Can prisons work? The prisoner as object and subject in modern corrections by Stephen Duguid. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. 364.6 DUG

After studying treatment and education programs in the US, Canada and the UK, the author argues that the most effective change to prisoners occurs when directed by ‘outsiders’ focusing on education rather than therapy or coercion... [T]hrough education programs prisons can provide for a more ‘natural,’ ‘organic,’ or ‘authentic’ process of self-transformation through empowerment, communication of values, and the formation of new interests.” (p. ix)

Community safety and recidivism in Australia: breaking the cycle of reoffending to produce safer communities through vocational training by Susanne Bahn. Maleny, Qld: eContent Management Pty Ltd, 2011. [article] DOC 2011-054

“Research has shown that prisoner training and education can successfully address recidivism rates. Therefore, the cost of incarceration is reduced whilst the level of community safety is increased. However, Australian Vocational Education Training (VET) delivery in prisons requires improvement and a greater emphasis on holistic support from community groups is essential for successful reintegration.” – From Author abstract.


This background paper to the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning (IFL) looks at the effectiveness of education not only to the prevention or reduction of crime but also as a contribution to more informed debates, both public and private. http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/lli-crime.pdf


The countries covered in this overview of international practice are Australia (“Policy development and cultural issues in Australian prison education” by Bob Semmens), Canada, China, England and Wales, France, Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United States. As the editor explains in the Introduction, education should be “an integrated part of penal practice”.


“Educating our [US] prisoners has proven to be the most effective and the least costly answer to reducing recidivism – and if we can reduce recidivism by even a modest 10% we can reduce our national and states' budgets by $60 billion to $70 billion every year! We can reduce crime significantly and make our communities safer.” – Back cover.

note: The text of this 372-page book concludes at p. 102. The remainder of the book, with the exception of some short statistical appendices, comprises listings of courses offered in the US.


This book, written by experienced correctional education instructors, identifies issues, problems and possible solutions associated with the education and training of juvenile and adult prisoners.

Formative assessment in adult literacy, language and numeracy by Jay Derrick, Kathryn Ecclestone and Judith Gawn. Leicester, UK: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), 2009. 374.1 DER

“This book provides practical ideas for teachers of adult literacy, language and numeracy in their day to day work of lesson preparation, teaching and assessment. Relevant for all levels and contexts, it focuses on basic principles of student-centred learning, teaching and assessment that put the goal of student autonomy at the heart of the process.” – Back cover.


The author examines the connections between Antonio Gramsci and Paulo Freire, two of the major twentieth-century thinkers on culture and education.
In the borderlands: learning to teach in prisons and alternative settings edited by Randall Wright. 3rd ed. San Bernadino, Calif: California State University. San Bernadino, 2008. 365.66 INT

“These essays illustrate the accumulated practical wisdom of teachers. In each chapter the authors share what they have learned through years of experience teaching ‘inside.’ Especially valuable to new educators, at the heart of their stories is their struggle to shape a professional identity behind bars, in the contested borderlands.” – Publisher’s website.


This background paper to the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning (IFLL) assesses “the key role of poor education in the social exclusion process [and considers] the kind of lifelong learning scenario that, though matching needs in different contexts, is likely to yield not only the best financial returns, but wider social and democratic returns” (p. 3).


This background paper to the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning (IFLL) applies an economic model to estimate the cost-effectiveness of in-prison educational and vocational interventions.


The above inquiry produced two reports. The first report’s “focus is prison employment activities and prison industries and their role in prison management in defraying costs and the reintegation of prisoners back into society” (p. xv). In the second report, acknowledging that existing and previous programmes have had a negligible impact on Aboriginal recidivism rates, the Committee recommends the implementation of Justice Reinvestment, “a data-driven approach which seeks to reduce corrections spending and reinvest savings in strategies that can decrease crime and strengthen communities. Part of the strategy is its focus on reducing re-offending by ex prisoners.” (p. x). To view, go to http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/index.htm - click on <Committees>, <Current Committees>, <Community Development and Justice Standing Committee>, then <Reports>. The above reports are nos. 4 and 6.


This review notes that the personal, social and economic costs of crime are huge, and that investment in education and training reduces the chances that prisoners will reoffend. The report also acknowledges the importance of finding ways to ensure that prisoners continue to make progress with their learning following their release. A link to the report can be found at the foot of the following URL.

http://www.bis.gov.uk/Consultations/call-for-evidence-on-review-of-offender-learning


The report finds that although the department, in its rehabilitation of prisoners, addresses their “immediate health and welfare concerns … it does not formally assess the education and work needs of all prisoners.” (p. 2). The Audit Office makes a number of recommendations under the broad headings of “defining and measuring success”, “identifying risks and needs”, “access to programs and services” and “working with other agencies to improve reintegration.”


“Beginning in 1997, Inside-Out has been creating opportunities for social change through transformative education, involving individuals inside and outside of correctional facilities working together through dialogue and collaborative problem solving in classrooms behind prison walls.” – p. 134.


“Prison(er) education comprises key essays by leading prison education practitioners, academics and prisoners, including new work on how to evaluate the ‘success’ of education within prison by Dr. Ray Pawson of Leeds University, and Stephen Duguid of Simon Fraser University, Canada.” – Back cover.

Vocational education and training for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia: research readings edited by Susan Dawe. Adelaide: NCVER, 2007. 364.6 VOC

This book contains two sections, the first, comprising five chapters, looks at Australian and international research on the education of adult prisoners: one of the chapters, “Should education and vocational training be compulsory in corrections?” is written by Peter de Graaff, of the Teachers Federation. The six chapters in the second half of the book examine the progress made by jurisdictions in implementing the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia.

This book examines various strategies for reducing recidivism, and includes two chapters on the role of education.

JOURNALS available from Library

Australasian journal of correctional staff development

This free online journal, published quarterly, is hosted by the Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy. http://www.bfcsa.nsw.gov.au/journal/ajcsd

Articles about education are published infrequently. The following article revealed how almost 200 years ago Governor George Arthur had realised the value of education in reducing recidivism: Port Arthur: the beginning of education and training in modern Australian correctional systems by Michael Cuthbertson. 4(1), 2009.

Corrective Services NSW bulletin

Staff magazine of Corrective Services NSW.

Current issues in criminal justice

A peer-reviewed journal, published three times a year, of the Institute of Criminology (Australia).

Education is just one of the issues addressed by this journal. The following article reviewed some of the consequences for America of defining its young people as a “generation of suspects”: Youth in a suspect society: education beyond the politics of disposability by Henry A. Giroux. 20(1), 2008, 111-122.

The journal of correctional education

The official journal of the Correctional Education Association (US); it is published quarterly.

An example of a recent article exemplifying the empirical approach of many published in this journal is Establishing successful postsecondary academic programs by Cindy Borden, Penny Richardson and Stephen J. Meyer 63 (2), 2012, 6-26.

WEBSITES

Australasian Corrections Education Association (ACEA)

“ACEA provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and values pertaining to education and training programs provided in correctional settings and to people on corrections orders in the general community. ACEA also seeks to influence policy makers and other interested parties in developing effective education programs for people in correctional settings.” – Website.

The website also includes pdf and PowerPoint documents of papers presented at their annual conferences. http://www.acea.org.au/

The Campbell Collaboration

Based in Oslo, “the Campbell Collaboration (C2) helps people make well-informed decisions by preparing, maintaining and disseminating systematic reviews in education, crime and justice, and social welfare.” – Website.

The website includes research papers and links to databases and useful organizations from around the world. http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/

Center for the Study of Correctional Education (CSCE)

“Founded in 1993, the Center for the Study of Correctional Education (CSCE), at California State University, San Bernardino is the only organization of its kind working to support teachers and administrators who teach in confinement institutions and alternative settings worldwide. The Center provides teacher preparation, research, and support services for veteran and aspiring teachers of academic, vocational, and social education and for correctional education administrators who work in local, state, federal and private institutions.” – Website.

The website includes links to articles and the full-text of some books. http://www.csusb.edu/coe/programs/correctional_ed/index.htm

European Prison Education Association (EPEA)

“The European Prison Education Association is an organisation made up of prison educators, administrators, governors, researchers and other professionals whose interests lie in promoting and developing education and related activities in prisons throughout Europe in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Europe.” – Website.

http://www.epea.org/

At a course for members in corrective services, September 2011, the Bridge Bookshop was recommended as an excellent place to acquire resources, particularly on adult literacy.

PrisonEducation.com

This website, run by Middle Publishing (a South Carolina non-profit corporation), includes news items, a newsletter, podcasts, and a link to recommended books. http://www.prisoneducation.com/