knowledge. As for the inmates' involvement in their education, Mulenga finds that they have little to say about the nature of their education. He also notes a disconnect between what teachers say about their own teaching methods and the reality in the classroom, where these methods are not put into practice or are not very diversified. These two elements lead Mulenga to say that education in Mukobeko prison unfortunately does not respect the principles of Paulo Freire's education, where learners are not simply recipients of knowledge, but active participants in their liberation through learning.



*Akinsanya, A. O., Adeniyi, A. A., and Okunola, L. J. (2020). Influence of Information and Communication (ICT) Maturity on Nigerian Correctional Education Services. KIU Journal of Humanities, 5(3), 327336.*  
<http://www.ijhumas.com/ojs/index.php/kiuhums/issue/view/29>

Noting the importance of information and communication technology (ICT) on prison education, Akinsanya, Adeniyi, and Okunola assess the impact of the level of ICT infrastructure "maturity" on the rehabilitative performance of the Nigerian correctional system. Using an Information and Communication Technology Maturity Scale (n=120), the researchers find that the IT "maturity" of the Nigerian correctional system is very low. Based on other studies that link the quality of ICT infrastructure to the potential of correctional systems for social reintegration, Akinsanya et al. conclude that improving ICT in Nigerian prisons could contribute to improving the reintegration and rehabilitation processes of prisoners.

## MONOGRAPH

*Cleere, G. (2020). Prison Education and Desistance: Changing Perspectives. Routledge.*  
<https://www.routledge.com/Prison-Education-and-Desistance-Changing-Perspectives/Cleere/p/book/9780367433864>

In this monograph, Geraldine Cleere, Lecturer in Law and Criminology at the Waterford Institute of Technology, explores the experience of incarcerated individuals with prison education and seeks to determine if there is a link between participation in education programs and offenders' ability to desist from crime. While the links between education and decreased recidivism are well known, little is known about the role of education in the desistance process. The book demonstrates how incarcerated individuals who participate in prison education programs gain self-esteem, control, agency, and pro-social attitudes, whose impacts on the desistance process have been demonstrated elsewhere. In summary, Cleere offers a relevant perspective and additional reasons to believe that prison education contributes to more broadly conceived social reintegration.



## REFLECTIONS AND RESOURCES RELATED TO COVID-19

### **The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)**

#### *Lessons Learned From Prison Education Interruption During Pandemic*

In this short briefing paper, CLASP tells us that in 32 states in the US, incarcerated people were more likely to die from COVID-19. In addition to its dramatic impact on the health and safety of incarcerated people, the pandemic also caused serious problems for prison education. Most corrections departments have suspended in-person visits and education programs. Although some prison education programs have turned to distance learning, many technological and bureaucratic obstacles have made it difficult. Some programs switched to more traditional correspondence education and improvised alternatives. Programs that already relied on new technologies and online training fared better. Despite many efforts, prison education remains heavily impacted, even after a year of the pandemic. CLASP concludes that the various prison education programs will need to adapt to a "new normal" by reforming, among other things, access to educational funding and the use of new technologies.

To read the entire document, go to:

<https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2021/04/CLASP%20Coronavirus%20Prison%20Education%20Disruption%20Mar2021.pdf>

## EUROPEAN PRISON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The European Prison Education Association website has a section entitled *Corona in Prison Education*. This section contains a wealth of announcements and insights on the impact of the pandemic on prison education.

The articles are all available in English and can be found here:

<https://www.epea.org/category/corona/>



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