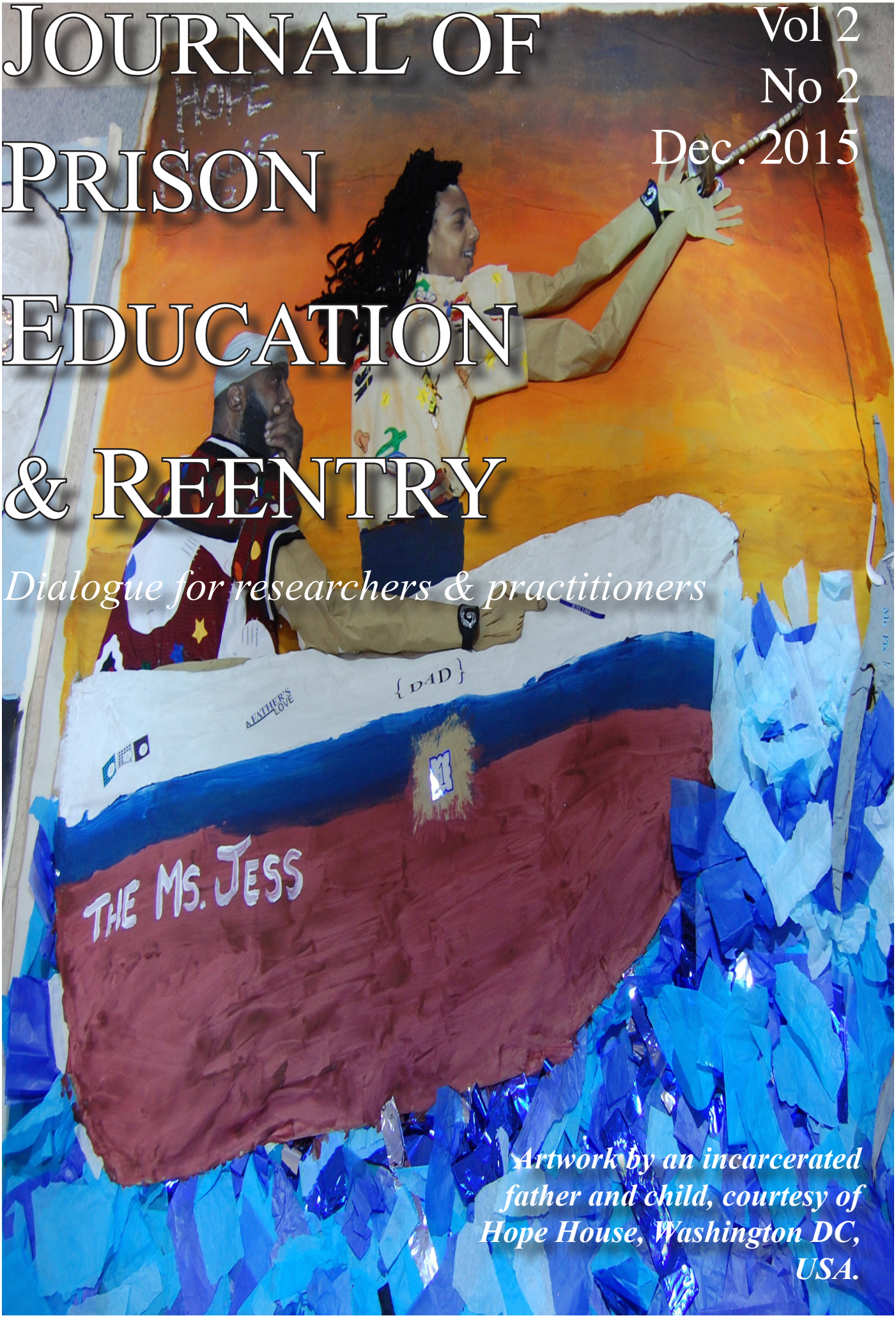
JOURNAL OF PRISON EDUCATION & REENTRY

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Dialogue for researchers & practitioners



Artwork by an incarcerated father and child, courtesy of Hope House, Washington DC, USA.

Journal of Prison Education and Reentry
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JOURNAL OF PRISON EDUCATION & REENTRY

Editor's Welcome

ARVE ASBJØRNSEN
Lead Editor, University of Bergen, Norway

The Journal of Prison Education and Reentry is now entering its second year. The first issue of Volume 2 includes a wide variety of topics across countries and continents. The research articles cover topics of ADHD among prisoners, racial factors of post-release employment, and the perceived role of correctional staff in the reentry process. Asbjørnsen et al, discuss the signs of ADHD and how they might be related to education and work experience among incarcerated adults in Norway. They report how lack of education and former work experiences are closely related to increased signs of ADHD as they follow from the Utah approach to ADHD in the adults. This may have important consequences for planning and delivering educational services in prisons, as the need for bringing in the philosophy and knowledge from special and remedial teaching should be acknowledged. Lockwood et al. then discuss their study of employment and recidivism among individuals returning to the community from U.S. prisons, and show how patterns of employability and recidivism differ by race. Following a survey among 6349 released prisoners, they report that African American ex-prisoners had a higher unemployment rate and recidivism rate than Caucasian ex-prisoners. The results further revealed that released ex-prisoners, if employed, would likely be under-employed and experience difficulties in sustaining employment. And most important: post-release employment and level of education were the two most influential predictors of recidivism among ex-prisoners, regardless of ethnicity. Maybe the reentry process is a good place to elaborate some of the disparities that are also a result of ethnicity issues? Gunnison et al, share the results of their survey of 142 correctional practitioners. Although they achieved a low response rate (904 practitioners were invited to participate), their study reveals important information on the diverse ways custody staff perceive the prisoners and the centrality of their role in the reentry process. Housing and employment were topics raised by wardens and corrections officials as important needs for successful reentry. But it is also worth noticing that education does not seem to appear as a relevant topic in this discussion. Is this a finding that can be generalized, or is this particular for the US? We hope to see a discussion of this in a future issue.

The practitioner papers also include new and important insights from a diverse range of voices. Dreisinger contributes the second part of "Prisons, pedagogy, and pipelines" in which she shares her experiences establishing a college program in a prison in the US. Rausch provides a provocative paper, "Your True Freedom", describing some of her experiences in U.S. jails while teaching inmates "the fundamental truths of self worth, self acceptance and self love through writing, mindfulness meditation and emotional healing". This may not be "mainstream" classroom management everywhere in prison education, but the approach may be recognized in other self-management programs contributing to the reentry process in some countries? Simmons and Branch's paper on "servant leadership" describes a model for work in prison that is inspired by religious philosophical models, that may sound quite exotic to many practitioners in prison education, but the paper also explores a philosophical platform for establishing understanding of the process towards reentry. In addition, Jane Carrigan's paper presents an important and challenging discussion on the practice of doing research in prisons and on prison education. Carrigan's paper might be seen as a hybrid paper that spans both sections of our Journal in the voice of a research-practitioner discussing the practice of doing research.

We hope this issue challenges and stretches the reader in some way, generates fresh and creative ideas, or opens up the possibility of a new way of understanding. As well, we hope it inspires researchers and practitioners from all over the world to write, to submit manuscripts to JPER, and to share their wisdom with colleagues. The greater the range of cultures and systems represented in these pages, the deeper our individual and collective contributions will be to the advancement of prison education and reentry.

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FEATURE--VIGNETTE

1917 American Labor Union Support for Prison Education

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Industrial schools had been advocated by John Philbrick as early as 1861, for "a class of children, more or less numerous, which is too low down in the depths of vice, crime, and poverty, to be reached by the benefits of a system of public education" (Tyack, D.B. [1974]. The One Best System… Cambridge: Harvard U. Press. pp. 69-70). But by 1917, adopting more positive language, the U.S. Congress passed the Smith Hughes Act to help fund vocational education (Smith, Aker, and Kidd. [1970]. Handbook of Adult Education. NY: Macmillan, p. 474). The Smith Hughes Act resulted from the tenacious efforts of a coalition which included philanthropist/ industrialists, the National Association of Manufacturers, and chambers of commerce. Tyack wrote,

> By 1910 the [vocational education] movement had won broad support, with endorsements from the NEA [National Education Association] and the American Federation of Labor (which had long been suspicious of the trade schools as sources of scab labor, but which apparently joined the movement in the hope of sharing in its control and improving the earnings of skilled labor) (Tyack, p. 189).

And in his 1931 book, The Education of Adult Prisoners, prison reformer Austin MacCormick announced the importance of this law in the process of developing institutional education services.

Thom Gehring is the research director of the Center for the Study of Correctional Education at California State University, San Bernardino. His scholarly emphasis is on the history of correctional education and prison reform. He has been a correctional educator since 1972. Thom did his Ph.D. dissertation on the correctional school district pattern of organization. He serves as the historian for the Correctional Education Association. Thom is a professor of education who directs the EDCA correctional and alternative masters degree program.

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FEATURE--BOOK REVIEW

Book Review: Jan Walker, *Unlocking Minds in Lockup*: *Prison Education Opens Doors,* 2015, Plicata Press

Reviewed by JUNE EDWARDS
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Education is a powerful tool that not only opens doors within prisons, but international research would indicate education also, and more crucially, prevents men and women from re-entering those same doors back to prison. Therefore Jan Walker's recently published *Unlocking Minds in Lockup: Prison Education Opens Doors* is a welcome addition to the already rich literature on this subject.

Walker opens with the astonishing statistic that there are currently over two million men, women and youths in prisons, jails and centres of detention in the US. In *Unlocking Minds In Lockup*, Walker addresses the fact that the majority of these two million men and women will one day return to society and to their families, but without the life-skills and social skills to deal with such situations, recidivism is a very real threat. Walker feels strongly that sending vulnerable people with poor educational and social skills back into the outside world serves no-one: not the prisoners, their families, society or indeed the taxpayers who ultimately pay the cost of keeping people behind bars.

A retired community college instructor who taught at the now closed McNeill Island Correctional Institute in Washington State, Walker's book is largely a memoir and collection of warmly told stories about the characters she met during her years teaching parenting and family relationships. Walker describes her initial shock at being 'drafted' into the prison from her cosy job at the local community college. It was not her choice, and she initially agreed to just one year's teaching, but she ended up staying 18 years until cuts to education programmes and changes in attitudes forced her to leave the system which was no longer working for her.

Many of the stories in the book are movingly told and those of us who have worked 'inside' will be all too familiar with the heart-breaking back-stories of many prisoners, and the feeling that if only they had had a different start in life, they likely would have travelled a very different path.
Walker dedicates the book to 'Correctional Educators and Inmate Students and the children of incarcerated prisoners'. However it is unclear whom she is targeting in terms of readership, as there is little here to engage academics in the fields of sociology or criminology, given that her work is more memoir than research or evidence-based study.

One of the more interesting aspects of this work is the parenting programme in which Walker worked for 18 years, particularly the very progressive practice of allowing male students to try out their parenting skills on their own children in a supervised childcare facility attached to the prison. Prison governors and departments of justice elsewhere could certainly take something from this, as male prisoners are rarely allowed such privileged and valuable access to their children in many prisons. Walker is very much an advocate for re-parenting programmes, and teaching inmates to deal with 'uneven parenting', basically a nicer way of saying 'neglectful' or absent parenting, usually as a result of addictions.

Walker's style is warm, down-to-earth and almost maternal, and it is obvious that she has genuine care for those she works with, but in parts the editing could be sharper. Occasionally she starts telling us a story about one of her students, but she has a tendency to change focus, leaving the reader eager to know what happened in the end to the particular student. From an editorial perspective, Walker could perhaps have had a tighter focus on the importance of parenting programmes in prisons as her theme, as this is definitely her area of expertise. Her stories reflect on the work she did to help prisoners re-invent themselves as better parents who could not only take responsibility for how their behaviour was impacting their children, but also how they could right those wrongs for the future, and hopefully break some of the tragic cycles of imprisonment within generations of vulnerable families.

The author of nine books, including *Parenting from a Distance: Rights and Responsibilities*, Walker is an experienced parenting professional. She is also active in publishing and founded her own independent publishing company, Plicata Press.

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RESEARCH PAPER

JOURNAL OF PRISON EDUCATION & REENTRY

Barriers to Participation in Vocational Orientation Programmes Among Prisoners

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Abstract: *This study investigates the barriers to prisoners' participation in vocational orientation programmes, as well as the predictors of different types of barriers. Survey data derived from a project in a remand prison in Belgium (N=468) provided the empirical evidence for the analyses. The results indicate that facing situational and informational barriers are most common. Based on the different kinds of barriers, various types of non-participants can be distinguished and multinomial logistic regression analyses are conducted to identify in what way participants of vocational orientation programmes differ from various types of non-participants. For instance, prisoners with a poor understanding of the Dutch language and those who never/rarely receive visitors participate less in vocational orientation programmes as they are more likely to be confronted with informational barriers. Paths for future research and implications for policy and practice will be discussed.*

Keywords: *barriers, participation, vocational education, prison*

Introduction

Vocational education in correctional institutions is a growing area of research and policy concern (Spark & Harris, 2005). Research has shown that participation in vocational education while in prison has several benefits, both for individuals and society, as well as correctional institutions. For instance, prisoners who participate in vocational training programmes have better employment patterns after their release (Lawrence, Mears, Dubin, & Travis, 2002; Vacca, 2004) and are less involved in disciplinary violations during their imprisonment (Gerber & Fritsch, 1995). Furthermore, several studies and literature reviews reveal that vocational education is effective in reducing recidivism rates (Gordon & Weldon, 2003; MacKenzie, 2006; Petersilia, 2003; Wilson, Gallagher, & MacKenzie, 2000; Ward, 2009).

Along with drawing attention to these positive outcomes, some international literature focuses on the reasons for participation in vocational education. An important motivation is employment-related: e.g., the hope to obtain job qualifications and effectively reintegrate in society (Alós, Esteban, Jódar, & Miguélez, 2015; Hunter & Boyce, 2009). Non-employment motivations concern, for example, protecting psychological health, entering into a human interaction with the teacher (Spark & Harris, 2005), structuring the day, withdrawing from tensions between other prisoners (Hunter & Boyce, 2009), and distraction from drugs and childcare responsibilities (O'Keeffe, Senior, & Monti-Holland, 2007).

Conversely, studies on barriers that impede prisoners' participation in vocational training programmes are almost non-existent. A literature review about the motivations and barriers to participation in prison programmes conducted by Brosens (2013) demonstrates that only 2 articles out of 22 focus on the barriers to participation in vocational education (i.e., Alós, Esteban, Jódar, & Miguélez, 2011; Spark & Harris, 2005). Furthermore, limited research demonstrates that different variables have an influence on the participation of prisoners in vocational education. For instance, female prisoners are more likely to participate in vocational education compared to their male counterparts, as well as prisoners over 30 years of age (Batiuk, Lahm, Mckeever, Wilcox, & Wilcox, 2005). Having insight into the profile of those who take part in vocational education is undeniably an important resource. However, research on the aspects that create barriers to prisoners' participation in vocational education is scarce. In response to these research gaps, this article aims to identify potential barriers to vocational education in prison and to examine whether individual, social network and prison-related characteristics are related to the experience of different kinds of barriers. Because the literature on barriers to participation in vocational training programmes is rather scarce (Brosens, 2013),

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this article starts with a discussion of the literature on the barriers that people experience when considering participation in adult education outside prison (e.g., Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Flynn, Brown, Johnson, & Rodger, 2011; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). Afterwards, this framework is used to present the available literature on barriers to participation in vocational education while in prison.

Barriers to participation in adult education outside prison

Several researchers have investigated the barriers to participation in adult education in the general population (Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Flynn et al., 2011; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). The first study on the reasons for non-participation was conducted by Johnstone and Rivera (1965), who divided the reasons into two categories: internal and external barriers. The internal barriers are grounded in the person's attitude towards learning (*dispositional factors*), while the external barriers go beyond the individual's situation or control (*situational barriers*). *Dispositional barriers* are sometimes called psychosocial barriers, referring to individual beliefs, values, and attitudes that obstruct participation in organised learning activities. Examples are lack of interest, feeling too old to learn, being tired of school, and not enjoying studying (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). Dispositional barriers are also called motivational hindrances (Flynn et al., 2011) or attitudinal barriers (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). *Situational barriers* are unique to an individual and are usually beyond the control of the educational institution (Bunyan & Jordan, 2005; Hardin, 2008). A lack of financial support to enrol in an educational course (Hardin, 2008; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965) and family or time commitments (Cross, 1981) are examples of situational barriers.

Cross (1981) builds further on this framework and adds *institutional barriers* as part of external barriers, indicating that some adults are excluded from participating in educational activities due to practices and procedures linked to the institution and the educational programmes itself (Flynn et al., 2011). The institutional barriers are divided into five categories: (1) scheduling problems, (2) problems with location or transportation, (3) lack of interesting, practical or relevant courses, (4) procedural problems and time requirements, (5) and lack of information about the programmes and procedures (Cross, 1981). Darkenwald & Merriam (1982), however, consider the latter, *informational barriers,* as a distinct category because informational barriers are more than a failure in communicating information about the learning opportunities. It also involves the failure of adults to seek and use the available information.

Limited research has investigated the various characteristics that influence how the different kinds of barriers are experienced. Younger adults and women experience more situational barriers (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965), while older adults report more dispositional barriers (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009). Regarding socio-economic status, adults with a low socio-economic status experience more situational barriers (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965), whereas adults with a higher socio-economic status more frequently experience dispositional barriers (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009). Unfortunately, no research papers were found which address the characteristics that influence institutional and/or informational barriers.

Barriers to participation in vocational training in prison

Previous studies have applied the above-described framework to present the literature on barriers that people experience when considering participation in different forms of education (e.g., higher education - Hardin, 2008; education programmes designed for older people - Bunyan & Jordan, 2005; distance learning - Tello, 2007). Although vocational training programmes in prison can be considered a specific form of education (Batiuk et al., 2005; Gordon & Weldon, 2003; Vacca, 2004), this barrier-framework has not yet been applied to vocational training in prison.

There are only limited numbers of scholars who pay attention to the barriers to participation in vocational training that prisoners experience, and if they do so, mainly institutional barriers are examined. Examples are a lack of available staff and resources (O'Keeffe et al., 2007), a lack of integration between vocational training and prison work (Callan & Gardner, 2005; O'Keeffe et al., 2007), long waiting lists and getting no answer to their application (Westrheim & Manger, 2014). In addition, prisoners can face a lack of information about the available opportunities of vocational education in prison (O'Keeffe et al., 2007; Westrheim & Manger, 2014).

Situational barriers are also discussed in the literature. Prisoners' uncertainty of being able to complete a course due to transfer to another prison or early release can lead to non-participation (Callan & Gardner, 2005). Also, being disadvantaged in terms of participation opportunities due to serving a short sentence (Alós et

al., 2015; O'Keeffe et al., 2007) can be considered an example of a situational barrier. When someone is in prison for a short time, it is difficult to get involved in vocational education and consequently it is unlikely that their mind-set changes, which means that these prisoners may be at greater risk of returning to their previous lifestyle (O'Keeffe et al., 2007). While reviewing the literature on vocational education in prison, research on dispositional barriers was not found.

Research has shown that the prison population varies in terms of gender, age, length of incarceration, etc. and that these factors may influence and differentiate the educational motives of prisoners (Manger, Eikeland, Diseth, Hetland, & Asbjørnsen, 2010). Unfortunately, we found no studies concerning the influence of these variables on the experience of prisoners' barriers to participation in vocational education.

Aim

Having examined the literature on barriers to participation in vocational training, evidence has been obtained that the existing research is scarce. In response to this, our study wants to contribute to a deeper understanding of this topic. More information about the available forms of vocational education can be found in the description of the measures. However, as our research took place within the context of a remand prison where most of the people await trial, the forms of vocational training were limited. For instance, there were no professionally oriented courses like brick laying, painting or cooking. Consequently, we will use the expression 'vocational orientation programmes' instead of 'vocational education' throughout the article.

The aim of the study is threefold. First, it investigates which types of barriers hinder prisoners' participation in vocational orientation programmes. Second, different types of non-participants are described based on the overriding importance of the different kinds of barriers. Third, research on barriers to participation in adult education has shown that there are differences in the types of barriers to persons in a different life cycle or social position (e.g., age, gender, socio-economic position – Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). However, to our knowledge, this has never been investigated for vocational education in prison. As such this study aims to investigate which variables predict the experience of the different types of barriers. Consequently, this study seeks to answer three research questions:

(1) What barriers to participation in vocational orientation programmes do prisoners experience?

(2) Which types of non-participants can be distinguished based on the different kinds of barriers?

(3) On which factors (i.e., individual, social network and prison-related features) do the different types of non-participants differ from participants of vocational orientation programmes?

Methodology

Participants

The research took place in one remand prison in Flanders (Belgium). The goal was to question the whole prison population (N=677), however 20 prisoners were not able to participate (e.g., being under a special security regime, staying in the hospital, being in the isolation cell, having the status of semi-liberty). Among the 657 prisoners who were able to take part, 486 volunteered to participate in the study, which represents a response rate of 73.9%.

The majority of the respondents were male (88.9%), which reflects more or less the make up of the prison population in the prison of Antwerp. In 2012 (when the data collection took place), 91.6% of the prisoners were male, while 8.4% were female prisoners. The percentage of female prisoners in the prison of Antwerp is higher compared to the national average. On a national level, 4% of the prisoners were female and they are spread over 7 correctional institutions (FOD Justice, 2013). Prisoners were aged between 18 and 67 years and the mean age was 33 years (*SD*= 10.50). 39.6% had the Belgian nationality, 28.9% had another European nationality and 31.5% a non-European nationality. Half of the respondents reported they had a good understanding of the Dutch language, 28.0% a little and 21.9% not at all. Regarding educational attainment, respondents had completed on average 10.2 years of school (kindergarten excluded) (*SD*= 3.99). Looking at the professional status before imprisonment, 30.7% had a job, 26.1% was unemployed, 15.7% worked outside the labour force, and 6.8% was disabled or on sick leave. The others (20.7%) were on career break, a househusband, retired, taking classes or on maternity leave.

Procedures

This study is part of a larger research project concerning participation in prison programmes (i.e., vocational orientation programmes, educational courses, sport activities, library, socio-cultural training courses, and mental health care) and the reasons for (non-) participation. The survey was undertaken in October 2012 and about 20 volunteers (e.g., activity organisers and members of the University) assisted with the data collection. The questionnaire was administered by self-administration or face-to-face interviews (in the case of

less literate prisoners) in a classroom. Because of the great amount of foreign nationals in Belgian prisons (Snacken, 2007), it was important to anticipate possible language barriers (Slotboom, Kruttschnitt, Bijleveld, & Menting, 2011). Therefore, the questionnaire was made available in 13 languages: Albanian, Arabic, Dutch, English, Farsi, French, German, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish.

The study was approved by the Ethical Committee of the University. Participation was voluntary and without financial compensation. More information about the methodology of this study can be traced in Brosens, De Donder, Dury & Verté (2015).

Measures

Independent variables. To study the different types of (non-) participants, we include individual, social network and prison related features. The five individual characteristics are gender (0 = male, 1 = female), age (measured in years), nationality (1 = Belgian, 2 = other nationality), school attainment (measured in numbers of school years without kindergarten) and understanding of Dutch (1 = very good, 2 = a little bit/ not at all). Two social network features are included: having children (0 = no, 1 = yes) and receiving visitors (0 = rarely or never, 1 = at least once a month). In addition, two prison-related features are incorporated: actual length of confinement (the entire sample ranged from less than one week to more than six months with a mean of 4.49 indicating that the majority is in prison between two and three months), and whether someone is a repeat offender (0 = no, 1= yes).

Dependent variables. Participants were asked if they had participated in vocational orientation programmes. Two forms of vocational orientation programmes were available. First, prisoners could have individual conversations with a consultant who could help them in their search for work, orientate them to vocational training when they are released, give information about vacancies, etc. Additionally, prisoners could follow a vocational training course in a group. During this course the job market was explored, prisoners learned to build up a CV, received solicitation tips and orientation and assessment training were done. Having one conversation with a consultant or following one course was enough to be included in the participant group. As there were no professionally oriented courses available in this remand prison (e.g., painting, cooking, brick laying), we use the term 'vocational orientation programmes' instead of 'vocational education'.

Second, respondents who did not participate in vocational orientation programmes were shown 20 different *reasons for non-participation* and each respondent was asked to indicate which reasons applied to their own situation (see table 1). These reasons were based on a systematic literature review and preliminary qualitative research (i.e., 6 focus group interviews with professionals of vocational education and prisoners about the motivations and barriers to participation). Afterwards, the barriers were grouped into different categories, based on the literature on barriers to participation in adult educational courses outside prison. We distinguish the 'traditional' types of barriers: situational, dispositional and institutional (e.g., Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). Similar to Darkenwald & Merriam (1982) we also consider the informational barriers as a separate category. Further, some items were added to the questionnaire because they were indicated during the focus group interviews, and two extra categories of barriers were formed with these items. The fifth category of barriers is the possible clash between different activities and participation in vocational orientation programmes. A last category, which is not mentioned in previous studies, is "having no need to take part". These prisoners possibly do not see a purpose or reason for participating (Desjardins, Rubenson, & Milana, 2006) as, for example, they might already have a job when released. Ultimately, we combined the different kinds of barriers with the participation variable and got a new variable with seven categories: (1) non-participants having no need to get engaged, (2) non-participants experiencing institutional barriers, (3) non-participants facing informational barriers, (4) non-participants experiencing dispositional barriers, (5) non-participants having preferences for other activities, (6) non-participants facing situational barriers, and (7) participants of vocational orientation programmes. Belonging to the first category of non-participants (i.e., having no need for vocational orientation programmes) does not mean that these prisoners do not experience other kinds of barriers, but first of all it is necessary that someone is in need of vocational orientation programmes to get engaged. This applies to all the other categories. For instance, prisoners who express informational barriers do not face institutional barriers, but it is possible that they also experience situational barriers. The hierarchical division of the different types of non-participants is based on group conversations with professionals to increase face validity.

Data analyses

Data was analysed using SPSS 22.0. First, the frequencies of the different barriers and their division

into several categories are displayed. Second, bivariate analyses are conducted to see whether the different types of non-participants and participants of vocational orientation programmes differ on individual, social network and prison-related features. Chi-square tests are used for categorical variables and for variables showing statistically significant differences at a level of $p \leq .05$, Z-tests or column proportion tests are used to determine which categories were causing the difference. For the continuous variables, one-way ANOVA and Bonferroni post-hoc tests are performed. Third, multinomial logistic regression analyses are conducted to measure the differences between participants of vocational orientation programmes and the different types of non-participants. Only the variables that are significantly related in the bivariate analyses are included in the regression. We controlled for multicollinearity among these variables by calculating the tolerance and variance inflation factors. The significance level was set at $p \leq .05$ and odds ratios are presented to indicate the size of the effects.

Results

First of all, the respondents were asked if they have participated in vocational orientation programmes. 42.1% of the respondents had at least one conversation with a consultant of the employment service or followed a vocational training course. 57.9% did not participate in vocational orientation programmes.

Types of barriers to participation to vocational orientation programmes

The respondents who did not participate in vocational orientation programmes were asked to indicate which reasons for non-engagement applied to their own situation (see table 1).

Prisoners are mostly confronted with situational (48.7%) or informational barriers (46.1%). The majority of prisoners who report situational barriers are hindered in their attempts to participate in vocational training programmes because they only recently arrived in prison, which is the second most indicated barrier in general. The most frequently cited reason for non-participation refers to the informational category of barriers: being unaware of the possibility to follow vocational education (42.1%). In addition, about 1 in 4 prisoners indicate having preferences for other activities. The most decisive reason for non-participation in this category is having preferences to go to work. Not being in need of vocational training is also indicated by 1 in 4 of the non-participants. Having a job at the time of release from prison in particular is a decisive factor. 13.9% indicated at least one institutional barrier and the most mentioned barriers are having received no answer to a report note (i.e., their request to register) and having no courses. Finally, dispositional barriers are the least mentioned category (4.3%).

Types of non-participants

Ranked on hierarchal importance of the barriers, a classification of different types of non-participants is developed (see table 2).

Non-participants of group 1 have a need for vocational orientation programmes, but are confronted with situational barriers that hinder their participation (9.6%). Group 2 contains prisoners who are also in need of vocational orientation programmes, but the timing of vocational programmes clash with other activities; they have a preference for going to work, receiving visitors, going out for fresh air, etc. Prisoners have to choose between following vocational orientation programmes and doing one of these other activities (6.9%). For the prisoners belonging to group 3 of non-participants, personal barriers (e.g., do not feel like it) hinder their participation (1.2%). It is essential that prisoners have enough information about participation opportunities. 18.2% are faced with a lack of information (group 4). Group 5 contains prisoners who are in need of vocational orientation programmes, but when someone is in need, it is essential that there is an appropriate offer. 5.9% of the respondents find that it falls short here. Group 6 of non-participants are prisoners who have no need to follow vocational orientation programmes. Some of them already have a job when they will be released, do not intend to stay in Belgium or are no longer allowed to work due to illness or disability. In total, 16.0% of all the respondents belong to this category.

Bivariate analysis: Factors influencing the experience of the different types of barriers

Table 3 shows that Belgian prisoners and those with a good understanding of the Dutch language more frequently participate in vocational orientation programmes. Prisoners with another nationality and who do not master the Dutch language sufficiently more frequently report experiencing institutional and informational barriers that hinder their participation. Prisoners facing dispositional barriers have longer school careers than those who experience institutional barriers or prisoners who are not in need of vocational orientation programmes. There is also a tendency that prisoners with shorter school careers lack more frequently information about the participation opportunities than those facing dispositional barriers.

Table 1.

Barriers to participation in vocational orientation programmes (n=230)

	Barriers	%
Situational barriers	I have only just arrived in prison	36.1
	I do not know when I will be released	18.3
	I cannot take training because I have not been convicted	6.5
	Subtotal	*48.7*
Informational barriers	I was not aware of the possibility	42.2
	I do not know how to sign up	17.4
	Subtotal	*46.1*
Having other preferences	I prefer to go to work	19.1
	I prefer to go see my visitors	7.0
	I prefer to go outside for fresh air	6.1
	I prefer to attend my religious service	4.8
	I prefer to do something else	3.5
	Subtotal	*26.1*
Being not in need	I already have a job when I am on the outside	16.1
	I do not intend to stay in Belgium	8.7
	I am no longer allowed to work due to illness or disability	3.0
	I do not want to work	0.4
	Subtotal	*26.1*
Institutional barriers	I requested to enrol, but I never received an answer	7.0
	There were no courses	5.2
	The subjects of the courses are not interesting	1.7
	I wanted to, but the courses were fully booked	1.3
	Subtotal	*13.9*
Dispositional barriers	I do not feel like it	3.0
	I am too tired to participate	1.3
	Subtotal	*4.3*

Concerning social network features, prisoners who receive visitors on a regular basis take more part in vocational training programmes. Those who rarely or never receive visitors are more frequently not in need to taking part, or they experience informational barriers. Prisoners with children are more frequently confronted with institutional barriers, and those without children report more often having a lack of information about the participation opportunities.

Finally, different prison-related characteristics are also related to participation. Repeated offenders are more frequently involved in vocational training than first-time offenders. Prisoners experiencing situational barriers are in prison for a shorter time compared to both participants as well as the other groups of non-participants.

There are no significant differences in terms of age and gender. Consequently, these are excluded from the logistic regression.

Logistic regression analyses: Factors influencing the differences between participants and different types of non-participants

Table 4 contains the results of the multinomial logistic regression analyses. Participants of vocational orientation programmes are compared with the different types of non-participants, based on different individual, social network and prison-related features. For instance, the individual characteristics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity) that make prisoners more likely to

Table 2.

Types of participants and non-participants of vocational orientation programmes (n=406)

	Is the prisoner in need to follow vocational training?	**Does the prisoner experience institutional barriers?**	**Does the prisoner lack information?**	**Does the prisoner experience dispositional barriers?**	**Does the prisoner prefer other activities?**	**Does the prisoner experience situational barriers?**	**Does the prisoner take part?**	%
Participants	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	42.1
NP group 1	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	9.6
NP group 2	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	/	No	6.9
NP group 3	Yes	No	No	Yes	/	/	No	1.2
NP group 4	Yes	No	Yes	/	/	/	No	18.2
NP group 5	Yes	Yes	/	/	/	/	No	5.9
NP group 6	No	/	/	/	/	/	No	16.0

Note: NP = non participants

experience certain barriers to participation in vocational orientation programmes are investigated.

The regressions examine the effect of different predictors between the various types of non-participants and participants of vocational orientation programmes. Prisoners with children and those who never or rarely received visitors were about 2.5 times more likely to not be in need of vocational orientation programmes than to be a participant (respectively OR = 2.318; OR = 2.739, $p < .05$). First-time offenders were also more likely to have no need for vocational training than to participate (OR = 1.875, $p < .10$).

When comparing participants and non-participants experiencing institutional barriers (group 2), prisoners with a poor understanding of the Dutch language and those with children were more likely to face this kind of barrier than to be a participant of vocational orientation programmes (respectively OR = 4.392; OR = 2.915, $p < .10$).

Prisoners with a poor or little understanding of the Dutch language (OR = 4.724, $p < .05$), first time offenders, (OR = 2.520, $p < .05$), those with a foreign nationality (OR = 2.493, $p < .10$), and those who never or rarely received visitors (OR = 2.289, $p < .10$) were more likely to face informational barriers than to participate in vocational orientation programmes. Besides, time of confinement is negatively related to experiencing informational barriers. Prisoners with a longer current sentence length were 20% less likely to be non-participants due to informational barriers (OR = .797, $p < .05$) than to be participants in vocational training programmes.

Having other preferences is associated with whether or not someone was a first time prisoner and understanding of the Dutch language. First time offenders (OR = 3.268, $p < .05$) and those with a poor or little understanding of the Dutch language (OR = 3.169, $p < .10$) were three times more likely to have preferences for other activities than to be a participant in vocational orientation programmes.

Lastly, those with a short current sentence length (OR = .422, $p < .05$), a higher number of school years attended (OR = 1.156, $p < .05$), with children (OR = 2.419, $p < .10$) and a poor or little understanding of the Dutch language (OR = 3.203, $p < .10$) were more likely to be confronted with situational barriers than to participate in vocational training.

This model explained between 41.0% and 42.9% of the variance between the different types of non-participants and participants of vocational education.

Discussion

Our study is one of the first that investigates the barriers that hinder the participation of prisoners in vocational orientation programmes. The framework of factors that impede participation in adult education outside prison (e.g., Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965) is applied to vocational education in prison. Furthermore, the framework is extended by the introduction of clashing activities and a lack of need to get involved in vocational education. When considering the different types of barriers independently, it is demonstrated that prisoners who do not take part in vocational orientation programmes while in prison are in particular confronted with situational and informational barriers. To some extent, prisoners also have preferences for other activities or are not in need of vocational education. Experiencing

Table 3.

Bivariate comparisons of participants of vocational orientation programmes and different types of non-participants (n=406)

Variable	**Group 1: Being not in need**		**Group 2: Institutional barriers**		**Group 3: Informational barriers**		**Group 4: Dispositional barriers**		**Group 5: Having other preferences**		**Group 6: Situational barriers**		**Participants**	
	%	*M*	%	*M*	%	*M*	%	*M*	%	*M*	%	M	%	M
Individual characteristics														
Age		34.57		32.67		31.26		43.5		32.00		33.24		31.66
Gender														
Male	16.4		5.3		18.9		1.1		6.4		9.2		42.6	
Female	12.8		10.6		12.8		2.1		10.6		12.8		38.3	
Ethnicity														
Belgian	12.1		1.9*		7.6*		1.9		7.0		10.2		59.2*	
Other nationality	18.9		8.8*		24.7*		.9		7.0		9.7		30.0*	
Number of school years		9.69*		9.21*		10.17*		17.00*		10.67*		11.38*		10.45*
Understanding of Dutch														
Not at all or a little bit	18.1		8.8*		30.1*		.5		7.8		9.8		24.9*	
Good	13.1		2.9*		7.8*		1.9		5.8		9.7		58.7*	
Social network features														
Receiving visitors														
Rarely or never	21.0*		6.3		27.3*		1.4		8.4		7.7		28.0*	
At least one a month	12.1*		4.8		13.9*		1.2		6.3		9.9		50.8*	
Having children														
Yes	18.6		8.7*		12.8*		2.3		7.0		11.6		39.0	
No	14.7		3.0*		22.3*		.5		6.6		7.1		45.7	
Prison-related characteristics														
Time served		4.37*		5.18*		4.20*		5.00*		5.16*		2.47*		4.80*
Being a repeated offender														
No	18.0		4.9		23.3		1.0		10.7*		8.7		33.5*	
Yes	15.0		5.0		12.2		1.1		3.3*		11.1		52.2*	

* $p \leq .05$

Table 4.

Multiple logistic regression analyses of the differences between participants of vocational orientation and non-participants (n=304)

Participants versus	**Group 1: Being not in need**		**Group 2: Institutional barriers**		**Group 3: Informational barriers**		**Group 4: Dispositional barriers**		**Group 5: Having other preferences**		**Group 6: Situational barriers**	
	B	Exp. (B)	B	Exp. (B)	B	Exp. (B)	B	Exp. (B)	B	Exp. (B)	B	Exp. (B)
Individual characteristics												
Bad or little understanding of the Dutch language (Good=Ref.)	.590	1.804	1.480	4.392*	1.553	4.724**	/	/	1.184	3.269*	1.164	3.203*
Foreign nationality (Belgian = Ref.)	.300	1.349	1.060	2.886	.931	2.493*	/	/	-.304	.738	.278	1.320
Number of school years	.012	1.012	.030	1.031	.039	1.040	/	/	.040	1.041	.145	1.156**
Social network features												
Having children (No=ref.)	.841	2.318**	1.070	2.915*	.090	1.095	/	/	.306	1.358	.883	2.419*
Never or rarely receiving visitors (Frequently receiving visitors=ref.)	1.008	2.739**	1.082	2.951	.828	2.289*	/	/	.257	1.293	.544	1.723
Prison-related characteristics												
First-time offender (Repeated offender=ref.)	.628	1.875*	.255	1.290	.924	2.520**	/	/	1.184	3.268**	-.199	.820
Time of confinement	-.123	.884	.238	1.268	-.227	.797**	/	/	.046	1.047	-.862	.422**

*** p ≤ .05, * p ≤ .10*

/ Too small to interpret the observations

institutional barriers, and in particular dispositional barriers, is less common.

The different types of non-participants are compared with participants of vocational orientation programmes on individual, social network and prison-related features using multinomial logistic regression analysis. The results show that knowledge of the Dutch language (an individual characteristic) is the most powerful factor in explaining the differences between those experiencing informational barriers and participants of vocational orientation programmes. Previous research has shown that language barriers prevent foreign prisoners' equitable participation in prison activities (Atabay, 2009). A lack of information about the educational opportunities in a language they understand impedes the participation possibilities of this group (Westrheim & Manger, 2014). Our research strengthens these findings. It is knowledge of a particular language, and not nationality, that determines the possibility of understanding the information about the participation opportunities. Accordingly, nationality and language understanding should not be considered as synonyms. There are Belgian prisoners who experience language difficulties and foreign prisoners who master the Dutch language sufficiently.

A second individual characteristic that explains the differences between participants and non-participants of vocational orientation programmes is the number of years of schooling. The longer prisoners have been to school, the more often situational barriers are experienced. This is in contrast with research concerning participation in adult education in 'free' society which states that low-educated people are more likely to experience these kinds of barriers (e.g., Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009). However, it is not possible to compare the groups of people who experience situational barriers inside and outside prison, as the experienced barriers are completely different. For instance, possible situational barriers that people outside prison experience are a lack of financial support (Hardin, 2008; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965) and family or time commitments (Cross, 1981). A possible explanation for why prisoners with a longer school career identify situational barriers more frequently may be that these people want to have certainty about their detention situation before they start participating in vocational orientation programmes. Future research is recommended to identify the reasons why these prisoners more frequently face situational barriers to participation in vocational orientation programmes.

Also, social network features are related with whether prisoners take part in vocational orientation programmes. Prisoners with children express more frequently a lack of need for vocational orientation programmes than the desire to be a participant. This is surprising, as the literature about participation in (vocational) educational courses while in prison has shown that parents are motivated to participate because they want to be a decent role model for their children (e.g., Hall & Killacky, 2008; Schlesinger, 2005; Torre & Fine, 2005). However, incarceration inevitably disrupts family relations and not all imprisoned parents have the possibility to have or maintain contact with their children (Vigne, Naser, Brooks, & Castro, 2005). Furthermore, the majority of parents worry about their children while they are in prison (Bahr, 2007). It may be possible that these worries hinder prisoners from participating in vocational orientation programmes. Additional research could provide more insight into this issue.

In addition, previous research has shown that prisoners who receive visitors are more likely to participate in educational courses than those who do not receive visitors (Rose, 2004). This is in line with our results. Visitation is considered important, as it allows prisoners to receive social support and maintain connections to the outside world (Connor & Tewksbury, 2015). A plausible explanation might be that the people who come to visit prisoners motivate them to take part in vocational education.

Finally, prison-related features also have an influence on the experience of various kinds of barriers. First time offenders and those with a short current sentence length are more likely to face informational hindrances than to be a participant. Previous research has shown that prisoners can face a lack of information about the available opportunities of vocational education in prison (O'Keeffe et al., 2007; Westrheim & Manger, 2014). It is possible that as time passes, prisoners become more aware of the possibilities for following vocational education, and that prisoners with various prison experiences are informed about the offer due to their previous stay. To anticipate this, certain prisons in the United Kingdom employ prisoners as 'insiders' to provide information about prison life, in particular to newcomers and first-time prisoners (Edgar, Jacobson, & Biggar, 2011; Jaffe, 2012). Besides, time served seems in particular to have an influence on the experience of situational barriers. Prisoners with a short current sentence length are more likely to face situational barriers than to be a participant. This is a logical conclusion because most of the situational barriers are related to the beginning of a prison sentence (i.e., being just arrived in prison, not knowing their release date,

and not having been convicted yet).

A last prison-related difference is found between prisoners who have preferences for other activities and participants of vocational orientation programmes. First time prisoners are more likely to prefer to do something else (e.g., going to work, receiving visitors, going outside for fresh air). Previous research has shown that there is a lack of integration between vocational training and prison work (Callan & Gardner, 2005; O'Keeffe et al., 2007). However, the reason that having other preferences is indicated more by first time offenders remains unclear. Further research is recommended to investigate this more in depth in order to provide an explanation.

Limitations

There are some limitations that might affect the interpretation of the results presented. Because the study took place in one remand prison in Belgium, it is not possible to generalize the findings to other prisons. Previous research has shown that characteristics that are specific to one prison (e.g., security level, crowding) can have an influence on the behaviour of prisoners (Dye, 2010; Lahm, 2008). Including both correctional institutions with remanded prisoners and prisons where sentences are served would enrich the data and could indicate the similarities and differences in the experience of barriers to participation in vocational education among various prison populations. For instance, this research shows that situational barriers are the most identified category of barriers. We hypothesize that these barriers are of less importance in prisons holding only convicted prisoners.

Second, the forms of vocational training in this study are limited because of the context of a remand prison. Prisoners can only have conversations with a consultant or follow some courses in a group (e.g., learning to build up a CV, getting solicitation tips, orientation and assessment trainings). It would be interesting to investigate the barriers that prisoners face to participation in a greater variety of vocational programmes, for instance professionally oriented courses (e.g., brick laying, painting, kitchen and cooking). Mostly, these courses are offered in correctional institutions where sentences are served. Nevertheless, more than research attention for participation in vocational education is necessary. The study of barriers to prison education more generally should be an important area for future research. Most of the research about prison education focuses on the motivations to take part (e.g., Boshier, 1983; Maggioncalda, 2007; Manger et al., 2010), while existing research on the barriers is rather scarce (Brosens, 2013).

Besides, our study has shown that 42.1% of the prisoners have participated at least once in vocational orientation programmes. Nevertheless, we do not know if they experienced certain categories of barriers in the past. It can be that they were confronted with, for instance, situational or institutional barriers, but that they overcame these difficulties or participated despite certain barriers they experienced. Future research can provide more insight into these aspects.

-Furthermore, due to the low educational level of the prisoners (Behan, 2014; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002), it was necessary to develop an accessible and user-friendly questionnaire. In order to so, first specialists on clear language usage checked the survey instrument. Afterwards, the questionnaire was piloted among 34 prisoners. During and after the prisoners had completed the survey, they were asked to reflect on the user-friendliness and the content of the questionnaire. We had the intention of including various validated measurement instruments in the final questionnaire (e.g., GHQ-12, MOS-scale). During the pilot phase, the prisoners were asked to fill in the GHQ-12 as a test. It became clear that it was very difficult for them to fill in these kinds of questions. Ultimately, we decided not to include more validated measurement instruments in the final questionnaire. Also questions about the barriers could be presented using likert scales so that the respondents could indicate how important a barrier was in comparison with other barriers. However, due to their low educational level, we decided to use nominal categorical variables (yes/no) in the questions about barriers due to their simplicity.

A fourth limitation is linked to the number of dispositional barriers included in our study, which is rather small. The number of dispositional barriers could be increased by the inclusion of barriers indicated in the literature about participation in adult education in the general population, e.g., feeling too old to learn or not enjoying participation in vocational education (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982).

Implications for policy and practice and future research

Despite the limitations, this study provides innovative insights into the barriers that hinder prisoners' participation in vocational orientation programmes. Having insights into these aspects, policy makers and activity organisers can try to anticipate the barriers and strive to make the offer available for everyone who wants to take part in vocational orientation programmes. Because barriers on various levels

determine non-participation, we discuss separately the possible interventions at each level.

First, it seems easiest to anticipate informational barriers. In particular, prisoners who have difficulties with the Dutch language do not take part in vocational training because they experience a lack of information about the participation opportunities. Policy makers and activity organisers can inform prisoners facing language barriers about the offer of Dutch language courses. Such courses can help prisoners to understand the information that is given and their surrounding in the prison (Westrheim &, 2013). It is necessary that the education opportunities are pointed out and that information is given about how to apply (West, 1994). For foreign prisoners it is essential that information is given in an understandable language (Westrheim & Manger, 2014). Besides, cooperation between the educational providers responsible for the Dutch language courses and vocational training would be interesting. One possibility might be to use a vocational training course as an applied Dutch course. Furthermore, first time prisoners and those who are recently arrived in prison also frequently indicate informational barriers. Special attention might be paid to these groups in disseminating information about the offer of vocational training.

Another category of barriers that seems possible to anticipate is the perceived lack of need. Our study demonstrates that prisoners who rarely or never receive visitors are more likely to have no need to take part in vocational education. It is possible that community volunteers could play a valuable role for these prisoners, as in some cases visitation from family and friends might be challenging (e.g., sex offenders, foreign nationals). Visiting volunteers can be useful for providing these prisoners with social support and connections to the outside world (Connor & Tewksbury, 2015). Although having visits from community volunteers might be less effective in affecting prisoners' behaviour than visits of close relatives, the interactions with these volunteers can help prisoners to offset the day-to-day strains of prison life (Cochran & Mears, 2013) and might provide them with valuable information about prison opportunities.

Third, anticipating institutional barriers also seems to be possible. Receiving no answer to a report note (i.e., request to register) and lack of course availability are the most indicated hindrances within this category. Additional research could reveal the reasons why activity organisers do not always respond to the report notes and which vocational training courses prisoners want to follow.

Furthermore, having preferences for other activities like going to work, receiving visitors and going outside for fresh air also prevents some prisoners from taking part. A prison wherein the different activities take place at different times could tackle these barriers. In this kind of prison, people can work during the day and follow vocational training during the evening, for instance. In particular first time offenders express having preferences for other activities. Research could shed additional light on the reasons why this group more frequently wants to do something other than take part in vocational education.

There is also a group of prisoners who do not participate due to dispositional barriers. Reducing these hindrances concerns encouragement, motivation and emotional support (Sticht, McDonald, & Erickson, 1998).

Finally, anticipating situational barriers seems to be the most difficult as these barriers are outside the control of the educational providers (Bunyan & Jordan, 2005). Most of these barriers are related to the beginning of a prison sentence. We would recommend anticipating other kinds of obstacles. Previous research outside correctional institutions has also indicated that it is difficult to make recommendations for tackling situational barriers (Sticht et al., 1998).

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RESEARCH PAPER

Results from a Multi-modal Program Evaluation of a Four Year Statewide Juvenile Sex Offender Treatment and Reentry Program

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Abstract: *The results of the Program Evaluation show the OJJ Statewide Sex Offender Treatment program is exceptionally productive in meeting over 90% of its established performance markers. These markers included successful screening and assessment of risk and psychosocial needs, completion of initial and master treatment plans, establishment of sex offender specific treatment goals with a focus on psycho-educational treatment components, and community reintegration. The Statewide Juvenile Sex Offender Treatment Program effectively produced the cost benefit of fewer juveniles in secure care, with a 42.3% reduction from pre-grant activities to the present. The results of the Program Evaluation showed a reduction of juvenile sex offenders in the system and a reduction of juvenile sex offenders in secure care, with a 27.5% reduction from pre-grant to the present. The sex offender treatment program effectively reduced recidivism rates of juveniles in secure care and community programs. The total recidivism for sexual and non-sexual crimes was 4.1% from 2008-2012; the sexual recidivism rate was 1.6% for the same time duration. The results of the Program Evaluation showed that the secure care treatment program addressed the needs of the higher risk to re-offend juveniles and the community programs addressed the needs of lower risk juveniles, showing a comprehensive method of ensuring public safety. This comprehensive statewide approach is robust in its ability to address the needs of juvenile sex offenders while at the same time keeping the public safe.*

Keywords: *Juvenile Sex Offender, Program Evaluation, Recidivism, Treatment, Reentry*

Juvenile sex offenders are one clinical population that remains underrepresented in juvenile justice reentry literature. The problem of juvenile sexual offending is well-documented. Adolescents (ages 12-18) commit approximately 20% of rapes and anywhere from 20-50% of child sexual abuse cases in the United States each year (Hart-Kerkhoffs, Doreleijers, Jansen, van Wijk, & Bullens, 2009). Trends in rates of juvenile sexual offense arrests as well as recidivism over the last 10 years have shown little decline (Keogh, 2012). As the number of juvenile sex offenses continues to rise, the tangible and intangible costs to victims, communities, child welfare systems, educational systems and private and state correctional facilities will also grow (Gibson & Vandiver, 2008). Accordingly, there is a need to include extensive program evaluations based on various approaches to juvenile sex offending treatment and reentry programs in order to continue meeting the needs of communities, victims, families, and the youth themselves.

Best practices for juvenile sex offender programs aim to maximize the juvenile's family involvement and reentry and make more connections to neighborhoods, friends and culture while implementing teaching, modeling, and mentoring strategies toward successful reintegration (Keogh, 2012). One significant challenge faced within the juvenile sex offender treatment community is the integration of services across treatment providers, especially related to transitional and reentry planning. Typically, youth who commit sexual offenses are charged, adjudicated and assigned to a level of treatment commensurate with type of offense as well as risk of reoffending. Levels of care normally progress from less restrictive environments such as community outpatient clinic services, to traditional and treatment foster care, to more restrictive environments such as

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residential group care, acute psychiatric services, and finally secure care within a juvenile corrections environment (Underwood et al., 2006). At all stages of treatment, consistency in provider training, program implementation, psychological and risk assessment, as well as program discharge are common challenges. Additionally, the multi-faceted procedures required to ensure positive reentry and youth community reengagement continues to be an important treatment focus. Through formal program evaluation, many of these challenges can be measured and addressed.

The Sex Offender Treatment Model

For the State of Louisiana, these and additional concerns lead to a multi-system shift in delivering services to adjudicated juvenile sex offenders. It was evident that the previous system for legally supervising and managing juvenile sex offenders was disconnected and lacked the rigor and coordination needed to effectively meet the needs of juvenile sex offenders, their families and the community. Effective community reentry and transitioning of juveniles from secure care to community-based treatment was needed. To ensure that juveniles received the appropriate treatment and that secure care was reserved for youths with the highest risk needs, the assessment of risk and treatment needs of juveniles would have to be standardized. Conversely, community-based programs, which would allow for increased family involvement and better management of reintegration services, would need to be primarily reserved for juveniles with the lowest risk. This would ensure that the treatment needs of juvenile sex offenders were met in multiple sites including community-based specialized non-secure residential and outpatient services. Finally, a focus on programming and treatment across reentry phases was also necessary. In particular, a focus on psycho-education was needed across all phases of treatment. However, for those youth reentering the community, this education would increase the likelihood of a seamless transition. The Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (JOJJ) received a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in 2008 with the implementation of the grant in 2009 to address these concerns. The Office of Juvenile Justice defined four major goals of the supported program:

1. Reduction in the number of low and moderaterisk sex offenders in the Office of Juvenile Justice's (OJJ) secure care facilities by developing in each of the six service areas of the state a model of community based residential and re-entry programming (outpatient clinics) for juvenile sex offenders.

2. Increased residential alternatives to secure care for juvenile who require out of home placement.

3. Reduction in the average length of stay for juvenile sex offenders placed in OJJ's secure care intensive track program (dorm-based programs).

4. Promotion of statewide institutional and community practitioner adherence to evidenced-based practice models, including a focus on psycho-educational components.

5. A specific focus on the four phases of reentry with increased communication across treatment providers, probation/parole, district attorneys, judges, and schools.

Because community treatment providers and juvenile justice administrators play a significant role in coordinating care in the provision of sex offender placement and treatment for these juveniles, the OJJ developed a comprehensive statewide system. This new system would address the needs of juvenile sex offenders including those juveniles in secure care, community-based residential treatment facilities and community-based outpatient treatment clinics. This statewide system also standardized initial and ongoing assessment and treatment. The continuum of care for adjudicated sex offenders in Louisiana focuses on reducing recidivism among adjudicated juvenile sex offenders (secure care and non-secure care community programs) and increasing safety within Louisiana's juvenile corrections facilities, residential programs, neighborhoods, towns and cities.

A Focus on Reentry

The OJJ maintains a "solutions-centered" reentry model which is intended to identify reentry needs from the time of adjudication, implementing specific plans as early as possible (Melancon & Graham, 2012). The overarching goal of the reentry model for OJJ is to help youths returning to the community to avoid many of the situations that resulted in their initial arrest and detainment. The term engagement is often utilized as a predictor of successful transition. An "engaged" youth is one who is attending school, vocational training or working as well as engaging in prosocial behaviors in their community. Youth disengagement is associated with increased recidivism, dropping out of school, mental health issues, and substance abuse (Mathur & Clark, 2014). While part of the juvenile justice system, a

youth will be in one of various phases aimed at ultimate reengagement with the community. For example, in phase one, a youth enters a secure care environment. At this time extensive assessment and evaluation are conducted for treatment and planning. In this phase, part of the focus is on identifying possible community resources to meet the offender's needs upon reentry, no matter the length of time the youth may remain in care. Phase two involves education, treatment, and other individualized services while in secure care (Melancon & Graham). Despite an intense focus on rehabilitation, this phase is also important in that community resources and partners continue to be identified for reentry. The current OJJ program evaluation focused primarily on phase two coordination of treatment and other resources with emphasis on community reentry. However, the focus on community-based treatment services continues to stress the importance of reentry for OJJ. With a focus on reentry, it is hoped that recidivism rates would decrease and the coordination of services would be improved.

Integrated Treatment

One of the primary components of the comprehensive statewide treatment program is the implementation of a best practices treatment protocol across all sites and providers. As cited in Underwood et al. (in press), the treatment literature indicates that cognitive- behavioral theoretical models are most effective with juveniles involved in the juvenile justice system, including sex offenders. Cognitive-behavioral therapies stress the importance of cognitive processes as determinants of behavior. Cognitive-behavioral therapy maintains that behavior and emotions result from one's appraisal of the situation, and because appraisal is influenced by beliefs, assumptions, images, and self-talk, these cognitions become the targets of change. The model of care utilized in the statewide sex offender treatment program utilizes three basic processes for change: 1) the juvenile's behaviors and reactions to these behaviors; 2) the juvenile's internal dialogue (i.e., what he says to himself before, during, and following the behavior) and; 3) the juvenile's cognitive structures (beliefs) that give rise to internal dialogue (Meichenbaum, 1977). As such, the theoretical and treatment model is primarily cognitive-behavioral treatment incorporating multiple interventions. The program's value lies in the development of empirically based, multi-dimensional, causal models of mental illness, delinquent and aggressive behaviors (Bourdin, 1999).

Treatment Focus: Psycho-Education

For the state of Louisiana, a specialization in the treatment of juvenile sex offenders was identified as particularly salient. Prior to the creation of the new program, consistency of treatment delivery specific to sexual offending behaviors was somewhat sporadic. In developing an integrated treatment approach, a psycho-educational component was specifically introduced across all treatment providers. Within the mental health literature, psycho-educational approaches have several purposes, including providing factual information about behaviors associated with disorders. The main intent is to increase knowledge related to the problem (Becker, 1998). For juvenile sex offenders, a primary psycho-educational component that has shown positive outcomes in the literature is information provided specifically about the abuse cycle, including many of the individual element that contribute to each offender's risk (Prentky, Harris, Frizzell, & Righthand, 2000). Psycho-education regarding the abuse cycle, including historical, situational, cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements was introduced into the integrated treatment protocol to ensure that each offender was aware of their own risk factors and the operation of the abuse cycle in their own individual lives.

Louisiana's statewide treatment program is designed to identify and respond to the challenging needs of juvenile sex offenders. While recognizing the dearth of empirical and evidence-based practices for juvenile sex offenders at a statewide level, this program uses cognitive-behavioral and behavioral approaches, case management, psycho-education, pharmacological and skill-based methodologies as contributing treatment components. Sex offender treatment in this system refers to the provision of culturally and developmentally appropriate assessments, diagnoses, treatment planning, on-going treatment interventions and reintegration services. Within this context, the actual service delivery consists of individual, group, family, psychiatric, educational, crisis intervention, and case management services. Because juvenile sex offenders' needs are addressed in three different placement systems along the continuum of care (i.e., secure care, residential, and community-based outpatient programs), Louisiana's empirically-supported sex offender treatment program is implemented in all treatment settings. However, based on the risk and needs of the juvenile, the dosage of treatment varies per treatment site.

Purpose of the Program Evaluation

As a means to measure Louisiana's progress toward important goals, OJJ recommended a program evaluation be conducted. The purpose of the program evaluation was to assess the following six overarching

goals:

1. Ninety-five percent of community providers and probation officers will successfully complete sex offender specific trainings.

2. Six regional treatment programs would be developed, resulting in one per service region.

3. Six community re-entry (step-down) programs would be developed, resulting in one per service region.

4. Six family intervention programs would be developed, resulting in one per service region to improve reentry services.

5. Development of program materials covering the following topics: training curriculum, assessment protocol, treatment protocol including psycho-educational components, probation/parole supervision guidelines.

6. Ninety percent of providers substantially adhering to the OJJ established practice model.

Each of these goals was categorized into three broad areas: direct service delivery, systems improvement, and research and development. Each of these areas contained specific evaluation goals to be accomplished and measured through a series of program evaluation methodologies, utilizing quantitative and qualitative strategies. Appendix A summarizes evaluation activities that quantify the above stated goals.

Program Evaluation Methodology

The current program evaluation relies upon a multi-modal methodology for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer critical questions about the sex offender treatment program. For each program evaluation activity, an outcome measure was assigned to capture essential information. Table 1 summarizes methodology utilized in the evaluation.

Participants

Participants were all persons involved with OJJ programs including secure care facilities, residential programs, and outpatient treatment clinics. Participants included not only juveniles, but their parents/guardians, providers, staff, probation officers, judges, and other court personnel. Participants were organized along the following broad categories:

1. Administrators (facility directors, assistant directors, regional managers, judges)

2. Treatment Providers (mental health providers, case managers, group leaders, probation officers)

3. Direct Supervision personnel (juvenile justice staff, residential counselors)

4. Juveniles (secure care, residential treatment and outpatient)

5. Families and other caretakers

The OJJ juveniles included males ranging in age from 12 to 21 years of age. Juvenile sex offenders classified by race show an equal distribution of African-Americans (45%) and Caucasians (51%). The Native American and Hispanic populations were both near 1%. The most frequent age of juvenile sex offenders was 14-15. Table 2 lists the number of juveniles in care during the program.

Table 2: Juvenile Sex Offenders from 2008-2012

2008	142
2009	118
2010	154
2011	117
2012	103

Each participant was given an opportunity to take part in the program evaluation process by providing written and oral feedback to several surveys regarding the Louisiana Juvenile Sex Offender treatment program. Participants had the right to refuse participation in the evaluation process at any time.

Instrumentation

Nine measures were utilized for information gathering for this program evaluation. These quantifiable and qualitative measures included interviews (structured), observations (audit and file reviews), and self-report measures (social climate and satisfaction surveys). Some of these measures relied upon a true-false format or Likert format, while others relied on forced response methods. Table 3 provides a summary of instruments utilized. Descriptions of each instrument follow.

Structured Interviews. The program evaluators traveled to all of the sites identified for this evaluation.

Table 1: Multi-Modal Program Evaluation Methodology

Program Evaluation Multi-Modal Methodology
1. Interviews with juveniles in secure & non secure community programs
2. Interviews with program staff in secure & non secure community programs
3. Consultation with administrators of OJJ and community providers
4. Focused meetings with community providers
5. Review treatment plans in secure and non-secure community programs
6. Review psychosexual risk assessments in secure care & non secure programs
7. Conduct environmental tours of secure and non-secure care programs
8. Observe group facilitation interventions by staff members
9. Administer satisfaction surveys to staff and family members
10. Observe assessment process and other treatment activities
11. Conduct interviews with community providers
12. Review training records and other program development activities
13. Assess systems function including recidivism rates and reduction of juvenile sex offenders in secure care programs

Table 3: Program Evaluation Instrumentation

Program Evaluation Instrumentation
1. Structured Interview for Administrators/Managers/Judges
2. Structured Interview for Clinical Providers
3. Structured Interview for Direct Supervision Staff
4. Structured Interview for Youth
5. Satisfaction Survey – Staff
6. Satisfaction Survey-Family
7. Program Audit & File Review
8. Ward Atmosphere Scale (WAS)-Residential Staff
9. Ward Atmosphere Scale (WAS)-Residential Youth
10. Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment Protocol- II (JSOAP-II)- Residential Youth

While onsite, in-person unstructured interviews were conducted, and all sites were administered structured interviews.

Satisfaction Surveys. Program evaluators utilized three separate 10-item surveys to assess the staff and family satisfaction with the Louisiana's Sex Offender program. Responses to prompts are rated on a Likert scale ranging from "Very Satisfied" to "Very Dissat-

isfied."

Ward Atmosphere Scale (WAS). The WAS, an instrument developed by Rudolf Moos (1996), was utilized by the program evaluators to assess the climate within secure care and residential care facilities. This 100-item questionnaire is completed by all residential programs including secure care and residential care. The WAS is composed of 10 subscales that measure the actual, preferred, and expected treatment environments of hospital-based psychiatric programs. The WAS assesses three underlying sets of dimensions. The Involvement, Support, and Spontaneity subscales measure relationship dimensions. The Autonomy, Practical Orientation, Personal Problem Orientation, and Anger and Aggression subscales tap personal growth dimensions. Order and Organization, Program Clarity, and Staff Control subscales assess system maintenance dimensi ons.

Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment Protocol – 2 (J-SOAP-2; Prentky, Harris, Frizzell, & Righthand, 2000). The J-SOAP-2 is an evidenced based assessment of risk factors that have been linked to both sexual and violent offending in juveniles. The measure is designed for use with males 12-18 years of age. No cutoff scores have been provided for risk level and the J-SOAP-2 is recommended to be used as part of a more comprehensive assessment and not in isolation (Martinez, Flores, & Rosenfeld, 2007). The J-SOAP-2 has four scales that include measures of sexual drive/preoccupation, impulsive/antisocial behavior, intervention variables such as treatment motivation, and community stability/adjustment. Studies involving the J-SOAP-2 indicate moderate to high interrater reliability ranging from .75 to .91, as well as internal consistency alphas from .68 to .85.

Observational Reviews. There were three methods of observation utilized outside of direct interviews:

1. On-site Visits: The program evaluator conducted onsite visits on four separate trips from December 2012 – March 2013. The program evaluator visited all of the secure care facilities, all of the residential treatment facilities and outpatient clinics and all of the regional probation officers.

2.Audit & File Reviews: The program evaluator reviewed treatment files of juveniles in the secure care, residential and outpatient programs. The file audit consisted of a 31-question structured form that measured the degree of the file's compliance with general programmatic best-practices for sex offender programs (e.g., assessment scores, risk level, treatment plans, sex offender specific goals, transition plans).

3.OJJ Outcome Data: OJJ staff provided statistical information from their Youth-Database regarding their outcomes: recidivism rates and youth demographics.

Ethical Considerations & Confidentiality of Data

This evaluation followed the ethical guidelines provided by the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles for Evaluators (2004), including but not limited to conducting a systematic, accurate and credible inquiry of archived data. In addition, the design was aimed at providing a competent program evaluation to all stakeholders touched by this evaluation, and to ensuring respect, honesty, and integrity of the evaluation process. The evaluator analyzed data about juveniles and adults that is sensitive in nature. Confidentiality was assured by the evaluator in a formal agreement, executed by both parties, to guarantee that information obtained for evaluative purposes was placed in strict confidence. To ensure the confidentiality of institutionalized youth, a formal confidentially agreement between the program evaluator and JOJJ was executed. Special attention was given to the security of all de-identified data files for confidentiality of all participants.

Results

The results of the program evaluation show the OJJ Statewide Sex Offender Treatment program is exceptionally productive, meeting over 90% of its established performance markers. A variety of statistical analyses were conducted using the data from the Louisiana Sexual Problem Behavior Program Evaluation. The primary findings of the program evaluation center on the areas of direct service delivery and systems improvement. Within direct service delivery, there are several noteworthy findings based on the evaluation. For example, 100% of behavioral health providers, staff, and community partners received training on the juvenile sex offender treatment protocol at the beginning of the program, including psycho-educational protocol related to the abuse cycle and community reentry. Additional trainings were provided as needed. With regards to treatment planning, there were two goals. The first involved completed treatment plans. Ninety- five percent of youth in the program had treatment plans completed. The second goal focused on content of treatment plans, specifically sex offender elements. Ninety six percent of treatment plans contained sex offender specific goals, progress markers, therapeutic notes about progress, and relapse prevention skills. Additionally, suc-

cessful completion of treatment program phases was also reviewed. For juveniles in secure care, 98% completed each of the three treatment phases appropriately. For juveniles in community programs, 90% completed the phases as prescribed by the treatment model.

Another focus of service delivery included rates of recidivism following reentry, both sexual and non-sexual. Typically, a rate ranging from 3-15% is considered average for sexual recidivism (Caldwell & Dickinson, 2009). Within the program, there were approximately 13 juveniles who met some portion of the criteria for recidivism. Of the 13 juveniles, five were for sexual crimes and 8 were for non-sexual crimes. Some of the crimes included indecent exposure, battery of a school teacher, burglary, simple battery, armed robbery, aggravated battery, failure to register, criminal damages, and murder. Of the 312 total juveniles, the total recidivism rate was 4.1%. However, sexual recidivism was 1.6%, well below norms established in the literature.

There were several goals related to the risk of reoffending based on the JSOAP-2. For example, a goal was set that all youth entering treatment would receive the JSOAP-2 to better assess psychosexual risk and for assignment to appropriate level of care. One hundred percent of youth entering the system received an initial assessment. Treatment progress was also measured using the JSOAP-2, with a goal for a decrease in dynamic risk scores during treatment. Notable changes were seen. A dependent samples t-test was conducted on pre and posttest JSOAP-2 data. The results indicated that the dynamic subscales decreased from pretest to posttest. The changes were statistically significant for both the intervention subscale ($t(14)=3.22$, $p=.006$) and the community stability subscale ($t(14)=3.20$, $p=.007$). Additionally, those in the moderate risk to reoffend category saw the most decrease in scores across subscales. Proper use of the JSOAP-2 was also a key factor in another program goal relating to reduction in the number of juveniles in secure care settings. In 2008, there were approximately 142 sexual offenders in the juvenile justice system. By 2012, there were 103 juvenile sex offenders in the state's custody, a reduction of 27.5%. Of the 103 offenders currently in the system, there were 41 in secure care, compared to 77 in 2008. The represents a reduction of 42.3% and successfully supports the goal of having more offenders remain with their families and in community based treatment programs when possible.

In considering outcomes for systems improvement goals, several findings are of particular interest. Community-based residential programs saw an increase in funding and availability of beds while implementing the same evidenced-based treatment protocol being used in secure care. In fact, during the life of the grant, approximately 187 juveniles were served in the community who would otherwise have been admitted to secure care. Further, community provider perceptions of effectiveness, quality, and efficiency of the treatment program were also examined through semi-structured interviews, which demonstrated approval of the program and stated goals. Additional interviews with staff, families and youth provided similar results.

Generally, staff surveys were in the "above average" range, suggesting satisfaction with the program's goals, expectations, training, techniques, interventions, and transition planning. Of particular importance was approval of the psycho-educational aspects of the program, which was highly endorsed by providers and staff. Family satisfaction surveys were significantly higher than staff members, with a focus on effective transitions of youth from most restrictive to least restrictive as an identified strength. Table 4 summarizes the comparison between staff and family member satisfaction surveys.

The Ward Atmosphere Scale (WAS) was also utilized as an outcome measure for staff, youth, and their families. The subscale scores for the WAS were converted into T-scores. These T-scores were analyzed using inferential statistics, specifically MANOVA and ANOVA, to determine if statistically significant differences existed between the eight treatment sites. Several findings are important to note. Among the eight treatment sites, four subscales emerged as statistically significant. These include Support ($F(2, 144) = 2.237$, $p=.035$, $r^2=.105$), Spontaneity ($F(2, 144) = 2.788$, $p=.010$, $r^2=.127$), Personal Problems ($F(2, 144) = 2.544$, $p=.017$, $r^2= .117$), and Order and Organization ($F(2, 144) = 2.933$, $p=.007$, $r^2=.133$). These results provide additional information about the program and how important support and other relational variables are perceived by staff and residents. These are also main foci of the treatment program and support the program's success as a whole.

Program Recommendations

Based on outcomes from the program evaluation, comprehensive program recommendations were made to the state of Louisiana and future goals were established. Table 5 summarizes these findings.

Discussion and Lessons Learned

One of the primary purposes of program evaluation is to make judgments or decisions about the usefulness of a model or approach (Holden & Zimmerman, 2009).

Table 4: Family and Staff Satisfaction Survey Comparison

Dependent Variable	(I) Name	(J) Name	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Youth S/O Tx	Family	Staff	.493*	.002
	Staff	Family	-.493*	.002
S/O Tx Program	Family	Staff	.458*	.004
	Staff	Family	-.458*	.004
Family Sessions	Family	Staff	.694*	.000
	Staff	Family	-.694*	.000
Length of Time Youth in Tx	Family	Staff	.465*	.003
	Staff	Family	-.465*	.003
Skills Youth Learned	Family	Staff	.521*	.000
	Staff	Family	-.521*	.000
Thrpst and Case Mgr's Knowledge regarding Tx of Youth S/O	Family	Staff	.556*	.000
	Staff	Family	-.556*	.000
Getting Answers to Questions about Youth's Progress	Family	Staff	.799*	.000
	Staff	Family	-.799*	.000
Manner in which Thrpst or Case Mgr Discussed Youth's Progress	Family	Staff	.493*	.004
	Staff	Family	-.493*	.004
Effort Made for Early Release after Youth Completed Tx Satisfactorily	Family	Staff	.236	.129
	Staff	Family	-.236	.129

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Louisiana's approach to streamlining and improving the delivery of services and treatment to juvenile sex offenders and their families appears to have made a successful beginning. Ongoing evaluation will be needed to continue assessing program goals. This program evaluation was designed specifically for the state of Louisiana but has a wide array of practical implications for juvenile justice systems, program evaluators, and treatment providers elsewhere.

Treatment Providers

In considering treatment programs for juvenile sex offenders, there are several important take away messages from the current program evaluation. The first is the importance of utilizing an evidenced-based treatment model to meet program objectives, such as reducing recidivism and improving reentry and community transition plans. Within the juvenile justice system, evidenced-based treatments are defined as "a body of knowledge, also obtained through the scientific method, on the impact of specific practices on targeted outcomes for youth and their families" (Underwood et al., 2006, p. 287). According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), evidenced-based practices include:

1. A minimum of two control group studies or a large series of single-case studies.

2. At least two researchers

3.Treatment manual utilization

4.Training for therapists with written protocols

5.Adequate clinical samples

6.Significant results from outcome tests

7.Clinical reviews of program functioning and symptom outcomes

8.Reports on long term outcomes following treatment completion

9. Two or more studies that demonstrate treatment superiority over medication, placebo, or other established treatment protocols (Underwood et al., 2006).

In working with juvenile populations, evidenced-based treatments utilize several outcome principles. These principles include assessment of risks and needs, enhancing intrinsic motivation for change, providing objective interventions that are structured, skills training, using positive reinforcements, utilizing community resources for support, and providing measurable feedback through assessment of practices and processes (Underwood et al., 2006).

Additionally, the importance of ensuring that an appropriate risk assessment is conducted at regular in-

Table 5: Overview of Program Evaluation Recommendations

System Improvement Recommendations
1. Revise the Sex Offender Treatment manual and curriculum to include complete manualized curriculum on a compact disk with all assignments, lesson plans, and corresponding documentation.
2. Enhance and systematize training with all providers to occur every year and include tracking of participants and training contents.
3. Establish Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Improvement (QI) protocols regarding adherence to the program fidelity that is conducted with regular audits.
4. Establish a dedicated Management Information System (MIS) tailored to capture critical information regarding recidivism and probation/parole violations.
5. Create a Policy and Procedure manual to assist with the standardization of the Sex Offender Treatment program.
6. Adjust new service contracts to include language in which the service provider is responsible for the collection and submission of raw assessment data, its summarization, and a general interpretation of JSOAP-2 and other assessment data
Direct Services Recommendations
1. Consider identifying a community-based trainer to better ensure training needs are met and allow for additional case conceptualizations and trouble-shooting for reentry service providers as needed.
2. Establish written documentation and other forms of communication with direct care staff such as Juvenile Justice Staff (JJS) to better ensure JSOAP-2 results are utilized in juvenile's treatment.
3. Promote the use of common assessment and treatment language centered on JSOAP-2 and the JUMP program, especially in regards to treatment and aftercare planning activities around risk levels.
Research & Development Recommendations
1. Establish collaborative relationship with interested service providers to participate in ongoing research and publications (scholarly and general works).
2. Utilize new databases and data collection protocols to share positive outcomes with service providers, families, local government agencies, and the correctional community at large.
3. Consider conducting program evaluations on an annual basis to identify critical themes and patterns.
4. Develop an Action Plan, outlining key recommendations included in this report which includes the action, monitoring information, progress to date and the responsible individual.

tervals throughout reentry phases of treatment is also imperative in monitoring treatment outcomes. Risk assessments with juvenile sex offenders specifically examine the risk of recidivism based on empirically supported factors related to reoffending. The state of Louisiana selected the JSOAP-2, which has demonstrated good clinical utility in the literature. However, there are other widely used risk assessment tools that could also be utilized. For example, the Juvenile Sexual Offense Recidivism Risk Assessment Tool – II (J-SORRAT-II; Epperson, Ralston, Fowers, & DeWitt, 2005) is based on a review of the juvenile's criminal record related to the charged offense. It shows high rates of reliability between raters (r = .89 or higher; Hempel et al., 2013). The Estimate of Risk of Adolescent Sexual Offense Recidivism (ERASOR; Worling, 2002) is another tool that can be used to assess youth aged 12-18 years of age. The ERASOR provides a risk estimate based on short-term factors, and cannot predict risk for more than one year. While there are many instruments available, utilizing a risk assessment at intake and then again throughout the treatment process is recommended for treatment providers seeking to evaluate their programs.

Treatment plan completion as well as goals integrating sex offender specific behaviors is another important treatment aspect demonstrated in the current evaluation. Treatment plans offer a systematic map of treatment goals and how they will be measured. The plans are designed to be created by both the therapist and, in this case, the juvenile. Including additional family or support individuals is also recommended (Adams & Grieder, 2005). Although there is no standard template, a quality treatment plan will include the following elements: problem definition, broad goals that address the target problem, measurable objectives that provide steps toward goals, and specific interventions (Jongsma, Peterson, & Bruce, 2014). For the juvenile sex offender population, it is particularly important that goals and objectives be centered on the desired treatment outcomes. Some of the desired outcomes for the program in this evaluation included an increased ability to accept responsibility for specific sexual as well as other offenses; the development of internal motivation for change, building an understanding of risk factors and applying risk management strategies; the ability to empathize, demonstrating remorse and guilt; the ability to analyze cognitive distortions related to sexual behaviors; and building skills to maintain quality peer relationships (Underwood et al., 2006). Introducing a psycho-educational component to all treatment phases was also highly valued by treatment providers and staff and provided important information for juvenile sex offenders as they determined goals and objectives with their treatment providers, increasing the utility of the treatment planning process. In order for treatment plans to be useable and effective, not only individual goals but also program specific goals for juvenile sex offenders should be included. This ensures that the youth, providers, and family are aware of what and how specific needs are being addressed.

In order to effectively implement an evidenced-based treatment program, special attention must be paid to implementation. Training was one major goal of the current evaluation. The evidenced-based treatment protocol utilized by the state of Louisiana contains a treatment manual and specific curriculum to be utilized throughout treatment. Clinicians need to be familiar with and trained in the protocol for optimal benefit. Training typically contains two components. The first is didactic, which involves workshops and written materials and is often conducted face-to-face. The second is competence training, which involves some type of supervision or coaching of clinicians utilizing the protocol (McHugh & Barlow, 2010). In the current program evaluation, initial trainings were conducted with 100% of staff. Additionally, follow-up trainings were conducted to build competency. For clinicians treating juvenile sex offenders, the inclusion of appropriate and frequent training is an essential part of ensuring protocol fidelity and improving outcomes. Training was particularly important for community treatment providers involved in reentry. Ensuring that treatment meets the needs of youth and their families is an important step in the reengagement process. A continual focus is needed to ensure that training is occurring in order to reduce the overall risk of recidivism for youth leaving secure care.

Juvenile Justice Systems

Juvenile justice systems can also benefit from the current program evaluation. The main premise of the juvenile system is to provide care and treatment rather than punishment. However, there have been recent movements in the last several decades toward a tougher system. Juvenile sex offenders have long been considered more "criminal" than "wayward," and at adjudication are often institutionalized when other, less restrictive options may be available (Bernard & Kurlychek, 2010). The state of Louisiana recognized this problem and sought to strengthen less restrictive treatment environments as a result. Juvenile justice systems can also benefit from identifying reentry programs at the outset of a youth's stay in the program. Early identification

of reentry services assists in coordinating care upon program discharge. Within the juvenile justice treatment outcome literature, youths often fair better within less restrictive environments and with more family and community involvement (Quayle & Taylor, 2009). Focusing resources on strengthening these programs can improve outcomes for youth, families, and communities.

The role of probation and parole officers continues to be a key part of community reintegration for juvenile sex offenders. Probation and parole officers have the difficult responsibility of providing services to a growing number of youth and their families. These systems must be well-managed and incorporate effective, evidence-based protocols. Having officers who, through education and experience, have acquired the necessary skills to effectively manage juvenile sex offenders and their unique needs is an important piece of a well-managed system (Raymond & Jones, 2006). Through strengthening relationships and training of probation and parole administrators and officers throughout Louisiana, more youth were able to be successfully managed within the community instead of through incarceration or more secure environments. Probation and parole officers play an important role in keeping youth in the least restrictive environments possible. Keeping high quality officers and administrators and providing them with training on evidenced-based models can be effective and less costly than incarceration for lower risk juvenile offenders.

Treatment and Reentry Program Evaluators

When completing a multi-faceted program evaluation, there are many challenges for evaluators. Having a well-organized system of primary evaluator and support staff is a crucial part of successfully evaluating a large program. For this particular evaluation, coordinating at regular intervals with the state of Louisiana's juvenile sexual problem program director and other staff was also necessary. Maintaining a plan of whom to include in the evaluation, how, and when is also an important component. Although some flexibility must be allowed for, the fidelity of the evaluation rests on the methods planned for and utilized. Communicating these important pieces with all individuals, including staff, the juveniles, and their families helps to strengthen the evaluation.

Conclusions

This program evaluation sought to address the changes made by the state of Louisiana to address concerns with treatment and management of juvenile sex offenders. Based on the results, the state of Louisiana's program was over 90% effective in meeting stated goals. Through ongoing evaluation, continued progress will be monitored and challenges addressed. The results of the current evaluation will continue to be utilized by the program to improve service delivery for staff, youth, and their families throughout the treatment and reentry process.

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Appendix A: Overview of Program Evaluation Activities

Program Evaluation Activity #1: Direct Service Delivery
1. Incorporate Mentors and Milieu Manager for intensive institutional Treatment Track in Secure Care
2. Provide Training & Technical Assistance to Secure Care and community-based staff (six regions) legal & mental health professionals, disseminate assessment and treatment protocols, train mentor home providers, probation officers, family intervention specialist
3. Percentage of Youth Completing Psychosexual Risk Assessment
4. Percentage of Treatment Plans Completed
5. Percentage of Treatment Plans with Sex Offender Specific Goals & Objectives
6. Program Effectiveness of Treatment Phase Completion
7. Rates of Sexual and Non-sexual Recidivism
8. Change in Dynamic Risk Scores on the JSOAP-2
9. Number of Probation & Parole Violations
Program Evaluation Activity #2: Systems Improvement
10. Reduction in number of juvenile sex offenders committed to Secure Care and the days in Secure Care
11. Adding Beds and implementing a evidence based model for community-based residential programs
12. Expand evidence based supported sex offender model in six regions (Community Providers) of the state
13. Stakeholders (Community providers) Perception of the effectiveness of the program and quality and efficiency of inter-agency cooperation and collaboration in case management
14. Youth Interviews, Staff Interviews, Stakeholder (Community Providers) Consultations
Program Evaluation Activity #3: Research & Development
15. Develop and disseminate Program Evaluation Research Plan for dissemination and publication to the field via reports and manuscripts

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PRACTITIONER PAPER

Maths in Prison

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Abstract: *I teach maths to all levels in an adult male remand prison in Ireland and am also studying for a PhD in maths in prison education in Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). This paper describes recent initiatives piloted by maths teachers and school management to increase attendance, engagement and certification in maths. It assesses the effects of the initiatives and looks at future potential in this setting and in others. To set the paper in context, I begin by describing a typical day as a prison maths teacher.*

Key words: *Prison, Education, Mathematics, Basic Skills, Literacy*

"What...So What...Now What" (Rolfe 2001)

"What..."

Teaching in a prison setting is unique. Each morning in the prison school teachers wait for the students' arrival. The chatter grows as they troop in with folders under their arms, look into all the classrooms. "Where are you today?" "Where am I today?" "Check the timetable!" "Where's maths?" "You in art?" "Nearly finished my painting." Meantime teachers wait with photocopies, checking that computers and everything is set for another day. "Have I got all I need?" Checking we have pens, worksheets, folders ready, enough chairs; we wonder who will come today: who's in court, who went to the gym, who has moved prison, who was released, who is having an off day, who remembered to bring up his homework? In ones and twos and clusters they come, some chatting, some silent, walking in and out to check they are in the correct class, if not apologising and backing out, saying "See you later, I'm next door now." The mood is mostly positive, energetic and everyone wants to get going. They enter with encouraging banter to each other and to the teacher. "Let's go, let's get this done." "Did my sums last night, nothing on telly." "My cell mate helped me but he showed me, didn't do it for me."

It is group, individual, peer and collaborative learning all at once. We teachers are visitors; the cells down the corridor are their home. The group works like any group, Weight Watchers, AA, relapse prevention, or men's sheds group. Some classes go by just settling in. They may sit alone or in a group. I note that there are some friends here, some who are not so sure of themselves and some who want to work alone or move as time passes. I gesture to the central table if they want to sit together, and point to the tables around the edge if they work alone, saying pick where you want to sit, giving choices. Each one has his own folder, which they take down from the shelf. The folders all look the same; no one knows which level you are at, unless you say. First I try and see if the new men know anyone in the class, watch their response when they see who is here and who is to come. I introduce myself and say again they are very welcome, that I hope that they will come back after today but it is up to them, no pressure, saying people may like maths but not everyone does, not everyone always feels like doing it all the time.

I try and get a sense of what they did in maths as a child or adult and what brought them back to education in prison now: family, friends or some other motivation (Costelloe 2003). Some talk about this or write a few lines of maths memories, but others are less willing. I have used different methods to encourage them to reflect and share, including a maths learning history chart (Safford 2008) which is a graph where they can plot out positive and negative learning experiences. Another tool is a graph of how they see themselves compared to how others see them (Safford 2008) and they can chat to others in the class about this. These tools help the learner understand and reflect on their attitudes and experiences of maths while giving an introduction to graphs.

Often they say they need maths for a full QQI[1] certificate

1 Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) provides certification for all education and training in Ireland other than state certificates at primary and post-primary level and the universities.

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or for their own personal reasons. Often they have negative memories of learning maths that they carry with them; they show you their hands shaking and sweat breaking out. Reassurance comes from their peers, the men who started a few days or weeks ago and have now settled. The chat gives strength to new entrants and words of encouragement from other prisoners have a bigger effect than any teacher's words. Soon we're all settled. It's another day.

Background

In Ireland, there have been changes in recent years in further education certification while these changes are welcome, they have provided a significant challenge for prison learners. Maths is now mandatory for accreditation for a full QQI certificate[2] at all levels. Accordingly, many attending maths class would not have chosen to do the subject and only do so now to achieve a full certificate. This is a new development. Previously learners opted for subjects they liked and which made time pass because participation in education in Irish prisons is voluntary: there are no compulsory subjects. Usually subjects such as the creative arts, cookery or music are popular. This works well as these popular subjects are often gateway subjects that can lead people back to Adult Basic Education (ABE) and maths.

There is not a strong tradition of Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths (STEM) education in Irish prisons for many reasons including security, cost and history. Science equipment has risks in any setting. Space in prison education is often shared between teachers and other services so books and equipment have to be put away after class. Many prison schools are not purpose built but were adapted, which makes science and engineering more difficult to run. The number of STEM teachers working in prison is proportionally low. There are many more creative arts and ABE teachers as historically basic education (reading, writing and numeracy), creative activities (art and craft) and courses on self-esteem and life skills (yoga, parenting) have been emphasised.

However, the prison situation is not unique. There is a shortage of STEM teachers in mainstream education Ireland as many graduates go into industry. Research carried out at secondary level (Ní Ríordáin, Hannigan 2010) and adult education (Bailey 2013) found deficiencies in teacher training.[2] These problems are not unique to Ireland. The UK Department of Business, Innovation Skills offers maths teachers entering Further Education (FE) cash incentives in line with their qualifications in an effort to raise standards in the sector (Sellgren 2014).

The shortage of STEM teachers causes problems in education for many reasons. Maths has to be taught in a clear way and with deep understanding so that the learner can grasp the concepts and skills. If a teacher has not got a deep understanding of maths, they cannot open the learner's eyes to the beauty of maths and the hidden and untapped skills the learners possess. Understanding the applications and origins of a topic in maths helps a teacher to explain to a student. History of maths is generally not taught, so maths is being taught without any background or context. Learners need to be taught the language of maths as it is the language of business, science, and technology, as well as the language of art and music. People who are confident and able to communicate in maths are in a better position to inspire learners. Words like symmetry, Pi (π) or Fibonacci can intimidate but they describe real life concepts. This is obvious to teachers who are confident at maths but others may struggle if they are out of field.

Pythagoras theorem is a rule that can seem difficult yet is used frequently in everyday life, especially in the construction industry. Recently, in class, a prisoner was listening to the explanation of Pythagoras theorem, the famous 3, 4, 5 rule, stating that a triangle with these three sides these lengths has to have a right angle. As I was explaining that the builders of the pyramids 5000 years ago used a knotted rope and folded it into lengths of 3 and 5 and 4 knots per side, I was interrupted by a student, who said "that's just the 3-4-5 brick rule; I use that when I want to make a right angled corner when building a wall!" In short, prisoners like any other group of adults have developed invisible maths skills through life.

While everyone may not agree with Galileo's assertion that *"[the universe] cannot be read until we have learnt the language and become familiar with the characters in which it is written. It is written in mathematical language, and the letters are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without which means it is humanly impossible to comprehend a single word*", yet most will find it difficult to disagree that a learner's invisible maths skills can best be developed when the teacher sees the maths of the real world. This is why it is important to have maths teachers who have studied the subject and attended Continuing Professional Development(CPD) to keep their knowledge and communication skills up to date. This confidence helps to enable adult learners to see their skills as maths not just as common sense (Coben 2000).

Traditionally prison maths classes are small, mixed ability and have a high dropout rate. Maths is seen by many learners as hard or boring and frequently holds bad memories. Accordingly, basic maths has many of the problems of literacy, as learners may have had bad experiences with both. But it should be noted that there are significant differences also. People admit more readily to having problems with maths than with literacy, often because it is assumed that while everyone needs to write, we do not need maths as we have calculators. It is acceptable in many cultures, including Ireland, to say "I hate maths" and "I am bad at maths" as it is seen as "hard" and "head wrecking". Few are so vocal about their struggles in reading and writing.

In prison education, maths has not received the same attention as literacy. Possible reasons for this may be the pathways by which prison teachers join the service, and be-

2 In mainstream schools, 50% of maths teachers are teaching out of field (Ní Ríordáin, Hannigan 2010). In adult education, 60% of maths teachers felt they did not have enough training, 5% said they had maths anxiety, and only 8% have a degree in maths (Bailey 2013).

liefs that "literacy does not include maths" and "maths is too hard". Maths may be seen as too hard a subject for the prisoner to dip their education toe into unlike the creative subjects, which may seem an easier place to restart learning. However maths can be both a gateway subject for entry to basic education and a path to lifelong learning. And as we have seen, most people have more maths skills than they realise and can progress very fast. Maths at all levels has similar strands (e.g. Number, Data, Algebra, Shape and Measure, Problem Solving) and deep understanding at the basic level gives a strong foundation for higher levels. Adults often have acquired understanding and skills in many of these strands through life, without seeing it as maths.

While being weak at maths is acceptable, paradoxically being good at maths is also a sign of status in prison. Those attending maths are seen as "brainy" by their peers. Prisoners openly say that they are coming to maths (and other subjects) but can be shy of admitting to going to reading and writing classes. ----Maths is seen as different to basic education and this helps its status. The reasons for this are not clear. Perhaps maths is recognised as a traditional school subject, so to return to maths in prison is a sign of success. Books and materials we use in prison are generally the same as in school, which reinforces the connection to mainstream and higher education. We often use materials from maths support service websites in universities as strands like fractions and algebra are still a challenge for mainstream students at third level. This helps prisoners to see that they are doing the same topics as higher education students and this is good for status and self-esteem.

"So what..."

So, these were the many reasons why we had problems in attracting prisoners to maths class and retaining them. To address these problems several initiatives were considered.

The first was to test the men on entry to the school using the prison assessment programme for literacy and numeracy[3]. The grade achieved on the test was used to assign the learner to an appropriate level: either pre level, level 1, level 2 and level 3[4]. The grade was thus used to place the learner in a group appropriate to their ability at this time; no other analysis was done on it initially.

Another initiative I tried was to look at the breakdown of the results over the years to determine the type of questions that students found the most challenging. The results in one prison showed that those who did not finish level 3 struggled most with division, adding big numbers, decimals, bills and the 24 hour clock. This provided us with useful insight into gaps in the learners' knowledge and indicated a starting point.

Another initiative was due to the decisions by management and staff to increase the number of maths classes available to learners and provide full time maths classes, so another teacher switched to teaching maths. Research has shown that full time provision of maths is beneficial (Coughlan 2014), (Novitzky & Jones 2013) which is why we decided to try it. The biggest challenge we encountered was in how to communicate effectively with each other about the students. We managed this by encouraging students to keep a brief reflective journal in their folders, for themselves and for the teachers, and we wrote a teachers' daily record of the class activities and suggestions.

So in short, classes were now grouped into level 2, 3 or 4 rather than mixed level classes as had been the case previously. Two teachers were delivering classes which meant students now had between 2 and 5 classes a week and classes were smaller. As students were blocked according to the level they reached in the assessment, they could no longer just join the group their friends were in, and some prisoners found this challenging. Another change was that all maths classes were held in the same room rather than in different rooms on different days, which gave greater stability and sense of continuity.

The most immediate lessons we learnt having introduced these initiatives included the need for good communication, as described above. Also we noted the need to communicate any changes in provision effectively to the students, as some found the change confusing at first. Another lesson we learnt was that students now took more responsibility for their own work folders and it was better to give them the full course materials from the start rather than in stages, which had been the case previously.

In order to build on progress and to coincide with national "Maths Week[5]", we planned a week of activities with the learners to celebrate maths and connect maths education in the wider world. We decided to have an open forum on the theme "Maths and Me" and to invite students and teachers to speak for a few minutes on their experiences of learning maths and of maths in real life. Some teachers and prisoners did not relate happy experiences while others did. It gave great insight to hear the students talk in public about their learning experiences of maths. The event concluded with a "Maths Week Quiz". Several non-maths teachers (art, ESOL, literacy) contributed to the planning of the event brought their classes along to the event. A visiting Australian speaker, Matt Parker[6], from the national Maths Week programme, came in to give a session with representatives from Maths Week Ireland and Waterford Institute of Technology. Maths teachers from other prison schools were invited in as observers, so their feedback would help us evaluate our new initiatives.

Prisoners helped each other to plan their speeches and they publicised the event. In order to make the event open to all prisoners, we also invited those who do not attend school.

3 This is a test developed by Dublin prison teachers; it was designed to match the National Framework of Qualifications, (FETAC/QQI, Mapping the Learning Journey and Junior Certificate and international standards for literacy and numeracy but adapted specifically to the prison context.

4 Level 4 is the required standard for entry to third level education.

5 See www.mathsweek.ie for further details.

6 See http://standupmaths.com/ for further details

"Now What..."

The Maths Week activity helped us to connect with a national event taking place in mainstream schools and colleges. It also helped break up the routine of everyday classes and generated 'a buzz' around maths learning. It was particularly effective in developing a community of practice with staff locally and from the wider prison education community. Visiting teachers noted the prisoners' confidence in speaking about their maths learning. In prison education, high turnover means that monitoring has to be instant and having a colleague as an observer helped. The best evaluations are often informal and the prison learners also contributed to the evaluation, saying things like - "I am remembering what I did not know I knew" and "time flew". Initial feedback showed that they enjoyed people talking about their maths stories and the learning and fun in the quiz. Teachers have subsequently run maths events in another prison centre and discussed future collaboration between centres.

Reflecting on what enables learning in maths class:

A teacher in prison has to expect the unexpected. My learning is to never assume that there is nothing left to learn. Negativity and frustration in prison education can be a challenge. Remembering the successes helps; the times when a student gets it, when he turns and teaches another, when he can talk about what he has learnt and how he learnt it. In retracing these learning steps, a learner can log what works for him, and share insights with both teacher and peers. For example, he can say what helped him to engage in maths in the beginning and along the learning journey: persistence or stubbornness when he felt like giving up in the early stages, or another learner in class showing empathy from his own experience, or taking a break from the classes when the frustration of learning or personal issues affect concentration. Adult learners, in prison and elsewhere, may need to tell the story of their past learning experiences again and again, until that story is replaced by a new one, until they can turn to the man beside them and say that he was like that, he couldn't do it and now he can... and here's how.

As a prison teacher you can organise groups, but they still change daily. Some learn faster, moods can vary, and there are bad days and good days. When someone who has struggled with fractions for days finally gets it, the joy is felt by everyone. Sometimes those who have never been to school or who left very young are easier to teach as they do not have the layers of memories of bad maths classes. Many come once and just leave after a few minutes. I wonder about them; sometimes they come back and say it was all too much now and they will try again. My hope is to learn to spot them before they disappear, or to at least try to make the few minutes they spend in class positive.

I need to remember that in prison education everything can change and nothing changes. The men who come into the classroom as angry as the day they left school (at themselves and the people they knew then) will turn around one day, if we are lucky, and say, "I never thought I could learn that". Transformation can happen and it is not instant. A new learning challenge or something outside of class happens and the anger is back just like the first day of class. What changes is that over time they may start to manage the anger, to ask for a book or a puzzle or a page of easy adding sums, or go to art or music for a little while, and then try again instead of walking away.

Without further analysis it would be unwise to suggest that the new initiatives alone can bring about such significant and important changes in attitude and self-awareness. However, I can say that they have helped to make maths learning more visible; there is now more time and staff allocated to maths, there is more awareness among both the learners and teachers, and more people are talking about it. As a result, more prisoners are considering and taking maths classes. This is helped in no small part by existing learners acting as maths ambassadors, sharing their experiences through word of mouth, encouraging others to join. As a maths teacher, the future is looking bright; to infinity and beyond.

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PRACTITIONER PAPER

Teachers' Beliefs: Believing in Teaching Incarcerated Persons

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Abstract: *This article gives insight into German as a foreign language course in a prison in the German speaking part of Switzerland. From the perspective of the teacher, the author reflects on beliefs and assumptions regarding professional issues which are carried into this specific learning setting and challenges these by contrasting them with anecdotal accounts. She advocates the view that rather than try and do away with their beliefs teachers should believe in incarcerated person's capability to learn and achieve.*

Key words: *Teaching German as a Foreign Language; beliefs; aspects of teaching*

> 'Now, how does it feel to be inside?' He asked – and I gazed out of the window of his spacious office; a meadow with flowers and butterflies, an idyll, were it not for the blue bars that spoiled the view and made me felt uneasy as if locked up in a narrow room with an extremely low ceiling...

Introduction

The Collins Cobuild Dictionary of English defines 'belief' as '*a feeling of certainty that something exists, is true, or is good.'* In education, we teachers hold beliefs about learners, methods, classroom organisation, subject matter and testing and assessment; in fact about every variable involved in teaching into the classroom (Pajares 1992). Our beliefs and assumptions as practitioners are drawn from own experience as learners and teachers. We operate according to our beliefs, professional practice and increasing experience in a mostly subconscious way.

Recently, the results of Hattie's study (2009) exploring the factors most effective for learning have received great attention and the name of the study have become a buzzword. This research on a metalevel (more than 800 studies were looked at) showed that it is not the size of the learning group nor the quality of the equipment of the classroom, to give just two examples, that are evidentially the most effective factors to enhance learning, it is us, the teachers. While this news might have left us with a sigh of relief – as we thought with all the innovations we might become obsolete at some stage - it does remind us to be aware that our role entails an enormous responsibility.

The study's outcomes underline what research in the field already showed on a smaller scale; teachers have a strong influence on learners' performance (Puchta. 1999:257) and the individual learning processes. It is therefore absolutely imperative that we examine our underlying professional beliefs more closely (Yero. 2001/2. 2).

I teach German as a Foreign Language to male prisoners in a penal institution in Switzerland. There, I am free to make my own choices regarding course material and I can set my own aims and goals as there is no specified curriculum. I can prepare the learners for an exam but apart from this my teaching is not put under any scrutiny whatsoever. Hence, as a teacher in prison – as ironic as this may sound for an institution as restricted and regulated as this - I have more autonomy than most other teachers and am consequently placed in an exclusively powerful position. Therefore, the onus is on me to examine the explicit and implicit beliefs I hold about these particular learners in this particular setting.

Teaching in a penal institution – no matter how big the rucksack of teaching experience may be – is a challenge for which you cannot really be prepared. When I first started teaching there, I was not exactly a fledging young teacher; I was a lecturer of German as a Second Language to students of a mainly academic background, I had taught English to IT-staff at a bank and had worked at a public school in an urban area with about 80 per cent of non-native speakers of German. Thus I had wide ranging experience of teaching different types and levels of learners before starting in the

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prison but I soon came to realise that prison learners are somewhat unique.

My prison learners live in an isolated context detached from the word outside, a fact that affects them in various and sometimes unforeseeable ways. One might argue that learning in prison is denied a great number of innovations, be it that the respective institution lacks money, be it that certain multi-media tools are restricted for security reasons, and so on. Moreover the currently rather restrictive political climate would not approve of such "rewards" for those who are in prison to be punished. Either way, according to Hattie's research, these technical tools and innovations are negligible and largely irrelevant to the learning process. So perhaps a reliance on state of the art learning tools is one the first 'professional assumption' that has proved largely irrelevant in the prison context. Over the coming pages I explore five aspects of teaching that I have come to reconsider in the prison context:

1. prisoners as language learners
2. classroom organisation
3. the use of mother tongue
4. approaches
5. topics

Before delving in it would be a good idea to set the context.

1. Setting the context

1.1 The foreign language to be taught: German as a Foreign Language

In Switzerland, High German is firstly the written language, functioning according to a strict and highly standardized grammar and orthography, and secondly, the spoken language at school, in electronic media, such as TV and radio, as well as in official situations. Where the idiom is used orally, it is normally more or less tinged by the respective dialect. Local and regional dialects are standard in oral communication and are generally on the rise as youngsters tend to use it for short text messages with their peers. Foreigners in penal institutions in the Swiss German part of Switzerland are exposed to both German and different Swiss dialects. In some prisons they can pursue an optional course of German as a foreign language to facilitate their everyday life in the institution. And prison staff in turn can facilitate prisoners' life by being consistent in their use of High German – this also helps to make institution-based official communication more efficient.

1.2 The penal institution

Poeschwies Prison in Regensdorf near Zurich is one of the biggest penal institutions in Switzerland. By Swiss law, prisoners are obliged to work. At the same time, in this particular prison, they have the possibility to get vocational training and to complete an apprenticeship in one of the 19 commercial enterprises. Furthermore, they can select from a number of spare time activities, which are optional[1]. These activities include languages such as English and German. Unfortunately, individuals normally have to wait for a place in a particular group. While research has shown that education can help reduce recidivism (The Center on Crime, Communities & Culture: 2001), learning the German language is valued as a tool for the prisoner to integrate and rehabilitation. It facilitates everyday communication between the prisoners and the institutional staff. Moreover, a prisoner's competence in German is a prerequisite for a psychological therapy or an apprenticeship.

1.3 The course

Teaching takes place in a classroom provided with equipment such as whiteboard, overhead projector, TV, video. Thus it is comparable to any other classroom used for adult education. There are six groups of between three and ten learners who attend one contact hour of 50 minutes per week. Despite the fact, that the average stay of a prisoner is three years, normally groups are not permanent as prisoners are moved to other institutions, deported from the country or have completed their sentence.

1 The problem of foreign language is not new in Switz correctional institutions and therefore German learning opportunities for non-native speakers histrorically have a long tradition and date back to the end of the 19th century. The pastor took charge of the school management and teaching, supported by assistant teachers and prisoners. In the German concordats (Switzerland has two German and one latin concordates) institutions offer German as a foreign language courses depending on their size and the financial resources. In 2007, the revised penal code came into force which equates formation and work as outlined in Article 75, Paragraph 1, Criminal Code: The penal system is to promote the social behavior of the prisoners, especially the ability to live unpunished. The penitentiary system shall comply with the general conditions of life as far as possible, to ensure the care of the prisoners, to counteract harmful effects of deprivation of liberty and take into due account the protection of society, the prison staff and other inmates. Thus, German as a foreign language thus has its legal anchorage as a educational measure.

Once the number of students reaches a minimal number; new learners from the waiting list are assigned to the existing groups. In order to find the most efficient group for each learner to meet his needs, I do a placement test with new entries. To make decisions about appropriate groups is sometimes hard for the teacher, while the level of language competence of an individual learner might match with others in the group, the character and resulting group dynamics might not. Furthermore, reorganising the groups can be disruptive in that sense that the 'fresher' has to find his place amongst the 'old-established'. Referring back to the learner description stated earlier, it could be assumed that groups tend to be heterogeneous. There are normally one or two beginner/false beginner groups and different groups ranging roughly from A2 to C1 in the European Reference Frame.

1.3.1 Testing and assessment

The main purpose of the course being both rehabilitation and integration, and bearing in mind all the descriptive elements given so far, the teacher is not for obvious reasons teaching to the test. However, learners have the chance to pass one or several of the Goethe Exams of the Goethe Institute. No official testing period exists which takes the pressure off the learners and the teacher. It arranged that as soon as there are a few candidates, a testing date is selected and organized. It needs to be stressed, that the prognosis for a learner to pass a diploma of his individual level of language should be good otherwise the teacher will suggest postponing until the next time as a negative outcome in an exam would almost certainly dent his confidence and hinder his learning journey. This sometimes requires difficult decisions. One learner even shed a few tears when I told him that his success in the next testing period was very questionable and that therefore he would have to wait until a later time.

However, tests in general help the teacher gain a perspective of what has been learned and are a prerequisite for determining at what stage new material can be presented. This view is consonant with Rudman (1989) who suggests learning and teaching as collaborating activities. Unfortunately, time constraints mean that reediting material to reinforce learning, normally a routine part of the teaching approach, cannot be fully utilized and the teacher has to demonstrate 'Mut zur Lücke' (the courage to leave gaps). However, tests can be harnessed to demonstrate achievement and to promote the motivation for further improvement.

1.4 The learners

The learners are on average aged approximately between twenty and fifty years – with a tendency of older persons, and they stem from all over the world. It would be literally impossible to write about these individuals in a summarized way as they vary so much in educational and professional background, interests and classroom experience. Having set the context I now return to exploring teachers beliefs and assumptions.

2. Beliefs:

2.1 On prisoners as language learners

The taxonomy model of '*the good language learner'* (Skehan 1989), offers a framework of categories which are directly related to the learning process. This framework can be harnessed to identify differences in the learners: age, intelligence, aptitude, motivation attitude, personality and cognitive style. In addition there is variation in culture and social backgrounds. While some learners have studied or completed an apprenticeship, others hardly have any education at all. A mixture of these differences in the classroom consequently leads to highly heterogeneous classes. Drawing on this fact, the assumption could be that in such a group neither effective teaching nor learning is possible. A direct consequence of the described heterogeneity could be aggression amongst learners and problems with discipline for the teacher.

Despite the fact that prisoners are individuals with unique experiences and life stories, they all share a strongly organized and structured life with a clear schedule while in prison. This can lead to a certain level of homogeneity among the group, which is not a necessarily learner-friendly one. Being incarcerated is "often [perceived as] a burden per se" (Christoffel and Schönfeld. 2008). A burden which very often results in the prisoners experiencing low energy levels, a depressed mood and reduced presence. Consequently, common traits amongst learners might be a lack of flexibility, interest, motivation and spontaneity. By the same token, the German lesson can be used as a pretext for being off work for one hour per week.

In contrast to the observations above, I found that the learners are motivated in learning German and take trouble in making progress. Yet, learning does not proceed in a linear fashion and indeed, for many of them I feel that they undergo a U-shaped course of language development and learning. At first the motivation is high and they are reassured that the foreign language is something the can master easily. Later, they find German as one leaner stated 'madly difficult', and they

detect their gaps in knowledge; 'I will never come to grips with that gender assignment thing!' In an attempt to fill the gaps they suggest more contact hours, which of course is out of question; 'I shall write to the director, he wouldn't be able to learn a language being taught one hour per week.' The impracticability of their wish often leads to frustration and abandonment.

On the other hand, there are learners who experience language anxiety that does not always naturally decrease over time, as Oxford (1999) underlines. Both these situations mark critical points in the learning process and have to be overcome. At this point the teacher's reaction is important. The following may illustrate what I mean. One learner was very enthusiastic about passing the B1-level diploma (Zertifikat Deutsch). Despite the fact that he had certain weaknesses, I agreed that this level was feasible for him. Because of the very short contact hours he would, however, have to practice the skill of writing in his spare time. At his level, the writing ability is tested by replying to a semi-formal letter where the content is already given by notes.

He began his letter:

'*Dear Mrs Lutz, I am not skilled at writing a letter at all.*

Dear Ms Schumacher, my apologies for being such an ignorant fool. I don't have the least idea of how to reply to this letter. I left school when I was thirteen. I am very willing to improve my situation, and I am sure that with your help it will work. I can tackle that. Thank you for your understanding. Yours sincerely …'

Unsurprisingly, the learner left the institution having passed B1. His letter received amongst those being assessed the highest mark.

Often I find when the learner acquired competence in the foreign language this brings about positive effects in a broader field; as success as a language learner boosts the learners' self-esteem. For example, one learner always had his B1-certificate with him during the lessons. Every once in a while he would stare at it dreamily. By the same token, another learner told me how thanks to literacy and German he was now able to fully understand and fill in a form without any constraints. As Quinn (2007) states, such 'rewards for the teacher are priceless.'

The extent to which participants can identify themselves with the learner's part in a process can be seen in the following situation:

I was teaching subordinate clauses to a group and the individual learners were required to find examples of their own. One learner said: *Because I have an attack of migraine, I prefer to go back to my cell. Since I have an attack of migraine, I prefer to go back to my cell.'* He would offer at least five versions, which were all correct, and I praised him for his work. However, when I eventually looked in his direction, I noticed that he was rolling his eyes and the skin of his face was something between yellow and white. Although he was in great pain he managed to use the learned structure correctly.

Having discussed individual examples so far, the last point of emphasis in this section concerns group dynamics amongst learners. Some learners are not willing to do any extra work outside the classroom and I told them this is fine with me. Yet, others expect to receive homework assignments to be completed for the next class as they enjoy comparing their work. What follows is a voice from the classroom to illustrate my point. *'Miss, my learning partner complained because I only brought a few exercises along. Can we please have more for next time*?'

2.2 On classroom organisation and methods

'Is your teaching there not dangerous?' is a question often raised by teaching colleagues. It is clear what kinds of attitudes have led to this question: a teacher in a prison might find herself in a perilous situation in which the teacher's control of both the situation as well as of the learners seems to be of prime importance. Drawing from this point, one might assume that a rather teacher-centred, hierarchical teaching might be a good choice. Transferring this to my own practice, I do indeed use a teacher-centred classroom layout with tables organized in a circle. At the same time, it needs to be stressed that this layout does not come from reflections on security. In the longer run, I found that the learners preferred to follow my instructions, answer to my questions taking turns, without the feeling of being deprived from my attention and interest or worse being isolated. This can be illustrated by the fact that learners would always choose plenary work when asked, arguing that individual work is for their cell.

2.3 On the use of mother tongue in the classroom

The prison being run in a so-called decentralised way, inmates live in cells, which are divided into 'living groups'. To prevent the over representation of one ethnic group and potential disciplinary issues their members are allotted to different "pavilions". This however has no repercussions on grouping German language learners. Hence, the classroom might be dominated by one ethnical group. Bearing in mind that the majority of learners are on level A1 and A2 of the European Language Frame, I advocate the view that a moderate, controlled use of the mother tongue amongst learners

can be beneficial in the learning process. This view is consonant with current research on second language acquisition (SLA), Kellermann (1986) that shows that the first language (L1) influence is a subtle and evolving aspect of second language (L2) development. Even more, this might lead to a genuine interest in comparing aspects of their own language to the foreign language and to consequently find analogies. In addition, the learners explaining phenomena of their language by using the German language take on the teacher's role and that of an interpreter for a limited time. As the target language is German the learner has the chance to see whether he can make himself understood. Hence the link between mother tongue and German can have a positive effect on the linguistic performance of the learner as research found. (Heyde. 1979) A great side effect for the teacher is that she can enhance her cultural knowledge and knowledge of foreign languages.

For instance, a learner did not know what the German word 'Aprikose' (apricot) meant. His colleague translated into Arabic. The word he uttered sounded like "Mischmasch" (hotchpotch). A small example of how a trivial word, homophone, can spark an interest and of how language teaching becomes a cultural event.

2.4 On approaches

The learners' needs in learning German can be divided into two groups. One group could be called their urgent and direct needs, such as for instance being able to communicate and understand prison officers or to make themselves understood during a visit at the doctor. The other could be defined as needs for their rehabilitation outside the institution where communicative skills might foster integration. This reflection would suggest that the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are at the centre of any teaching. To incorporate what has been said about the learners themselves earlier, it seems obvious that choosing a grammatical approach might not be ideal.

Therefore, it is essential to determine the kind of second language skills prisoners need? If you reflect on their everyday life including work, communication with prison staff and their lawyer, therapist and social worker, you would mention communicative skills in both spoken and written form. Grammar is assigned a lesser importance and a more relaxed approach is preferred. Thus, participants feel more comfortable and allow themselves to forget their often difficult situations for a while. Yet, it needs to be stressed that certain language games did not appeal to the class: *You know, this game where you have two players and the rest of the group acting as referees, this game reminds me of the situation in court where the judge thrones high above you. I rather not have it.'*

This and similar comments from the learners gave me food for thought. I found their remarks instructive. After a while I searched for new ways to precipitate learners' progress. Meanwhile, some students would ask about parallels and differences in their own language and in German. This prompted the decision to begin explicit tuition of grammar. However the new approach was not an unalloyed success. As one learner stated:

"Once I spoke like a construction worker, grammatically completely wrong. But people understood me more or less. Then you came with your grammar-teaching, and now this language works in me and it just won't stop making me think".

The above quote was uttered in an angry tone, and certainly the speaker would reject my point of view. However, in terms of language learning, I realized that the learner was referring to the concept of 'consciousness rising about grammar' shaped by Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1988). The latter have suggested that instruction does not directly precede production and that learners need to be aware of grammatical phenomena. For this to be achieved the teacher needs to deliberately "draw the leaner's attention specifically to the formal properties of the target language." (Rutherford and Sherwood Smith. 1988. 107). My learners find it instructive when they realize that the German language, which they regard as incredibly difficult, has five grammatical causes whereas theirs has seven. Even more, they feel more self-assured in German as grammar gives them an insight in the mechanics of the language.

2.6 On topics

Initially, I found it extremely difficult to decide on topics for the lessons. I promote the view that the classroom should not be a place where the prisoners are confronted with their difficult situation. Therefore, the topic on crime and punishment in the textbook of B2/C1-learners remained untouched. Following on from this point, considering every page of content in the available textbooks, I came to the result that topics of general interest, nomen est omen, are generally prone to turn a 'solid floor" into a 'trapdoor' exposing the learners in a way I have not intended. However, it was in fact the prisoners themselves who proved my misgivings unfounded.

One day in one of my first weeks there a learner showed me a cartoon. The main character was a little bird riding on his motorbike. While riding his bike he

had a collision with a man driving a car. The bird became unconscious. When he woke up he found himself in a cage. He mistook it for a prison when he saw the water-dispenser and slices of bread on the floor. His supposed situation made him reflect: *'Oh no, I must have killed the car driver.'* The prisoner with the cartoon in his hands was looking at me giggling. Honestly, I was rather shocked. Analogously, in the textbook for level A1 there is a dialogue between a little girl and an assistant at a pizza service. The girl calls the service to order nine pizzas. The man on the phone wants to speak to her parents because she is a minor. Eventually, he learns that the girl is home alone with her dog. Thus her order is rejected with the words: 'No mama, no papa: no pizza.' The comments of my students were*: 'That poor young girl is in exactly the same situation as we are.'*

Similarly, I found on many occasions that it was the learners who chose to put their situation or the context of a prison as the centre of interest, as the following demonstrates. The topic of compound nouns has usually been an area where learners when asked to come up with their own words, often use words such as, 'Fluchtgefahr' (risk of escape) or 'Haftstrafe' (imprisonment). Following on from this point, one student once asked: *"Is it o.k. to say that I like it to be here in prison?"* After I had replied that yes, from a grammatical point of view it was, the room was full of laughter.

In contrast to the above, sometimes the issue of crime arises more indirectly. One learner was working hard in his spare time in order to prepare for the B1-exam. As he is slightly hard-hearing in one ear, he asked me whether he could get extra listening test examples to do in his cell. I provided him with the material by saying that I expected it back the following week unharmed. His answer was, 'don't worry nobody can steal it, I'm always careful locking my cell when I have, for instance, a shower.' When I fixed him with a stare for a moment, he would suddenly say: 'Oh, I see, no, I won't sell it or anything.' In line with the above, one learner told me he had not noticed that I was left-handed: *'I didn't know you're left-handed. Do you do all with your left hand? Do you write with it? Do you do manual work with it? I beg your pardon; with which hand do you actually shoot? I shot with a pistol. What, you do not possess an arm? I thought that all Swiss do.'*

3. Conclusion

Hopefully, this paper is a source of inspiration for the readers to reflect on their own assumptions and beliefs about teaching in general or about teaching prisoners in particular. Drawing from my experience, I can say that teaching in the described context has tested – and still does test – my own assumptions and has left me grateful for the experience.

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PRACTITIONER PAPER

Wovon wir als Lehrperson überzeugt sind und wie wir Gefangene als Lernende sehen

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Abstract: *Dieser Artikel bietet einen Einblick in einen Deutschkurs für Fremdsprachige in einer geschlossenen Justizvollzugsanstalt in der Deutschschweiz. Aus der Perspektive der Lehrenden denkt die Autorin über Annahmen und Überzeugungen nach, die man in ein solches, doch eher spezielles Lernsetting mitbringen könnte. Ihren Überlegungen stellt sie Begebenheiten aus ihrem Unterrichtsalltag im Vollzug gegenüber. Sie kommt zum Schluss, dass es nicht in erster Linie darum gehen kann, Überzeugungen einer Lehrperson zu verändern bzw. überwinden – vielmehr ist es im genannten Kontext wichtig, an die Gefangenen und ihr Potenzial als Lernende zu glauben.*

Key words: *Deutsch lehren als Fremdsprache; Überzeugungen; Aspekte der Lehre*

„Jetzt sind Sie also drinnen, wie fühlt sich das an?" Sie blickte aus dem Fenster seines grosszügigen, hellen Büros: Eine blühende Magerwiese mit Schmetterlingen, ein Idyll, so schien es fast, wären da nicht die blanken blauen Gitterstäbe an den Fenstern gewesen. Diese gaben ihr das Gefühl, in einem engen Raum mit einer sehr niedrigen Decke eingesperrt zu sein...

Einleitung

Im Collins Cobuild English Dictionary steht zu „belief": „*a feeling of certainty that something exists, is true, or is good"(ein Gefühl oder eine Überzeugung, dass etwas existiert, wahr oder gut ist).* Wenn wir unterrichten, tragen wir all unsere Überzeugungen zu den Lernenden, den Methoden, der Unterrichtsorganisation, zum Fach oder Stoff, zu Leistungsmessungen – zu jedem Aspekt, der in irgendeiner Form in das Unterrichten hineinspielt - mit in den Unterrichtsraum (z.B. Pajares 1992). Unsere Annahmen als Fachpersonen sind von unseren eigenen Erfahrungen sowohl als Lehrende als auch als Lernende geprägt. Wir handelt entsprechend unseren Überzeugungen und mit zunehmender Berufspraxis und –erfahrung meist unbewusst.

Im Zusammenhang mit Schule und Bildung sind die Ergebnisse der so genannten Hattie Studie (2009) zu den wichtigsten Faktoren fürs Lernen auf grosses Interesse gestossen und sein Name bzw. derjenige der Studie war in aller Munde. Die Metastudie – über 800 Studien wurden untersucht – brachte an den Tag, dass letztlich nicht etwa die Lerngruppengrösse oder die technische Ausrüstung in einem Klassenzimmer entscheidend für den Erfolg des Unterrichts sind. Nein, es ist die Lehrperson, die als wichtigster Faktor ausgemacht wurde. Nun könnten wir erleichtert feststellen, dass wir auch in Zeiten, wo immer mehr Technik in den Unterricht Einzug hält, nicht arbeitslos werden. Gleichzeitig sollten wir im Zusammenhang mit den Erkenntnissen der Studie auch bedenken, dass unsere Rolle als Lehrerin oder Lehrer eine enorme Verantwortung mit sich bringt.

Die Ergebnisse der Studie unterstreichen, was bereits frühere Untersuchungen in einem kleineren Rahmen gezeigt haben: Die Lehrperson hat einen grossen Anteil an der Leistung bzw. am Erfolg der Lernenden (z.B. Puchta 1999:257) und am individuellen Lernprozess. Es liegt deshalb nahe, zu untersuchen, welche Überzeugungen die Basis unseres Unterrichts bilden (Yero 2001/2, 2).

Die folgenden Überlegungen wurden im Zusammenhang mit dem Deutschunterricht für Fremdsprachige in einer geschlossenen Justizvollzugsanstalt für männliche Gefangene in der Deutschschweiz angestellt. Für diesen Unterricht gibt es keinen Lehrplan, vielmehr kann die Lehrende ihre eigenen Ziele setzten. Die Lernenden können auf ein Sprachdiplom vorbereitet werden – wir kommen später darauf zurück, aber abgesehen davon kann der Unterricht frei gestaltet werden. Das mag befremdlich klingen in einer Institution, die so stark durchstrukturiert ist und eine so hohe Regeldichte hat wie eine Institution des Freiheitsentzugs.

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Diese Freiheiten in der Unterrichtsgestaltung, die grösser sind als in anderen Unterrichtskontexten, geben der Lehrkraft natürlich eine gewisse Macht über die Lernenden. Wie sind die bewussten und weniger bewussten Überzeugungen der Lehrerin im Zusammenhang mit dieser besonderen Gruppe von Lernenden?

In einem Gefängnis zu unterrichten, kann man nicht lernen. Auch wenn man über einen ordentlichen Erfahrungsrucksack verfügt, ist es eine Herausforderung. So hat es auch die Autorin des Artikels erlebt: Als sie im geschlossenen Vollzug zu unterrichten begann, hatte sie bereits einige Unterrichtserfahrung. Sie gab Kurse für Studierende mit einem meist akademischen Hintergrund, hatte Sprachkurse für die IT-Leute einer Bank gegeben und in einer öffentlichen Schule in einem städtischen Quartier mit um die 80 % Fremdsprachige unterrichtet.

Die Schüler in der Anstalt sind von der Welt draussen abgeschnitten, sie leben in einer isolierten Welt – diese Tatsache spielt auch in den Unterricht mit hinein, und zwar in unterschiedlicher und manchmal völlig überraschender Weise. Man könnte nun sagen, dass der Unterricht in einem Gefängnis sehr eingeschränkt ist, weil man etwa verschiedene heute selbstverständliche technische Möglichkeiten nicht nutzen kann. Das könnte einerseits an den in der jeweiligen Institution fehlenden finanziellen Mitteln liegen, andererseits an zu beachtenden Sicherheitsvorschriften – man kann die Gefangenen nicht einfach so im Internet surfen lassen –, dazu kommt ein aktuell eher restriktives politisches Klima im Land. So würde es die Öffentlichkeit nicht gutheissen, wenn die Gefangenen für ihre Fehltritte statt bestraft auch noch „belohnt“ würden. Nun ja, offensichtlich sind die Überlegungen, was den Schülern im Vollzug für Möglichkeiten entgehen, nur begrenzt sinnvoll, denn Letztere tragen, so Hattie, nicht wesentlich zum Lernerfolg bei.

In der folgenden Diskussion werden fünf Aspekte des Unterrichtens im Vollzug genannt, über die im Zusammenhang mit Ansichten und Überzeugungen reflektiert wird. Es sind dies:

1. Gefangene als Sprachschüler
2. Unterrichtsführung und Methodik
3. Der Einsatz und Sinn der Muttersprache im Unterricht
4. Ansätze und Zugänge
5. Themen

1. Die Ausgangslage

1.1 Die zu unterrichtende Sprache: Deutsch als Fremdsprache (DaF)

In der Schweiz ist die deutsche Hochsprache zunächst die geschriebene Sprache; ihr zugrunde liegt eine Grammatik und Orthographie, die beide streng standardisiert sind. Hochdeutsch ist aber auch die gesprochene Sprache in den Schulen, den elektronischen Medien – wie Fernsehen und Radio – ebenso in offiziellen Situationen. Wenn die Sprache mündlich verwendet wird, ist sie je nach Sprecher oder Sprecherin mehr oder weniger stark dialektal gefärbt. Lokale und regionale Dialekte sind üblich in der alltäglichen mündlichen Kommunikation und fliessen auch in die geschriebene Sprache ein, so wird sie gern von der Jugend verwendet, wenn diese per i-Phone mit Gleichaltrigen kommuniziert.

Fremdsprachige im Justizvollzug der Deutschschweiz sind mit dem hochdeutschen Standard und mit den Schweizer Dialekten konfrontiert. In machen Anstalten können die Gefangenen auf freiwilliger Basis Deutsch lernen, um sich den institutionellen Alltag zu erleichtern. Die Vollzugsmitarbeitenden wiederum können die Gefangenen unterstützen, indem sie Hochdeutsch sprechen und dabei konsistent sind. So kann auch die Kommunikation an der institutionellen Basis effizienter gestaltet werden.

1.2 Die Vollzugsanstalt

Die Anstalt Pöschwies in Regensdorf bei Zürich ist die grösste geschlossene Vollzugsanstalt in der Schweiz. Nach Schweizer Gesetzgebung sind die Gefangenen zur Arbeit verpflichtet. Gleichzeitig haben sie, wie etwa in der genannten Anstalt die Möglichkeit, eine Berufslehre in einem der 19 Gewerbebetriebe zu machen. Weiter stehen Freizeitaktivitäten zur Wahl, für die es allerdings oft Wartelisten gibt. Die Aktivitäten beinhalten Deutsch und Englisch als Fremdsprache[1]. Bildung senkt das Risiko der Rückfälligkeit, wie Stud-

1 Die Problematik der Fremdsprachigkeit ist im hiesigen Justizvollzug nicht neu und daher haben Deutschlernangebote für nicht muttersprachliche Gefangene eine historisch lange Tradition, es gab sie bereits Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts. Die Schulleitung und das Unterrichten übernahm der Pfarrer, Hilfslehrer und manchmal auch noch Mitgefangene unterstützen ihn. ln den beiden deutschsprachigen Konkordaten (die Schweiz hat insgesamt drei) bieten die Anstalten ja nach Grösse und finanziellen Ressourcen den Gefangenen Deutschunterricht für Fremdsprachige (DaF)an. Eine Übersicht über die Angebote wurde nie erstellt. 2007 trat das revidierte Strafgesetzbuch in Kraft. Der Artikel 75* stellt die Bildung der Arbeit gleich. Durch die gesetzliche Verankerung wurde der Deutschunterricht der Häftlinge zur Bildungsmassnahme.

ien gezeigt haben (The Center on Crime, Communities & Culture: 2001), aber Deutsch im Besonderen ist auch deshalb wichtig, weil es dem Gefangenen bei der Integration und Resozialisierung hilft. Es erleichtert ausserdem den kommunikativen Alltag zwischen Gefangenem und Anstaltsmitarbeitendem. Zudem sind die Sprachkenntnisse im Deutschen oft eine Voraussetzung für eine Psychotherapie oder auch eine Ausbildung.

1.3 Der Kurs

Der Unterricht findet in einem Klassenzimmer statt, das, mit Whiteboard, Hellraumprojektor und Fernseher mit Video ausgestattet, sich kaum von einem anderen Schulzimmer für Erwachsenenbildung unterscheidet. Es sind sechs Lerngruppen von zwischen drei und zehn Schülern, die jeweils einmal pro Woche 50 Minuten Unterricht haben. Trotz der durchschnittlichen Haftdauer von drei Jahren ist die Anstalt alles andere als ein stabiler Ort und so verändern sich auch die Gruppen oft. Es kommt zu Verlegungen in andere Anstalten, Gefangene werden entlassen oder nach dem Ende ihrer Strafe des Landes verwiesen.

Wenn die Anzahl Lernende auf eine minimale Zahl zurückgegangen ist, rücken jeweils neue von der Warteliste nach. Ein Einstufungstest hilft den für jeden neuen Lernenden am besten geeigneten Platz in einer Gruppe zu finden. Das Einteilen ist oft ein schwieriges Unterfangen, einerseits sind natürlich die Deutschkenntnisse massgebend, aber genauso wichtig ist, ob ein Neuer in eine Gruppe passt und wie sich durch ihn die Gruppendynamik (vielleicht zum Negativen) verändern könnte. Des Weiteren sind Neuzugänge ab und zu eine Störquelle, da ein Einzelner seinen Platz in einer bestehenden Gruppe erst finden muss und von den „Alteingesessenen“ nicht immer mit offenen Armen empfangen wird. Im Unterricht kann oder muss von heterogenen Gruppen ausgegangen werden. Normalerweise gibt es eine oder zwei Anfängergruppen/“falsche Anfänger“ und weitere Gruppen die sich irgendwo zwischen A2 und C1 des Gemeinsamen europäischen Referenzrahmens (GER) bewegen.

1.3.1 Prüfen und Testen

Die Wiedereingliederung und die Integration sind die Hauptziele für Programme im Justizvollzug und wenn man sich die bisher genannten Besonderheiten dieses Lehr- und Lernkontextes vor Augen führt, so kann es nicht im Wesentlichen darum gehen, die Gefangenen auf eine Prüfung vorzubereiten. Nichtsdestotrotz haben aber die Gefangenen die Möglichkeit, sich auf ein oder auch mehrere Diplome des Goethe-Instituts auf ihrer Stufe vorzubereiten. Hierfür gibt es jedoch keine offiziellen Termine, was Druck von den Lernenden und der Lehrperson nimmt. Immer wenn es wieder Prüfungskandidaten gibt, wird ein Datum festgelegt und die Prüfungen auf den verschiedenen Stufen vorbereitet. Die Prüfungskandidaten können selbstverständlich über eine Teilnahme mitbestimmen, sie sollten auf jeden Fall gute Chancen haben, die Prüfung zu bestehen, sonst wird ihnen empfohlen bis zum nächsten Termin zu warten. Ein Scheitern bei den Prüfungen soll den Lernprozess eines Gefangenen nicht behindern. Dieser Ansatz führt ab und an zu schwierigen Entscheidungen: So war ein Lernender einmal sehr niedergeschlagen, als ihm die Lehrerin eine schlechte Prognose für einen Prüfungserfolg gab und ihm vorschlug erst noch weiterzulernen.

Trotz allem sind Prüfungen wichtig, denn sie geben der Lehrerin einen Anhaltspunkt, zeigen, was gelernt wurde, und sind Voraussetzung für Entscheidungen zu neuem Stoff. Diese Ansicht vertritt Rudman (1989), der Lernen und Lehren als Zusammenspiel sieht. Leider fehlt im Unterricht die Zeit, um das Gelernte neu aufbereitet zu wiederholen, zu recyceln, obwohl dies vom Unterrichtsmaterial her angeboten würde. Als Lehrende muss man da ‘Mut zur Lücke’ beweisen. Abschliessend bleibt zum Testen zu sagen, dass es dem Lernenden den persönlichen Fortschritt signalisiert und ihn motiviert weiterzugehen.

1.4 Die Lernenden

Die Lernenden sind normalerweise zwischen zwanzig und etwa fünfzig Jahren alt, wobei es tendenziell mehr ältere Schüler gibt. Sie kommen von überall auf der Welt. Über sie kann man nicht als Gruppe schreiben, das wäre unmöglich, denn ihre Persönlichkeitsprofile unterscheiden sich stark in Bildung und Beruf, Interessen und Lernerfahrungen.

2. Ansichten/Überzeugungen:

2.1 Zu den Gefangenen als Sprachlernern

Das Taxonomiemodell eines guten Sprachenlerners (Skehan 1989) bietet einen Rahmen mit Kategorien, die mit dem Lernprozess direkt verbunden sind. Dank dieses Rahmens lassen sich Unterschiede unter den Lernern festmachen: Alter, Intelligenz, Talent, Motivation, Einstellungen, Persönlichkeit und Kognition. Weiter variiert der kulturelle und soziale Hintergrund. Während vielleicht einige Lernende ein Studium begonnen oder abgeschlossen, eine Berufslehre gemacht haben, haben andere nicht einmal die obligatorische Schulzeit absolviert. Die Klassen sind damit äusserst

heterogen. Wie kann unter solchen Vorzeichen überhaupt effektives Lehren bzw. Lernen stattfinden, mag man sich da fragen. Muss es bei einer solchen Heterogenität unter den Lernenden nicht zwangsläufig zu Aggressionen unter den Einzelnen und disziplinarischen Schwierigkeiten der Lehrperson kommen?

Obschon die Gefangenen alle ihre individuelle Geschichte haben, leben sie doch allesamt in einer streng durchorganisierten und strukturierten Welt mit klaren Abläufen. Der Kontext schafft also eine gewisse Homogenität. Die Situation im Freiheitsentzug ist für mehr oder weniger alle Gefangenen „häufig per se belastend..." (Christoffel und Schönfeld 2008: 10). Diese Belastung kommt etwa durch verminderte Energie, eine deprimierte Grundhaltung und reduzierte Präsenz zum Ausdruck. Folglich werden unter den Deutschkursteilnehmern immer wieder ähnliche Muster im Lernverhalten zu finden sein: Fehlende Flexibilität und Spontanität und fehlendes Interesse. Und sicher dürfte es auch eine Reihe von Gefangenen geben, die sich durch den Deutschkurs eine Stunde von der Arbeit ausklinken können und für die dies die einzige Motivation ist.

Im Gegensatz zum oben Gesagten kommt man als Lehrende doch immer wieder zum Schluss, dass die Lernenden mit Motivation Deutsch lernen und dass sie bemüht sind Fortschritte zu machen. Aber der Spracherwerb ist kein linearer Prozess und viele der Lernenden müssen mit einem u-förmigen Verlauf klar kommen: Ihre Motivation ist zunächst sehr gross und sie sind davon überzeugt, dass die Fremdsprache in den Griff zu bekommen ist. Später finden sie diese „extrem schwierig", wie sich ein Lernender ausdrückte, und sie stolpern über verschiedene Wissenslücken: „Den deutschen Artikel werde ich nie beherrschen!" Um ihre Defizite zu überwinden, möchten sie gern mehr Kontaktstunden, was natürlich ausser Frage steht: *„Ich werde dem Direktor einen Hausbrief schreiben. Der wäre auch nicht imstande eine Sprache mit einer Stunde Unterricht zu lernen."* Über ihr geringes Vorwärtskommen oder die Stagnation im Lernen sind sie häufig frustriert und manche geben an diesem Punkt das Deutsch lernen auf.

Auf der anderen Seite gibt es Lernende, die eine gewisse Sprachängstlichkeit entwickeln, die sich nicht von selbst wieder verflüchtigt, wie Oxford (1999) unterstreicht. Die beiden Situationen sind heikle Punkte während des Lernprozesses und müssen überwunden werden. Hier ist die Reaktion der Lehrperson entscheidenden, wie das folgende Beispiel darlegen soll:

Ein Lerner war begeistert von der Idee, ein Goethe-Diplom auf der Stufe B1 ablegen zu können. Obwohl er gewisse Defizite hatte, hielt die Lehrerin seinen Wunsch für realistisch. Da eine Unterrichtsstunde pro Woche für eine Prüfungsvorbereitung sehr knapp ist, sollte er in seiner Freizeit den Teil „Schreiben" trainieren. Auf dieser Stufe war die Schreibaufgabe damals die Antwort auf einen halbformellen Brief, dessen Inhalt in Form von Notizen bereits vorhanden war. Der betroffene Lernende begann so:

„Lieber Herr Lutz, ich habe überhaupt keine Übung im Schreiben eines Briefes.
Liebe Frau Schumacher, ich entschuldige mich dafür, dass ich so ein ignoranter Idiot bin. Ich habe gar keine Idee, wie ich auf diesen Brief antworten sollte. Ich bin mit dreizehn aus der Schule. Ich würde meine Situation sehr gern verbessern, mit Ihrer Hilfe könnte ich es schaffen. Ich bekomme das in den Griff. Vielen Dank für Ihr Verständnis. Freundliche Grüsse..."

Dieser Lernende verliess die Anstalt mit einem B1-Zertifikat und sein Brief bekam eine der besten Noten unter den Prüflingen auf dieser Stufe.

Oft scheinen verbesserte Fremdsprachenkompetenzen einen positiven Effekt zu haben, der auch auf den Alltag ausstrahlt. Zum einen wirkt sich ein Erfolgserlebnis natürlich positiv auf das Selbstwertgefühl aus: Ein Lernender hatte während des Unterrichts jeweils sein Deutschdiplom bei sich und blickt ab und zu etwas träumerisch drauf. Ein anderer Lernender berichtete, dass er dank der Alphabetisierung und seiner fremdsprachlichen Fortschritte nun in der Lage sei, ein Formular auszufüllen, und zwar ohne Hilfe. Wie Quinn (2007) sagt, sind solche und ähnliche Erfolge für die Lehrperson unschätzbar wertvoll.

Wie sehr sich Kursteilnehmer im Lernprozess in die Rolle als Lernende versetzen können, zeigt folgendes Beispiel:

Es ging um Nebensätze und die Lernenden sollten eigene Beispiele suchen. Ein Schüler sagte: *„Da ich einen Migräneanfall habe, würde ich gern auf meine Zelle gehen."* Er gab diesen Satz in etwa fünf Versionen wieder, alle waren sie korrekt und die Lehrerin lobte ihn. Als sie dann aber in seine Richtung schaute, rollte er seine Augen und seine Gesichtsfarbe changierte zwischen gelb und weiss. Er musste in einer sehr schlechten Verfassung sein, dennoch verwendete er die Strukturen absolut korrekt.

Nachdem es bisher um individuelle Beispiele gegangen ist, steht im folgenden Teil die Gruppendynamik unter den Gefangenen im Zentrum: Einige Lernende wollen keine Hausaufgaben machen und sie wissen, dass dies für die Lehrerin in Ordnung ist, andere erwarten aber, dass sie bis zum nächsten Unterricht Vertiefungsmaterial bekommen und es macht ihnen Spass die Resultate untereinander zu vergleichen. Hier ein Beispiel aus dem Unterrichtsalltag, das diesen Punkt unterstreicht: *„Sie, Frau S., mein Lernpartner hat sich beklagt, weil Sie uns das letzte Mal so wenig Aufgaben mitgegeben haben. Können wir bitte das nächste Mal mehr haben?“*

2.2 Zur Unterrichtsführung und Methodik

„Ist das nicht gefährlich, dort zu unterrichten?“ ist eine häufige Frage von Kolleginnen und Kollegen. Es ist klar, welche Ansichten hinter dieser Frage stehen: Eine Lehrperson in einem Gefängnis begibt sich in eine gefahrenreiche Umgebung und muss sowohl die Situation unter Kontrolle haben, aber auch die Lernenden. So könnte man zum Schluss kommen, dass hier Frontalunterricht, bei welchen die Lehrerin bzw. der Lehrer im Zentrum steht, angezeigt ist. Tatsächlich wird im Deutschunterricht der Anstalt so unterrichtet. Die Tische bilden dabei eine U-Form. Allerdings hat dieser Ansatz weniger mit Fragen der Sicherheit zu tun, vielmehr zeigte sich, dass die Lernenden es bevorzugen, den Anweisungen der Person, die sie unterrichtet, zu folgen, abwechslungsweise Fragen zu beantworten, die Aufmerksamkeit und das Interesse der Person vor ihnen zu bekommen und auf keinen Fall isoliert zu sein. So würden die Lernenden stets die Arbeit im Plenum der Einzelarbeit vorziehen; Letztere sei für die Zelle.

2.3 Zum Einsatz und Sinn der Muttersprache im Unterricht

Die Anstalt ist dezentral geführt, die Gefangenen leben in Zellen, die sich in Wohngruppen befinden. Um das Übergewicht einer bestimmten Ethnie auf einer Gruppe und mögliche, damit verbundene disziplinarische Probleme zu vermeiden, sind Landsleute meist in verschiedenen Pavillons untergebracht. In den Deutschgruppen kann es aber durchaus vorkommen, dass eine Ethnie übervertreten und somit vielleicht auch dominanter ist. Da die meisten Lernenden sich auf den Sprachniveaus A1 und A2 des Gemeinsamen europäischen Referenzrahmens bewegen, vertritt die Lehrerin die Ansicht, dass ein moderater Gebrauch der Muttersprache durchaus vertretbar und im Lernprozess sinnvoll ist. Zu diesem Schluss kommt auch die Zweitspracherwerbsforschung (SLA): Kellermann z.B. (1986) zeigt, dass der Gebrauch der Erstsprache (L1) ein subtiler und sich entwickelnder Aspekt im Erwerb der Zweitsprache (L2) ist. Darüberhinaus kann die Verwendung der Erstsprache dazu führen, dass bei der lernenden Person ein echtes Interesse am Vergleich von Aspekten der beiden Sprachen entsteht und dass dabei Analogien ausgemacht werden. Wenn die Lernenden Phänomene ihrer eigenen Muttersprache auf Deutsch erklären, sind sie selber Lehrer und Dolmetscher auf Zeit. Da die Zielsprache Deutsch ist, kann der Lernende erkennen, ob er sich selber verständlich machen kann. So kann es sich positiv auf die sprachliche Leistung des Lernenden auswirken, wenn er eine Verbindung zwischen der Muttersprache und dem Deutschen macht, das zeigt Forschung, z.B. Heyde (1979). Ein schöner Nebeneffekt ist dabei, dass die Lehrperson ihren kulturellen Horizont erweitert und die eigenen Fremdsprachen trainiert.

Ein Lernender wusste z.B. nicht, was das Wort „Aprikose“ bedeutet. Seine Kollegen übersetzten es für ihn ins Arabische. Worauf er sagte: „Ah, mushamsh.“ – Das klang wie „Mischmasch“ für uns nicht Arabisch Sprechenden. Dies ist nur ein triviales Beispiel, das zeigt, wie ein Wort, ein Homophon das Interesse der Lernenden wecken kann und so zum kulturellen „Erlebnis“ wird.

2.4 Zu Ansätzen und Zugängen

Die Bedürfnisse der Deutsch Lernenden im Gefängnis lassen sich grob in zwei Kategorien einteilen: Einmal geht es um das dringende Bedürfnis, zu kommunizieren und zu verstehen, bei der Arbeit, beim Arzt. Zum anderen soll die deutsche Sprache längerfristig die Resozialisation und die Wiedereingliederung in die Gesellschaft erleichtern. Und so läge es eigentlich auf der Hand, dass im Unterricht hauptsächlich die vier Fertigkeiten – Lesen, Hören, Schreiben und Sprechen trainiert werden müssten. Wenn man noch berücksichtigt, was weiter oben über die Lernenden gesagt wurde, dann erscheint ein Ansatz von der Grammatik her weniger angebracht.

Welche sprachlichen Kenntnisse und Fähigkeiten brauchen die Gefangenen dringend? Sie haben ja in ihrem Alltag und bei der Arbeit mit Anstaltsmitarbeitenden zu tun, weiter mit Anwälten, Therapeuten und Sozialarbeitern, sie müssten also vorrangig Kompetenzen erwerben, die ihnen die mündliche und schriftliche Kommunikation erleichtern. Die Grammatik lässt sich dabei eher vernachlässigen und man entscheidet sich für einen eher spielerischen Ansatz. Die Teilnehmen-

den fühlen sich so wohl und können ihre oft schwierige Situation für den Moment vergessen. Jedoch, kamen einige Sprachspiele nicht sehr gut an bei den Klassen:

„Also wissen Sie, das Spiel, bei dem es zwei Spieler gibt und alle anderen Schiedsrichter sind, erinnert mich an die Situation vor Gericht. Der Richter thront hoch über mir. Ich möchte das nicht mehr spielen."

Solche und ähnliche Aussagen von Lernenden machten die Lehrerin nachdenklich. Sie suchte nach neuen Wegen, gleichzeitig fragten Schüler immer wieder nach Parallelen und Unterschieden zwischen ihrer Muttersprache und der deutschen Sprache. Das war die Entscheidung für expliziten Grammatikunterricht. Nicht alle waren davon hellauf begeistert. Ein Lerner meinte:

„Einst sprach ich wie einer von der Baustelle – von der Grammatik her völlig falsch. Aber die Leute verstanden mich mehr oder weniger. Und jetzt kommen Sie mit ihrer Grammatik und nun arbeitet die Sprache in mir und ich muss mir immer wieder Dinge überlegen."

Diese Äusserung kam verärgert daher und selbstverständlich war der betroffene Lernende mit dem neuen Ansatz nicht einverstanden. Aber im Bezug auf die Theorie des Zweitspracherwerbs stand fest, dass es hier um die Sensibilisierung für grammatische Phänomene ging. Diese Idee der Bewusstmachung geht auf Rutherford und Sharwood Smith (1988: 107) zurück: Instruktion bringe nicht automatisch Produktion hervor, und so müsse versucht werden, die Aufmerksamkeit der Lernenden gezielt auf die formalen Eigenschaften der Zielsprache zu lenken. Die Lehrende wählt einen induktiven Ansatz des Grammatikunterrichts. Den Lernenden hilft es, wenn ihnen bewusst wird, dass die deutsche Sprache – die „unglaublich schwierig" ist – fünf grammatische Fälle hat, während ihre Muttersprache über sieben verfügt. Sie bewegen sich innerhalb der Fremdsprache sicherer und selbstbewusster, denn die Grammatik zeigt ihnen auf, wie die „Mechanik" der Sprache funktioniert.

2.6 Zu Themen

Anfänglich fiel es der Leherin schwer, sich für Themen für den Unterricht zu entscheiden. Persönlich war sie eher der Ansicht, dass die Gefangenen im Unterricht nicht noch zusätzlich mit ihrer schwierigen Situation konfrontiert werden sollten. Es erschien zunächst klar, dass das Thema „Kriminalität und Strafe" im Kursbuch auf der Stufe B2/C1 ausgelassen werden müsste. Beim Durchgehen der Themen im Inhaltsverzeichnis wurde der Lehrerin aber bewusst, dass jegliches „allgemeine Thema" schnell den sicheren Boden verlassen und die Gefangenen in einer nicht intendierten Weise blossstellen könnte. Es waren dann allerdings die Gefangenen selber, die ihr zeigten, dass ihre Bedenken unbegründet waren.

Nachdem die Lehrerin gerade erst ein paar wenige Wochen in der Anstalt unterrichtet hatte, brachte ein Gefangener einen Cartoon mit. Die Hauptfigur war ein kleiner Vogel auf seinem Motorrad. Einmal hat der Vogel einen Unfall, in den ausser ihm auf der Maschine noch ein Auto verwickelt ist. Der Vogel verliert das Bewusstsein. Als er wieder zu sich kommt, befindet er sich in einem Käfig. Er sieht den Wasserspender und ein paar Scheiben Brot auf dem Boden und glaubt, er sei im Gefängnis: *„Oh nein, ich muss den Autofahrer getötet haben."* Der Gefangene schaute die Lehrerin an und kicherte, sie war ziemlich geschockt.

Ein anders Mal ging es um eine Stelle im Kursbuch der Stufe A1: Da gab es einen Dialog zwischen einem kleinen Mädchen und einem Pizzaservice-Mitarbeitenden. Das Mädchen telefoniert mit dem Service, um neun Pizzas zu bestellen. Weil sie minderjährig ist, will die Person am Ende der Leitung die Mutter oder den Vater sprechen. Doch das Mädchen ist mit dem Hund allein zu Hause. Ihre Bestellung wird mit den Worten: *„Tja Lisa, keine Mama, kein Papa – keine Pizza."* abgeschmettert. Die Lernenden kommentierten darauf: *„Dieses arme Mädchen ist in genau derselben Situation wie wir."*

In vielen Situationen sind es die Gefangenen selber, die ihre eigene aktuelle Situation zur Sprache bringen, wie die folgenden Beispiele zeigen: Wenn die Lernenden nach Komposita gefragt werden, bringen sie meistens Begriffe wie „Fluchtgefahr" oder „Haftstrafe". Einmal fragte ein Gefangener: *„Ist das korrekt, wenn ich sage, mir gefällt es hier?"* Die Lehrerin antwortete, dass es aus grammatikalischer Sicht richtig sei, die Mitgefangenen lachten.

Manchmal wird das Thema „Kriminalität" auf ganz natürliche Art und Weise ins Spiel gebracht. Ein Gefangener bereitete sich sehr ernsthaft auf ein Diplom der Stufe B1 vor. Er war auf einem Ohr leicht schwerhörig und er wollte speziell den Prüfungsteil „Hören" gut vorbereiten. So bat er die Lehrerin um Prüfungsbeispiele, die er in der Zelle hören konnte. Er bekam das entsprechende Material, wurde aber darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass er die CDs in einer Woche

wieder intakt zurückbringen müsse. Er meinte darauf: Keine Sorge,: *„Ich schliesse meine Zelle immer sorgfältig ab, wenn ich zum Beispiel zum Duschen weggehe.“* Vielleicht fixierte die Lehrerin ihn dann einen Moment zu lange, denn er fügte hinzu: *„Oh, ich verstehe, nein, ich werde die nicht verkaufen oder so.“*

Ein anderes Mal meinte ein Gefangener zur Lehrerin, dass ihm gar nicht aufgefallen sei, dass sie Linkshänderin sei: *„Ich wusste nicht, dass Sie Linkshänderin sind. Machen Sie alles mit der linken Hand? Schreiben Sie mit ihr? Brauchen Sie sie bei manueller Arbeit? Sorry, aber mit welcher Hand schiessen Sie? – Ich habe eine Pistole gebraucht. Was, Sie haben keine Waffe? Ich dachte, alle Schweizer hätten eine.“*

3. Fazit

Vielleicht inspiriert dieser Artikel Lehrende zum Nachdenken - über eigene Ansichten und Überzeugungen was das Unterrichten generell, aber besonders auch im Gefängniskontext begrifft. Die Autorin des Artikels kann aus eigener Erfahrung sagen, dass der besondere Unterrichtskontext im Vollzug ihre Ansichten und Überzeugungen immer wieder auf die Probe stellt. Für die Erfahrungen, die sie sammelt, ist sie sehr dankbar.

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PRACTITIONER PAPER

Teaching Compassion in Prison: A Key to Learning

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Abstract: *In a project with long-term prisoners at HMP Dumfries, Scotland, tutors and students explore the notion and application of compassion, focusing in particular on the ways in which understanding compassion enables learning – not just the learning of academic subjects but also of interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence. The project highlights the benefits of teaching a so-called extracurricular subject, at the same time as revealing its centrality to learning in the first place. A lack of adequate teaching time in prison, and the fact that compassion is not considered a core subject in education, are both cited as obstacles in consolidating the work of the project. The benefits of teaching compassion - emotional, intellectual and spiritual - was made clear through written and verbal student feedback. Three short workshops highlighted the enormous potential in developing and establishing compassion as both subject and practice in prison education. It is hoped that practitioners and researchers will support the expansion of this work throughout prisons.*

Key words: *Compassion, holistic prison education, arts-based interventions, spirituality, non-violent communication, rehabilitation, Buddhism*

Introduction

Since I began work as Creative Writing tutor at Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Dumfries two years ago, my interest in and understanding of compassion has deepened. As a poet, it's always been clear to me that poetry relies on the writer being able to feel her way into the material; to practice empathy by imagining herself into another's world. But the more I thought about compassion and tried to practice it, the more I realised how central it is to learning of all kinds. It seemed to me that a lack of compassion created an obstacle in the path of learning, not just in learning academic disciplines ("I can't do this, I'm rubbish/too stupid/too lazy!") but also in learning interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence.

I decided to organise a project in the prison to explore the notion of compassion, not specifically from the perspective of poetry (though this came into it) but more generally: What is compassion, and how can we learn to be more compassionate to self and other? My aim was to encourage students from all subject areas to get involved in thinking and talking about compassion, in the hope that by practicing it in our daily lives, we might be more open to learning of all kinds. I didn't want to frame it entirely around poetry because I wanted to reach a broader cross-section of students, those who had never attended my classes and had no particular interest in literature or Creative Writing. In the end, however, poetry ended up being a central component of the project, not least because I invited two poets to come in and speak about their relationship to and understanding of compassion.

The project consisted of four sessions with 18 long-term prisoners (at HMP Dumfries, long-term refers to a minimum sentence of four years) over the course of a fortnight. I arranged for three people to visit the prison and offer workshops – two poets, Valerie Gillies and Gerry Loose, via the Scottish Book Trust's Live Literature Fund (http://www.scottishbooktrust.com), and Vérène Nicolas who facilitates workshops in non-violent communication and self-compassion.

What is Compassion?

I began the project with an introductory session in which we discussed what we thought compassion was and how it manifested in our lives. We discussed definitions of compassion: Empathy; being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes; being open-minded and aware of others' needs; loving ourselves; accepting who we are and who others are, too. Many students were able to recall times when they were shown com-

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passion and also when they were able to be compassionate towards others:

"I remember the time my co-pilot was imploding because his wife had left him – over the phone. He was broken. It's something that happens a lot in here; people on the outside can't bear the sentence any more than we can." ('Co-pilot' is prison slang for 'cell-mate'.)

"And what did you do for him? Were you able to help in some way?"

"Only because I understood where he was at. I knew how he felt. I just listened."

We read a chapter from Marc Barasch's book *The Compassionate Life: Walking the Path of Kindness* (2014), to look at ways in which people are compassionate to themselves and others. Barasch writes movingly on the events immediately post-9/11, a topic I thought the students would all feel strongly about - and they did. What we came to realise whilst reading and discussing the chapter, was that suffering opens us; that through it we enter a place of vulnerability, somewhere we often choose to suppress or avoid or even actively deny because it's painful; but that it's also a place that paves the way for compassion:

I think the common denominator is the breakdown of your ego to a place of vulnerability. We are brought up to think we all want to be happy and comfortable and up – and that's what we're programmed to go for. And I don't think anybody in their right mind would want to go for the other. But when you have been put there, you become aware that you can relate to others who have been there as well – hearing firemen talking about finding bodies the night before and feeling the pain they were going through. And it wasn't morbid. It was just…connected (Marc Barasch, *The Compassionate Life: Walking the Path of Kindness*, 2009).

As we read, it became clear that an understanding of the ways in which we are all interconnected is tantamount to an understanding of the roots of compassion. Zen Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh calls it 'interbeing':

"Interbeing" is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix "inter" with the verb "to be", we have a new verb, "inter-be". If we look into this sheet of paper […] we can see the sunshine in it. If the sunshine is not there, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow. Even we cannot grow without sunshine. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are. And if we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree and brought it to the mill to be transformed into paper. And we see the wheat. We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. And the logger's father and mother are in it too. When we look in this way, we see that without all of these things, this sheet of paper cannot exist (Melvin McLeod, ed., *The Pocket Thich Nhat Hanh,* 2012).

Perhaps more importantly, though, it became clear that this understanding isn't something only available to monks and other spiritual practitioners, but something we can all access and exercise.

We took it in turns to read pages of the chapter out loud. At times we found it quite difficult because the material was raw and everyone in the class – of course – knew what it meant to suffer. There was a section early on in the chapter about a fireman, Joseph Bradley, 'a hardhat crane operator who had helped build the World Trade Center when he was twenty-two' (Barasch, 2009), and by the time we got to the end of the page, we had to admit to having lumps in our throats.

Like so many workers at the site, he was overwhelmed by the carnage at the pile, sinking to the curb after his fist night under the savagely bright arc lamps, his head cradled in his hands. "That's when the Salvation Army kids appeared," he remembers, "in their sneakers with their pink hair and their belly buttons showing and bandanas tied around their faces. They came with water and cold towels and took my boots off and put dry socks on my feet.

"And then, when I got to Houston Street, a bunch more of these kids, all pierced and tattooed with multicolored hair, had made a little makeshift stage. They started to cheer as we came out, and that was it for me. I never identified with those people before, and I started crying, and I cried for four blocks. I can't tell you – I was taken so off guard.

"I got home and saw my wife, who asked, 'Joe, are you okay?' 'Sure!' I said. You know the bravado came back. But she said, 'Are you sure? Go look in the mirror.' There I was with my filthy dirty face and just two clean lines down from my eyes."

A community of love was the last thing anyone had expected to find in the mouth of Hell (Barasch, 2009).

The Threat Of Change

We talked about how 9/11 and its aftermath represented a period of extreme suffering and that extremes like this often seem to bring out the best in humanity – the superficial layer we habitually offer the world is peeled back and we often feel liberated to reveal our true worth and value.

"Not always," one of the students said, "9/11 is what sparked the whole War on Terror. How enlightened was that?"

"But Bush and the decision-makers in the White House never personally suffered," I suggested, "They never engaged firsthand with the devastation and trauma of 9/11. They weren't torn open by it. Instead of realising the potential for a compassionate response, they fought back with equal venom."

"Isn't that just a nice, idealistic way of seeing things? People retaliate. That's what we do when we've been hurt."

"Maybe," I said, "But who says it has to be that way? Doesn't it all come down to fear in the end? Isn't it true that for most of us change is threatening and seeing things from a different perspective is frightening sometimes because it challenges our status quo?"

"OK, sure, but how do we actually bring about that change in the world? In other people?"

It's a question that came up a couple of times during the project, but by the time we got to the final session, the students realised they all already knew the answer: change begins with the individual and only then because we choose it. We can only change ourselves and then witness the ways in which this impacts those with whom we inter-are. It's so obvious we often overlook it. Spiritual practitioners and psychologists down the millennia have espoused it, and yet most of us still fail to put into practice the strategies that enable us to do the work of change. And it's hard work, there's no getting around it. It's hard work for those of us *not* incarcerated; for those of us who are, there are even more challenges to overcome; not least, prison culture's mode of accepted behaviour, which more often than not runs counter to the notion of compassion. In all-male prisons, pathological interpretations of masculinity must also be side-stepped (HMP Dumfries is a men's prison).

Gaining an understanding of this is one thing, "the fundamentals", as one student said; but putting it into daily practice is something else altogether. How do we remember to pause before we act or speak? What does it even mean 'to create a pause'? Luckily, I'd invited Vérène Nicolas, an expert in seeking answers to these questions, and she opened the project's first workshop with a phrase that has stayed with me ever since: Get curious not furious (Marshall Rosenberg, https://www.cnvc.org/about/marshall-rosenberg.html).

Vérène began by making clear distinctions between universal human needs and the strategies we might employ to fulfill those needs. For example, one of the students suggested 'work' as a universal human need, but we all quickly realised that this wasn't a need, but a strategy to meet deeper needs – self-esteem, for example, or safety, stability, equality. In this way, we were able to see that beneath every action, every choice, there is a human need seeking to be met. If we transfer this understanding to a situation in which conflict arises, a space suddenly opens up: We can now see that on both sides of the conflict, universal human needs are not being met. We were able to see that when we get upset or angry, it's often because a deep need in us isn't being met, and/or a deep need in the other person is also not being met. Even though the psychology of this wasn't new to us, breaking it down in this way helped to open the space up again, to re-define Viktor Frankl's famous words, 'There's a space between stimulus and response.' If we can use this space to see into the needs of self and other, compassion will naturally arise.

The Application of Compassion

Of course, creating space to open ourselves t o compassion sounds great in theory, but in practice it's often much more difficult to achieve. It's something we need to train our minds to accommodate. I decided to test out the theory in a class with short-term prisoners (men sentenced to less than four years) later in the day:

"Imagine you're being bullied by a fellow prisoner because you've got a physical abnormality, say, very short arms. What would you think about the bully and how might you react?"

"Tell him to fuck off. Arsehole…I'd clout him with my very short arms. Ha ha!"

"Would you ever wonder why he was being a bully?"

"Nah. What for? Arseholes like that aren't worth thinking about."

"And have you ever been an arsehole?"

"Oh sure. Who hasn't?"

"And are you not worth thinking about?"

"I didn't say that!" He paused, "Well, I'm not worth thinking about! I'm scum!"

The Workshops

To begin the process of training the mind to allow compassion to arise, Vérène led an exercise on self-responsibility. The students were asked to remember a recent situation in which someone did something that made them angry or upset. They were then invited to break off into pairs and discuss the following questions, in response to the remembered incident: (i) What thoughts arise? (ii) What do you feel/sense? (iii) What do you need or value? (iv) What could you do now? One student said, "I've never done this kind of thing before. I wish there was more time to go into it more deeply."

For the project's second workshop, Valerie Gillies

visited the prison. Valerie is a poet and writer, originally from Ayrshire, and with a close knowledge of the local area , something a number of the students appreciated because many of them come from there. She led a session on natural wells and springs, sharing the pilgrimage she undertook to find them dotted around the country, as well as reading poems from her collection, *The Spring Teller* (2009). She also brought in photographs of the wells and springs which she passed around, and told tales of the people who had sought them out in times of hardship and ill-health. She said that visiting the wells and springs had been a kind of spiritual journey for her, not just because of the footsteps she was treading in, but because of the clarity and purity of the water she found in these places. In the words of one student:

"Valerie took a simple thing like a well and had us really think, not only about the purity of the water, but also about the fact that you could see through to the bottom of the well – how the water was clear all the way down.

She then led a meditation – we were to focus on a glass of water on the floor – and I was astounded that the deeper I gazed into the water, the more relaxed and content I became."

I'd advertised the project by putting posters up around the prison, and I knew the mention of meditation would be a risk: it would likely mean that some prisoners wouldn't even consider coming along because meditation is seen by many of them as "soft" or "for fairies". However, Mindfulness Meditation had been taught recently at HMP Dumfries, so I knew it wasn't a wholly new concept for everyone. And as it turned out, I needn't have worried:

"Very enjoyable. Surprised at myself. Something I would never have participated in usually."

We concluded the project with a visit from writer and poet, Gerry Loose. Gerry focused on readings from his two most recent books, a poetry collection, *Fault Line* (2014) and a book of prose about two oakwoods, one in Scotland and one in Finland, *An Oakwood Almanac* (2015). He also talked frankly about compassion – how he experiences it in his life and how the Buddha teaches it (he's a practicing Buddhist). In particular, he talked about the Buddhist concept of *dukkha*, the first of the Four Noble Truths: all existence is suffering. Many of the students were already familiar with this, but it was good to be reminded. When we're immersed in our own suffering, it seems so easy to forget that everyone else suffers, too. One of Gerry's poem excerpts touched on compassion for non-humans, for flora and fauna, something that reminded us again of the complexity of inter-being:

7 herons
in the meadow
horse & rider
cantering
across the bay
by the old fish yair
Gartness fault

he's been by
with the petrol strimmer
by the fence
a foot wide
by 125 paces
ten species
dead or threshed
could name them all
called friends
am I foolish (Gerry Loose, *Fault Line*, 2014)

"I thoroughly enjoyed the last of the sessions," one student wrote, "I found a great deal of inspiration listening to Gerry's poetry and writing. I feel that he brought all the sessions together, and now I'm better able to understand the nature of compassion and how the concept relates to literature. A great end to things! Many thanks!"

Student Feedback

But it wasn't an end to things, it was a beginning. Three months on and we're still talking about it. I think this is partly because the project was so successful – students were enthusiastic and engaged in a way I don't often witness – and partly because it was flawed – there wasn't enough time. It's ironic that there's often not enough time in prison to really explore themes and ideas deeply. The daily routine gets in the way; students come and go (are released); and funding is hard to come by for projects that are deemed extracurricular. Many of the students who attended the project gave me written and verbal feedback, and almost all of them mentioned the paucity of time. Almost all of them wanted more time in Vérène's session to explore the more practical applications of compassion. This was a 3-hour workshop, but we needed at least a full day, if not two, to gain an understanding of needs, how to recognise and then meet them in self and other. If I ran this project again, I'd make sure to factor this in.

Nonetheless, seeing the students come together so well as a group, being mutually supportive and at times

quite open and vulnerable, even though it was only short-lived, was something to celebrate. It's not often I experience a sense of camaraderie amongst prisoners, at least not in a way that sidesteps the usual banter and machismo. It was good to witness students letting down their guard and I think for them it was a breath of fresh air, a relief, no matter how fleeting. When I suggested this to them afterwards, they said that learning about compassion was relaxing because they didn't have to pretend any more; they realised that everyone's in the same boat, even if the view from the porthole is a bit different.

Self-compassion is something we continue to talk about in class. It's the one aspect of the project that is most frequently revisited. This isn't surprising, I suppose, given that many prisoners struggle with low self-esteem and depression, states of mind that tend more towards self-loathing than self-love. For many of them, it's hard to recognise that if they can't be kind to themselves, they're going to struggle to be genuinely kind to others; that we need to love and nurture ourselves in order to go out into the world with compassion for others. And, most of all, that if we can show compassion for others, we will reinforce the love and understanding we have begun to nurture for ourselves. In other words, compassion is a regenerative circle, not a vicious one: in giving out, we receive something immeasurably valuable back. If there's ever a circle worth being trapped in, it's got to be this one!

A lack of self-compassion often manifests in very obvious ways in my students. For example, in my Creative Writing class, students will sometimes pre-empt the reading of their poem or short story with a disclaimer: "This is rubbish! You can tell me how rubbish it is when I've finished reading!" Nowadays I invite the whole class to talk about the disclaimer: What's the fear? What need isn't being met here? In what way does this statement set up a vicious circle of low self-esteem *and* self-righteous ego? How do we apply what we've learnt about compassion to this situation? Obviously, I've had to practice compassion in gauging these kinds of questions, too. The students are now openly enthusiastic about engaging in self-reflective and critical discussions. Interestingly, this has translated over into the classes in which I teach COPI (Community of Philosophical Inquiry) - many of the students in these classes also participated in the project on compassion. At the end of a recent session in which we discussed the philosophical question 'Who Am I?', one student said,

"I love these classes because they make me realise what crazy thoughts I have! I mean, I seem to get stuck in thinking about things in one way only and COPI helps me see that there are lots of different ways of seeing and thinking about things. My head hurts after COPI but in a good way! I feel better somehow."

Conclusion

The project has taught all of us that compassion is far more than just doing someone a favour or putting our own needs second. In fact, it's taught us that sometimes it's much more important to put our own needs first, in order to be able to extend ourselves for others later. But most of all, it revealed to us that compassion is at the heart of all genuine learning – learning that brings about a change in the individual and therefore a change in the world; that without compassion we remain closed off from opportunities, frightened to try new things and we hide behind habitual ways of seeing and thinking about the world. Compassion opens and enables us; it invites us to embrace a potential we never even knew we had, something that reaches far beyond the few skills learnt during a workshop. If we give ourselves a chance, we can relax into learning a new language or painting a picture without judging it, or writing a story and sharing it without the need to impress or be right or clever or 'good'. In teaching this project, it struck me that Compassion should really be one of the core subjects taught in prisons (and schools for that matter), and that education and human relationships would be all the better for it. Teaching this project has enabled the classroom (and all of us in it) to develop into a space that's much more conducive to learning – of all kinds.

Note

I'm grateful to the SPS for agreeing to this project, to the Scottish Book Trust for enabling it, and to Vérène Nicolas, Valerie Gillies and Gerry Loose for their passion and participation.

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Appendix 1

If you're interested in using the following as a teaching resource, please contact Vérène Nicolas for an explanation of when and how these exercises can be best used (http://www.verenenicolas.org/contact.html).

I. Exercise on Self Responsibility

Self-compassion can only happen if we take responsibility for and understand what happens in us when we get upset and react to someone's actions. When we don't take responsibility for the way we react, especially for what happens in our head (i.e. our thoughts), we project, blame, judge and often make things worse.

Self-responsibility means:

> We recognise what belongs to us. That's our thoughts (interpretations, evaluations, judgments), our emotional feelings (what's in our heart), our physical sensations (what's in our body), what we want and value (our needs). When we recognise what belongs to us, we can understand why we reacted as we did, can open our heart a little and respond in a way that's easier on ourselves and the other person.

Distinctions:

- Self-responsibility is not blaming ourselves and making it our fault.
- Recognising what belongs to us does not mean we have to sort things out on our own. We can get help to sort things out.

Exercise:

1. Remember a recent situation where someone did something and you got angry or upset.

2. **Thinking**:
   a. Identify what went through your mind in that moment: what did you think about the other person or about yourself.

   b. Notice that and say, "That's what I am thinking about them. That's what I am thinking about myself. That's how I am thinking about what happened. It's not what actually happened. That's me judging and blaming them (or myself). These thoughts are mine. They are my thoughts. There are my judgements."

3. **Feeling/Sensing**: As you think about this situation,
   a. How are you feeling in your heart now (upset, angry, sad…)? Name your feelings. Look at handout "Feelings (emotional states)" to identify your emotional feelings if you are stuck.

   b. Notice the feelings and say, "These feelings are mine. These feelings are in me."

   c. How are you feeling in your body (heavy, tense, achy, 'butterflies' in the tummy…)? Where in your body are you feeling? Look at handout "Feelings (physical sensations)" to identify your physical feelings if you are stuck.

   d. Notice the feelings and say, "These feelings are mine. These feelings are in me. They are in my body."

4. **What you need or value**:
   a) In relation to this situation, what is it that you want instead? Deep down, what do you value? What

are your needs? See handout "Universal Human Needs" to identify your needs if you are stuck.

b) Let yourself feel what you value or need. Try to relax in your body as you do this. Feel what it feels like to want respect, choice, friendship or whatever it is that your needs are in this situation.

5**. What could you do now** to address your needs and what would you do instead if the same situation happens?

a) Now that you know what your needs are and why you reacted the way you did, is there anything you can do that would give you what you want (i.e. meeting your needs)?

b) Now that you know what your needs are when situations like this happen, what would you like to do next time and make it more likely that your needs will be met?

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Appendix II.
Universal Human Needs (without reference to specific people, time, actions, things)

Subsistence and Security

Physical Sustenance
Air
Food
Health
Movement
Physical Safety
Rest / sleep
Shelter
Touch
Water

Security
Consistency
Order/Structure
Peace (external)
Peace of mind
Protection
Safety (emotional)
Stability
Trusting

Freedom
Autonomy
Choice
Ease
Independence
Power
Self-responsibility
Space
Spontaneity

Leisure/Relaxation
Humor
Joy
Play
Pleasure
Rejuvenation

Connection

Affection
Appreciation
Attention
Closeness
Companionship
Harmony
Intimacy
Love
Nurturing
Sexual Expression
Support
Tenderness
Warmth

To Matter
Acceptance
Care
Compassion
Consideration
Empathy
Kindness
Mutual Recognition
Respect
To be heard, seen
To be known, understood
To be trusted
Understanding others

Community
Belonging
Communication
Cooperation
Equality
Inclusion
Mutuality
Participation
Partnership
Self-expression
Sharing

Meaning

Sense of Self
Authenticity
Competence
Creativity
Dignity
Growth
Healing
Honesty
Integrity
Self-acceptance
Self-care
Self-connection
Self-knowledge
Self-realization
Mattering to myself

Understanding
Awareness
Clarity
Discovery
Learning
Making sense of life
Stimulation

Meaning
Aliveness
Challenge
Consciousness
Contribution
Creativity
Effectiveness
Exploration
Integration
Purpose

Transcendence
Beauty
Celebration of life
Communion
Faith
Flow
Hope
Inspiration
Mourning
Peace (internal)
Presence

This list builds on Marshall Rosenberg's original needs list with categories adapted from Manfred Max-Neef. Neither exhaustive nor definitive, it can be used for study and for discovery about each person's authentic experience.

Appendix III.
Feelings

(emotional states) *Feelings that we experience in our emotional body*

When Needs are Being Fulfilled	**When Needs are *Not* Being Fulfilled**
GLAD, happy, excited, hopeful, joyful, satisfied, encouraged, confident, inspired, relieved, touched, elated	SAD, lonely, helpless, overwhelmed, dismayed, discouraged, disheartened
PEACEFUL, calm, content, absorbed, expansive, loving, blissful, satisfied, relaxed	SCARED, fearful, terrified, nervous, horrified, anxious, lonely
LOVING, warm, affectionate, tender, friendly, sensitive	MAD, angry, aggravated, furious, resentful, disgusted, irritated, annoyed, disappointed
PLAYFUL, energetic, invigorated, refreshed, stimulated, alive, eager, giddy, adventurous, enthusiastic	CONFUSED, frustrated, troubled, torn, embarrassed, uneasy, worried, concerned
RESTED, relaxed, alert, refreshed, energized	TIRED, exhausted, fatigued, indifferent, weary, overwhelmed, helpless, heavy
THANKFUL, grateful, appreciative	UNCOMFORTABLE, pained, uneasy, hurt, miserable, embarrassed

Feelings

(physical sensations) *Sensations that we experience in our physical body.*

Expansive	**Contracted**	**Burning**	**Faint**	**Shaky**
airy	breathless congested	achy	chills	fluttery
bubbly	dense	flushed	clammy	jumpy
buzzing	constricted	frantic	cool	pained
light	frozen	hot	damp	shuddering
radiating	heavy	itchy	dizzy	tingly
relaxed	numb	quaking	fuzzy	trembling
shimmering	paralysed	pounding	goose-bumpy	twitching
soft	sharp	prickly	nauseous	vibrating
sparkly	sticky	pulsing	queasy	
warm	tense	quivering	wobbly	
	tight	sweating		
		throbbing		

Feelings exist in our bodies, not outside of them. Feelings generally have physical sensations associated with them. The aim is to develop awareness of our feelings, then consciously choose whether or not to express them.

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