

Foreword to the Practitioner Papers

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This first issue of the Practitioner Section of the journal is themed around a set of articles on prison-based college programmes. Collectively, they detail the experiences and reflections of a number of tutors teaching college programmes in prisons, and include also the perceptions of their students, both imprisoned and not. There are many reasons why we have devoted our first issue to this particular focus (not least due to the increasing numbers of prisoners with advance educational needs far beyond that of basic education). Newcomers to prison education do so with a fresh eye, and can identify aspects of practice and provision that those of us more 'resident' or long-term practitioners no longer notice or perhaps consider in any great depth. Being reminded of what it was like for the first time is refreshing and prompts us all to look again at our prac-

tices and rationales. Perhaps more importantly, because of their college background these tutors 'get education', and understand that the education provided in our prisons must be equal to that of the wider community. Like the resident practitioner, they come to know that in essence it is merely the context that is different, and appropriate and well-considered education, no matter where it takes place or who is involved, has the power to transform lives. The voices of the learners coming through these papers attest to this. Accordingly, the articles presented here remind us once again of how powerful and fulfilling prison education can be – for everyone involved.

I hope you enjoy reading them.