

Lead Editor's Welcome

CORMAC BEHAN

Welcome to Volume 7, Number 1 of the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*.

In this abridged issue of the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, we examine a number of key issues around higher-level pedagogy in penal institutions. We begin with Magic Wade's paper 'What Can be Taught in College in Prison? Reconciling Institutional Priorities in Clashes Over Incarcerated Students' Access to Instructional Materials' which was inspired by allegations of censorship of college curricula in an Illinois state penitentiary. If disagreements arise over what students in prison-based college programs are permitted to read and learn, Wade asks important questions about how these issues are resolved and how relationships between colleges and prisons can be developed.

Rod Earle and colleagues' paper on 'The Open University and Prison Education in the UK – the first 50 years' argues that while the Open University has been providing education in prison for 50 years, "there is much to celebrate and still more to learn". Drawing on a collection of essays and reflections on prison learning experiences by OU academics and former and continuing OU students in prison, it examines the prospects for higher education within prisons in the UK which they argue are demonstrating "an escalating preference for carceral punishment". Nevertheless, they conclude that: "a silver lining to the carceral cloud can be found in The OU's pioneering work with imprisoned men and women".

Mark Jones and Debbie Jones' paper, 'Understanding Aspiration and Education Towards Desistance from Offending: The Role of Higher Education in Wales,' argues that despite policies to 'widen access,' "universities continue to be an unwelcoming place for those with a criminal record". Their paper adopted a Pictorial Narrative approach which found that the benefits of attending a higher education institution can be "outweighed by a distrust of the 'institution'". There was a fear that the stigmatisation experienced through the "criminal identity" would be hard to avoid which may leave students "vulnerable to judgement and exclusion".

Kimberly Collica-Cox's paper 'When 'Inside-Out' Goes 'Upside-Down': Teaching Students in a Jail Environment During the COVID Pandemic and Implications for the Use of Correctional Technology Post-Pandemic' examines the challenges of maintaining prison education during the COVID-19 pandemic in institutions that do not allow Internet-based technologies, such as Zoom. Based on an *Inside-Out* class conducted during the first wave of the Coronavirus pandemic, this paper again demonstrates the resilience and innovation that characterises pedagogy in penal settings.

Cormac Behan teaches criminology at the School of Languages, Law and Social Sciences, Technological University Dublin. His research interests include penal history, prisoners' rights, comparative penology and prison education. Prior to taking up this position, he taught criminology at the Centre for Criminological Research, University of Sheffield. From 1997 to 2011, he taught politics and history in Irish prisons. Cormac has served on the executive boards of the Correctional Education Association and the European Prison Education Association. He was the founding chairman of the Irish Prison Education Association.

Correspondence: Cormac Behan, Email: Cormac.Behan@tudublin.ie

(Accepted: 04 September 2021) ISSN: 2387-2306 doi: <https://doi.org/10.25771/02jr-vx93>

Except where otherwise noted, content on this site is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution

