

FEATURE

Lead Editor's Welcome

Editor's Welcome

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This letter welcomes you to the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry* (JPER) Volume 5 Issue 2, the second half of our first volume in our new home on the Virginia Commonwealth University Library platform. It was fitting that *JPER* was launched on 13 October 2014, which has been designated by the Council of Europe as the International Day of Education in Prison. As an international journal that welcomes contributions from around the globe, the *Journal of Prison Education and Re-entry* will continue to facilitate the collaboration of researchers and practitioners in prison education through the publication of a variety of papers exploring the theory and practice of prison and correctional education.

We began Volume 5 Issue 1 with a vignette, "The Hidden Heritage" by Thom Gehring, detailing the rich tradition of prison education and penal reform. Thom's vignettes remind us of the work done by prison educators and prison reformers throughout our history. 'The Conduits and Barriers to Reentry for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals in San Bernardino' by Annika Anderson *et al.* considered the challenges of re-entering society and community. Using a sample from San Bernardino county callers using United Way's 211 Reentry Call Center, they found that the callers have intersecting, disadvantaged identities and require multiple services, which suggests a need for collaboration across agencies. They found that human needs resources (i.e. housing, clothes, and food assistance) and legal assistance are the two most frequently requested services.

In the paper, 'Identity, Discourse, and Rehabilitation in Parole Hearings in the United States', Danielle Lavin-Loucks and Rachel Levan adopted an ethnographically informed conversation analytic approach to address one tactic prisoners utilize to appeal to a state parole board for release – claiming rehabilitated status. They found that prisoners appealing for parole attempt to establish, in a performative space, their identity as 'rehabilitated'. The study was used to address how individuals manage, assert, and negotiate identity in the course of this interaction.

In the paper 'Realist Model of Prison Education, Growth, and Desistance: A New Theory', Kristine Szifiris *et al.* offered a new insight into the relevance of desistance theory and understanding of prison sociology to the lives of men engaged in education whilst in prison. Using a realist review method (Pawson, 2002b; Wong, 2013a), the paper articulated three inter-related CMOs (context-mechanism-outcome configurations) that were grounded in prison sociology and desistance literature: 'hook', 'safe space' and 'qualifications'. In their review of the literature, they took a targeted view of relevant fields to identify the most relevant evidence base for (or against) the three CMOs under scrutiny. They identified a stronger evidence base to support the 'safe space' and 'hook' CMOs than for the 'qualifications' CMO.

Silvia Lukacova and colleagues in 'Prison Education in Slovakia from the Teacher's Perspective' dealt with teaching practices in prison education in Slovakia. The research sought to find out in what ways, in the view of the teachers, prison education and school education differ and how they react to the differences. As is the case in many jurisdictions, it found out that the absence of teacher training for prison education and the power of the prison regime strongly affect teaching practice. However, the teachers adjusted the syllabus, the pace and demands placed on the learners according to the conditions of the prison regime. The authors believe



that the present study sheds more light on teaching practices in prison education and helps recognize such areas where specific teacher training is needed.

June Edwards' review of 'Prison Pedagogies: Learning and Teaching with Imprisoned Writers', edited by Joe Lockard and Sherry Rankins-Roberson, highlights for those who work in prison education the constant grapples with the challenge of making our classrooms relevant, welcoming and creative. Edwards concluded that this book was a fascinating collection of essays exploring a range of pedagogical practices that support writing as a form of self-development and cultural resistance.

The final paper in Volume 5 Issue 1, on 'Demographic Variations in Achievement Goal Orientations among Prisoners on Formal and Vocational Training in Uganda' by Irene Aheisibwe and Aloysius Rukundo, examined why, despite the introduction of free prison education, prisoners in Uganda have lower formal and vocational skills compared to the general population. The study found statistically non-significant differences in achievement goal orientations across all the demographics. The main conclusions include the need to deepen prisoners' knowledge on setting various achievement goal orientations to help them in information acquisition and engagement in learning; support goal orientations equally regardless of age, gender, religion and level of education; and achievement goal orientations that allow academic social comparison among learners, which results into richer academic engagement. It recommended that teachers/ instructors in prison education use achievement goal orientations to improve prison education programme through measurement and evaluation of learning outcomes, choosing appropriate methods of instruction and instructional materials, and in helping learners to choose achievable and realistic goals.

We look forward to 2019 and our second issue of JPER Volume 5. You will also find us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/#!/JournalofPrisonEducationandReentry>). Please join the conversation as we endeavor to build our journal together. I appeal to all those involved in prison education and learning to consider writing a research paper, contributing examples of best practice, writing a book review or updating us on policies, to make *JPER* the primary source for prison education and reentry. I look forward to working with prison education researchers, prison educators and learners inside as we embark on a new phase of our journey.