

Prison education as an agency of empowerment?

ACJRD Education Working Group Seminar: “Education: Empowerment through literacy”

Wednesday 16th July 2014.

The Education Centre, The Law Society of Ireland, Blackhall Place, Dublin 7.



Lifelong
Learning
Programme



acjrd Association for Criminal Justice
Research and Development



Presenter and editor:

Dr Liz McLoughlin, Lecturer, Psychology, Dublin
City University

liz.mcloughlin@dcu.ie

Editors:

Dr Catherine Maunsell

catherine.maunsell@dcu.ie

Dr Jane Carrigan

janecarrigan@gmail.com

Valerie McLoughlin

valerie.mcloughlin@dcu.ie

Objectives of this presentation:

- To present and explore the importance of prison education as a mechanism for promoting prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration into society
- To briefly outline the **Reintegration into Society through Education and Learning network– *RiSE*** – which was established in 2011 with the primary objective of contributing to the social and educational participation of prisoners.
- By drawing on a multidisciplinary evidence base, to highlight how the ***RiSE*** position paper (Maunsell, McLoughlin, Carrigan and McLoughlin 2013) offers a unique perspective on prison education and learning which promotes the importance of a holistic learning approach, both in and outside prison.



***RiSE* PARTNERS**

GERMANY - FCZB FrauenComputerZentrumBerlin e.V.

BELGIUM - L4 Adult Education

LUXEMBOURG - Défi-job

FINLAND - Criminal Sanctions Region of Southern Finland

AUSTRIA - Vollzugsdirektion, Department of Care and Services

FINLAND - IJKK Vocational Training Center

GERMANY - Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Center for Continuing Education

IRELAND – EDC Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra



FIVE KEY PRINCIPLES OF PRISON EDUCATION

- Person at the Centre
- Common Co-ordinated Mission
- Continuum of Education and Learning
- Strengthening the Evidence Base
- Advocacy for Prison Education and Learning; Raising Awareness



The **RiSE** partnership adopts an approach which places the **person at the centre**. It views prison as a learning environment with the potential to support prisoners' building of social and human capital following reintegration into society.



Common
co-ordinated
mission

A common coordinated mission is required through which prison/support staff, supported by decision makers inside and outside the prison, work in tandem with the prisoner as the person at the centre.



Adopting a **continuum of education and learning** supports the view of prison as a holistic learning environment.



Strengthening the
evidence base

RiSE acknowledges the potential of research to contribute to our understanding of prison education and learning and the need to **strengthen the evidence base.**

A photograph of sunlight streaming through a dense forest of green trees, creating a bright, hazy path of light. The text "Raising Awareness" is overlaid in bold black font at the bottom of this image.

Raising Awareness

A grayscale photograph of a prison courtyard. It features a central staircase, a circular skylight in the upper part of the building, and a paved ground with a manhole cover. The text is overlaid on this background.

At both national and European levels, **RiSE** calls for the **advocacy of prison education and learning**, as integral to successful reintegration.

Theoretical Positions on Prisoner Rehabilitation

- 1970s and '80s dominated by 'Nothing Works' philosophy
- Lipsey's (1992) analysis of 443 treatment studies of offenders aged from 12 to 21 years shifted this paradigm to a 'What Works?' approach
- Over 70 meta-analyses undertaken subsequently
- A meta-analysis produces a statistic called an *effect size* from which the magnitude of the difference in outcome between treated groups and controls can be calculated.

Theoretical Positions on Prisoner Rehabilitation

- The meta-analyses yielded a 'net effect' of all kinds of treatment – including deterrence, boot camps, group therapy etc.
- This net effect was a 10–12% reduction in reoffending for treated offenders compared to untreated controls.
- There was a diversity of effects of different types of intervention.
- Punitive deterrence-based interventions had a null or negative effect,
- Interventions that were **multi-modal**, behavioural, cognitive-behavioural or skills-oriented in nature had a positive effect.

Offender Rehabilitation Approaches

- Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model is now the predominant model in the field of offender rehabilitation; it informs several interventions including some with mentally disordered offenders.
- Good Lives Model (GLM), which is a 'strengths-based' approach that seeks to enable offenders to achieve legitimately the primary goals they currently gain through crime.
- When set against the RNR model, the GLM has been criticised for a lack of solid empirical base.

Strengthening the Evidence Base



Carrigan (2012) prisoners' educational life histories

“the school I suppose it is like, it’s a great escape, especially in prison”

“Just different, different, I suppose different atmosphere, different, at the end of the day when you come up here they don’t treat you like you’re a prisoner. They just treat you like you’re normal. But then we are normal people but there’s none of this like ‘I’m better than you’ and I get treated with respect when I come up here so. You’re not treated like a child; you get treated like an adult”.

Prisoners' voices

2011

Courtesy of Dr Jane Carrigan

Prison Education: From Right to Reality?

- The right to education is a universal tenet. However, Alan Smith, former director of the DGEAC notes that, “... *despite the right to education anchored in international agreements, provision is very unequal between and within European countries*” (2012).
- The Council of the European Union Resolution on a Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning (12/2011) includes the first specific reference to prison education.
- Thus, prison education has emerged as an issue “*which is now on the map*” Smith (2012).

References:

Carrigan, J (2012). *Educational experiences of prisoners studying within the prison system – A life history approach*. Dublin: Educational Disadvantage Centre, St, Patrick's College a College of Dublin City University (Unpublished thesis)

Maunsell, C., McLoughlin, L., Carrigan, J & McLoughlin, V. (2013) *Reintegration into Society through Education and Learning*. Dublin: Educational Disadvantage Centre, St Patrick's College

Smith, A. (2012). *Prison education: Recent developments at EU level*. Presentation at the BRIDGE final conference, October 25-26, 2013, Ljubljana, Slovenia

RiSE was funded through the Grundtvig Learning Partnership 2011 -2013 (GR 2011-53P)

National Agency: Léargas

GRUNDTVIG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP:

Reintegration into Society through Education and Learning [RiSE]



Editors: Dr Catherine Maunsell; Dr Liz McLoughlin; Dr Jane Carrigan; Valerie McLoughlin
June 2013

