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# PRISON EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF YOUNG OFFENDERS INSTITUTIONS (YOIS)

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## IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

- Does prison (education) work? or inversely, 'is prison (education) working? is a well rehearsed question in prison research.
- In *Can Prisons Work?* (2000), Stephen Duguid wrestles with the paradox of corrections-sanctioned rehabilitation:
  - Tensions and structural constraints inherent in prison rehabilitation programs such as education
  - How transformation can and does occur within prisons.
  - Tensions between prison personnel and external agencies offering higher education
  - Extent to which education can provide rehabilitation to inmates.
  - Consistency of thought and similarity of epistemic trajectory the purpose of prisons and whether prison (education) works across Western world (USA, Australia and Scotland)
- Duguid also identifies consistency of thought and similarity of epistemic trajectory the purpose of prisons and whether prison (education) works across Western world (USA, Australia and Scotland)
- In UK a raft of policies and guidelines on how best to rehabilitate prisoners exist
  - "Education should be at the heart of the prison system" (Coates, p. i)
  - However, despite rhetoric, prison education remains at the back of the class (Allison and Sloan, 2015).
  - Over 50% prisons inspected required improvement (Ofsted, 2014).
- 2016 review of education in UK prisons inspected in terms of 'effectiveness' reveals:
  - (a) 2 excellent
  - (b) 9 outstanding
  - (c) 27 required improvement
  - (d) 7 inadequate
- In addition: "three fifths of [UK] prisoners leave prison without an identified employment or education or training out come" (Coates, 2016, p. i).
- Report by Prison Reform Trust identifies the need "more resources" in order to improve prison education (PRT, 2003, p. 59).
- Calls to overall prison education
  - If prisons are ever to be able to tackle recidivism, and make inmates more employable (see BBC News, 2015; Coates, 2016).

## NEED FOR THE RESEARCH

- UK-Wide research
  - Prison education remains a fertile area of research in the UK
  - Some published research in England and Wales but none on Scotland (see Reuss, 1999; Czerniawski, 2015; Education Scotland, nd).
- Scotland - Devolved Status
  - Scotland has Jurisdiction over Crime and Justice, including management of prisons.
- So far only unpublished reports in Scotland
  - Unpublished reports such as those commissioned by the Scottish Government,
  - Undertaken by Prison Reform Trust (PRT).
  - Annual self-reported reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS) - all which provide important information (PRT, 2003; HMIPS, 2015; Sapouna, 2015).
- Scottish 'uniqueness' provides the need to understand:
  - (a) The Scottish scenario in terms of published on prison education.
  - (b) How Scotland rehabilitates inmates through education as a way to dealing with the persistent problem of recidivism.
- Issues of research focus on prison education in Scotland include:
  - (a) Extent and quality of educational provision in prisons,
  - (b) Inmates' engagement (or not) with and experience of prison education,
  - (c) Who teaches in prison and their experiences of a prison teaching and learning environment,
  - (d) How prison staff manage education, including resources available, time allocation within the wider 'purposeful activity' programme,
  - (e) What works (and doesn't) and how to motivate and improve learning in prison?

## ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

- Realist Evaluation
  - Developed by Pawson (1989) and Pawson and Tilley (1997) and adopted by Duguid and Pawson (1998).
  - Offers tools to explore suppositions behind (educational) programmes being evaluated.
  - Highlights theories, ideas and practices that can help explain why such programmes succeed or fail.
  - Theories, ideas and practices are drawn from the experience of connected with the programmes concerned such as:
    - > Instructional leaders (prison management),
    - > Practitioners (teachers and prison staff),
    - > Participants (prison inmates),
    - > Policymakers (government officials)
  - Realist evaluation attempts to discover what works and why, for whom and in what circumstances (Duguid and Pawson, 1998).

## TENSIONS AND CONTESTATIONS IN PRISON EDUCATION RESEARCH

- Paradox of provision due to conflicting interests and ideologies between the education and penal systems.
- Need for prison education to appease different audience (Duguid and Pawson, 2000)
- Prison Education: Contested terrain between 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' scholars and theorists on the purpose of prison (Ubah, 2003).
  - (a) Transformative vs prisoners can not change (Duguid and Pawson, 1998).
  - (b) Tool for living vs tool of control (Wilson, 2000, 174).
  - (c) Self selection vs mechanistic (Wilson, 2000; Duguid and Pawson, 1998).
  - (d) Recidivism vs empowerment (Reus and Wilson, 2000).
  - (e) Killing time vs rehabilitation (Reuss and Wilson, 2000).
  - (f) Punishment vs Human Rights/public safety (Reuss and Wilson, 2000; Thomas and Murray, 2008).
  - (g) Cost vs benefit: Keeping law breakers locked up is very expensive (in UK cost per prisoner is £33, 785) (Thomas and Murray, 2008).
  - (h) Choice vs control (Reuss and Wilson, 2000).
  - (i) Basic skills vs employability skills (Duguid and Pawson, 2000).
- Areas of general agreement in the discourse
  - Less dispute regarding 'barriers' to education in prison: (a) dispositional barriers, (b) effects of prisonisation (negative values of prison sub-culture) and (c) institutional factors (Czerniawski, 2015; Farley and Pike, 2016; Westreheim and Manger, 2014).

## SITUATIONAL AND POLICY CONTEXT IN SCOTLAND

- Scottish Prison Service (SPS)
  - Prisons under the 'Scottish Prison Service' (SPS), an agency of the Scottish Government under a Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- One of the Highest Rates of Imprisonment in Europe
  - Although reconviction rates declining slightly (0.6%), along with Wales and England, Scotland has one of the highest rates of imprisonment in Europe per head per population.
- Re-offending rates for young people offenders
  - In Scotland, re-offending rates is highest for young offenders (16-21 years old)
  - 53% re-offend after two years.
  - Young offenders largely reluctant to participate in 'purposeful activity', including education and preferring to watch TV instead.

### Prison population across the UK

Region	Population (2015)	Prisoners (2016)
England and Wales	55 Million - England 3.1 Million - Wales	85400 (2016)
Northern Ireland	1.9 Million	1836 (2014)
Scotland	5.4 Million (2015)	7872 (2016)

- Annual budget
  - SPS receives an annual budget of £382.3 Million of which £18 Million is spent on 'purposeful activities' including education (SPS, 2014).
- Prison population in Scotland (2016)
  - Male sentenced: 5551 | Female sentenced: 266
  - Young offenders male-sentenced: 264 | Young offenders female-sentenced: 17
- Number of Prisons in Scotland (15): 13 public and 2 Private

Prison	Ownership	Additional Status
Corton Vale - Stirling	Public	Women/Young Offenders Institution (YOIs)
Dumfries - Dumfries	Public	
Edinburgh - Edinburgh	Public	Some women
Glenochil - Tullibody	Public	
Greenock - Greenock	Public	Some women
Inverness - Inverness	Public	
Palmont - Falkirk	Public	Young Offenders Institution (YOIs)
Low Moss - Bishopbriggs	Public	
Perth - Perth	Public	
Shotts - Shotts	Public	
Addiewell - Addiewell	Public	Sodexo Justice Services
Kilmarnock - Hurlford	Private	Serco
Grampian - Peterhead	Public	HMP and Young Offenders Institution (YOIs) and some women
Castle Huntly - Longforgan	Public	

- Interesting policy detail
  - From a policy context, SPS has no statutory duty to rehabilitate prisoners (Ross, 2012).
  - SPS however does recognise the important of rehabilitation.
  - Encourages prisoners to take opportunities which will reduce the likelihood to re-offend and help them reintegrate them back into their community.
- Purposeful activity
  - Prison education underpinned by a nation-wide initiative known as 'purposeful activity' (HMIP, 2015).
  - Scheme that encourages all prisoners to use their time in prison constructively
- Provision of education in prisons
  - Provision of prison education in Scotland is 'contracted out' and currently offered by two national learning providers (non-degree providers) (Scottish Parliament, 2013).
  - Carnegie College
  - Motherwell College
- Courses typically offered
  - Education subjects: Arts programme, literacy and numeracy
  - Vocational training: bricklaying, painting, decorating, hairdressing/barbering, cleaning etc.

## AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

- (a) To appraise the nature and extent of provision of prison education in young offenders' institutions.
- (b) To identify and assess the quality of resources used in the provision of prison education in young offenders' institutions.
- (c) To critically examine Scottish young offenders' engagement with prison education
- (d) To explore the prison lived experience of Scottish young offenders and assess the impact of the prison environment on offender learning.
- (e) To examine ways in which prison education in young offenders' institutions in Scotland could be improved.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What works (and doesn't), and how to motivate and improve learning in YOIs?
  - (a) What is the nature and extent of provision of prison education in young offenders' institutions in Scotland?
  - (b) What resources (human and material) are available for prison education in young offenders' institutions in Scotland?
  - (c) What is the quality of these resources? In what ways do these resources facilitate or hinder offender learning?
  - (d) How do young offenders' engage with prison education? If, at all, are there gender differences in the way male and females young offenders engage with prison education, and why?
  - (e) What is the nature of prison life for young offenders? If at all, how does the prison environment impact on offender learning?
  - (f) What should be done to improve learning for young offenders in Scotland?

## RESEARCH DESIGN

- Qualitative research - critical micro-ethnography (Pane and Rocco, 2009)
- Sources of data (data triangulation)
  - Examination of relevant documents
    - Official government reports
    - SPS reports and other relevant documents
    - Curriculum materials
    - Newspaper/Internet materials
  - Interviews with key informants
    - Government officials in the department of corrections.
    - Prison wardens and managers
    - Teachers who teach in prisons
    - Young offenders, both male and female
    - Officials from non-government organisations
  - Focus group discussions with young offenders

## WAY FORWARD AND IMPACT

- Fieldwork Research
  - Phase 1: Preliminary study
    - Undertake the proposed research in YOIs between November 2016 and July 2018.
    - Aim to complete 2018
  - Phase 2: Expand the research to include data from adult prison (both male and female)
    - Provide a published account of the state of prison education in Scotland on the question: 'Does prison education work?' between 2018-2020
    - Aim to complete 2020
  - Impact: Professionalization of prison education
    - (a) Need to formalise and professionalise prison education within teacher education.
    - (b) Through the research unit interest my university to offer professional graduate diploma in education specialising in teaching in prisons.
    - (c) Approach the GTCS for recognition of the new qualification as a new areas for teacher professional registration.

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