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Prison Education

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Abstract

In my article I deal with the question of NGOs’ and church’s role in prison. The question of non-state-controlled actors’ gaining ground primarily focused on market actors entering penitentiary systems but this part of inmates’ reintegration has not yet been properly described. While researching the professional literature related to this subject matter I went through several primary sources and original documents. I digested the topic from an international and European point of view as well. After researching the international and European documents I paid a great deal of attention to studying the sources of Hungarian prison reintegration and issues about the role of church. Church programs and opportunities in prison provide great help for inmates who are receptive to those. They contribute to the inmates’ coping with the environment of the penitentiary institution, pastoral activity can help prisoners to accommodate to prison life. This is a crucial question to deal with because social involvement in critical issues such as criminality, prisons, criminals is rather low. Deep prejudice and intolerance may increase after release, and it is difficult for society to accept those having done their time.

Keywords: prison education, correctional education, NGO’s in prison, church in prison, prison chaplain
Introduction

The penitentiary system is a hermetically sealed world in many senses, which is reflected in the organizations’ mechanisms designed for management, operation, and control, as well as their organizational culture. This is why it is practical to examine the appearance of external, non-state-controlled actors within the prison walls. The impact of these organizations on the given penitentiary organization is interesting, and, in relation to that, it is beneficial to investigate the development of penitentiary policy.

In the professional debates of the past decades the question of non-state-controlled actors’ gaining ground primarily focused on market actors entering penitentiary systems. This is why the problem is so severely linked to political theory and ideology, raising the question of the monopoly of violence, a revaluation of the role of the state, and financial ramifications. The intensive gaining ground of market players (private prisons) is primarily characteristic of English-speaking countries, but this operational form also exists in Hungary.

The other focus on non-state-related actors has to do with social organizations active in the penitentiary system. The role and activity of social organizations encompass a much wider range than those of market players, and they have several hundreds of years of history. In the past decades, however, there has been a serious change in the financial background of organizations and in the significance of roles filled by the different types of organizations (Somogyvari 2014, 203).

The positive impact on inmates of organizations related to the penitentiary system

To ensure the reintegration of inmates, penitentiary organizations perform several activities that go beyond the framework of classic jurisdiction. In the background of this there is the provision of Act No. CCXL of 2013 which provides: “during the implementation of imprisonment it must be ensured that the convicts’ self-esteem, personality, sense of responsibility are developed, and thus they can prepare for an individual life after their release meeting the requirements of society” (§83 (7) of Act No. CCXL of 2013). To reach these objectives the penitentiary system must “map” outside reality and organize imprisonment so that by carrying out tasks the system may get closer to the declared objectives: the fair and humane treatment of the inmates and via this the promotion of reintegration (Garami 1997, 74).

“Social organizations” is an umbrella term including NGOs (also an umbrella term in its own right), meaning classic civil organizations, private foundations, associations, various federations such as trade unions, professional employers’ organizations, as well as public foundations and non-profit business entities. But in a broader sense the term social organizations also includes churches, prison missions, church and legal entities, subsidizers and political parties. From the perspective of their role in penitentiary
activity, the most relevant are the organizations of social control, churches, trade unions, and classic NGOs (Somogyvari 2014, 203).

These organizations play an important part in operating the system in spite of the fact that penitentiary institutions as state-owned organizations have the staff, infrastructure, and budget to meet their own legal responsibilities. This has two reasons. Firstly, the staff is insufficient, and often professionals with the necessary qualifications and experience are in short supply, therefore, cooperating organizations provide supplementary resources. The other reason is that even in the case of an ideal situation there are some tasks that organizations not bound by administrative obligations and professional routine can do better (Garami 1997, 74).

Civil organizations can serve a social function that builds a bridge between political decision-makers and social groups of professional policies. Social organizations are able to counterbalance administrative dysfunctions, in many cases acting more effectively, because they can profit from their social capital and experience. A further benefit is that these organizations are not bound by limits related to scope and jurisdiction, which are characteristic of the public sector. In addition, they are more efficient and flexible than bureaucratic state organizations with regard to time management, professional matters, as well as being able to provide alternatives to state policy (Somogyvari 2014, 67). We may establish that the state expects non-state-related actors to assume roles that the network of professional institutions cannot expend appropriately upon or cost-efficiently intervene in.

**The penitentiary institution, the convict, and the social organization**

The three parties of the cooperation, the penitentiary institution, the convict, and the social organization, work by different interests and rules, thus it is important to harmonize their activities. The prison provides the conditions, the organization attempts to meet its goals set in its articles of association, and the inmate utilizes the opportunities according to their own decisions (Garami 1997, 75).

Concerning organizing activities there are several differences between penitentiary organizations and NGOs. Civil organizations carry out the objectives set in their own articles, of which only one specifies the management of inmates; if, however, they wish to deal with inmates, then the scope of activities is predefined. In contrast, the responsibilities of penitentiary institutions are prescribed by laws, and they are not limited to partial tasks. The penitentiary system has tasks with all inmates, and it cannot choose between persons. The organizations’ articles of association in general provide that they intend to deal with inmates and not assist the prison, even if that indirectly influences the penitentiary work, too (Garami 1997, 75).
Apart from the religious needs of inmates, the organizations also meet cultural and learning demands, as well as carrying out charitable activities, not to mention the activities of some organizations defending human rights.

The process of developing cognitive social competence contributes to the resocialization of persons serving their custodial sentence (Ruzsonyi 2006, 29). Some activities are essential for the reintegration of inmates, facilitating the utilization of skills in the job market. In the framework of education and training in penitentiary institutions these fields must be addressed specially (Novák 2004, Simandi 2017).

It is crucial to ensure for the inmates culture, religious practice, and work, as well as health care and social political care. But the list includes law enforcement activities, too, related to the guarding of inmates, protecting the internal order of the institute and the safety of its environment, the public order (Lorincz and Nagy 1997, 253). The organization may develop special educational programs for their inmates, for instance, to develop key competences or provide self-help trainings for aggression and conflict management, job search, communication, problem solving, assisting life skills, drug prevention, controlling conduct. For the sake of reintegration after discharge it is also important to cooperate with the counselor network and, in the case of homeless inmates, to subsidize the persons released at their own request by contacting organizations which provide housing (cf. Novák 2004, 56).

The community activities operating in the penitentiary system include all those that are omitted from the range of classically “mandatory” in-house activities (education, vocational training, work). These activities have a similarly great impact on the development of inmates, and laws and international requirements and guidelines also demand the performance of these (Czenczer 2008, 312).

Cooperating social, church, and charitable organizations and private entities are prominent in penitentiary activity. There are three groups of contributors: those supporting institutional activity are first and foremost involved in training the inmates and organizing their recreational programs. The second group includes those which provide personal support and help for inmates and those on release. The third category consists of those providing help, financial and moral support to the relatives of inmates (Lorincz and Nagy 1997, 254). In the next chapters I will elaborate the importance of churches and Prison Chaplain Service in penitentiary institutions.

**The role of churches and pastors**

Domestic and international sources agree that church programs and opportunities in prison provide great help for inmates who are receptive to those. They contribute to the inmates’ coping with the harsh and sometimes inhumane environment of the penitentiary institution, and give them strength (Dammer 2002; Sundt 1997; Szegal 2007; Thomas and Zaitzow 2006, 242).
To understand the central role of the church played in reintegration, we must highlight the contrast between religion and the prison. The latter is always associated with bad and unpleasant events, such as crime and punishment. Religion, on the other hand, is related to good and pleasant things such as the concept of sanctity and self-sacrifice. Inmates are like exiles who have been cast out of society. The instance of understanding carries the promise that with the help of it inmates will be characterized by the adjective “free” instead of “captured, arrested, devoid of freedom” (Clear et al. 1992, 1).

It is a well-known fact that churches cared for criminals for centuries, and made significant attempts to rehabilitate individuals having served prison time as early as the 19th century. The leaders of churches and different denominations, as well as members of missionary or charitable organizations may enter Hungarian penitentiary facilities since the autumn of 1989 (Teleki 2010, 35).

At the start the representatives of denominations took over from one another in the institutions. When, however, they saw the difficulty of the task they shied away from the service because new ministers were not prepared for the new circumstances, and were not familiar with the specificities of the institutions, the population, and how to deal with them (Estok 2002, 5).

It is important to distinguish between prison chaplains’ service and broader religious-based civil organizations. These civil organizations independent from churches are bodies whose members have a religious motivation (Somogyvari 2014, 68). There are four missionary organizations specialized for the support of prisons and inmates: the Hungarian Evangelical Prison Mission, the Hungarian Prison Pastoral Society, the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service, and the Hungarian Prison Fellowship (Lorincz and Nagy 1997, 254).

The Hungarian Prison Pastoral Society was established in September 1991. They coordinate and control the work of Catholic, Reformed, Evangelical, Methodist, Adventist and other pastors. They protect the rights of spiritual counselors and pastors, teach and distribute Christian culture and a humanist value system and morals in the penitentiary system, as well as create a person-centered perspective in the penitentiary institutions which includes respecting human rights. Their activities focus on two venues. In prison they carry out prison missionary work, caring work based on a humanist value system, reinforcing relationships between the inmates, charitable activity, spiritual care, and the training of correctional staff for pastoral work. Outside the prison they coordinate the entire activity of the prison pastoral activity, organize joint retreats, operate a methodological periodical, and organize trainings (Herczeg 1997, 64).

Pastoral activity can contribute to accommodating to prison life, according to Clear et al. One possibility is to support coping with the emotional distress caused by incarceration, the other is to mitigate the stress of privation experienced in the prison environs. In connection to mitigating emotional burdens caused by incarceration it must be stressed...
that although religion is not the only tool assisting the inmate in understanding and processing the causes of their wrongdoings and criminal acts, it is the only tool which can provide a solution (Clear et al. 1992, 4).

Clear et al. emphasize two ways to mitigate the pain of incarceration. The first is to manage the problem of guilt. Apart from the taking away of one’s freedom, the most important message of incarceration is to emphasize guilt. Inmates can turn to religion with their desire for relief, as if doing penance for committing the crime. Many convicts do not forgive themselves for doing their crime. The second way is the promise of a new life. Inmates stress that religion has changed them, and they have started a new life as a result. The really deeply religious inmates take the prescriptions of religion seriously, the certainty and calculability of church doctrines is really attractive to them when changing their own uncertain lives, submitting their old lives to the new completely, gaining strength from the change. They sense an active role of God in their lives, which helps them cope with the pain of incarceration (Clear et al. 1992, 5).

Prison pastoral activity has a lot of beneficial impacts on inmates: firstly, in contrast to consultations with psychologists ("mentally ill," “crazy”) and counselors ("snitch") it does not result in the disapproval of other inmates, as there is a basic respect towards religion in all convicts without exception. Secondly, consultations with a chaplain mean the offer of an unprejudiced relationship, as the pastor encourages inmates to face their own lives and does not chide them because of their errors, there is no punishment there (Czenczer 2008, 325).

A really interesting and iconic effort for inmates is the prison Cursillo². Prison Cursillo is the same as the Cursillo outside prison, with a few basic differences due to the obvious location and time limitations. Cursillo is a movement recognized by the Roman Catholic Church, it’s original full name is "Cursillo de Cristiandad". The word has Spanish origin, meaning a crash course on Christianity. With its help believers, people living far from belief and the church, as well as special believers can consider and experience the Christian perspectives and answers provided to today’s questions. It is not a theoretical course nor a traditional retreat and it is best described as an experience. An experience that leads to discover and better live what is fundamental in Christianity. Prison cursillos intend to provide for this with a short, intensive experience within the prison walls for three and half days with collective occasions, presentations, and spiritual retreat. A cursillo is not only for the religious. Cursillos are organized by the Catholic

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² Between 26-28 November 2014 the Satoraljaujhely Prison and Correctional Facility was the venue of the first Hungarian prison cursillo, with the participation of 15 inmates and 7 presenters. A cursillo is a spiritual experience, a kind of shock, to participants rather than the gaining of some knowledge, even though there is knowledge involved. The inmate explores a new world. This meeting is nothing else than a personal religious experience. According to some accounts, a cursillo provides joy, makes a person active, and inspires action to better ourselves and our environment. A cursillo may present friendships and new communities, and due to its impacts it may ensure that after release the inmate can reintegrate in society more successfully.
church, but it is mostly presented by secular persons. According to some experiences it is valid without respect to participants’ sex, family situation, denomination, age, qualification, social status, or even their religious belief, and most often than not it generates enthusiasm.

**Prison Chaplain Service**

Decree No. 13/2000 (VII. 14.) of the Minister of Justice gave birth to the Prison Chaplain Service (Baran 1997, 79; Hajdu 2006, 33). The renewed establishment of the service was a significant event in Hungarian correctional institutions. Both churches and the penitentiary system paid attention to creating the conditions ensuring the operation of the prison chaplain service so that the practice of religion would not only remain a constitutional principle but those that used religion as a day-to-day support and guidance could exercise their right to religious practice on a daily basis (Vari 2008, 48). By setting up the prison chaplain service, spiritual care provided to inmates and spiritual life became more organized than before. In 20008 Catholic, 6 Protestant and 1 Judaic chaplains and deacons were employed full-time in some of the penitentiary institutions. In the regional institutions part-time pastors carry out this activity, including 10 Catholic and 5 Protestant ones (Estok 2002, 6).

According to Bizik, prison chaplains carry out 4-8 hours of discreet ecumenical pastoral activity daily, in contrast to which small churches would like to get the inmates to join their own congregation, spending 1-2 hours of spiritual activity in prisons, performing direct and assertive missionary activity. In his opinion, prison chaplains wish to help, know prison circumstances better, while the objective of missions is rather proselytism and they are rather naïve when it comes to the circumstances in the prison. He claims, however, that both structures have positive and negative sides; nonetheless, the way of “missionaries” is not the way of penitentiary chaplains; the right thing is to let both freely perform their activities, supplementing each other (Bizik 2002, 98).

The educational, instructive role of the prison chaplain supplements the traditional educational activities carried out in penitentiary institutions. A prison chaplain has to have psychological stamina well above average. Dealing with inmates requires much more patience, more generosity, and empathy. Psychological stamina rests on the following three pillars: the expertise of the prison chaplain, the potentials of their personality and their personal faith and devotedness, and commitment towards their service. Having these skills and features the prison chaplain may become the educator, the caretaker, and the pastor of their congregation within the penitentiary facility (Vari 2008, 52).

Colleagues of missionary organizations and chaplains carry out versatile activities among the inmates. Prison chaplains are responsible for ensuring that inmates have access to spiritual teaching, counseling and guidance, regardless of the incarcerated people's particular religion, practice or spiritual belief. This person provides spiritual
growth and education programs for incarcerated people. The major tasks of the prison chaplain service are the following: ensuring the practice of religious worship and piety; performing masses, church services, Bible lessons and prayer meetings; spiritual counseling of the individuals and the community; life management and moral education. Moreover, they provide assistance on how to take care of inmates and former inmates after their release as well as their families, how to strengthen their faith, how to build communities, and how to settle the inmates’ family relations, how to solve their personal and social issues. Chaplains counsels them preparing for release, coordinates special programs, such as seminars and family programs and trains volunteers.

Inmates may ask for one-to-one chaplain audience; however, group meetings are much more common, such as spiritual practices, church services with music, preparations before church celebrations, and Bible sessions. As a result of prison chaplain visits the inmates’ psychological well-being, discipline, and self-esteem undergo a positive change due to the meetings and sessions, which may contribute to their subsequent reintegration into society with as little mental and spiritual damage as possible (Lorincz and Nagy 1997, 254; Teleki 2010, 33). A prison chaplain tends to lead the religious congregations of a prison and provide religious counseling to the inmates which is often a high stress job because there may be concerns about health safety.

The chaplain’s activity can be carried out in individual and collective form as well. The inmate may request individual consultation with the chaplain, but collective group consultations such as retreats, musical services, preparations for church holidays, and Bible classes are more popular (Czenczer 2008, 327).

Prison chaplains provide an opportunity for inmates to shape themselves through this activity. According to Bizik, the goal is not to “resolve tensions,” make them “more manageable,” or to ensure “a safety valve”; these are only lucky outcomes but not objectives (Bizik 2002, 97).

It is important to stress that Decree No. 13/2000. (VII. 14.) does not prescribe visiting cells for chaplains, but this is the primary venue of individual and communal spiritual care. The main goal of visiting cells is to announce the occasions of religious practice, and to make personal contact with the inmates (Vari 2008, 53). It is a rule that in penitentiary institutions the inmate can keep contact with the church personality without supervision, which contact may be initiated by each of the parties (§110 (2) of Decree No. 16/2014).

According to Szegal, the direct objective of pastoral activity is to organize the religious life of convicts and manage moral conflicts, thus improving the atmosphere of the prison (Szegal 2007, 32).

As a result of prison chaplains’ visits the positive experiences of inmates can be felt in the psychological air, conduct, and self-esteem of inmates, which ensure that they can
reintegrate in society with as few spiritual injuries as possible (Baran 1997, 80). The main tasks—according to Estok—include “rebuilding the inmates’ moral standing, creating and shaping a real view of humanity based on everlasting rules, that is, influencing morals and ethics positively” (Estok 2002, 7). The presence of a chaplain means the reinforcement of an inner bearing for the inmate, and discussing problems, jointly facing sources of anxiety can help reduce the distress (Bekeffy 2005, 85). Aggression is a frequent problem in prisons: the quenching or significant mitigation of aggressive drives is possible by verbal and Biblical means, singing, and the therapeutic effect of shared spiritual experiences. It is practical, furthermore, to have constructive discussions about the conflicts which have led the inmate to aggression. During this the inmate can experience the cooperative and facilitating attitude of the chaplain and the service community, which may provide help in processing it (Bekeffy 2005, 89). Another important task of prison chaplains is the education of self-esteem, as it is a generally accepted view in the professional literature that only strong characters can cope with closed institutions and resist repeat delinquency, people who have appropriate self-esteem. The prison chaplain has an important role in balancing out the self-esteem of inmates, a tool of which is a permanent and unprejudiced attention to others (Bekeffy 2005, 90).

Prison pastoral activity is essential for coping with the injuries caused by incarceration and prisonization. Emptiness and existential vacuum are one of the biggest dangers. In this case inmates are overcome by indifference and depression. To evade this the penitentiary system offers several alternatives such as correspondence, telephoning, receiving visitors, short-term leaves, as well as cultural and sports clubs and religious occasions. The task of church events is to assist the inmates in leaving behind the crisis of values (Bekeffy 2005, 91).

The prison chaplain serves in an incultured environment, existing in a permanently incultured process, that is, in contact with the local culture. As per Vari’s opinion, evangelization is necessary in all extremely incultured environments—including incultured persons themselves. Prison chaplains during evangelization have to face not only incultured persons and environments but also linguistic inculturation (Vari 2008, 52). During inculturation, forms, rules, and rituals of communication, and practical know-how are internalized (Pusztai 2010, 25).

Prison chaplains are in close contact with the supervisors, educators, and prison psychologists, and their cooperation with other prison staff is a priority task. Majzik claims there is some resistance by the staff to the activity of prison chaplains and missions, and suspects an anti-religious attitude behind this (cf. Majzik 1997). Garami, however, emphasizes that the personnel of prisons perform services with disregard to world views. Services must not be influenced either negatively or positively by religious
convictions (Garami 1997, 76). Estok stresses that dealing with the prison population is among high-priority jobs in the prison chaplain’s service (Estok 2002, 9).

The prison chaplains’ job is not possible without the cooperation of supervisors and guards. So that the prison chaplain may get in touch with the convicts this service cannot be neglected, as these officers carry out the majority of penitentiary tasks: guard, supervise, and control the inmates (Vari 2008, 55). It is evident, therefore, that the prison chaplain’s activities present a significant excess burden on the personnel.

In cases where the reintegration officer finds that the inmate needs consultation with a chaplain, they can notify the chaplain. In addition, prison chaplains may make recommendations to the reintegration officer to reward those inmates that regularly attend and actively contribute to the church practices (cf. Hajdu 2006, 36).

Continuous communication with psychologists assists in the pastoral activity of inmates, as the group whose philosophy and working style are closest to those of pastoral service is evidently that of psychologists. In some cases it happens that the prison chaplain has questions about the spiritual treatment of the same clients, which may be discussed without breaching the obligation of confidentiality (Vari 2008, 56).

The accommodation of inmates to the prison takes place in two well-distinguishable ways, on the one hand, coping with problems, on the other, avoiding problematic situations. We can say that a convict can cope with their penitentiary term if they feel they are able to live in captivity without feeling endangered, angry, exposed, or depressed. Avoiding problematic situations means the convict can serve their term not breaking the rules of prison life during the time spent in the institution (Dammer 2002; Clear et al. 2002, 2).

**Closing thoughts**

Social involvement in critical questions such as criminality, prisons, criminals is rather low. Deep prejudice and intolerance may increase after release, and it is difficult for society to accept those having done their time. Ex-convicts are renounced by the majority of society, they are difficult to welcome back. This prejudice is often so strong as to make it almost impossible, but at least very difficult, to realize the intention of social reintegration and the person discharged is ostracized.

The majority of society keeps their distance from felons, and this lack of trust derives primarily from the lack of information. Therefore, reintegration of those discharged is necessary, and their treatment must be reinforced through the state, church, civil social institutional network.

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3 This includes masses, Christening, weddings, funerary services, and suggestions, advice provided for problems arising during routine work with the population of the prison (Estok 2002, 9).
To reintegrate ex-convicts in society the penitentiary institution needs to broaden its network of relationships with all the state bodies, social, and church organizations and entities that on the basis of state or social entitlement or voluntarily provide assistance to inmates in leading them back to society.

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Thematic Article

Education in Prison: The Italian Profile

Teresa Savoia

Abstract

The following contribution is thought as a reflection on the theme of education in prison in the Italian context, so as to supply sufficient elements of critical knowledge of it and open to a confrontation with other national situations, through the analysis of the other contribution on the same topic which are presented in this volume of HERJ. As it is known, in several modern European countries, education in prison was born with the concept of prison itself. In the process for the theorization of prison, a major debate arose from the thoughts of Cesare Beccaria, an Italian intellectual. He formulated a penal system where education was considered the final end of incarceration and also the only way to prevent crime. Two centuries later his ideas have become a founding principle of the Italian Constitution where it is stated that prison must tend to the re-education of inmates. Efforts have been made along the years, to build up a penitentiary system that reflected the constitutional mandate. Laws and decrees have passed to apply in practical instances these issues and also absorb the European Prison Rules. A study made in 2012 by the author shows some profiles of prisoners from an educational point of view. A reflection is presented that emerges from the analysis of the correlation between some background variables and literacy achievements. It shows how education in prison is fundamental to break the process of deprivation of alphabetical skills but, at the same time, conflicts with some contradictions of the system.

Keywords: correctional education, rehabilitation programs, recidivism, educational profiles of offenders, cultural habits of offenders, alternative measures.

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Introduction

Given the international scope of this number of HERJ, the following contribution is thought as a reflection on the theme of education in prison in the Italian context. The main aim of the article is to present this scenario under different perspectives, so as to supply sufficient elements of critical knowledge of it and open to a confrontation with other national situations.

The first perspective here presented is historical. It is a theoretical reflection on the foundation of education in prison, in the XVIII century, when the Italian penal system was first theorized. As it is known, in most modern European societies, the idea of the need for an education to inmates was born with the concept of prison itself. It may be worth mentioning, then, how this concept was conceived among the scholars and intellectuals who were working and sharing ideas to lay the basis for the juridical systems in the rising States of the time. More significantly because, among these people, a prominent position was held by an Italian intellectual, Cesare Beccaria. His essay *De delitti e delle pene* (a/n *Of crime and punishment*) was published in 1764, and set out the principles of penal justice and the ideals of education in prison. The treaty had a wide echo at the time and was very widespread not only in the Italian context, but throughout Europe. Remarkably, it became the centre of a lively debate, and success and controversy followed its first publication. Many were the supporters of the ideas presented in it. Voltaire and the publisher Grimm called Beccaria the “defender of humanity”, while other personalities criticized it, even launching harsh attacks on the author.

However, there is also another reason to present this work, namely the fact that, in the debate that was above mentioned, Beccaria was firm in the idea that prison treatment should not lead or convey any kind of injustice and torture. His reflections, thus, appear amazingly modern, since still nowadays a definite solution to this moral issue does not seem to have been found. It is a sad evidence that the European Court of Human Rights has condemned more than a country for inflicting penalties against the respect of life. And in that regard Italy has been condemned twice in the past five years. It seems then, not inappropriate in this place, where we interrogate and reflect on issues related to education in prison, and have to deal with both the axiological aspects and their practical realization, to briefly review the work that was at the basis of the juridical system of Italy and at the same time brings about such contemporary issues.

In § 2 the situation of education in prison in Italy is presented. Education is thus analyzed through a more institutional perspective. The main reforms will be introduced and the principles of education implied within, starting from 1947 when the Italian Constitution was signed. The Constitution of the Italian Republic is in fact the main landmark for education in prison, since it states that education is a right for convicted people. However, from the Constitution to the definition of a Law embedding its principles of education to offenders, there was a very long and difficult process. Still
nowadays there is a strong iato between the instances prescribed by the juridical reforms and their true realization.

Finally, in § 3, a research that was led in an Italian prison of high security will be introduced. It is a field research that I completed in 2012, regarding literacy levels and educational profiles of offenders. I will here deal with a few aspects deriving from the analysis of alphabetical skills and their correlation with background variables, such as age, penalty and formal education. What emerges is how education in prison is fundamental to break the process of deprivation of alphabetical skills but, at the same time, conflicts with some contradictions of the system.

The foundation of education in prison in Italy

The first person in Italy to set out the principles of penal justice who became common to many European countries was Cesare Beccaria. His essay De delitti e delle pene published in 1764, is indeed an extensive work, far beyond the angle to which the title seems to relegate it. It is a philosophical and political reflection at the same time, which, moving from anthropological, social and axiological considerations, looks at the social relations as a whole and the role that must be assigned to them by law. In other words, the book shows how talking about crimes and punishments means facing a much broader topic that involves the whole society.

At its time, indeed, the work arose a true interest, was soon translated into several European languages, and had several tangible consequences on the penal systems of other countries, such as that of Catherine II of Russia (her Nakaz is indeed full of quotations from Beccaria's work), Gustav III of Sweden and Charles III of Spain. In Italy, after the debate around the book, the Tuscan penal reform abolished some practices which were considered too cruel in the treatment of offenders.

The principles of Beccaria's criminal policy are relevant for the history of education in prison, both for the concrete effects they had on the reforms of European governments and because they represent an early example of how a penal system can be just and effective without being repressive. The key principles of his theory are based on the concepts of social contract, of egalitarianism and guaranteeism. The starting point is Beccaria's concept of man. Heir to sensitive philosophy, man is considered essentially a sensitive being, whose acts are dictated by the pursuit of pleasure and the escape from pain. As for society, his idea is Rousseauian and was shared by many contemporary philosophers. It is the result of the sacrifice of unconditional freedom in exchange for safety. The need for security, is, in this sense, to use his own words the primary aim of every legitimate association (VIII)⁵. The Social order must be thought out in respect for the nature of man, but also be effective in terms of usefulness. It is precisely the utility that determines the characteristics of the social contract, that is the social and legal

⁵ The quotations in paragraph 1 are from C. Beccaria (1991), and report the chapter number from (I) to (XLVII).
system. From this point of view, laws, that is to say the social and juridical order, are intended as a useful and necessary sacrifice to which men submit themselves in order to enjoy the remaining [freedom] with security and tranquility (I).

The need to inflict a sentence is born in the safeguarding of the same need for security. At the same time, the purpose of a sentence is not the punishment of the offender, nor the idea that with the prison he will compensate the society for the damage he has done, but the prevention of other possible crimes. It is a penal system that has no punitive or restitutive purposes, but only a preventive one. Penalty is not a matter of tormenting and afflicting a sensible being, nor of undoing a crime already committed; the end is exactly in preventing the offender from doing new damage to its fellow citizens and stopping others from doing the same (XII). In this vision of penalty and man, a central role is held by education. The main means that the author identifies to prevent crimes is indeed education. This are his same words: Do you want to prevent crimes? Let the lights accompany freedom (XLII). And, significantly in conclusion of the treaty, he writes: Finally the safest but most difficult means of preventing crimes is to perfect education (XLV).

The principle of guarantism is a fundamental element of Beccaria’s thinking. It is the presumption of innocence, in dubio pro reo. It is the “right that everyone has to be believed innocent” (XIII). Then, there are the principles of legality - nullum crimen, nulla pena sine lege, and the principles of the minimum penalty necessary and of proportionality between crime and punishment - nulla pena sine necessitate, nulla pena sine iniuria . The minimum penalty necessary in Beccaria’s thought assumes more radical characteristics than those expressed by his predecessors, such as Hobbes or Montesquieu. Penalty must be necessary and useful at the same time. Only a necessary penalty is right and legitimate, and it is necessary only where it can prevent another crime. If it does not, it is no longer even necessary. In the same way, a punishment that is useful but which entails a superfluous violation of freedom would also be wrong, even tyrannical: any punishment that does not derive from absolute necessity is tyrannical, every act of authority of man to man that does not derive from absolute necessity is tyrannical (II). If the penalty is not limited within these parameters it is abuse and not justice, it is done, but not already right (II). In addition to having to be useful and necessary, a conviction must be as mild as possible: for a just punishment must have only those degrees of intension sufficient to remove men from crimes (XXVII).

Throughout De delitti e delle pene, there is a widespread attention to fundamental human rights. In particular, the lines on torture and death penalty strike as very modern. First, torture is defined as cruelty consecrated by use, criterion worthy of a cannibal that even the Romans, barbarians for more than one title, reserved only for slaves and is still existing monument of the ancient and wild legislation. It is reneged not only from a human point of view, but also because it proves to be inadequate on the civil level. Likewise, death penalty is defined as useless prodigality of supplications which has never made men better. Not only is it cruel, it is also useless to contrast evil. Beccaria
wonders what can be the right that men attribute to slaughter their fellow men? If the state has to give an example of civility and justice to citizens through the punishment of the offender, the example that would inflict the death penalty would be completely contradictory.

It must be said for completeness’ sake, that in Italy death penalty was only abolished in 1889, with the so-called Zanardelli reform. It was then reintroduced in 1926 with fascism and was definitively abolished with the promulgation of the Italian Republic in 1947.

Education in prison in the Italian context

The main reference for education in prison in Italy is represented by the Constitution of the Italian Republic, which was signed in 1947. Article 27 of the Constitution recites: the defendant is not considered guilty until the final sentence. Penalties cannot consist in treatments contrary to the sense of humanity and must tend towards the rehabilitation of the offender. Death penalty is not allowed.

Education in prison is, thus, first of all, a founding right of the Nation. It is, secondly, an element of the penitentiary treatment. For this reason, the role attributed to education in prison systems and the ways in which it is established depend on the rules of the Penal Code and the penitentiary regulations that have followed one after the other over the years. The objective of these regulations has been to translate the institutional dictate into a coherent educational policy and into educational practices that can be implemented in existing prison systems. Education in prison is, in fact, also and above all, the result of practical instances and, also, the contradictions that the daily reality of the prison structures present and which impose many constraints and limitations on the full realization of any project. Even today, in fact, after decades of social and political debates, the realization of education meets different obstacles.

Actually, from a numerical point of view, the prison population is almost in line with standards of other European countries of the same area. However, this is not the only parameter to be taken into consideration, since the infrastructure to hold this amount of people is totally inadequate. The so-called coefficient of occupancy of the prisons, for example, i.e. the ratio of used space compared to the total amount of available space, is worryingly high. This is a huge problem for the everyday survival of people and surely has a bad downfall on the access to education. Just to supply a few data, it may be worth mentioning that the total number of detainees in Italy by January 2018, is 58.087. In addition 478 minors are held in special institutions. The total amount is lower than that in the past years and the prison population rate, i.e. the number of prisoners per 100000 inhabitants, is 96, in line with the other European countries. However, the percentage of pre-trail detainees is very high, 34%, as is the occupancy level which is 115% (ICPS, 2018). Both these data are critical as far as education is concerned. In fact, detainees who have not been judged cannot take part in educational courses.
As for the history of the penitentiary system, after the Constitution, the first important reform has been Law n. 354, in 1975, Norme sull’ordinamento penitenziario e sull’esecuzione delle misure privative e limitative della libertà (Rules on the penitentiary system and on the execution of the privative and restrictive measures of liberty).

This act was made with the intention of translating into reality the constitutional dictate established by article 27. Its gestation lasted over thirty years. During those years, the political and social scenario was very complex and made it hard to accomplish any relevant goal. The most critical instances came from the prison administration, where direct contact with the brutal reality of the prisons elicited feelings of reaction and the aspiration to a more human condition of life. The theoretical scholars, on the contrary, who did not have direct experience with the prison reality, if were reformists, they were however more cautious. The major obstacle to the reform was the sense of re-educational treatment. Catholic conservatives had a very harsh view, but also in the secular criminological world there were currents that did not believe in the validity of rehabilitation treatment. (Di Gennaro, 1980).

The reform of 1975 introduced important elements of novelty with respect to the previous legislation on the basis of the principles reaffirmed by international documentation, especially the first European Prison Rules, issued by the Council of Europe with Res. (73) 5 and the principles on the inviolability of the right to education. In the first place, the provision recognized education as an element that could not be renounced in the offender’s treatment program, establishing that the rehabilitation of the inmates is the end to which the detention must tend. A rehabilitative treatment must be implemented, which tends, also through contacts with the external environment, to the social reintegration of the offender (art. 1). Some aspects were then strongly underlined that are still crucial today. In particular those regarding cultural development, younger offenders and the institution of alternative measures. The education of prisoners is, in fact, intended as cultural development of the individual as a whole and tailored on the characteristics and personal needs of each person. To this end, treatment must include basic education, but also cultural, recreational and sporting activities. Education must be offered of every order and degree, from primary school to secondary schools, which must be created indoors, while access to outside universities is made available. Finally, access to the library must be facilitated, with full freedom of choice for the readings. Another important aspect of the reform is the solicitation to the participation of the external community in the rehabilitative action. The penitentiary organization must facilitate appropriate contacts with the outside world and relations with the family (art. 15). This demonstrates a substantial reversal in the social conscience, according to which the institution of punishment is considered as an integral part of the community, of which it must take charge, and not as a separate body and marginalized by the rest of the civilized world. Particular attention is paid to younger offenders. The reform insists that the cultural and professional training of inmates under the age of twenty-five is crucial because it has a critical importance for the solution of
the practical problems of social adaptation. Lastly, alternative measures to detention are introduced, namely the possibility of accessing the semi-liberty after a period of detention in which the condemned is observed to develop a prognosis of social danger. Among the elements of observation of the condemned, participation in educational paths takes on a significant role. In fact, the penitentiary system, in art. 50, establishes that participation in educational programs is taken into consideration as an element in the evaluation of the concession of semi-liberty and early release.

The reformist spirit that had characterized the normative production of the second half of the Seventies had to face, however, different kinds of emergencies that prevented a real implementation of the principles established by the Law. These problems are still so present today, that former President of the Republic, G. Napolitano, dedicated more than one message to the critical situation of Italian prisons and declared peremptorily: evident in general is the abyss that separates today’s prison reality from the constitutional dictate on the rehabilitative function of the punishment and on the rights and dignity of the person. It is a reality that cannot be justified in the name of security that is more undermined than guaranteed. (Napolitano, 2012).

A reform to Law 354/1975 was in 2000 (d.p.r. n. 230), and it recollected the same principles of the previous act, further reinforcing them with the inclusion of European documents.

Finally, in 2017, a law was passed, Law n. 103 Modifiche al codice penale, al codice di procedura penale e all’ordinamento penitenziario (Amendments to the penal code, the code of criminal procedure and the penitentiary system) that regards the reform of the penitentiary system. By march 2018, the Council of Ministers has preliminarily approved a few decrees. The priority objective of this reform is to make the current prison system more modern, adapting it to the guidelines of the Constitutional Court and the European Courts. Its main aim is to finally reduce the use of prison in favour of rehabilitative solutions without weakening the safety of the community. It means to restore the efficiency to the system, reducing procedural time and saving costs. Finally, it aims at reducing prison overcrowding, assigning, on the one hand, alternative measures to prison, and enhancing, on the other hand, the treatment of the inmates and their social reintegration, so as to stem the phenomenon of recidivism.

Crime, detention, education: an Italian field research

In 2011-2012, I conducted a study in the prison of Spoleto, in Italy, an institution of maximum security, that at the time held 660 people.

Aim of the study was to research some educational aspects of the prison population analysing some background variables and relating them to performances in literacy tests. The goal was to figure out a profile of the population and draw hypotheses on their needs, and also to make some reflections regarding the achievements or contradictions
of the prison education system, if possible. All aspects of the research, such as hypotheses, objectives, sampling, instruments and results are explained in Savoia, T. Crimine, educazione, detenzione, Anicia, 2015\(^6\).

I will here deal only with some data collected through the tests on alphabetical skills and compare them to a few variables. It will be verified how these data show the necessity to reflect on the consequences relevant both to short-term and long-term sentences, at least when compared to education.

The tests used for the research came out of an extensive analysis on existing materials, namely the recent researches on the alphabetical skills of the adult population. More specifically, PIAAC, the latest research on the literacy levels of the adult population conducted by OECD, supplied the theoretical framework. Base skills frameworks in PIAAC on Literacy, Reading components and Numeracy were adopted. Besides, an Italian research on the same area of analysis, named PREDIL, conducted by the University of Roma, RomaTre, and headed by Professor B. Vertecchi, was the main source to take the tests from. However, the available tests were tested on the prison population and modified for the purpose. A process of adaptation to the prison context and restrictions was necessary, in order to avoid inappropriate or sensitive questions. Questions that referred to work, money or current currency, were removed, since many detainees for example had never seen the Euro, so as questions containing sensitive topics, such as family ties.

The scores obtained through the administration of the tests were compared with the background variables detected through a questionnaire, in order to figure out some aspects regarding cultural habits and education. We will here see their trend when compared to age, education\(^7\) and length of penalty.

Figure 1 shows the comparison between scores and age. The analysis aims at understanding whether competences may vary in function of age. It emerges that younger respondents got better results and, in fact, they ranked more in the middle and high score ranges. In contrast, older inmates got the worst scores and ranked more in middle and above all low ranges. (Figure 1).

\(^6\) Some aspects of the research are also available in English in Savoia, T. (2012). Education Profile of Inmates, Cadmo XX (1) pag. 95-110.

\(^7\) The variable education was split into two different variables: qualifications obtained before imprisonment, that is formal education, and qualifications obtained during imprisonment.
Figure 1. Distribution of scores in function of age.

![Scores and age](image)

Figure 2 shows the comparison between scores and education before detention, i.e. formal education. The analysis aims at understanding whether scores vary in function of education levels. It shows that performances improve with the increasing levels of qualification. The number of those with no educational qualifications and with primary school certificate is much smaller in the higher ranges, while those with higher education qualifications are more in the medium and high ranges. (Figure 2).

![Scores and qualifications (before detention)](image)

Finally, the length of penalty is taken into consideration. The objective of this analysis is to verify what are the trends of the alphabetical skills when confronted to the time spent in prison. Figure 3 shows that detainees who have been in prison for less time obtain the best results, ranking most in the higher ranges. On the other hand, inmates who have already spent many years in prison get low scores. The distribution of the scores in
function of the years of imprisonment shows, therefore, a worsening with the increase of the time of detention.

Figure 3. Distribution of scores in function of the years spent in prison.

![Scores and length of penalty chart]

So far, the results shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3 were quite predictable, and aligned both with the studies on the adult population and on the prison population, that show how adults impoverish their alphabetical skills with time, and, more seriously, people in prison lose them even stronger. Besides, sociological studies on prison population accredit the process, underlining how worse it is for secluded people. Clemmer theorized the concept of prisonisation, which consists in a gradual, progressive process, in time irreversible, culminating in the identification of the offender with the environment, i.e. the adoption of costumes, culture and codes of the prison. This process brings about other consequences, such as cultural impoverishment and disculturation of people, which define the life and personality of offenders.

We can however see how the trends indicated above change significantly when the qualifications obtained in prison are taken into consideration. In fact, in this case, the oldest and the long-term offenders obtain satisfactory results, comparable, and in some cases better than, those of younger prisoners and those with short sentences.

From the analysis of the questionnaire, we know that the older inmates and the inmates with long sentences follow with much more consistency the educational courses held in prison, obtaining more qualifications. They also have better cultural habits, namely they read more books and magazines and write more. In fact, the number of students enrolled in formal education and training courses grows significantly, as the years of penalty increase. Likewise, the number of inmates who get educational qualifications also greatly increases. On the contrary, those with short sentences do not obtain

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8 An overall review of the studies on the education of the adult population and on the prison population and a review of sociological studies is recorded in Savoia, T. (2015) Crimine, educazion, detenzione, Anicia
qualifications, regardless of how many years they attended school. As far as young people are concerned, if it is true that they enroll in education and training courses, it is also true that only in rare cases do they attend enough time as to obtain a qualification. They are, therefore, more inconstant in their educational choices, while older people, once they enroll, tend to complete the course of study. Even among the young age groups, only those with long sentences obtain a qualification.

If we take into account the performances of inmates with long sentences, more precisely those who have more than five years of detention, we note that the results change between those who achieved a qualification in prison and those who did not. As shown in Figure 4, inmates with long sentences without a qualification, in fact, reflect the scenario presented in Figure 4, ranking, in the majority in the first score range. On the contrary, inmates with long sentences, which obtained a qualification in prison, show a different trend and are more homogeneous in all three bands. (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Distribution of scores among long-sentenced inmates, in function of their qualifications.

A similar result is obtained by considering older inmates, aged over 45. As shown before, in general they get worse results than younger inmates. However, figure 5 shows that the results clearly improve when the qualification is taken into consideration. In this case, older inmates are placed in a much higher percentage in ranges 2 and 3 (Figure 5). On the contrary, for young people, i.e. inmates under the age of 30 and inmates aged between 30 and 45, the performance of the scores is independent of the qualification. Both those who have a qualification and those who haven’t are placed in the three ranges in a fairly homogeneous way. This fact seems to confirm that those who embark on an educational process have a tangible benefit from it, and can mitigate the damage of imprisonment.
The latter analysis highlights that, while it is true that skills during imprisonment tend to impoverish, at the same time, where there are successful educational paths, education is able to mitigate these so-called processes of disculturation and to establish virtuous circles.

Conclusions

We must then make a final reflection and would like to focus on an aspect in particular, the one regards young detainees.

Young detainees are often imprisoned for minor offenses, their stay in prison is short, and consequently theirs are crimes for which the alternative measures are invoked. From an educational point of view, they present the most advantageous starting characteristics, since they have not consolidated the process of skills impoverishment, given the young age. However, we have seen how they do not exploit the educational opportunities offered and, therefore, suffer the damage of imprisonment to a greater extent. Therefore, despite the positive starting point, the profile that emerges is far from reassuring. If, in fact, we analyse cultural habits, it should be noted that they did not improve during the detention, in many cases they even worsened, compared to before. In fact, they read fewer newspapers and magazines and books and write less than older inmates and those with longer sentences. The reasons why they do not read are attributable to economic and organizational problems, most significantly to the precariousness of their condition, since for them, the prison is experienced as a temporary pause before returning to their life outside. Even the use of computers, widespread in prison among inmates with long sentences, for this group of the population is rare. They complain that they cannot have it in the cell and therefore they use it very rarely, only in computer rooms where there are few units and not always accessible. Moreover, if we analyse the educational process, they tend to enroll in the courses of education and training, but rarely complete them by obtaining a qualification.
The abandonment of the educational courses without a certification is sometimes due to the release, for the end of the sentence, and other times to the same reasons just mentioned for reading and writing. Entering and leaving a prison, without benefiting from the educational offer, certainly does not help break the vicious circle of recidivism, which is instead one of the main objectives of the penalty system. At the same time, the months spent in prison are not a neutral period and if they do not offer the possibility of constructing valid alternatives, they offer the possibility of consolidating and renewing criminal and negative behavior. The result is a paradox, such that the worst consequences of imprisonment are paid by those who have committed minor offenses. International organizations and local governments agree on the importance of identifying alternative measures to detention for those inmates who have to face minor convictions. Young inmates are precisely those on whom the educational offer should be measured, because they still have a long future ahead of themselves and can contribute to collective life for a long time. All international organizations invite governments to pay particular attention and take measures to facilitate the educational pathways of this group of prisoners. Once again, one wonders what sense a prison can have for people who could be directed to more fruitful alternative paths through which to learn, perhaps, new occupations and no longer represent a cost to society, neither in economic nor human terms.

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Promotion of Reading, Literacy and Culture in Catalan Prison Libraries

Andreu Sule

Abstract

The aim of this article is to increase awareness of the activities that are carried out in Catalan prison libraries to promote reading, literacy and culture among inmates. The educational role of prison libraries is recognized both in recommendations on international law issued by UNESCO and the Council of Europe and in recommendations issued by professional bodies such as the Library and Information Association (CILIP, formerly the Library Association) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). To ascertain the type of activities conducted by Catalan prison libraries to promote reading, literacy and culture, a survey was emailed to prison managers. The results reveal that libraries in Catalan prisons play a very active role in the education of inmates. They offer a wide range of activities related to the promotion of reading, literacy and culture, whether as part of an internal library initiative or in partnership with other education services. The survey revealed some relatively common prison activities, such as reading clubs and art workshops, in addition to some highly original initiatives such as rap writing, escape rooms and lip dubs, and programmes such as AlfaDigital, which aim to develop reading and creative abilities while enhancing ICT skills.

Keywords: Special libraries; correctional institutions; correctional education; prison libraries; Catalonia; prison education.

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Introduction

The aim of this article is to increase awareness of the activities that are carried out in Catalan prison libraries to promote reading, literacy and culture among inmates. Such activities are conducted by the libraries themselves or in partnership with other education services within prisons, especially schools.

To find out about these activities, a survey was emailed to the managers of all ten prison libraries in Catalonia in March 2018.

The survey was divided into two sections (see Appendix 1). The first section asked questions about the library's services and activities, and the second section contained questions about activities carried out in collaboration with other education services within the prison (e.g., schools).

Prison libraries and education

The role of prison libraries as promoters of reading, literacy and culture is set out both in international law recommendations and recommendations issued by professional bodies.

Within Europe, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe recognized the potentially key role of libraries in prisons in the chapter on education in Recommendation Rec(2006)2 on European prison rules: “Every institution shall have a library for the use of all prisoners, adequately stocked with a wide range of both recreational and educational resources, books and other media.” (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, 2006, 28.5). Reference should also be made to Recommendation No. R(89)12 on education in prison, which describes libraries as a service that guarantees access to education: “Libraries in the community are a source of education, information and recreation, as well as centres of cultural development.” (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, 1990, 34–36).

With respect to publications about public libraries, the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994 should be the first port of call. The following statement makes explicit reference to the role public libraries should play when it comes to providing inmates with specific services and materials: “Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.” (IFLA, UNESCO, 2016).

In the strictly professional sphere, the educational role of prison libraries is one of the pillars of the service, alongside their recreational and informational roles. The third edition of the IFLA’s recommendations on library services for inmates states that “The prison library then becomes an important part of the entire prison environment in its support for educational, recreational, and rehabilitative programs”, and that “Prison
libraries should emulate the public library model, while at the same time providing resources for prison education and rehabilitation programs, as well as other prison specific requirements, e.g., legal collections.” (Lehmann, Locke, 2005, 4).

The UK-based Library Association (now the Library and Information Association, CILIP) has expressed similar views. In the second edition of its Guidelines for Prison Libraries, it asserts that “The prison should support all forms of education and training, formal classes, practical training, working parties, open and distance learning, and informal self-education.” (Library Association, 1997, 11). In addition, it is clear on the need for collaboration with the education services of prisons: “A central library, in or near the Education Department should be provided wherever possible, conveniently sited for use by all prisoners and available at times when the Education Department is closed.” (Library Association, 1997, 11).

**Prison libraries in Catalonia**

Catalonia is one of the nineteen autonomous communities of Spain. It covers an area of 31,895 km². With a population of 7.5 million people (2017), it accounts for 16% of the total population of Spain, making it the second most populated autonomous community.

Catalonia has nine prisons, with a total population of 8,367 inmates (110.7 per 100,000 inhabitants):¹⁰

2. Centre Penitenciari Brians 2: 2,068 men.
5. Centre Penitenciari els Lledoners: 1,025 men.
7. Centre Penitenciari de Ponent: 725 men and 52 women.

All have one library, except for Centre Penitenciari Brians 1, which has two; one for men and one for women.

The organization and operation of prison libraries are regulated by the Programa marc de biblioteques dels centres penitenciaris de Catalunya: gener 2002 (Libraries Framework Programme for Prisons in Catalonia: January 2002), which was drafted by the former General Directorate for Prison Services and Rehabilitation. According to this programme (Catalunya. Direccio General de Serveis Penitenciaris i Rehabilitacio, 2002, 3), the objectives of libraries within the prison context are as follows:

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To promote reading habits.
- To awaken and foster new intellectual pursuits.
- To contribute to lifelong learning.
- To facilitate access to knowledge and culture.
- To encourage the intellectual, social and cultural development of library users.
- To promote respectful attitudes and a spirit of coexistence.

The Programa marc also stipulates that all libraries must be run by a professional librarian who holds a degree in library and information science (Catalunya. Direccio General de Serveis Penitenciaris i Rehabilitacio, 2002, 10). As discussed below, this requirement is vital for the quality of the services offered by libraries and is very rare in most European countries, where not all prison libraries have professional or indeed full-time staff.

To reinforce these principles, the Catalan Ministry of Justice commissioned the Catalan Association of Librarians and Information Professionals to draw up guidelines for Catalan prison libraries in 2005. These guidelines were published in 2007 and specify that Catalan prison library services should be underpinned by four key strands, two of which are as follows:

“1. Access to education, not only through self-learning materials, but also through information about the resources available (print and online) and training courses or materials on how to use information access tools.

[...]

3. Promotion of the personal and cultural development of people through reading and activities related to leisure and culture.” (Comalat, Sule, 2007, 9).

It is therefore clear to see that the role played by library services in the education of inmates is also explicitly and strongly set out in Catalonia’s regulations and guidelines.

**Promotion of reading, literacy and culture**

Catalan prison libraries, as other institutions with students with special educational needs (Mortimore, Zsolnai, 2015), play a very active role in the education of inmates, whether internally or in partnership with other education services. In addition to offering a document lending and consulting service, which in itself is considered an education service, libraries offer a wide range of activities to foster reading, literacy and culture.

As mentioned above, the fact that all libraries are run by professional librarians guarantees that the service is professionally managed. Today, however, the range of educational activities available is constrained by a lack of financial resources, since libraries do not receive the regular budgetary allocation that would allow them, for example, to develop their collection to meet the specific needs of users and provide
access to an adequate level of up-to-date technological equipment (e.g. computers, printers and tablets). However, as revealed below, librarians strive to overcome these limitations through a professional approach and partnership agreements with prison personnel and services, as well as with civil society organizations and volunteers.

Before outlining a representative sample of the activities carried out by Catalan prison libraries to promote reading, literacy and culture, it is worth noting that the level of cultural outreach varies from prison to prison. This is because, regardless of the availability of resources and personnel, each prison’s inmates have different needs. For example, the needs of the inmates at the Centre Penitenciari de Joves, who are aged between 18 and 25, are different from those of the adults at the Centre Penitenciari de Ponent; and the needs of the inmates at the Centre Penitenciari de Dones are different from those of the men at the Centre Penitenciari Quatre Camins.

Likewise, the level of collaboration between libraries and other prison education services, especially schools, varies. The survey reveals that the librarians at most prisons coordinate with other education professionals in an informal manner, i.e. through personal contact rather than within the framework of a permanent coordination committee. This means that partnerships are often carried out through ad hoc committees to design specific activities or through the willingness of stakeholders to cooperate, rather than through a prison strategy in the form of permanent joint working bodies and officially recognized groups. However, the high level of professionalism of the stakeholders means that collaboration between librarians, teachers, social educators, instructors, etc., works well in all Catalan prisons and undoubtedly contributes to the success of such partnerships.

Reading clubs

Many libraries organize reading clubs, either by themselves or through partnerships with prison schools. Under the guidance of the librarian or another member of the prison’s education service, inmates read and comment on a wide range of works. Since many inmates have some form of transitional reading difficulty (due to immigration, delayed development of reading skills, poor schooling, etc.) or permanent reading difficulty (learning disorders, functional diversity, old age, etc.), some libraries employ easy-to-read materials, which enable such inmates to read and understand content more easily.

Writing competitions

As mentioned above, writing competitions represent one of the most successful activities for promoting culture among inmates. Competitions are often organized to mark Saint George’s Day on 23 April, since this feast day coincides with World Book Day, when books are traditionally exchanged as gifts. Poetry and short story contests are also popular. These two literary genres have enjoyed great success among inmates, and some
of their work has been selected for publication. The library at the Centre Penitenciari de Ponent organizes a competition with the support of a local cultural institution, the Cercle de Belles Arts, which donates prizes and forms part of the judging panel.

**Exhibitions, montages, festivals, etc.**

These tend to be organized in collaboration with members of other prison services (social educators, teachers, art instructors, etc.). Activities to mark festivals (e.g. Christmas and Carnival) and world days (e.g. International Women's Day, World Poetry Day, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and World AIDS Day), and those related to a specific subject or artist (e.g. exhibitions on astronomy and the street artist Banksy), are frequently organized.

Two outreach activities carried out by the library at the Centre Penitenciari els Lledoners are worth mentioning due to their high degree of originality: lip dubs and escape rooms. These are examples of the degree of sophistication with which librarians adapt to new times by converting traditionally non-educational activities into educational experiences.

**Literacy**

Many prison libraries adapt literacy activities to the interests and skills of their inmates. One such example is the library at the Centre Penitenciari de Joves, which houses inmates aged 18 to 25 with poor reading habits and organizes workshops on writing rap songs.

Collaboration with prison schools to promote literacy is relatively common, either through the supply of teaching materials for classes (e.g. dictionaries, atlases, films and music) or through the organization of joint activities. The library service at the Centre Penitenciari de Dones, for example, organizes a monthly storytelling session aimed at students who are learning to read and write.

Particularly noteworthy is the AlfaDigital programme, which is promoted by the Catalan government’s General Directorate for Prison Services. AlfaDigital is aimed at digital literacy for inmates with the following key objectives:

- To incorporate ICTs into the daily life of prisons, as digital literacy and cultural stimulation tools.
- To promote links between the different areas that carry out actions to foster the digital literacy of inmates.
- To strengthen the tools and areas for collaborative work within and among prisons.

Thus, some prisons utilize this platform not only to improve their inmates’ reading ability and develop their creativity, but to enhance their ICT skills. The library service at
the Centre Penitenciari de Ponent, for example, collaborates with the prison’s teachers to record group reading sessions held in the library with literacy students and new readers and publish them as audiovisual material.

**Art workshops**

Activities carried out to promote art are usually organized outside the prison in collaboration with the school or the prison’s art instructors. These include craft workshops (to make bookmarks, envelopes and Christmas cards to provide inmates with a form of contacting their families, etc.) and photography workshops.

In this respect, one initiative worth highlighting is the “Reading and Prison” photography competition organized jointly by the General Directorate for Prison Services and the Centre for Legal Studies and Specialized Training:

“The objective of the competition is to highlight the subject of reading in prisons through photography. It is about increasing awareness of how artistic practice with people who are deprived of their liberty can be turned into an educational pathway to promote reintegration and rehabilitation. In addition, this artistic medium provides an opportunity to disseminate some of the prison’s cultural and educational work beyond the prison walls. The aim, therefore, is to break with stereotypes about prison life and show society that culture extends to all corners.”

The exhibition for the 2017 competition can be seen in the video Reading and Prison 2017 Exhibition.

**Use of the library**

The use of library areas by other education services is strongly determined by security-related aspects and the proximity of the library. For example, since the library at the Centre Penitenciari Quatre Camins is located within the prison’s education area, inmates can use it as a study room when they are not in class to carry out work set by teachers.

**Conclusions**

As shown, libraries in Catalan prisons play a very active role in the education of inmates. They offer a wide range of activities related to the promotion of reading, literacy and culture, whether as part of an internal library initiative or in partnership with other education services. The survey revealed some relatively common prison activities, such as reading clubs and art workshops, in addition to some highly original initiatives such as rap writing, escape rooms and lip dubs, and programmes such as AlfaDigital, which aim to develop reading and creative abilities while enhancing ICT skills.

Even though the survey detected differences in the range of activities offered, all ten of the library services attempt to adapt their education plans to the needs and
sociocultural characteristics of the inmates. In addition, formal or informal partnerships with staff from other prison education services (teachers, social educators, instructors, etc.) not only serve to expand the service, but often represent a means of overcoming the financial and human constraints faced by Catalan prison libraries.

References


Appendix 1

Name of the center:

Library own services

1.1. What is this service and activities related to education library offers the inmates own regular way?

- Reading clubs.
- Writing contests.
- Exhibitions, assemblies, festivals, etc.
- Readings by authors.
- Loan of text material and others for face-to-face education support:
1.2. Which of these devices or services does the library offer for educational purposes?

- Computers.
- Printers.
- Internet access.
- Others (indicate below which other devices or services).

2. Services offered in collaboration with other educational services of the center (ex. School)

2.1. Is the library located near the school?

- Yes (indicate the approximate distance).
- No.

2.2. With which educational services of the center, the library collaborates on a regular basis?

- School.
- Social educators.
- Others (indicate below which other educational services).

2.3. In what way is the library coordinated with the educational services of the center?

- In a formal way (coordination bodies, commissions, etc.).
- Informally (personal contacts).

2.4. Which of these services does the library provide the staff of the educational services of the center on a regular basis?

- Acquisition of text material and others supporting educational services.
- Loan of documents.
- From the collection of the library.
- Other libraries (interlibrary loan).
- Assignment of library spaces (ex. for classes, organizing activities ...).
- Others (indicate below which other services are offered).
2.5. What is this service and activities the library offers regularly inmates in collaboration with educational services center?

- Reading clubs.
- Writing contests.
- Exhibitions, assemblies, festivals, etc.
- Readings by authors.
- Loan for text material and others for face-to-face education support:
  - From the collection of the library.
- Other libraries (interlibrary loan).
- Loan of text material and others to support distant education:
  - From the collection of the library.
- Other libraries (interlibrary loan).
- Art workshops (theater, music, plastic arts, etc.)
- Creative writing workshops.
- Computer workshops.
- Literacy support workshops.
- Others (indicate below which other activities related to education).

Any other comments on the role of your library in the center educational services can be added here below:
Abstract

The article presents the ideas of the Polish prison education system. It has been based on current Polish legal regulations, statistical data and specialist literature. Nowadays the situation in the labour market requires people to acquire education and to improve their qualifications. People without education, who are excluded from the access to professional development and in-service training, find themselves in an extremely difficult situation. The lack of qualification and vocational skills usually leads to exclusion from the labour market. People who serve their sentences in prisons find themselves in a particularly difficult situation, because their lack of education may push them back into crime. A very positive tendency that may be observed in Poland is a growing demand for prison education. Convicts may acquire knowledge and raise their qualifications at various levels and in various fields. They may follow the curricula at the level of a primary or secondary school; they may pass their Matura certificate and, after the consent of relevant authorities, they can continue their education at the university level. Convicts may also learn a new profession, change their professional qualifications or acquire new additional skills during specialist courses. The qualifications acquired in this way shall meet current demand in the labour market, and convicts may find employment after they leave prisons. Education allows them to improve their self-esteem and self-reliance, to catch up with any deficiencies and to work on their self-discipline. At the same time, education offers opportunities to expand knowledge, to return to the society and to the labour market. Education is one of many possibilities and a real chance for rehabilitation. It is important for society and prisoners to foster the pursuit for education among convicts. It is worth realising, that lot of prisoners still do not want to learn. It may be a result from their previous school failures, the sense of embarrassment caused by their knowledge deficiencies, the lack of interest and faith in...
their own potential. The material for the text has been collected on the basis of the method of theoretical analysis, and it includes available statistical data, legal regulations and literature which refers to the discussed problems. The article aims at the presentation of the Polish prison education system, how it is organised and what advantages it presents for both: convicts and the society. The system is based on formal education, special training courses, career counseling and programmes of prison education. They are implemented by correctional staff in prisons. Problems which refer to the education of convicts in Poland are regulated by the Act of 6th June 1997, the Executive Penal Code, the Act on the Education System and executive acts to the above-mentioned regulations.

**Keywords:** prison education system, education of convicts, penitentiary correctional measures, social re-adaptation, social rehabilitation.
Introduction

Education is one of the most important elements of effective resocialisation. While in prison isolation conditions, convicts are exposed to certain stagnation associated not only with deprivation of freedom, but with related limitations. It is all about access to knowledge, technology, following changes taking place in various areas. Convicts are therefore particularly at risk of social exclusion. It is likely that when they leave prison they will not find work, and they will return to crime and prison. Education is, therefore, a means of minimising the consequences of detention in prison which are disadvantageous from the point of view of the individual and the society.

It should also be noticed that the Polish law guarantees citizens access to education and training. At the same time, it should be taken into account that convicts constitute a specific group of recipients of educational activities. This results not only from the environment in which they are currently staying, but also from school delays and educational negligence.

The education system of convicts in Poland consists not only of schools and trainings, but also of counseling activities and programs initiated and implemented by the prison service. These projects concern education of convicts in various areas and include activities in the field of vocational counseling and counseling. The activities of personnel and convicts in this area have a real influence on the re-adaptation of convicts.

The presented text explains the Polish prison education system. It shows how it is organised in Poland, what kind of solutions are used and what are the advantages for convicts and the society.

The material for the text has been collected on the basis of the method of theoretical analysis. It also includes available statistical data, legal regulations and literature which refers to the discussed problems. It is worth noticing, that available statistical data on prison education in Poland are published and collected by the Prison Guard. It is needless to add, that there are relevant legal regulations which are important in order to manage all the issues related to prison education.

Although there is a number of publications on the significance of education in the process of re-adaptation of convicts, it is necessary to check the available solutions and to perform a constant, in-depth analysis. There is a gap in this area that should be filled with empirical research. Education, improvement of qualifications and re-adaptation of convicts are the elements which affect convicts’ lives after they leave prison, their self-esteem, perception of the world. The point is that convicts should not return to the criminal path, obey the law, have a possibility to earn their living in the form of legal work. It is important to prepare them for returning to the labor market, finding themselves in conditions of freedom, achieving life satisfaction. It is important that while in prison, convicts should experience discipline, learn proper time organisation, learn
how to perform their responsibilities and how to be responsible for themselves and others. It is needless to say, that learning understood as the process through which the person acquires knowledge and develops competences and also as the potential insight of the individual as gaining understanding of previous experiences of humankind is an everlasting task of the author as a researcher, as a curriculum developer as much as a teacher trainer and a facilitator of partnership between different agents of the educational arena. Such learning processes need to take place both in sync and historical dimensions on vertical axles as much as on horizontal ones overlapping time, disciplinary and social status/roles of autonomous individuals who are responsible citizens of today's democracies” (Dezso, 2014, p. 73).

The functioning and assumptions of the Polish prison education system

The functioning of activities concentrated around the organization of education of convicts is governed by the law. These include regulations such as the Act of 6 June 1997 Executive Penal Code (Journal of Laws of 1997 No. 90, item 557, as amended), Act of 7 September 1991 on the system of education (Journal of Laws of 1991 No. 95 item 425, as amended), Act of 14 December 2016 - Educational Law (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 59) and executive acts to them. The Constitution of the Republic of Poland (Journal of Laws 1997 No. 78 item 483) is very important, as in Art. 70. it guarantees the right to education for every citizen.

Prison schools operate in accordance with the Act on the Education System. Teachers who are employed at prison schools are subject to the same regulations and requirements as teachers who are employed in external schools. (Służba Więzienna [SW], 2017a).

During the process of convicts adaptation to living in freedom, providing conditions for the improvement in convicts’ education and professional qualifications becomes extremely significant. All prisoners at penitentiary institutions and custody suites are given opportunities to exercise their statutory right for education which is organised in accordance with the regulations of the Executive Penalty Code (Art. 102 and Art.130-134).

Schools and education centres which operate within penitentiary institutions and custody suites offer education at all the levels, except for higher education level. Regulations allow some convicts to continue their education outside prison. The operating network of prison schools provides education opportunities for under-age convicts who undergo obligatory education as well as to those who voluntarily apply for education. Prison education is organised in a 5-level system: a primary level, a junior level, a junior vocational level, a secondary level and a post-secondary level. On average, school education is provided to about 3500 convicts every year. They are provided with care and education which are the most efficient elements of work in the field of social rehabilitation. Convicts who attend schools come as 4.5% of all convicts who serve their
sentences in penitentiary institutions and custody suites. Education opportunities offered by various types of prison schools are addressed mainly to juvenile convicts and those who serve their sentences for the first time. They form the largest group of pupils at prison schools, and they come as 66% of all the pupils of prison schools. Nevertheless, education is also available for convicts classified in other groups, if they wish to continue their education at school.

During the organisation of the network of prison schools, special emphasis is laid on providing convicts with an opportunity to graduate from primary and junior high schools, because it is impossible to continue further education without the completion of these two school levels. The number of places at prison schools covers the demand for education among all the convicts who require learning at these levels.

Convicts who have already graduated from their secondary school, but who do not have any profession, there are post-secondary vocational schools which offer education in the profession of an IT specialist. In vocational education of convicts, special emphasis is laid on the quality of practical training. Its efficiency is verified during external vocational examinations which are organised by regional examination boards. For a few years now, external vocational examinations have already proved prison school graduates’ readiness for professional work.

It should be also emphasized that the number of graduates who have passed their secondary school final examinations at prison schools is relatively high.

Every year there is a number of convicts who continue their education outside their penitentiary institutions. Addressed to convicts, a supplementary education offer includes training courses organised by penitentiary units. Training courses are dedicated, first of all, to adult convicts who do not have any professional skills or who need to learn a new profession. Training courses are offered mainly to convicts who are at the end of serving their imprisonment sentences in order to provide them with a chance to start a professional career after they leave prison, and to prevent them from crime recidivism.

Training courses are organised in cooperation with employment agencies, and their scope is adjusted to the requirements of the local labour market. The advantage of training courses is their relatively short time and their wide variety.

Considering the fact that an average imprisonment sentence served at penitentiary institutions is relatively short – about two years, training courses come as significant supplementation of the education offer available for convicts with short sentences.

Education of convicts, particularly, preparation for their future professional career after leaving prison is one of the essential components of social rehabilitation at penitentiary institutions.
Tasks related to the improvement of conditions in which professional training of convicts takes place and to the establishment of new education centers for training courses dedicated to convicts have been of primary importance in the programmes implemented by penitentiary institutions. As a result of such activities, a significant improvement in the conditions of work at prison schools can be observed along with the improved quality of vocational education of convicts (SW, 2017a).

As it is indicated by the data published by the Prison Service, in 1st September 2017 schools which operate at penitentiary institutions and custody suites provide convicts with knowledge and qualifications which allow them to work as: cooks, tailors, confectioners, building installation and machine fitters, bricklayers, plasterers, construction installers, electricians, locksmiths, carpenters, steel fixers, concrete placers, electromechanical technicians, hair stylists, electronics installers, IT technicians, assistants to the disabled, industrial maintenance specialists, upholsterers, machine tool operators, book-binders, machine and appliance installers and mechanics (SW, 2017d).

At present (status as of 1st February 2018) schools which operate at penitentiary institutions and custody suites/detention centres provide convicts with knowledge and qualifications which allow them to work as: a tailor, cook, confectioner, building fitter and finishing works in construction, a bricklayer - plasterer, a construction fitter, a concrete mixer - steel fixer, locksmith, carpenter, electrician technician, electromechanic, mechanic - fitter of machines and devices, hairdresser, computer specialist, operator of cutting machines, bookbinder. Education will take place primarily in the form of qualifying vocational courses (SW, 2018).

Valuable sources of information are statistical data. The data for 2016 indicate that on 31st Dec. 2016 there were 71 250 convicts in Polish prisons. There are 87406 places for prisoners. Regarding the problems discussed in the article, the data on prison education are the most interesting for our considerations (SW, 2017b).

A table below presents information on prison schools and school units. It also comes as information on the types of schools which operate in Poland. Prisoners who serve their imprisonment sentences are provided with education within this structure.
Table 1. Prison schools and school units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detailed information</th>
<th>The number of schools in the school year</th>
<th>The number of school units in the school year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior secondary schools</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic vocational schools</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary vocational schools</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary schools</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training courses</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Prison schools provide convicts with an opportunity to complete their primary education and to acquire a profession. Covering any deficiencies in their education and being granted a certificate of school graduation come as a chance for convicts to enter the labour market.

Averagely, school education is organised for approximately 3500 convicts each year. They undergo educational procedures which come as most efficient elements of social rehabilitation. Convicts attending schools come as 4.5% of all convicts who service their sentences at prisons and custody suites. While planning the chain of prison schools, the most important is to provide convicts with a possibility of graduating from the primary and junior high schools, because convicts' further education will be impossible without such graduation certificates. The above-mentioned schools provide education for all the convicts who require courses at the discussed levels. At the same time, it should be emphasized that a relatively high number of convicts pass their examinations for the Matura certificate at prison high schools (SW, 2017a).

A table below presents statistical data referring to the number of convicts who were provided with education at various types of schools.

Table 2. Convicts who were provided with education at prison and non-prison schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detailed information</th>
<th>People in a school year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior secondary schools</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic vocational schools</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary vocational schools</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary schools</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools</td>
<td>1568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training courses</td>
<td>2232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focusing on the area of education of convicts, it is worth noting that on 1st September 2017 a reform of the education system came into force. The reform introduced a change in the education system. The previously binding structure of a 6-year primary school, a 3-year middle school, a 3-year general high school, a 4-year technical high school, a 3-year basic vocational school and a post-secondary school was transformed. The target education system will include:

- an 8-year primary school,
- 4-year general high school,
- 5-year technical college,
- 3-year vocational school of the first degree,
- a 2-year industry school of the second level,
- a 3-year special vocational preparatory school, post-secondary school.

According to the assumptions of the reform, teachers' workplace will be preserved. Additional expenses related to the changes will be financed from government subsidies. Pupils are to learn independence and creativity (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej [MEN], 2017).

Due to legal regulations and the structure of education, these changes also include education of convicts.

As it has been already mentioned, in the field of education of convicts, programmes are important. Among them there are such solutions as the Prison University programmes - and Road to Freedom or Re-adaptation through Education (Moroz, 2009, pp.101-105, Marczak, 2009, p.353). These and other applied solutions are intended to prepare convicts to life in freedom. It is important to avoid committing crime after leaving prison. It is also important to find a way to live, integrate, have a job, pay taxes, cooperate with other people.

Another exemplification of the applied programme is the project "Raising the professional qualifications of prisoners in order to return to the labor market after imprisonment". The Prison Service began its implementation in 2016. As a part of the Knowledge, Education and Development Operational Programme for 2014-2020. In 2016, 257 training cycles took place, which covered 2,926 people. In 2017, 922 trainings were planned and 11,064 convicts participated in them. It is planned to provide training to 46 thousand prisoners within five years - both women and men, in over 30 professions. It will allow them to become employed while serving their sentences, and it will also help to find them a place in the labor market after leaving prison. The programme is a response to the needs of employers. The list of occupations covered by the courses was prepared after the assessment on local labor markets. In the forthcoming time it will be updated. It complements the Government Work Programme for Prisoners. The convicts will be educated in general construction and catering professions, in the field of forklift service, installation of electrical and gas networks, and
development of green areas. There are also courses for the career of an assistant to the disabled, hairdresser, seamstress, florist. The vocational courses will prepare prisoners to obtain employment in production halls that are being built in prisons. 56% of graduates will have their job guaranteed while serving a prison sentence. After completing the training, the prisoners will be directed to employment for a fee, for example at private external contractors, as well as free of charge to local self-governments (SW, 2017c).

The problems discussed in the article are presented in the following figure. It comes as a graphic representation of the collected material. It systematises the contents and indicates the most important issues presented in the text.

Figure 1. Polish prison education system

Although this text is focused on the Polish education system, it is important to cite H. Farley and A. Pike. The authors find that if the prisoners are engaged in education it becomes “one of a range of measures that could alleviate security risk in prisons. For prisoners, one of the main challenges with incarceration is monotony, often leading to frustration, raising the risk of injury for staff and other prisoners” (Farley, Pike, 2016, p. 65) Engagement of imprisoned people in education “may help to alleviate security risk in prisons through relieving monotony and reducing re-offending by promoting critical thinking skills” (Farley, Pike, 2016, p. 65).

Conclusions

The solutions in the field of education of convicts applied in Poland are difficult to be defined as a structure. However, this is a certain area of organised activities regulated by
the Polish law. Convicts have the right to education, with special emphasis on the education of juvenile prisoners. It is important to adjust the educational activities and educational offer to the conditions of the labor market.

There is no doubt about the fact that teaching convicts and equipping them with the skills to take up work after leaving prison is one of the most important components of penitentiary work. The actions undertaken are modified and systematically improved, which increases their value and effectiveness.

Prison education is organised to provide convicts with such professional skills that should give them a chance to find employment after they leave prison.

In order to prepare prisoners properly to return to social structures, opportunities should be created for them to acquire education and to equip them with such skills that are in demand on the labor market. Acquiring formal education and professional competences allows prisoners to reduce the risk of returning to crime. It is important to provide prisoners with professional support within available educational and counseling resources so that they can find their place on the labor market after leaving penitentiary units.

The author of the text asks whether the introduced reform of the education system contributes to the improvement of its functioning. Is it possible to predict what changes will occur on the labor market and to plan educational activities in advance? Will sentenced prisoners continue to gain knowledge after leaving prison? Will prisoners use the acquired qualifications and return to the labor market after leaving prison?

The social significance of the problem and its value for re-socialised individuals implies the need to undertake further empirical research and reflection on the problems posed here.

The social significance of the problem and its value for prisoners implies the need to undertake further research and reflection on the problems explained in the article.

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The Right to Educational Compensation of the Prisoners in the Italian System

Francesca Torlone

Abstract

Starting from the principle of re-education of inmates as stated in the Italian Constitution (article 27, paragraph 3) the essay wants to reflect on the meaning of “educational compensation”. The research method is based on the consultation and analysis of several pedagogical and legal documents, mainly from the Italian context. As a result the essay poses evidence to the involvement of the society as a whole in the “educational compensation” processes that take place within and outside prison, mostly in informal and embedded modes.

Keywords: learning city, transformative learning, learning organisation, educational compensation, embedded learning, adverse learning actions

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Introduction

In this paper we aim to analyse the pedagogical dimension of the re-education principle of punishment in the Italian legal system, governed by national and supranational law, in consideration of the prison context and its function in terms of preventing criminal acts and abating/reducing recidivism. We will therefore refer to the re-education function of the conviction solely in the phase of imprisonment.

At the time of writing, the Italian prison system is undergoing a reform: starting from the activation of the General States of the imprisonment (2015), the reform process has seen the approval of a decree-law (2017) which is being followed by the implementing decrees. In this text we will refer mainly to the Italian Prison Code (1975) and to some changes set forth by law.

The re-education principle, cautiously applied by the Italian constitutional jurisprudence for several decades in favour of the retribution and prevention functions (in its general and special dimensions), has seen increasing levels of promotion, until it became qualified as the main and indispensable purpose of the sentence. The question we intend to investigate is the meaning of the re-education of the convicted individual, respecting the right to the education of each individual - convicted or not - also within "training in which his personality develops" (Art. 2 of the Italian Constitution) - and going beyond repressive models and the temporary incapacitation of prisoners.

When we speak of the (re-)education function of the punishment, from a pedagogical point of view we refer to the set of learning actions - formal, non-formal and informal - that take place inside and outside prison and that intercept the educational valencies of every moment of prison life. We think in other terms of the Bildung, the comprehensive human education of individuals aimed at a re-education in being a citizen with a reflective and transformative view. In the prison Bildung there is, indeed, the whole of the single components of the treatment programme (school, vocational training, workshops, work, the cultivation of spiritual activities, etc.), however there is much more. The entire period of punishment must aim to stimulate in the inmate processes of reflection on his actions and their meaning, from a past and future perspective, as well as processes of individual development transformation.

In this essay we will take on a deliberately legal and pedagogical approach, trying to analyse the educational dimension of the punishment also through the use of approaches and systems related to the judicial disciplines. We believe this approach can contribute on the one hand to reaffirm the learning valencies of the time of incarceration as a whole, from a rehabilitative and inclusive perspective, and on the other hand to reflect on the social responsibilities towards the incarcerated population (before and during the imprisonment).

13 According to these models, the task of the penal system is to prevent people convicted or at risk of conviction from harming society again, without any reference to their re-education.
The concept of educational compensation of the prisoners

The need to re-educate subjects who have violated norms of social behaviour is linked to the occurrence of an "educational harm" suffered by them before the incarceration (we refer to "adverse learning actions", Federighi, 2016), at the root of the fracture with civil society, and accentuated during the period of incarceration.

Educational impairment is associated with the development of learning disorders, which accentuate in the individual the propensity to commit antisocial and criminal acts (Brier, 1989; Bryan et al., 1982), poor autonomy of action and thought, linguistic and mathematical deficit (Brier, 1989), communication difficulties (Schumaker et al., 1982; Hazel and Schumaker, 1988).

When the educational harm occurs, we suggest that the person who suffers it should be recognized a right to educational compensation (following the logic of civil law) or the right to see compensated the harm suffered as a result of the violation of a previous contract or obligation\textsuperscript{14}, or of an unjust harm\textsuperscript{15}.

If we try to interpret the legal/compensatory framework in a pedagogical dimension, we interpret the category of the compensation from an educational point of view. The right to educational compensation arises and must be recognized to the convicted person by virtue of a close etiological link between two important elements. On the one hand there are the shortcomings (scholastic, educational, family, etc.) of society against him, guilty of not having contributed to creating, through adequate educational actions and with diligence, prudence and skill, honest and virtuous citizens, and on the other hand having been guilty, violator of rules of civil coexistence due to the lack and/or inadequate education to life in the polis, without denying the intentionality of certain choices of action, poorly guided or oriented. The harm also continues to be accentuated in the prison institution, to the extent that all the conditions for rehabilitation and rehabilitation of the harmed person are not in place, relying on available components, devices and resources.

Please note that we refer this construct not only to "street" crime (Carnevale, 2015:109), in which there is an evident lack of guiding values in the construction of one's life in relation to that of others and in the respect of ethical and social values, but also to many areas of illicit behaviour, barely related to situations of maladjustment and social dangerousness (we refer to illegal behaviours against the Public Administration, of a tax nature, etc.).

\textsuperscript{14}This is a contractual responsibility (regulated in Italy by Articles 1218 et seq of the Civil Code).

\textsuperscript{15}This is a non-contractual or aquilian responsibility (regulated in Italy by Articles 2043 et seq of the Civil Code): the harm is unjust because of someone's malicious or negligent act. The fact is negligent (according to the legal references) if caused by negligence, imprudence or inexperience.
The "service" (as many erroneously perceive it, according to the positivistic conception of the crime) (Carnevale, 2015:109) that prison operators provide to prisoners, who are considered problematic, disadvantaged, fragile subjects, takes, in this perspective, the form of an "obligation" to design and implement measures of recovery, rehabilitation and growth to reconstitute the correct mutual obligation in the relationship between prisoner and prison institution, which represents the society that failed him.

With this in mind we aim to read and study the subjective position of the prisoner (convicted, awaiting sentencing, subjected to precautionary custody in prison), who must be recognized the right to be (re-)educated in relation to the fact committed and to being civis in general, but also with regard to the possibility of constructing on his own, within the prison, a path of constructing meaning, of acquisition, growth and development, to be applied on the outside once the sentence has been expiated.

The interpretative question of the re-education principle of the prison treatment from a pedagogical perspective

Studying education and training in prisons poses a strong pedagogical problem that highlights a deep distance between individual and collective behaviours desired in the prison context and behaviours actually practiced there.

This is not the place to revisit the well-known theories on the function of punishment (retribution and general and special prevention). Instead, we would like to try to understand its pedagogical purpose, also in view of an organic reform of the Italian system of sanctions currently under way. In other words, we would like to try to reinterpret the treatment logic adopted by the Italian legislator in 1975 and the reforming one.

It is the dichotomy between punishing (even with the use of violence) and educating, between the exercise of a coercive force that risks de-educating in regards to "justice", "legality", respect for values and constitutive principles of a democratic society and a state of law, and the practice of a spontaneous and conscious adherence to a reconstruction path of personal and professional life within the punitive context. From a pedagogical perspective, the question to be answered is how to make the period of punishment educational without reducing it to a mere moment of neutralization, segregation, idle parking and incapacitating of those who suffer it.

We analyse this problem considering the retribution paradigm of a criminal penalty, still largely underlying the criminal systems16mitigated, however, by re-education and rehabilitation approaches (which the practice of criminal law is still struggling to

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16 The commission of serious and alarming crimes triggers, today as in the past, not only in the victims but also and especially in the community feelings of aggression and frustration that turn into emotional needs for punishment. This is an unequivocal sign of a "rooted persistence of a retribution mentality" (Fiandaca, 1991:46; Mazzucato, 2010:121), recognizable in ordinary people and in judicial practice itself.
implement, to the detriment of the social and human costs that the penalty entails, primarily in terms of social exclusion, e.g. Pavarini, 2006). Retracing ancient conceptions (Foucault, 1976), the penalty is used to "punish" those who have caused an evil with their illicit actions, violating rules to protect human rights and civil coexistence (legal theory). Those who make mistakes first of all pay: the penalty is an evil, a suffering that serves to reciprocate the harm done by committing a crime. It expresses an exchange, the idea of a consideration, a remuneration, a retribution, unrelated to any purpose to be achieved. We refer to the "gallows culture" of Massimo Pavarini, which opposes the crime to the punishment. It is the principle of absolute justice, which nevertheless forgets the co-responsibility of society in the genesis of the crime, disinterested in the future of the individual inmate. The root problem also emerges from the very qualification of the punishment, from "poena", i.e. suffering and strain to be inflicted on the offender in response to the criminal offences committed by him17. This evokes, from a historical point of view, capital or corporal punishment and imprisonment.

In the modern landscape, the retribution idea loses autonomy. Taking up the perspective of Cesare Beccaria, it implies the personality, the determinateness, the proportionality and the unavoidability of the sentence. The basic sanctioning model is therefore such that the negativity of the unlawful act (crime) can only be answered by a reaction of the same nature, i.e. by applying a negative reaction against the offender, reproducing it with the same severity according to a requirement of proportionality (Fiandaca-Musco, 2009:704). Personality and proportionality of punishment assume a central position in the rehabilitation with the function of special prevention: the more the recipient is aware of the criminal action committed the more he feels the sanction imposed as right and proportionate and reinforces his intent of educational redemption. Punishment, in other words, even if deserved (where it really is), must tend to re-educate the inmate so that he will avoid future crimes. The Italian Constitution of 1948 states it: "Punishments must not consist of treatments contrary to the sense of humanity and must aim at the rehabilitation of the convicted" (Article 27 paragraph 3). In a famous ruling, the Italian Constitutional Court also strengthened its meaning and value, requiring the legislator to "keep in mind not only the rehabilitative purposes of the sentence, but also to prepare all the appropriate means to achieve them and the forms suitable to guarantee them" (ruling of the Constitutional Court no.204 of 1974). The means and the forms are, from a pedagogical point of view, the devices that accompany the learning actions in the prison.

So we repeat the dichotomy we mentioned earlier, which highlights the need to build an educational climate within which the punishment, "humanly understood and applied" (ruling of the Constitutional Court no.12 of 1966), must be placed to be able to re-educate the individual and transform his behaviours. Humanity and re-educational nature of the punishment complete each other, offering a solid reconstruction of the

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17 The literature on the subject of justifying theories of punishment is significant and vast, and crosses over into different disciplinary fields, such as the judicial/penal, criminological, philosophical, psychological and theological.
social bond broken by the commission of the crime and, from a pedagogical perspective, they symbiotically base the development of the personality of the inmate (also activating processes of critical reflection on the self and on one’s own act).

The arduous direction taken by law and pedagogy consists therefore in moving away from exclusively retributive and coercive practices (at least in theory) and in the contextual promotion of rehabilitative pathways that enhance every educational component of the penal system (Torlone, Vryonides, 2016).

You learn from your errors

Errors and error management for educational purposes are fields of investigation that are broader than anyone can imagine, especially for those who do educational work in complex contexts. The pedagogy of errors considers these one of the most useful educational tools, and also one of the most neglected.

Many studies of the concept of error concern the scholastic environment. The tendency is to not demonize it, but to promote it to stimulate the reflective and critical capacity in the child, with the support of the teachers.

In general, error is an integral part of the existence of man and of every human activity. There is a variety of types of error. Here we take into consideration the errors we learn from, which generate reflection and creativity, which allow us to activate transformative and learning processes. There are "painful and very unpleasant" errors (Swartz et al., 1980:16) that help to improve our actions because they allow us to "know what we should not do" (Swartz et al., 1980:16) and force us to seek help and collaboration from the people around us. This way we learn from our errors, but at the same time the error can reveal a lack of learning.

The question of pedagogical interest that we are trying to highlight here is how to manage the error of the offender so that he may begin a process of aware creation of meaning and knowledge.

In general, the error involves a "misalignment between reality considered in oneself and reality as formulated within the representations given by the individual sciences" (Piccinno, 2005:81). It is the disconnect between reality and representation, between prescriptions (including laws), rules of behaviour and the way in which an individual makes them his own in his actions.

In general terms, the phases of error management process can be identified in the following (Fig. 1):

Figure 1. The phases of error handling

1. offence  ➔  2. recognition  ➔  3. management  ➔  4. transformation into a new awareness of behaviour
The following are briefly analysed.

**Recognizing the error**

The error recognition phase is complex because it takes into consideration:

1. the scale and significance with respect to the offender’s rehabilitation aim
2. the competence in relation to the learner: recognizing it means knowing how to make it known to those who have committed it, in order to get information on the offender, on his way of building knowledge and behaviours, on the state of his cultural heritage, and on the level of responsiveness of the offender to educational actions that involve him
3. the objectives of the error in close connection with the rehabilitation purpose: the error assumes different importance and value depending on the criminal act of the offender and the aim that the criminal system takes on towards him. The educational design for managing errors will have to consider both variables to define priorities and relevance.

Analysing the causes (relevant to designing effective and quality educational interventions) of someone’s errors is not a simple task. We need to interrogate the error: the path to be reconstructed is not linear at all, it requires the selection of important aspects and information for the design of the educational action, not always easy to collect and immediately available, complex in themselves and also for the interaction with other components that must be considered in the individual planning.

**Manage the error and turn it into new knowledge or behaviour**

It is in the relationship between phase 3 and phase 4 (see Fig. 1), between the diversity and quality of educational actions put in place for the offender (in addition to the normally prescribed treatment programme) and the response that they arouse in him, which activates evolutionary phenomena, from whose observation and analysis it is possible to understand the effectiveness of the educational practices (inside and outside the prison) to promote transformation and learning.

We start from the "fallibility" in the process of growth and development of each individual (Popper, 1969) that, even in the theoretical perspective of socio-constructivism, becomes a critical review tool, aimed at bringing out the committed error, interpreting it, analysing it to collect information on the way of learning, to relate to the reality of the offender and the state of his knowledge, also in terms of behaviour and of its interpretation.

The subject is actively involved in the autonomous construction of knowledge, meaning and behaviour. This process is situated in the context where he operates and develops into a social dimension of interaction between subjects and the real world through dynamics of reasoned negotiation of meanings (Vygotsky, 1980). Interaction with the
context generates learning, but also unlearning. In this constant process of constructing meaning and learning, error is all the more unavoidable given the scarcity, or complete absence, of any points of reference and "more knowledgeable others" (Vygotsky, 1980), to support the generation of a cognitive and behavioural advancement. It is therefore necessary, in order to learn from the error, also with a view to abating or reducing recidivism, to recognize its educational potential and therefore its source of learning from a rehabilitative perspective, without demonizing the offender by reason of the mistake made. It must be recognized that, through educational actions promoted for the management of the error, the offender can approach the proximal development zone (Vygotsky, 1978), in a process of continuous and gradual self-development, which determines the boundaries within which to act for the purpose of re-education and return to society. It is the quality of the educational actions, carried out inside and outside the prison walls, to support the management of the error, the cause of imprisonment, which can make the difference in the moment of problematization and accompaniment: the offender often lacks the tools, and not just cultural, to read critically his own history, his own crime experience, to construct meanings, also in relation to the environment that is often at the root of criminal behaviour.

In addition to a series of treatment interventions, including medical and psychological ones, it is important to activate educational processes to contextualize the criminal action within a self-directed path of transformation and growth of behaviours and knowledge related to them.

In other words, the retributive and rehabilitative functions of the punishment, in a pedagogical perspective, promote, with the support of professionals, actions to activate reflection and analysis of the committed mistake, aimed at encouraging the growth of the prisoner-offender-student, his conquest of autonomous awareness of the harm caused (to a wide range of subjects, in addition to the person directly offended by the crime), the production of new awareness, and the implementation of the conditions to avoid repeating the illicit conduct. The management, whether intentional and not, of the entire prison context in which the offender lives must strive in this direction. In this regard, restorative justice contains strong educational potentials, promoting in the offender, also through the support of educational process professionals, paths of reflection on the criminal act and its consequences, in particular on its victims.

An error, understood as an inadequate action in relation to an objective, if managed and controlled, can represent an opportunity for growth and transformation (gradual and with increasing awareness), a learning environment towards the fullest re-education.

For prison education, the challenge is to gain the cognitive and intervention tools able to give each educational action ever greater levels of effectiveness in a re-educational sense, that is, the awareness and correction of past errors to avoid committing crimes again.
Penalties (incarceration and probation)

Let us briefly mention the issue of the penalties set forth in the Italian criminal system. Incarceration, the deprivation of personal freedom, stands out among the criminal penalties that in modern times have taken an almost hegemonic role, reinforcing the "prisoncentric" nature of the penal response (destined to produce the well-known phenomenon of prison overcrowding, often leading to intolerable levels of incivility and insecurity). Criminal law does not explain why this was chosen as the penalty of reference and the only option of punishment. The fact is that this criminal justice policy has contributed to affirming the traditional autarchy of incarceration facilities, subject to the logic of "total institutions" (Goffman, 2001), which seize part of the time and interests of those who depend on them, offering in exchange an "encompassing" world (character accentuated even more in the institutions specialized in maximum security or in rigid custody, as per Article 41-bis of the Penal Code, for association-related crimes).

However, the system also provides for the execution of penal sanctions in an external penal area (so-called probation) to promote alternative measures thanks to initiatives linking prisons with the territory. Just to mention some, these measures include a trial assignment to social services and in special cases, house arrest and special house arrest, outside assistance for minors, parole and early release.

The external penal area, in the recent Italian reforms of the punishment system, tends more and more to assert itself in response to the need for rehabilitation of the offender. The intent is also to permanently reduce the number of prisoners and to implement the principle of subsidiarity or extrema ratio regarding the use of incarceration (proposing a different system of penalties, also in compliance with the indications of the European Court and the Constitutional Court), always paying attention to the multipurpose function, or rather, essentially and mainly the re-education purpose of the sentence (inside and outside prison) to avoid the risk that the alternative measures become mere instruments of deflation of the prison population.

The incentive system

The topic of incentives in the penal system also deserves a mention. Again, with a view to rehabilitation, the educational theory of incentives was translated into the judicial field (not only in Italy) by introducing a flexibility of the sentence in the executive phase. The supervisory magistrate has the option to modify the quantity and quality of the sentence, following criteria of effectiveness and regularity/stability in the progression of the individual within his own path of re-socialization, rehabilitation and re-education. This path, with gradual steps regularly followed in their consequentiality, can be fuelled

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18 The distinctive elements of the total institution are: 1. the removal and exclusion from the rest of society of imprisoned subjects; 2. the formal and centrally administered organisation of the place and its internal dynamics; 3. the control from above of the members/subjects.

19 Making prison an alternative measure and not the other way around (Flick, 2015:331).
by rewards (e.g. bonus leave permits, outside work, parole, licenses), on the basis of technical reports that give account of activities of observation and analysis of the inmate within prison life. It is not enough to not have behaved contra legem during the incarceration. It is necessary that the inmate/convict has "proved his participation in the rehabilitation work" (Art. 54, par. 1 of the Italian Prison Code) to be eligible for benefits such as early release, with rigid calculations related to the duration of the incarceration.

However, the incentive understood as negotiating selfish and opportunity interests ("the more you give me, the more I give you") risks activating "adverse educational actions" and defeat the educational aspect of the "reward" (in addition to the retribution aspect of punishment) by virtue of the prison exchange between inside and outside (often anticipated in the procedural phase with the plea agreement). The exchange takes place because it is the subject of negotiation, even though on the basis of a sort of preliminary investigation through the collection of reports and the "information statement" by the prison institution hosting the prisoner.

Access to reward benefits, on the other hand, can play an educational role, if accompanied by processes of management of the learning values of the external contexts where the sentence is served. The topic refers to the opportunity to rethink and design the penal system as a whole as a "learning city" (OECD, 1993, 1973; Osborne, 2014; Longworth & Osborne, 2010; Federighi, 2016).

**The prison context to support the prisoners' growth**

Education, training and work are central aspects in the life of every individual, essential for the conscious construction of their identity (also professional) and their independence (also economic). This centrality is also confirmed for the inmate population: denying the right to education, training, development of one's personality and work to those who erred is not punishing the inmates for the crimes committed, but rather depriving them of relationships, future plans and the educational compensation we mentioned. The point of arrival of the process of learning with a transformational perspective is the reconstruction by the inmate of a relationship with society, which represents the context and the cause of his crime. In this regard, there is also talk of a corrective function of the sentence, aimed at changing the mental attitude and the underlying values of the inmate, rehabilitating him before himself and society. Reconstituting this relationship, also recognizing the prison institutions as "cognitive systems" (Federighi, Torlone, 2015), capable of transforming into an educational function the knowledge that is available within them, means putting the prisoner in a condition of conscious redemption (provided that the offender understands the sentence imposed and does not consider it unjust or disproportionate).

From a pedagogical point of view, the interesting point is to understand and reflect on the meaning of the punishment, possibly combined with the recognition of incentives for

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20 We do not address here the well-known question of the prisoners' work (quality, economic conditions).
each individual inmate within a project of personal and social realization defined and constructed with the inmate himself, going beyond stimuli (as few as they are) coming from the penal law and from the practice of punishing that it regulates (while recognizing the afflictive and preventive functions of the penal sanction, in addition to the educational one).

The pedagogical intent in the study of prison contexts is to enhance everything that can promote the growth of the inmate, developing his potential while also exalting the educational potential of the environment in which he lives, helping to activate transformational processes (respecting his dignity as a human being). The important pedagogical issue concerns the planning and implementation of adequate educational actions with those who perform an educational function for the inmate population, based on the full accomplishment of each individual’s re-education, starting from the prison context. These actions, combined with other interventions included in the treatment programme, must aim to improve the offender, to re-educate him and to re-socialize him so that he can find his full realization and not be dangerous for society. In this perspective, prison, far from being a school of crime and illegality, contributes to recovering responsible citizens (previously detoured), provided that there are spaces for rehabilitation and growth projects, aware or otherwise (e.g. self-education, work, relationships, etc.).

The execution of the sentence becomes the moment of recovery of the convicted through the enhancement of his potential, his personal fulfilment and the satisfaction of his requirements, questions, needs for change. The collection of educational interventions that the prison institution offers to every inmate, with its rules, procedures and restrictions (also physical in nature due to the difficulty of interacting with the outside world), also contributes to the recovery and integral development of the prisoners’ personality. From a place of mere custody, the prison becomes an institution that in itself has educational components for the promotion of the person and for his personal and social rehabilitation. The “controlled persons” (Goffman, 2001) become an active part and co-constructor of systematic and critical educational actions, which originate and take place within the prison, constantly revisited and adapted to new paths of individual improvement.

The pedagogical specificity lies therefore in the analysis of the learning valencies of context, as well as in the study of the value of educational purposes and methods in the activities, relationships and dynamics that permeate the prison environment. Last but not least, pedagogy is called upon to identify those who, by virtue of their solid knowledge of individual prisoners, are in a position to manage individual growth actions.
"Treatment prison" between pedagogy, criminal law and learning organisation

The "treatment" - a positivistic word, recurrent in the Italian punishment system - as defined in its individual elements by the prison system\textsuperscript{21}, still remains a little-defined concept. It translates into norms and practices that are implemented "in separated or non-separated spaces for a more or less forced community aiming to pursue the objective of reducing, containing and combating the social, economic, cultural etc. deficit which marked the experiences of the inmate's life in order to be able to return him to society without his deficits and therefore with a prognosis, a prospect of easier social integration" (Pavarini, 2003:7).

The legislator's language from 1975 harks back to ancient psychiatric approaches: it speaks of "scientific observation of the personality" and "individualized treatment". On the model of the clinical sciences, it refers to a process of observation, diagnosis, prognosis (Pavarini, 2003). Instead, there are no references to educational and pedagogical approaches, in terms of designing educational actions - not just formal - with a transformative approach, aimed at the growth and personal development of the prisoner through the acquisition of attitudes, behaviours, values and knowledge.

The "treatment prison", as regulated by prison provisions, highlights the complexity of an organisational system that tends towards the (prison and re-education) treatment of the inmates (held and convicted). In prisons, the difference applied by the regulations is towards the recipients of the treatment (Art.1 Italian Prison Code and Art. 1 of Italian Presidential Decree 230/2000). It is divided into:

- prison treatment, for defendants subjected to measures depriving personal freedom (pending trial or final sentence of conviction or imprisonment for precautionary reasons). The goal of treatment is to "support their human, cultural and professional interests". If they request it, they are admitted to educational, cultural and work activities organised for the inmates (the reference is always to structured and intentional activities). This is the set of rules and principles that inform life in prison
- re-educational treatment, for convicts and inmates. The aim of the treatment, in addition to the one just stated for the accused, is to "promote a process of change of the personal conditions and attitudes, and of the family and social relationships that are an obstacle to a constructive social participation".

However, the process of "change" interpreted with a pedagogical approach, i.e. "transformative learning" (Mezirow, 2000, 1991) is a growth objective, common to the entire population of prisoners (Fig. 2). By the very fact of being in the prison, each

\textsuperscript{21} The treatment mainly uses a series of activities (Article 15 of the Italian Prison Code, paragraph 1-2) such as: activities that are educational (e.g. compulsory education, secondary education, university centres), training (offering that varies depending on the prison), work, cultural, recreational, sporting or religious.
prisoner is exposed to processes of individual change (for better or worse, depending on the quality of the educational actions of which he is a part), intentional or not.

*Figure 2. The interaction between transformative learning and the "treatment" prison*

Recognizing the prison institution as a source of learning by itself contributes to activating endogenous processes of organisational change (Torlone, 2015) - promoted and managed by "transformational managers" (Foglio, 2011:37) - depending on the organisation's continuous improvement and growth of the detained population. The change compared to a prisoner exposed to informal learning processes in prison (see below) is intended as assumptions, knowledge, points of view and values considered no longer valid and replaced with new assumptions, knowledge, points of view, values that take the place of the previous one as a result of a critical reflection on their validity.

*(Re)educate informally in the prison context*

The most important and significant learning processes (also in quantitative terms) are those of an informal, structured nature while serving time, in a manner incorporated into each moment of the sentence period. From the more structured and procedural actions (interviews, searches, access to the health service, etc.) to those that are less, if not at all, structured and unintentional (e.g. contacts with prison staff).

Several studies show that in a complex system, such as the prison organisation, individuals develop a culture in which the processes of knowledge socialization and informal (and incidental) learning are more important and significant than formalized training actions. It is ultimately a question of recognizing the learning valencies (De Sanctis, 1975) of the various components of the prison system, although not perceived as such, which promotes self-learning processes. These valencies are neither manifest nor declared, but must be made manifest so that the training processes in which prisoners are involved become legible, such as school or course programmes.
This set of experiences and moments of daily life strongly affects the lives of those who live there, contributes to training them, to educating them or dis-educating them, albeit in a less obvious and explicit way, less open to being planned or structured than other educational experiences (intentional, organised and structured, such as a course, a workshop, a seminar, etc.). The recurrence and pervasiveness of these experiences make them particularly important, even more so than other educational dimensions. They can contribute to creating virtuous or wrong life stories of the individuals who are entrusted to be "re-educated" and "rehabilitated". Pervasiveness is linked to continuity: they are learning processes that are always active, every day, all day, arising at every moment of contact and relationship between the prisoner/learner on one side and the custody magistrate, prison police officers, other in-house staff, other inmates, external experts, and the prison organisation on the other.

These processes are aimed at acquiring and producing knowledge and behaviours during the course of every activity of prison life (from the request for a leave to the communication of visits and the participation in hearings, etc.). Both the individual prisoner and the prison institution intentionally manage "non-training" activities which, however, generate more or less aware training and growth or de-growth processes.

Thus, the prisoner's re-education also takes place through the processes of informal learning, incidental learning and embedded learning, which we consider to be complementary to "traditional" interventions carried out within the "formal" prison institution (university hubs, vocational training courses, school education). We do not delve into the study of other, albeit important, approaches, such as situated, self-directed, experiential and tacit learning, action learning, and the communities of practices, which would risk widening excessively the subject of analysis.

The main elements that characterize informal learning refer to learning generated by any type of action, whose object is both knowledge and behaviour, and which is not necessarily identified with improvement paths given the full or partial lack of intentionality. Eraut (2004) distinguishes between "deliberative", "reactive" and "implicit" informal learning, due to the degree of intentionality and consequent reflection of the individual involved: in implicit learning there is no time to reflect and define problems, there is time only to learn and increase your knowledge.

This form of learning is encouraged or discouraged by the organisation one belongs to, especially in those in which learning organisation culture is strong (Argyris and Schon, 1978; Senge, 1990; Watkins and Marsick, 1993).

On the other hand, "knowing is a process not a product" (Bruner, 1966:72): ideas and concepts are formed, transformed and reproduced constantly through experience lived in a given context (Kolb, 1984); experience modifies their aspects, contents and facets through the unfolding of interrelated phases that end with the creation of new knowledge, even tacit (Polanyi, 1967). This process of continuous transformation of
daily experience interprets, enriches and takes place through and inside the prison system. All the actions that take place in it - even those that do not seem to have educational purposes - have within them learning as a by-product (Fig. 3) (Marsick and Watkins, 1990). Learning is incidental, generated by interpersonal relationships, by the culture of the organisation, by trial and error, by the results obtained from a task (Marsick and Watkins, 1990, 2001; Kerka, 2000) or from a service that one is called to perform, even if it is often invisible (Eraut, 2004) and not always recognized by the prisoner.

Figure 3. Learning as a by-product of the activities carried out in the prison

And thus it is possible to state that the intentionality of the prisoner is not a characterizing element of every educational process, but only of those that fall within its treatment plan under Articles 1 and 13 of the Italian Prison Code and Art. 29 of Italian Presidential Decree 230/2000. Conversely, organisational educational intentionality is pervasive and requires pedagogical reflections to control its (dis-)educational/learning valencies.

With this in mind, stating that the exclusion of a particular category of prisoners from rehabilitation treatment due to their dangerousness, both inside and outside the prison (Articles 4-bis and 41-bis of the Italian Prison Code22) - and therefore to ensure and protect order and security - implies their lack of re-education and the fulfilment solely of the social preventive function meets the limits linked to the belief that one can be "trained" or "educated" exclusively by structured actions included in the treatment programme.

Conclusions

22 These are prisoners who are part of organised crime, mafia, terrorist organisations, but also inmates held for crimes of particular social alarm (e.g. sex crimes). They are subjected to a harsh punishment regime on the basis of the type of crime committed. Even though they have been raised, the issues of constitutional legitimacy have been declared unfounded by the Italian Constitutional Court (by way of example, we mention ruling no. 410 of 23 November 1993; no. 35124 of 14 October 1996; no.135 of April 2003; no.190 of 28 May 2010, http://www.cortecostituzionale.it/default.do, 12/2015). With particular reference to the regime referred to in Article 41-bis Pen. Code, the law provides for the suspension of "normal rules of treatment" (paragraph 1) and "the right to suspend, in whole or in part, (...) the application of treatment rules and prison regulations" of the Prison Code "that may stand in concrete contrast with the requirements of order and security" (par.2).
Reading the criminal system in terms of a cognitive system (Federighi and Torlone, 2015) means including pure informal and embedded learning processes (where the informality is associated with the intentionality of the organisation that "manages" the daily life, the rules, the activities of prisoners), with which every element of the prison context is permeated and involving all the subjects who live there. The educational potential of this context is strongly linked to the culture of the learning organisation, or the set of devices, values, rules, procedures, etc. that the prison organisation puts in place for the re-education of prisoners (none excluded). The organisation as such (in its activities inside and outside prison, in the diversity of all the personnel involved - from the custody magistrate to the prison and external staff, in the adopted organisational models) - is called upon to carry out educational functions in every moment of daily life prison. It is necessary to have full awareness at every level in order to direct the educational action of management, operators and prisoners.

Recognizing the educational potential of the context and the foundation of purpose of the punishment imposes a reflection on the need to eliminate the possibility that - even informally or accidentally - "unfavourable educational actions may be put in place" in spite of the constitutional dictate.

As a whole, the treatment programme is useful for the rehabilitation of the prisoner only if and to the extent that it is consistent with the training potential put in place by the organisation.

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Thematic Article

Education of the Convicts Serving their Prison Terms in the Slovak Republic

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Abstract

The article deals with issues of educated prisoners. The basic features describe the penitentiary system in Slovakia, convicted as an excluded group of society and the need for their inclusion in society. It focuses in detail on educating convicts, their educational needs and how to implement education.

Keywords: education, society, social inclusion, convicted people, educational needs, post-penitentiary care.

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**Introduction**

Serious changes have taken place in the prison service in the Slovak Republic in the last couple of years. These changes are reflected in the amendment to the Criminal Code of 2005 as well as in the philosophy of imprisonment and humanisation of the prison service.

The punishment of imprisonment is one of the strictest and most universal punishments in the Slovak Republic; it belongs among the eleven types of penal sanctions. This punishment also represents the most serious form of intervention in one’s freedom and citizen’s rights. It has three basic functions:

- **Repressive function** – the main aim of this function is to punish the person for the crime committed and to prevent further actions of this kind. At the same time, it also has a deterrent effect on other people in the society,
- **Preventive function** – the punishment can prevent further crimes in the society,
- **Re-educational function** – it emphasizes the transformation and helps develop desirable attitudes in the convicts.

The philosophy of imprisonment incorporates more than just the repressive function, since every prison term (except for the life imprisonment) will end. Effective punishments eliminate the recurrence of criminal activity. This result can be achieved through a positive development of the convict’s personality. For this reason, social rehabilitation as a function is considered significant. Depriving the convict of their freedom by placing them into an isolated environment provides an opportunity to influence their personality in a way that could help them to live a proper life after their release and refrain from recidivous actions.

The fundamental instrument of the penal care deals with the treatment of convicts. Its main aim is to support and develop the sense of responsibility in them. It is also concerned with the observance of law and social standards, positive personal qualities, respect for other people, self-respect, positive relationship towards one’s family and at the same time, trying to mitigate the negative influence of the prison environment. A treatment program is tailored for every convict. The program introduces a purposeful, complex and structured effect on the convict taking into account their personal qualities, specialized knowledge and level of education. Treatment instruments include various methods and forms of pedagogical and psychological activities as well as social work methods, institutional discipline, disciplinary authority, work classification, education, cultural and public awareness raising activities (Act No. 475/2005 on Prison Sentence Execution, § 11, § 15–16).

The punishment of imprisonment in the Slovak Republic is practiced in eight prisons, four detention facilities and a specialized prison hospital. Imprisonment is the punishment for convicts who have received a non-suspended sentence; during their
imprisonment they are deprived of their personal freedom for violating the valid legal standards of the given society by committing illegal acts.

**Convicts as a socially excluded social group**

The number of convicts in Slovakia keeps reducing which can be seen in Table G1. However convicts represent 0.16% of Slovak citizens on average. In the last five years, the average number of convicts serving their prison sentences in the Slovak Republic was 8,691.

*Table 1: Development of the number of convicts in the Slovak Republic to the 31.12.*

![Graph showing the development of the number of convicts in the Slovak Republic over time.](image)

*Source: Compiled according to the Yearbook of the Social Welfare Department Corps of Prison and Court Guard in 2016 (2017) and the Number of Accused and Convicted Persons document (2018)*

Convicts represent a highly heterogeneous group whose heterogeneity lies in its fundamental attributes such as gender, age, education and work qualification. According to the overall statistics (Yearbook of the Social Welfare Department Corps of Prison and Court Guard of 2016), the typical adult convict in the Slovak Republic can be characterized as a 30 to 45 years old male who serves one to five years in the minimum guarding level prison. He graduated from an elementary or high school without the leaving exam and lacks any professional qualifications. As an example, we can list the results of our research that we conducted at the middle and maximum levels of security. Up to 40% of those convicted in our research sample had the highest level of basic education. 42.5% reported their highest level education secondary education without a school-leaving examination, only 16.25% secondary education with a school-leaving examination and only 1.25% university education.

In the last two decades, the issue of the socially excluded, marginalized and disadvantaged social groups has been largely discussed in the professional community. Convicts serving non-suspended sentences in prison belong among groups endangered by social exclusion. Social exclusion is defined as inequality of different individuals or whole groups of citizens in terms of their access to the life opportunities in the society that leads to their social isolation (J. Matulčik, 2012). Convicts are socially excluded mainly in the following ways:
Ex-consicts released from the prison also represent a disadvantaged group. Their disadvantage “lies in the fact that after their release the ex-consicts are in an unfavourable position in relation to other members of the society since they have been stigmatized with their status. Other disadvantages include the lack of education, qualification, social and communicative skills” (A. Kovač – L. Širova, 2008, pp. 3 – 4).

Inmates represent the highest risk social group; the society does not offer them compassion or understanding and remains unwilling to help them. The more they are threatened by this rejection, the bigger the threat they represent (M. Justova, 2005). One of the fundamental ways to integrate them into the professional and social life after they are released from the prison is undoubtedly education.

**Convicts’ education**

Educational systems may be able to bring consciousnesses closer to one another, therefore, education can lay the foundation for the normalisation of relationships, the evolution of dialogues and human integration over the long term (Harai, 2015, p. 77). Education is a part of the treatment program. It is also characterized as “a set of activities with pedagogical and psychological effect on the convict aimed at social rehabilitation and elimination of subjective reasons for which the individual committed criminal acts....” (Decree No. 368/2008 of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic publishing the Order for serving of prison sentence, § 24). Convict education is defined as a educational process based on andragogical aspects which influences the convict’s personality. This process contributes to the convicts’ social rehabilitation and helps form and cultivate their adult personalities. Education facilitates their return to the normal life and society after their release.

The aim of education is to develop adequate behaviour and value orientation in line with the generally binding legal regulations in the convict, with the aim to prevent them from returning to criminal activity after their release (Decree No. 368/2008 of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic publishing the Order for serving of prison sentence, § 24).

Upbringing and education are interconnected in terms of their aims. Their common goal is to develop the convict’s personality and help them adapt to the normal life after being released from the prison. It relates to their abilities to follow the valid legal standards of the given society and live a fulfilling life in professional, social and cultural areas.

The achieved qualification level is one of the conditions of successful adaptation after the release. Giovanni Delaere, Sophie De Caluwe and Geraldine Clarebout (2013, p. 3)
claim that low qualification constitutes one of the differences between the target group of convicts and other members of the society along with the high unemployment and low activity rates among the ex-convicts. Gaining a higher qualification can be of a great help for convicts in the labour market. Unemployment also represents one of the reasons for recidivous behaviour. Although not all criminal offenders and convicts lack education, it characterizes a large portion of this group. An example characterizing the level of education of convicts in Slovakia is mentioned above. In our research the subjects with relatively low education constituted a large group.

Education of convicts in the treatment programme fulfils mainly the following functions:

- social rehabilitation or reintegration – a return into the society,
- re-education – correction of behaviour to an acceptable or required manner,
- prevention of recidivous behaviour,
- facilitation – facilitates and navigates the convict’s life after their release,
- adaptation – helps the convict deal with changes, adapt to conditions in the society, particularly after long-term imprisonment. This function helps to prevent or to reduce their cultural shock.

**Legislation regarding the education of convicts in the Slovak Republic**

The Slovak legislation does not recognize the term „penal” (penal system), not even in terms of education, it employs merely terms such as “education” and “convicts’ education”. However, education is one of the treatment methods and it belongs among the convicts’ rights.

Convicts’ education is a set of activities requiring their active. Activities focus on their incorporation into the society in accordance with their personal and social needs. A successful completion of the educational course is usually confirmed by issuing a certificate to the convict by an accredited institution. The certificate must not obviously show that its holder completed their education in a prison (Act No. 475/2005 on Prison Sentence Execution, § 32). Convicts’ education consist of:

- general education,
- cultural and sport activities,
- social education,
- using of library funds, which are free of charge (Decree No 368/2008 of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic publishing the Order for serving of prison sentence, § 44).

Educational activities are performed in all prisons and for this purpose the institutions establish classrooms, detached classrooms and alternatively also classrooms for practical teaching. Educational activities take place on a daily basis but convicts can also apply for individual courses. Foreign convicts or convicts without citizenship who do not
speak Slovak are provided an opportunity to learn Slovak facilitated in a language they do understand. If the conditions allow, such convicts are further educated in a language they do understand (Order No. 7 on education and organization of leisure activities for accused and convicted persons, § 2–4).

A number of educational organisations can participate in convicts’ education, mainly schools located in the vicinity of the given prison. Other institutions include citizens’ interest associations, registered churches, religious societies, etc. Education is provided based on a written contract or project between the director general of the given institution and the prison director. Convicts’ education can be funded by the relevant prison itself, European Union, Slovak state assistance programmes or other grants (Decree of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic No. 368/2008 Coll. on Issuance of the Order on Service of a Term of Imprisonment, § 44).

Adult convicts’ education is defined as an intentional and purposeful process of gaining new knowledge, skills and abilities. It can also include restoration of convicts’ existing skills. „Through educational activities, we develop a person’s knowledge, abilities and attitudes required in their work and personal life” (V. Prusáková, 2005, p. 26).

The Social Welfare Department of the Corps of Prison and Court Guard also devotes time to the convicts’ education. It states that “to achieve the educational goal of the prison sentence it is necessary to improve convicts’ education through requalification courses in order to help them succeed in the labour market after their release” (The Concept of the Prison Service for 2011 – 2020, 211. P. 11). Although education which provides a certificate upon completion is gaining popularity, we believe that other types of education also play an important role and are of equal importance. Their common denominator is the development of knowledge, skills and abilities in convicts which will allow them to manage their life after their release.

**Particularities of convicts’ education**

Convicts represent a specific group in terms of environment as well as personal characteristics. It is a socially excluded group that needs considerable attention if the purpose of their punishment is to be achieved. Working with convicts requires for a number of circumstances to be taken into consideration (legislation, teaching staff, material conditions, social climate, individual personalities, etc.).

Convicts are a heterogeneous target group with significantly ranging attributes such as age, education, health, previous criminal activity, life and educational opportunities, skills, abilities and value systems. It is necessary to perceive convicts as individuals if their education is to achieve its goal. Otherwise, adult convicts might not be willing to pursue it.

The most important and fundamental factor in education is motivation. Motivation is essential in terms of participation, persistence and successful graduation. Motivation
Factors in adult convicts can be divided into internal and external ones. External factors include the desire to fulfil other people’s expectations (family, friends, Corps of Prison and Justice Guard staff). Internal motivation factors include compensation of the educational deprivation to help the convicts in their future professional life and also adaptation to social and cultural life. Further motivation factors include the belief that education is important, one’s personal interests, actual interest in gaining knowledge but also the opportunity to escape the problems emerging from the complicated life situation. The last factor is concerned with spending free time in the company of other people.

If the convicts lack motivation, educators from the Corps of Prison and Justice Guard play an important role as motivators. These educators should help the convicts understand how education will help them manage their lives after they are released.

For sustaining the convicts’ motivation to gain education, it is important to eliminate barriers in education which are frequently present in this specific environment. The problem can be rooted in the absence of one’s drive to study or their inability to do so; in other words, passivity and the lack of motivation. Sometimes, the target group is not convinced about the benefits of education in solving of their problems.

Barriers in convicts’ education can be categorised as following:

- Typical barriers, however, usually eliminated in the prison environment, include lack of time, high costs, too many duties, need to travel to gain education, inability to navigate through the offer of education opportunities,
- Barriers arising from the educational system itself – the offer of educational opportunities does not reflect the actual educational needs of convicts, selection of participants for individual educational activities,
- Internal barriers – a negative attitude towards learning, absence of learning habits, lack of conviction about the significance of learning, doubts about one’s ability to study, low self-respect and self-confidence.

Adjusting the types, forms and methods of convicts’ education to accommodate the aforementioned specificities is mainly the educator’s task. Educational projects targeted at these groups firstly need to identify the group members with relatively similar educational interests. It is further possible to create similar educational programmes for these group members, select the educational content to accommodate their interests and thus create “tailor-made” educational programmes (Z. Palán, 2002). Tailor-made educational programmes for convicts proved successful also in Nordic countries.

**Convicts as a target group of social andragogy**

Andragogy, as a modern educational science, takes into account the specificities of adult education. Prisons are a typical environment in which adult education takes place as the number of non-adult inmates represents merely decimal numbers.
Social andragogy is an applied discipline. It refers to upbringing, education and counselling of specific groups of population in problematic social situations or undergoing changes which are difficult to handle even for adults. Typical social andragogy target groups include ethnic groups, unemployed people, seniors, immigrants, asylum-seekers, people who suffer from substance and non-substance addictions, parents on parental leave, parents returning from the parental leave, homeless people, convicts with both suspended and non-suspended sentences, and last but not least, ex-convicts.

Due to the specificity of their problems, prisoners belong among the traditional target groups of adult education (M. Beneš, 2008, p.88). Specialized literature classifies convicts as one of the target groups of social rehabilitation in (special) andragogy (A. Tokarova, 2003). Special andragogy is one of the recently emerged andragogic disciplines dealing with “…upbringing and education of handicapped, disturbed and otherwise endangered adults, or more precisely, with education of adults with special educational needs. Social andragogy includes re-education of people with hearing, mental, visual and physical impairments, adults with health issues, but also talented and gifted people with multiple disabilities as well as behavioural, emotional, communication and learning disorders. Special andragogy …deals with the questions of complex rehabilitation care, educational rehabilitation, integration of disabled persons and disturbed adults in the intact population, etc.” (G. Porubska – C. Hatar, 2009, pp. 34 – 35).

Special andragogy and rehabilitation can serve mainly the adult convicts with diagnosed mental or physical disorders via education and training this target group. They need a special educational approach including an adjusted curriculum. People with special needs can be found in every social andragogy target group. Since it is not possible to generalize special needs in education for convicts as a group, from our point of view, they represent a social andragogy target group.

**The role of the andragogue in the prison environment**

Although in Slovakia a social andragogue is not considered an independent occupation, “it can be said that a modern expert in andragogy with complex social and andragogic qualifications meets the relevant professional requirements” (C. Hatar, 2012, p. 132). In specialized literature, andragogues are categorized among the helping professions that are supposed to help solving physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual problems.

Every prison has a specialized department which includes a sub-department managing the pedagogical and psychological activities. These departments employ specialized Corps of Prison and Court Guard staff which is in the direct contact with the convicts; other staff includes educators, social workers and psychologists. They represent the triad of the penitentiary professionals. Each of these professions approaches the issue of convict resocialization from a different angle and uses different tools. The primary
role of the prison educator is to help develop convicts’ personalities through an educational influence.

The educator positively affects the individual’s personality components in the process of education, mainly in the areas of moral education (moral imagination, opinions and beliefs, emotions, habits and customs, will, character, moral relationships), legal and social education (developing the convicts’ sense of justice, mutual help and cooperation). The aim of the abovementioned is to teach the convicts to interiorize the moral principles and norms appropriate for a civilized democratic world. These standards and principles represent the foundation of moral beliefs and thus also motives of adult behaviour (J. Perhacs – P. Paška, 1995).

We hold the view that the educator’s most important role is not the teaching itself, but rather the management of education – which is why they should possess a complex andragogic education. They should be able to analyse convicts’ educational needs but also plan, manage, organize and facilitate education within the formal system of education (primary, secondary and tertiary education) as well as within the non-formal one (external educators, civic associations) and to provide convicts with tailor-made education opportunities. Education of convicts should be provided in the cooperation with external assistants.

Our claims are also confirmed by the relevant international document which states that the prison staff should facilitate education for the inmates, support them and reasonably allow the public to participate in this process. Educational programmes should be provided for convicts. Prison educators should be acquainted with the relevant adult educational methods (Recommendation No. R (89) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Education in Prison. 1989).

The key component of an educator’s work, is education of the adult population. Since andragogy, as a scholarly field, deals with adult education and consultancy along with its sub-discipline known as social andragogy, it is considered inevitable for the Social Welfare Department Corps of Prison and Court to hire staff with proper andragogic qualifications. Experts in this field meet the specific demands arising from the adult educators’ role with the Social Welfare Department Corps of Prison and Court which should be taken into consideration in the recruiting process. We are convinced that this step would lead to a significant improvement in convicts’ education as well as in the whole prison educational system.

Last but not least, we consider the term “educator” inappropriate and suggest to replace it with the term “andragogue”.

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Thematic Article

Physical and Emotional Considerations in Conducting Research in Prisons

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Abstract

This article reflects the experiences of the authors as two prison teachers conducting research in the prison. It signals the pressures experienced in conducting qualitative research in a prison setting and explores the conditions within which the prison researcher functions, particularly if one already forms part of the prison regime. The article should serve as an eye-opener for those planning to carry out research in prison, notably to the novice prison researcher. The article discusses two types of encounters a researcher will meet in prison: physical challenges and emotional concerns. The reflection exemplifies the distinctiveness of doing research in prison.

Keywords: prison research, prison environment, emotions in research

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Introduction

Much research in prisons is conducted by university students as an integral part of their studies. Other research is conducted by academics, alone or in conjunction with their students. Normally this research is published in peer-reviewed journals, some of which, unfortunately, is written in such an obscure and academic language that it ends up not being that useful for the prison administration itself. More recently it is common for those involved in EU projects, such as Erasmus+ projects and DG Justice and Consumers projects, to start their project by means of a needs analyses exercise. Typically these projects have to produce ‘deliverables’ including training manuals for prison staff and/or for inmates. From the point of view of the prison authorities these projects have high value since they tend to be more practical in nature. Other research in prisons is conducted by charities and non-governmental organisations with a very specific focus directly related to their raison d’etre. Few prisons have their own research units; most prisons subcontract research if they are intent on transferring knowledge to practice within their institution. This article focuses on the experiences of a minority group doing research in prison: the practitioner researcher. In this case, the practitioners worked as part-time teachers in Malta’s correctional facility, Corradino Correctional Faculty. Having taught in both male and female sections of the prison, the practitioners wanted to understand better how they could reach the needs to the female population in prison better. The paper does not discuss the research per se, but the experiences the researchers had in conducting their research. The authors categorise their reflections and experience in three sections: those of a physical nature (obtaining approval, the conditions during interviews, power relations, lack of privacy, negotiating space and time, gaining access), those of an emotional nature (positioning oneself, negotiating emotions etc.) and those of an ethical nature. This article focus only on the first two.

Physical challenges

Being familiar with the prison does not mean that ‘physical’ challenges become much easier than for the novice researcher entering the prison the first time. It is true that one is familiar with the procedures of entering and exiting the prison, the smell of the prison, the noise and shouting, the dealing with officers and the initial encounter with inmates. Still practical difficulties arise all the time. Some of them may sound trivial such as finding a room where to hold an interview, or obtaining permission allowing one to take in the necessary equipment, such as a laptop, or a recorder. But they are not. Having some privacy is very difficult in a correctional setting (Davies, 2000, p.86): the constant presence of inmates and staff, prison guards checking your belongings every time one goes in and out not only of prison, but also different wings within the same prison, with everyone observing who moves where and who talks to whom. The researcher tends to feel as if her or she is being assessed all the time by everyone. Restriction of movement in prison does not only affect the inmates but it also impinges on the researcher since one has to move within a space that is highly marked by power relations. Negotiations around space and time are important and necessary in a penitentiary system in which
even the researcher has to submit to all restrictions, despite her privileged status compared to that of the inmates (De Miguel Calvo, 2013, p.10). Ideally the researcher should try to negotiate for a private interviewing room without, if possible, the presence of a prison officer during the interviews. The reason is that inmates do not trust officers in general, and any form of information, both to other inmates and to officers can later be used or misused against the very inmate. Information in a prison setting is power. On the other hand, it is good for an officer to be within earshot for safety reasons. But this is not always possible, particularly because of shortage of staff in some prisons. If prison rooms are equipped with internal close circuit cameras, issues of physical security are reduced and the researcher feels assured.

In carrying out research in prison, the structural location of where the research takes place cannot be neglected. Marx (2001) and Reiter (2014) examine how the structural location influences how access to participants is gained and how rapport with them is corroborated. By its own nature, prison is a ‘closed’ institution, a setting full of dynamics/structures of power, where hierarchy is all pervasive and is constantly observed (Lučić-Ćatić, 2011, p.59). It is constructed in such a way as to create and emphasise this power inequity, to produce in the inmates (and visitors) a certain obedience and compliance. This makes the researcher’s ‘fitting in’ a more complex experience (Ugelvik, 2014, p.471, 474). Formal distinctions of power include the high rank administration of the prison and a ladder ranking of prison officials each of whom gives great import on how s/he is seen and addressed. This hierarchy, in turn, affects the researcher in gaining access to the participants and how one establishes a rapport with them (Davies, 2000, p.86; Hart, 1995, p.169; Liebling, 2013, p.22; 2014, p.483; Lučić-Ćatić, 2011, p.59). For the authors, they could already understand and respect such a hierarchy, but for the novice research this issue could potentially be a minefield, particularly in areas where the officers do not wear a uniform and it becomes difficult to distinguish between an officer and an inmate. One thing that the authors kept in mind in researching in prison is that they were entering the participant’s environment as a privilege, as guests, and not as a right (Newman, 1958, p.127). Although it is a place where the presence of strangers is relatively commonplace, particularly in low security prisons, everyone has to be rapidly recognised and placed by both the authorities and the inmates. As a researcher, one is thus “identified, positioned, and managed accordingly” (Rowe, 2014, p.406; see also Liebling, 1999, p.150; Ugelvik, 2014, p. 475). This is even physically done by being given a large, visible visitors’ tag to wear. All this highlights the tensions of working in a rigid institution where security is all-pervading, including the stress on doing one’s best not to lose the visitor’s tag itself. One feels as a temporary insider, but at the same time, a total outsider. Beyens, Kennes, Snacken & Tournel, (2015, p.66) describe the prison as a place where there is “a constant process of negotiation”.

Prison authorities are often cautious where research is concerned (Kazemian, 2015, p.117; Lučić-Ćatić, 2011, p.59). More often than not they are averse to the use a tape
In some prisons the authorities insist on reading the notes taken of interviews with inmates. Unfortunately such notes may be misinterpreted, or seen as ‘trouble’ to the prison’s reputation or to themselves as administrators (Newman, 1958, p.128). Prison researchers encounter more often than not emotions like helplessness and frustrations. Sutton (2011, p.50) points out that ‘accommodating researchers is not a primary concern of most prisons and assisting researchers is an added burden in an endless list of a prison official’s responsibilities. It is a location where assisting a researcher is viewed more as a nuisance than a priority’. During fieldwork, the prison researcher must remain aware that s/he is intruding in the daily, regimented life of prison and sometimes one may need to interrupt an interview and return to the prison on another date (Kazemian, 2015, p.119; O’Brien & Bates, 2003, p.219), for example in the event of a lockdown. When conducting research in prison, one also has to keep in mind the participants’ priorities; meetings might need to be structured around meals, inmate counts, visitations, lock-ups, recreation and other factors such as their emotional state, impending court appearances and medical appointments. Thus, flexibility is important and the inmates must feel free to postpone or cancel the interview any time. Such setbacks are inherent to prison research.

Building trust and relationships across various departments in the correctional institution is necessary to carry out one’s research. Thus, in such a low-trust setting (Molding Nielsen, 2010, p.308), the prison researcher must not only safeguard the rapport with the inmates but also that with officers. Sparks, Bottoms and Hay (1996, p.349) write about the dynamics of the prison setting; how uneasy relations can easily develop between prison staff and researchers and the tricky position the researcher might find him/herself in (see also Liebling, 1999, p.150; Newman, 1958, p.127; Sutton, 2011, p.50). The entry of an outsider in prison is often regarded as a nuisance or worse, as a threat. This might be further worsened when opting to use a tape recorder during the research (Roberts & Indermaur, 2008, p.319). Gaining formal approval from authorities does not mean that the field will open up for the researcher eager to receive and accommodate him/her. Thus, the prison researcher must carefully plan his research in order to avoid as much as possible being a liability to the correctional staff going about their everyday responsibilities (Hart, 1995, p.168, 174; Liebling, 1999, p.150; Lučić-Ćatić, 2011, p.60, 70). The advantage the authors had in conducting their research was that they were known quantities. They could be trusted as familiar faces, possibly identified as loyal to the interest of the prison and the correctional officers.

This trust is not automatic, particularly with the inmates, especially those who do not know you. Our experience is that inmates categories teachers in two: the ‘alright ones’ and the ‘pains’. Luckily it seems that the authors were categorises within the former bracket. Inmates tend to view researchers with suspicion and curiosity, curious to know what one is doing with the information given, and to whom it is being reported. Of
course they also think of what they can get out of this encounter, both in terms of physical objects, such as bottled water, some clothes etc., and in terms of privileges such as an extra telephone call, an extra five minutes with the family, etc. The tacit understanding is that the inmate will give you information only if he/she receives something in return. This is prison culture. Sparks et al. (1996, p.349) describe the researcher as the ‘ignorant spy’ in prison. Sparks et al. (2006, p.349) further mention how it takes times and effort for the researcher to pass from being “a grudgingly tolerated fool to a fairly welcome one”. Sutton (2011, p. 49) argues that in strict settings such as prisons, even a fault in equipment may be perceived as a researcher’s carelessness, lack of preparation or professionalism. It can be construed as a “lack of regard for the inmate and his time” and thus break the circle of trust. Whilst equipment failure is not limited to prison research, it can cause inconveniences for inmates and prison officials and can pose challenges in a setting dominated by discipline and routine.

Prisons are also highly politicised and unpredictable fields (Ugelvik, 2014, p.476). In a prison setting where situations, prison staff, senior management and rules are fluid and change constantly, another problem which the researcher needs to face is on what happens if/when the setting changes (Liebling, 2013, p.22; 2014, p.483). All this makes establishing relationships more difficult for the researcher. Therefore, establishing continuous rapport not just with the interviewed inmates but also with prison staff is vital. It is by no joke that Patenaude (2004, p.69) argues that “it is far easier to gain access to study the residents of a remote Alaskan community than to study the lives of prison inmates.” Gaining access to inmates requires permissions at various levels, patience and perseverance (see Davies, 2000, p.87-88; Jewkes, 2014, p.389; Shaw, Wangmo and Elger, 2014, p.275). During the authors’ period of research the Director of the Prisons changed twice, meaning that a rapport had to be built again from scratch. Heads of divisions also changed constantly, and with them their attitudes towards the idea of research in prison in general and the authors as researchers in particular. Liebling (1999, p.150) describes how, during a particular research, inmates and staff had been “largely interested, responsive, friendly and agreeable” while a year after, in the same prison wing, she and her research team faced for the first time the “difficult prisoner: angry, hostile, resentful, suspicious and challenging.” This forced her to reflect on how one can possibly carry out research in such a field which changes all the time and so reactive to internal and external pressures. In carrying out prison research, Tournel and Kennes (Beyens, et al., p.69) elaborate how, in order to gain easy access and trust, they tried to project themselves as harmless doctorate students relatively new to prison context but willing to learn from the more experienced prison staff. However, this posed difficulties in juggling this image without giving the wrong picture of being incompetent, unprofessional students and thus risking not being taken seriously (see also Sloan & Wright, 2015, p.152). Similar to Beyens et al. (2015), Davies (2000) and Rowe (2014) have both elaborated about the positions they adopted (or where imposed on them), and how they were placed and misplaced by both inmates and prison staff while carrying out research in female prisons. Sieber (1992, p.29) reasons how useful it
is in certain difficult research settings to “identify legitimate leaders or gatekeepers (...) and to work with them to make the survey mutually useful. A gatekeeper is a person who lets researchers into the setting or keeps them out”. In the case of the authors, the gatekeepers were two: the administration of the prison and two particular female inmates. The authors were lucky for they knew these two inmates from other encounters in the prison during their work as teachers within the same prison. It was apparent that nothing happened in the wing without the approval of these two female inmates, and luckily we were in their good books. Although they did not participate in the research, the research and the participation of other inmates in the interviewing process, was given their blessing. What worked for the authors in gaining trust during their research was time and coffee. The authors always found time to chat with both inmates and officers, each getting to know one another in an informal environment, each cautious on how much information to part, but at the same time, closing the initial gap of the unknown.

**Emotional challenges**

Another issue surrounding the whole experience of carrying out qualitative research in prison is that of emotions. The emotional factor has not traditionally formed a substantial part in prison research and has often gone unreported. Researchers usually tend to report findings in an ‘emotionally disconnected’ way (Bosworth et al., 2005; Davies, 2000; Jewkes, 2012; 2014; Lučić-Ćatić, 2011; Molding Nielsen, 2010; Reiter, 2014; Rowe, 2014; Widdowfield, 1999). Some would rather prefer to evade any form of ‘connectedness’ between the researcher and participant and to make believe that their research is “unsullied by such concerns” (Bosworth et al., 2005, p.258). Rowe (2014, p.404) mentions how in prison research, “the researcher often all but disappears.” Jewkes (2012, p.63; 2014, p.387) and Ugelvik (2014, p.472) discuss how prison researchers, who are often proficient in talking about inmates’ feelings and experiences, often neglect the feelings and emotions they themselves go through before, during and after their research process and how these are seldom mentioned in their work. This is a pity, since, Jewkes argues, “the acknowledgment of the ethnographer’s biography, motivations, and emotions can uniquely enrich data, analysis, and writing up.” She goes as far as arguing that those prison researchers who do not divulge emotions in their research are doing “a disservice to those who follow them ... who frequently approach the field with high levels of anxiety” (Jewkes, 2012, p.18). Qualitative research goes beyond simply handing out questionnaires to fill in; it is more humane and sensitive in nature where “numbers become names and those names ‘real’ people with whom the researcher has face-to-face contact” (Widdowfield, 2000, p.201). If the knowledge one produces is simply evidential, informative and unemotional, it would result in knowledge that is short on meaning and in a vacuum (Jewkes, 2014, p.388; Liebling, 1999, p.163). Over the past decade various feminist researchers have emphasised on the importance of acknowledging the emotional aspect inherent to doing research in prison (Bosworth et al., 2005; Liebling, 1999; 2014). Emotions are not only felt by the prison
researcher but even the researched can undergo certain emotions as a result of participating in a research, especially one of a qualitative nature (Lučić-Ćatić, 2011, p.67). Although various feminist researchers (Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton, 2001; Reinhartz, 1992) have stressed on the importance of establishing an egalitarian and sharing relationship with the researched, the delineations are not always that simple or clear in a prison environment. Researchers, including the authors, ask themselves on how best to connect with inmates who have been behind bars for several years, are awaiting their sentence or will soon be released. Researchers ponder on how they will deal with dilemmas when facing such an emarginated group asking for help, or how to relate to someone who has been defined by the media and the courts as pure evil. It is these issues that the authors often thought about and discussed. For prisons are not simply spaces where the participants are detained; they are spaces where punishment, deprivation, aggression, masculinity and frustration form part of daily life. Jewkens and Liebling point out that research in prisons is likely to be intense for the researcher regarding emotional, sensorial and tangible experiences also in terms of sight, sounds, smells, security, fear and injustice (Jewkes, 2014, p.389; Liebling, 1999, pp.158, 161). One of the biggest emotional challenges the researchers found themselves in was on how to react to instances of injustice, at worse, cruelty, in prison. Such injustices could range from trivial matters such as inmates being served inadequate prison food or denied phone calls or family visits, to officers making derogatory comments about them or more serious abuse. These feelings create, to some extent, not only a degree of frustration, but also a degree of the fear of powerlessness to do anything about some issues, the inability to act for various reasons; be it of fear from the administration (for example being stopped in the middle of one’s research), to a feeling of helplessness, of not knowing what to do (see Arditti, Joest, Lambert-Shute & Walker, 2010). Looking the other way may not be within one’s character, but researchers may be forced, even implicitly, to do just that. It may even come to a decision between doing what one considers to be right and as a consequence, being stopped from continuing one’s research, or closing both eyes. Gatekeepers in prisons are very powerful, particularly in countries where there is only one prison, and for some students, it may even mean the end to their PhD studies.

Authors such as Davies (2000, p.87) and Sloan and Wright (2015, p.151) discuss other emotions and thoughts they felt when carrying out research in prison, such as, what to wear, what to take with you, how to sound credible to prison staff, arriving on time and whether the security staff at the prison gate would be informed and let one in. These are probably seen as trivialities, but for the prison researcher they are a reality one has to face every time one sets foot on prison premises. Prison researchers often choose to omit admitting emotions of ‘insecurity and confusion they experienced when entering the field, the rites of passage they endured, the interplay of different identities adopted by them and ascribed to them, and the bonds they formed as they traversed the threads of the prison security “web”’ (Jewkes, 2014, p.387). This is the fear of the unknown – the fear that a prison researcher feels inside before even starting research in prison. Yuen
(2011) weighs the coping strategies she employed to help her deal with the emotions that emerged during her study working with female inmates. Similarly, Liebling (1999, p.150) recounts how her research team tried to deal with a particular strenuous research experience in a male prison and how, after research, they tried to “let off steam”.

Ugelvik (2014) and Crewe (2014) mention the various tests and ploys posed on them by both inmates and staff while conducting research. Davies (2000, p.92) suggest that the prison researcher should learn how to “strike a balance between reacting naturally to disclosure whilst not appearing too shocked” since interviews would naturally lead to disturbing accounts of injustice, abuse, trauma and hardships (see also Widdowfield, 2000, p.201). Such disclosures can have a traumatic effect on the researcher who is unprepared for them as well as have “effects on the interviewer as researcher in the longer term.” Liebling (2001, p. 475) affirms that “one of the difficulties of prison research … is that those researchers who feel sufficient sympathy cannot bear very much prison research, and those who are the best often move on to less painful topics.”

Carrying out research inside a prison setting can be very risky since certain testimonies regarding prison irregularities, conditions and services could have consequences on the participants interviewed who might fear reprisal from the prison officers or institution. So, the researcher has to make it clear that s/he will not give prison staff any information that could prejudice them in any way (Molding Nielsen, 2010). It is also important for the researcher to protect the inmate by making sure that the latter does not prejudice him/herself, and to stop the inmate from continuing to talk even if the ‘data’ being given is invaluable. As researchers, the authors often felt that it was better not to note information that was gold from the point of view of the research, but detrimental to the inmate if the officers read the notes that were being taken, and/or eventually the research report itself.

There is always the temptation for a researcher to ‘go academic’ and play the part of the detached researcher (Lučić-Čatić, 2011, p.67). However, the researcher can take an alternative route by being more transparent about his/her involvement and position, and to express views sympathetically and critically (Fuller 1999, p.223). Liebling (1999, 2001, 2013, 2014) has written profusely on the role of emotion in prison research. She considers doing prison research as “emotional edgework” which raises all kinds of methodological, political and emotional dilemmas in a researcher who must always be ready with decisions, negotiations and trade-offs to make on the field (see also Beyens et al., 2015). These, in-turn, will affect the research experience and its outcomes (Davies, 2000, p.94; Khawaja & Mørck, 2009, p.28; Widdowfield, 2000, p.199). The researcher’s involvement and engagement will therefore reflect on the production of knowledge (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006, p.42). Both Liebling (1999, p.149, 2001, p.475) and Jewkes (2014, p.389) argue that carrying out research in prison, with its unwelcoming environment, can be a highly emotive task for the researcher and remaining unaffected and objective is practically impossible. As such, our emotions need not be cancelled.
They constitute part of the data (Kirschner, 1987, p.213; Liebling, 1999 p.164). Sutton (2011), recommends that a prison researcher should train him/herself in emotion management:

> For instance, there were times when I was frustrated by prison policies, angered by the actions of corrections officers, annoyed by inmates, and sympathetic to those who were incarcerated. I also met inmates and staff members with whom I likely could have established friendships had we met under different circumstances. Regardless of how I felt, I kept my opinions and emotions to myself to ensure that neither prisoners nor staff had reason to associate me with ‘them’. I also chose to contain my reactions when experiencing negative emotions and encountering language and behaviour I found offensive (Sutton, 2011, p.56).

Moods and behaviours are unpredictable in prisons and this is something to be considered when conducting interviews in prisons. In some instances, there is the risk of inmates becoming disagreeable or even aggressive, venting their anger and frustration about the system upon the researcher (Kazemian, 2015, p.119; Liebling, 1999, p.150; Lučić-Ćatić, 2011, p.66). Prison researchers also find themselves in a position of power: they can bring change within the participant while at the same time bring about change to themselves: “...not only does the researcher affect the research process but they are themselves affected by the process” (Widdowfield, 2000, p. 200). It is often assumed that the researcher has power during all the stages of the research. But power is not unilateral; only exerted by the researcher upon his participants and vice versa. It is also exercised by the prison institution upon the researcher (Marx, 2001). This is where the prison researcher is further weighed down during the course of one’s research. The power balance is clearly not all one-sided in favour of the researcher. By withdrawing participation or withholding data, participants can also challenge the researcher (Costelloe, 2007; Lučić-Ćatić, 2011; Marx, 2001). One must also take into consideration the potential danger of inmates who push for a particular agenda or cooperate in order to attain or maintain approval or favour of a prison officer (Roberts & Indermaur, 2008 p.314). On the other hand, there is the risk of prison officers biasing the researcher against particular inmates by making prejudiced comments in their regards, thus risk field contamination (Bosworth, 1999; Waldram, 1998). For this particular qualitative research the authors took a feminist research approach since such methods are “not exploitative but are appreciative of the position of women.” (Finch, 1993; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002), an approach that made the authors strive to minimise the power imbalance between them and the inmates. Another goal was to seek to change inequality in the provision of education in prison, which the authors managed to achieve. Emotionally this was extremely satisfying.

Within the authors ‘relaxed’ and ‘confident’ approach to this research, resulting mainly from familiarity with the location, and enjoying high levels of trust from the inmates, they also often found themselves taking the role of social workers, being ‘friends’ and being shoulders to cry on. Boundaries were always made clear, and it was stressed that if the authors where informed of anything that fell into the ‘harm to self and harm to
others’ category, or if the inmates spoke of anything that was illegal, both in prison and outside prison, they would have to report to the authorities. The stories the authors heard brought about emotions such as anger, frustration and also disgust, at times towards the system, at times towards the inmate herself. The authors always felt that after a session they could not simply walk away and continue with ‘life’. Often, also being in unison with the feminist approach to research, the authors ended up advocating for the inmates even for minor things, such as a change in cell location. Bosworth et al. (2005) points out that some inmates participate in prison research because they felt empowered and believed that through research, they could help bring about reforms in their environment or social change (see also O’Brien & Bates, 2003, p.220; Shaw et al., 2014, p.275). The authors experienced a transition from a professional relationship with the inmates to one that became increasingly personal and friendly as the research moved on. Such a relationship brought about a new responsibility on the authors, through a feeling of a need to give more voice to female inmates, to help them in their everyday struggles in prison, to educate the general public and change the public’s negative perception of prison inmates. Bosworth et al. (2005, p.261) emphasises the need to work directly with inmates rather than simply writing about them and how listening to them and their experiences and sharing can make a difference to individuals. Fuller advocates how

…the researcher must occupy a space in which the situatedness of our knowledges and positionalities is constantly renegotiated and critically engaged with. This space necessarily involves the removal of artificial boundaries between researcher, activist, teacher and person, and proposes instead movement between these various identities in order to facilitate engagement between and within them (Fuller, 1999, pp.222-23).

However, Guillemin & Heggen, (2009, p.292) stress that the researcher’s ethical responsibility is to maintain “a fine balance between building sufficient trust to be able to probe participants for potential rich data, while at the same time maintaining sufficient distance in respect for the participant.” Besides, the researcher must prevent prisoners from developing idealistic expectations about what the research can deliver (see also Bosworth et al., 2005, p.256-57; Shaw et al., 2014, p.275). Thus, it is vital not to raise their hopes but to advise them that what:

… [I] can offer is a fair representation of prisoners’ views in any report [I] write, but stress that while [I] can make recommendations for change, it is others who decide whether or not recommended changes will be accepted and implemented (Roberts & Indermaur, 2008, p.319).

When Sutton (2011, p.51) was conducting prison research he tried to avoid this conundrum by presenting himself as being “committed to learning about prisoners rather than as an advocate for inmates or employees.” Khawaja and Mørck (2009, p.38), explore the issues behind what they term as “going native” versus “going academia” and how in their research they tackled dilemmas of “commitment versus distance, advocacy versus reflexivity, and researchers as political versus researchers as neutral.” The experience of the authors is that in a prison setting, where at times deprivation, scarcity
of services and material provisions abound, (e.g. decent meals, phone calls, medicine, visits to doctor etc.) rapport between individuals tends to become instrumentalised. One has to keep in mind that an inmate might be ‘befriending’ one in order to secure a service or some form of support. Keeping this in mind, however, the authors discovered that prisons can also be places where human contact with someone from the outside is something from which one is deprived and being able to confide, or simply to talk, to have someone to hear, is in itself a luxury (Kazemian, 2015, p.121; Lučić-Ćatić, 2011, p.66). However, prison research is not always a harrowing experience (Jewkes, 2012, p.66, 69) and prisons “can also precipitate remarkable honesty” (Liebling, 1999, p.152). In one instant an inmate informed the authors that having a conversation with them was the only beckon of sanity in a mad prison world. Relationships of mutual respect can be affirmed and some inmates craving exchange and conversation open up about their situation, drawing one into their world. Yuen’s study on Aboriginal women inmates, (2011) captures these emotions well:

I was so caught up (I still am, somewhat caught up) in the thick of things. Very much affected by my emotions and the pain of the women. How can I not? I’ve spent so much time with them. The group is affected by what happens to its members and I am a member... How do you just take yourself out? ... My time with the women has become ingrained into a part of my everyday life (Yuen, reflexive journal, August 9, 2006).

Establishing trust in not easy in a prison setting. The truth is that no one trusts anyone in prison. The basic underlying imperative is that the researcher propagates a “sense of rapport, trust and mutual respect” and to be “responsive to the concerns of the subject” (Sieber, 1992, p.26). In a prison context, this rapport extends further from the researcher, to the researched, to the gatekeepers and prison staff and administration. This rapport, in turn, is essential to safeguard the validity of the results (O’Brien & Bates, 2003, p.219; Roberts & Indermaur, 2008, p.320). Carrying out qualitative research can go beyond simply gathering data and is an emotional experience for both researcher and participants; it is only a question of acknowledging these feelings which render the research more humane. Doing research in prison is “an emotional minefield” (Beyens et al., 2015). This makes prison research differ from any other type of qualitative endeavours (Jewkes, 2014, p.388).

Reflections

In carrying out their research, just like in carrying out their duties as prison teachers, the authors are convinced that it is practically impossible to put aside one’s feelings and emotions. Effort has to be placed in how to deal with these feelings, in how to handle the various dilemmas one encounters during one’s research. Support, ideally by a councillor familiar with a prison environment, or even someone who experienced research in prison, helps. The authors feel that their prior experience in knowing the prison before actually conducting research in prison helped tremendously. The authors recommend that anyone planning to do research in prisons should spend time there before doing
any research whatsoever, either as a volunteer with some non-governmental organisation or simply as helpers. The feeling of a prison helps immensely in navigating oneself during a research exercise.

Liebling (2014, p.485) concurs with Rowe (2014, p.414) in that the best research emerges when one knows the field “emotionally, as well as intellectually.” Our suggestion is that knowing the prison ‘physically’ also helps. As authors of our research, it was decided to go along with one’s feelings and not to hide behind power barricades. Day after day of working with inmates the authors embraced the emotionality of the research. Judgements resulting from the research were not only based on data, but where also grounded in the authors’ feelings. This in itself made us feel closer to the study. The authors’ opinion is that the researcher has to make his or her emotions visible and documented so that the reader is aware of the kinds of emotions, conflicts, pitfalls and subjectivities a prison researcher encounters in one’s study. The researcher’s description of emotions will help one to understand better the phenomenon under study. It will make it richer and real.

**References**


The Method of Theme-Centred Interaction (TCI) at Hungarian Schools: a Theoretical and Practical Overview

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Abstract

Theme-centred Interaction (TCI) is a complex, integrative program that develops social competency and was created by Ruth Cohn (1974). Its axioms and regulatory system make this method different from other educational concepts. These are based on the four-factored model of I-We-Theme-Globe, which is balanced by the teacher in the interactions. The TCI model can be part of the school's analytical processes, it can enhance innovation (Klein, 1997) and can contribute to holistic learning (Evert, 2008). According to the latest research into teaching (Hattie, 2012), we consider learning effective when teachers' work exerts a measurable effect on the pupils. Therefore we applied TCI in classroom environment, and in our pre-, and in-service teacher training schools. Our research included quantitative and partly longitudinal examination in 2016 and 2017 (N=162) with the same pupils at Kossuth Secondary Grammar and Primary School in grades 5-8 in a group. We conducted research in three groups: Control group I: not learning with TCI; group II: using TCI method for 1-2 years; group III: using TCI for 4 years in Hungarian literature and grammar classes), as well as in a control-group not employing TCI, using electronic questionnaires. The other questionnaire created by us focused on open-ended questions relating to the film Everybody directed by Kristof Deak (2016), filled in by both the TCI group and the control-group. The method of TCI leads to more motivated students and teachers. This method also develops the social competency of the students and promotes enhanced self-knowledge of the teacher. The method can establish open communication, co-operation and mutual trust, which all can bring about democracy at the school. If students can experience this at their school, then they can use and apply these experiences as adults. These will help them become

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autonomous citizens, who can take ownership and responsibility for their own actions, decisions and lives.

**Keywords:** Theme-centred Interaction, teacher efficacy, didactics
Introduction

Teachers and educationalists aim to develop several skills apart from the cognitive ones at today's schools. Based on pedagogical research, researchers and practitioners are seeking effective methods to improve social competencies, responsibilities, co-operative and intercultural competencies. Their primary goal is social learning and development of the person as a whole. In addition to knowledge-transfer, problem-solving skills have become crucially important as well as the learner autonomy, similarly to the ability to co-operate with peers. Today’s pupils will be expected to have to work in teams. In order to teach and improve the necessary skills, adequate communication and interaction is indispensable. These skills and elements belong to the realm of social competency and cannot always be acquired by conventional means. This article focuses on unconventional yet crucially important methodology approaches, particularly the method of TCI. The authors of the articles aim to provide a general and global overview of the method, while integrating their own professional experiences as well.

The theoretical characteristics of TCI

TCI is the abbreviation for Theme-centred interaction, which is a widely known and employed method and phenomenon for group-work. The approach of TCI improves the affective and cognitive abilities, communication and social competencies. It aims to enhance social learning and to promote the development of the person. Its underpinning theories stem from the socio-cultural constructivism of Vygotskij (1971) and the humanistic personality-centred approach of Rogers (1980). The theory has also been elaborated and established by Ruth Cohn (1975) and other significant researchers from humanistic psychology. The TCI method matches two education-theoretical models: the pedagogy of learning by doing and the constructivist theory (see Table 1). Furthermore, the 'New School' and Montessori reformed pedagogy have been influential in its theory. The more liberal structure of the alternative schools and the common characteristics determine the general description of the TCI method. It follows:

The teacher’s roles are:

- a facilitator rather than simply transferring knowledge,
- remains in the background, withdraws from directing and controlling, becomes a participant in the creative processes,
- lays down the rules of communication together with the pupils,
- ceases to be a lecturer,
- keeps away from authority.

A further characteristic of TCI is that it builds upon making doing.
Table 1: Learning theories/models (Falus, 1998; Nahalka, 2003; Siemens, 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Way of learning</th>
<th>Behaviourism</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Pedagogy of doing</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
<th>Connectivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge-basis</td>
<td>observant, behaviour-centred</td>
<td>structuring, modelling</td>
<td>make do</td>
<td>social construction</td>
<td>networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing factors</td>
<td>implementing the processed reality</td>
<td>objectivist</td>
<td>analytical, elementary</td>
<td>constructivist</td>
<td>connectivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical principle</td>
<td>praise-punish</td>
<td>present schemes and experiences</td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>commitment, social, cultural participation</td>
<td>Depth and strength of network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main tenet</td>
<td>deductive</td>
<td>inductive</td>
<td>inductive</td>
<td>deduction</td>
<td>atypical, spontaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is in the centre of the learning process</td>
<td>author of the text</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>active student</td>
<td>active student</td>
<td>student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of memory</td>
<td>repetition</td>
<td>coding, storing, evoking</td>
<td>elements of knowledge by doing</td>
<td>remembering existing knowledge</td>
<td>adaptive pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>stimulus-response</td>
<td>knowledge duplication</td>
<td>autonomous individual</td>
<td>socialisation</td>
<td>connecting to existing points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical learning form, method</td>
<td>frontal</td>
<td>argumentation, problem-solving, questioning</td>
<td>exploration</td>
<td>open questions, tasks essay</td>
<td>maps of terms and concepts, summarizing studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the primary knowledge-centred feature (Table 1), TCI belongs to the constructivist pedagogy, since it can be characterised by interest, social participation and commitment. Pedagogical practices underline that both the inductive and the deductive thinking are apparent in TCI, as well as the spontaneous learning. Its basic tenet is learning by doing, which means experienced learning and thus it promotes the recognition and understanding of patterns. The method focuses on the active pupil in the learning processes. Memory plays a pivotal role in the operation of TCI: the elements of knowledge are used by doing and by experiencing and by evoking previous knowledge. When constructing knowledge, the learner uses their own processes formed by their socialisation, open questions and exploration. We believe that the method of TCI affects learning strategies and knowledge construction in a highly positive way.

**Productive learning with TCI method**

Productive learning puts the emphasis on co-operation. When it comes to organising learning, teamwork and co-operation seem the most effective forms of learning to share the tasks and duties with mutual and common responsibility. The eventual success leads to enhanced work and attainment, the participants demand increasing amount of workload, while appropriate social contact will be established. However, failure can have completely different effects (Juknat, 1937). Bruner (1971) claims that success
largely depends on exploring effective learning alternatives. These aspects are as follows: activity, which covers curiosity, maintaining that refers to gaining benefit from the memorized and learnt material, and finally directing, which ensures understanding the goal of the task.

In the process of learning we need to establish motivational situations (Lazar, 1980): e.g. competition, game and control situations that increase performance. These contexts activate the intrinsic motivational factors by generating a demand for performance and for achievement, such as the desire to be outstanding, the need for satisfaction, the craving for success. All these develop the efficacy of the learning processes (Lazar, 1980).

Human learning can be defined by the cognitive feature as well as by acquiring the emotional-motivational system, thus it can be stated the learning is not exclusively reduced to cognitive competencies, but it presupposes a more far-reaching definition of learning both in space and life-phases. Caring, becoming engaged and committed, encouragement and support in a constructive social relationship are important elements so productive children should become healthy and productive adults (Johnson, 1984). Children can learn relations by experiencing and doing activities. These characteristics describe the dimensions of productive learning (Bohm-Schneider, 1993). According to Bohm-Schneider, we can differentiate between the following aspects:

**Personal**

Pupils get to know themselves, they discover their own values, skills, abilities and they actively participate to improve these. They will be able to plan, to make decisions, to realise plans, to evaluate independently and in co-operation as well. Learning becomes a personal, life-long act.

**Institutional**

Teachers unite theoretical, practical and experimenting forms of learning. They organise the process of learning by taking the individual preferences, motivation and interest into consideration.

**Social**

They also learn to set goals and to control their own life-situations. Culture is reflected in learning: this describes one’s relation to reality and to existence.

Bardossy (1986) claims that this method enables the teacher to participate holistically in the development of the whole personality. The individual is free, independent, co-operative and committed. Meanwhile students can learn from their failure, from their environment, from their peers and from the co-operating adults as well. This results in the enhancement of their competency and responsibility. The relationship between
students and teacher is direct in the form of learning based on co-operation. The teacher understands the needs of the students, recognises their abilities, their skills and helps them improve these with a positive mutuality. Hungarian education needs more productive teaching methods based on co-operation.

**Theme-centred interaction (TCI)**

This method does not allow for the group to depend on the group leader. Interaction within the groups focus on the work related to the topic. Members accept each other, their opinions and they develop their knowledge and personality with the help of free co-operation and communication in a helpful team working climate. The term TCI was coined by Ruth Cohn (1975).

When applying this method, the teacher works with content-based issues and they delegate tasks while appreciating the needs of the group. The teacher directs the individual demands, leads the interrelationship of the members and supervises the development and the environment of the group.

The four factors: the I, the WE and the TOPIC are intertwined. It is illustrated with a transparent, multi-layered globe with a straight-sided triangle in the middle. These factors need to be balanced and harmonised in a dynamic way, improved and maintained by TCI teamwork.

I refers to the individual subject. We refers to the interaction and the interrelationship among the members. It illustrates the topic and the content, while the Globe refers to the Earth and the environment. The operation of the group is influenced by the four factors. This is symbolised by a triangle, and a circle, where the symbols indicate that balance is needed between the factors.

*The axioms of the TCI conception* based upon the tenets of Schneider-Landolf-Spielmann-Zitterbarth (2017)

1. **Existential-anthropological**: Everybody is an autonomous individual, at the same time one is part of the whole. Nobody can exist on alone, only in a mutual dependency. Every personality is a unity of a psychosomatic wholeness, perception, sensation, thinking and activity. However, as people depend mutually on each other, the interdependency is constantly increasing.

2. **Ethical-social appreciation**: Man represents a value. Respect life, growth and living beings! Inhumanity is a destructive force.

3. **Pragmatic-political**: A human being makes free decisions within a defined framework. The inner and outer boundaries can be broadened constantly by educating attention. The mutual interdependency enables humans to be take responsibility. One’s autonomy is even bigger when they take the inner and outer determination into consideration more consciously. Free decisions happen within the given inner and outer boundaries.
Autonomy and interdependency characterise it at the same time. The three axioms have an interrelationship and are each other’s pre-requisites.

**The brief history of the concept**

The group dynamic method of TCI was created and coined by Ruth Cohn (1975). Cohn was born in 1912 in Berlin and pursued studies in psychoanalysis then she emigrated to America. It was there that she worked on this method and published its tenets in 1955, where she wrote about the advantages and techniques of group psychotherapy and how these can be applied to healthy human groups. Its main focus was to promote and help experience-based learning. The roots of the method are the following: psychoanalyses, humanistic psychology, group dynamics, different learning and communicative methods.

The international centre for TCI, the Ruth Cohn Institute for TCI International is to be found in Basel, but it has a widespread organisation in the Netherlands, in Germany, in Rumania and in Luxemburg. This method can make group-work effective and it develops personality and social competence. It also challenges the responsibilities of the leader and authority. TCI is taught by members of the Ruth Cohn Institute, an international association. the training consists of two parts: basic and diploma training. It contains elements of supervision, working with peers, in workshops.

**Terminology**

The concept of TCI is based on three axioms leading to two important postulates:

a) Be your own chair person, the chairperson of yourself. You have to see yourself, other people and the environment in their possibilities and limits. You also have to accept every situation as a proposition for your own decision. You must be your own boss and listen to your ‘inner voice’.

b) Disturbances and passionate involvements take precedence. This is also part of the group dynamics. These disruptions and violent feelings do have priorities as these can disturb communication within a group. One always needs to pay attention to what hinders communication inside a group. Effective work and growth can only be achieved if these obstacles are recognised and removed.

With this method we reduce one-way communication to the maximum. Furthermore, it only plays any roles if the group is in a preparatory phase.

**Communication in a TCI group**

The fundamental principles underpinning the communication of the method follow:

- Always speak for yourself, it should never be us, but straightforward and personal way of talking.
- Authentic and selective communication.
– Analyse what you think, how you feel and then decide. Never focus on others’ expectations.
– If you talk, also explain why you ask questions. Tell only your own interpretation.
– Do not react to others’ talk, do no interpret others. You should talk about your feelings. One person speaks at a time.
– Pay attention to your own emotions and to others’ emotions as well. Emotions and feelings are not always good, but they are.

The autonomy of the group members will assist the forming of the group itself. The leader is always a participant in the processes. They are always authentic, selectively authentic, and they always tell the truth, yet they do not always inform about everything. They refrain themselves from manipulating. The functions of the leader in the group are the following: choosing and introducing the themes, structures and methods. They are also responsible for establishing and maintaining group dynamics and work.

The following section will include a description and illustration of a practical implementation of the theory.

**TCI in practice**

When it comes to making a decision, the following list of criteria and questions are crucially important:

1. The mechanism of the mutual decision: what should be the theme? The teacher/leader offers theme possibilities. Then it will be clarified what will affect the final decision:
   – What do I want?
   – What do the others want?
   – What does the environment offer?

*Figure 1: The structure of TCI*

I have to accept the consequences of my decision even if these are positive or negative. Students need to be taught to be able think consciously. They will then have their own decisions. If we integrate this fundamental principle into the system of TCI, it will be obvious how behaviour becomes part of it.
It is advisable to avoid the interview form. Opinions should be voiced. The person (I) and the community (we) are just as important as the Theme. Meanwhile one has to pay attention to the environment (Globe). This process sees the teacher as a facilitator.

The aim of the research

We have set the goal of measuring students’ change in learning attitudes, social competencies by teaching TCI. This is a pilot study to examine the use of TCI method, furthermore it is not an impact assessment, but a methodology-based testing focusing on the changes of the elements of social competency, which is partly a longitudinal study.

Applied methods

Our research included quantitative and partly longitudinal research methods in 2016 and 2017 (N=162) with the same pupils at Kossuth Secondary Grammar and Primary School in grades 5-8 as a group. We conducted our research in three groups: Control group I: not learning with TCI; group II: using TCI method for 1-2 years; group III: using TCI for 4 years in Hungarian literature and grammar classes, using electronic questionnaires. The items of the questionnaires (except for the Supplementary data questionnaire) applied the Likert-scale. The other questionnaire created by us focused on open-ended questions relating to the film Everybody directed by Kristof Deák(2016), which were filled in by both the TCI group and the non-TCI group. We applied Mann-Whitney probe, with the help of SPSS 13.0.

In two occasions (2016, 2017) we had our questionnaires completed by the same pupils: Learning style questionnaire has been in use and validated by Bernath–N. Kollar–Nemeth (2015: 67–69), while the questionnaire focusing on decision-making, debating skills, co-operation and self-knowledge was created by Revakne (2013: 86–88.). We employed 20 items from the original 90 items of the questionnaire focusing on Self and peer-evaluation, Friends and peer questionnaire from Kosane (1998). The pupils answered the questions in the presence of the researcher and the class-teacher. They had 2x45 minutes available for the questions of the quantitative questionnaire and the open-cloze questions regarding the film (25 minutes).

We analysed the results with SPSS 22.0 and with content-analysis. In this research however, the family background, the parental education, the attitude and motivation of learning, and other sociological variables could not further elaborate the findings as the school is the teacher-trainee school of the university. We examined the correlation between TCI and sex with a variance analysis. As the sex variable was not significant, we re-examined the relationship of the variables with TCI. As well as the reliability of the questionnaires focusing on the dominance of the learning style and the social competency factors. In the Who do you learn from dimension we carried out a factor analysis, as well as we examined the reliability of the questionnaires. For this we ran the
test-retest examination along the Cronbach-alpha values, and we examined the item-total correlations. We could establish that the scales are balanced and there are not extremely strong or weak items.

**The findings of the research**

**Who do you learn from?**

The answers regarding the parents and the teachers are very similar, but the relatives (69%) and the friends (58%) cannot be neglected either. Girls had a significant difference in their answers to this question learning from friends. This finding is used by colleagues when applying co-operative methods, when the wish to embrace the possibility of learning from each other and want to encourage it. It has been established that the Information and Communications Technology tools and the internet have not been identified as a means of learning in this age-group, which is supported by 23% in the question learning from others. We firmly believe that the pupils regard these tools (smartphones, computer) as entertainment and these serve the purpose of communication and chatting. We should not prohibit these tools from education, but rather include them. Schools play a pivotal role in educating safe internet use. We can establish that nowadays pupils in grades 5-8 learn not only from their teachers but from their parents, siblings, friends and relatives.

However, this age-group does not involve Internet as a source of knowledge in this dimension.

**Social competency variables**

**Debating skill**

Our research supports the hypothesis that the TCI method develops the communicating and debating skills of the social competency, which could serve as the basis for interpersonal relationships and cooperation. The factor time is highly important since the debating skill and other social competencies do correlate with the timing of the employment of the method.
The fact that in other parts of social competency – decision-making, cooperation, self-knowledge, handling emotions, aggression and stress – we did not receive the expected results can be explained by the circumstances that the pupils were exposed to other methodological effects apart from TCI. In our lessons we use only 15% of the method. We also believe that the used time was insufficient for improving indirectly several parts of social competency only by TCI.

**Emotions**

We examined pupils taught with TCI in the variable of emotions the attributes of recognising emotions, understanding emotions, verbalising emotions, coping with anger and fear.

The one-pointed variance analyses almost proved to be significant ($p=0.06$). Based on the group-average it can be stated that those pupils improved the most who have participated in the TCI classes for 4 years. The pair-comparison shows that there is a significant difference between the control-group and the TCI group (using TCI for 4 years) ($p<0.047$). Furthermore, there is also a significance if the two first groups are compared with the last one with a contrast examination ($p=0.024$). This result proves the hypothesis that time spent with TCI affects the improvement of the emotional part of social competency: pupils taught with the TCI method showed an increased development with regard to their emotions. It points at the possibility that prolonged use of the TCI method can lead to positive changes. Our research can be affected by this result in the future.
Making friends

Figure 3: The increasing average of the Friendship variable

The dimension of making friends is composed of initiating communication, following the rules, providing help, sharing things, being able to say sorry and appreciation. Our evaluation led to a similar result to that of the variable of emotions. We found that the level of TCI, that the relationship between the time spent on TCI and friendship was significant (p=0.045), furthermore the pattern is the same as in the case of the variable of emotions. The pair-comparison shows that there is a significant difference between the control-group and the 4-year-long TCI group (p<0.037). Furthermore, following the comparison of the first two groups with the last one, we also receive significant differences (p=0.026). If we could conduct further research, then we can presume that time spent on TCI longer than 4 in lessons will lead to significant differences in the variable of making friends. The development and the pattern of the average regarding TCI and the variable of making friends will most likely result in positive changes in the future.

Learning style variable

As TCI is characterised by pair and groupwork, we can see in our findings that pupils taught with the TCI method display the characteristics of the cooperative learning style, as compared to pupils not taught by TCI. There is a correlation between the time spent on TCI and cooperative learning. With the help of TCI, teachers can provide help in promoting and establishing cooperation for pupils who are inadequate social skills. The social competency of the pupils will be enhanced, and a positive self-image will thus be
created, the social sensitivity of the pupils will be improved. TCI will develop the cooperation, forming opinion and cognitive skills. The scale of the visual text shows a lower score of the TCI pupils (p<0,009) than the control-group. TCI pupils do not prefer the intuitive learning style, they tend to use analytical thinking, with a different learning orientation. Since the sensible learning scale is an indicator of the quality learning (with reference to analytical thinking), the difference between TCI pupils and the control-group is significant (p<0,008). This highlights the fact the TCI pupils tend to use sensible learning style.

Other researches have focused on discrimination analysis, where the scale of sensible learning highlighted the fact that this learning style is characteristic of university students. We believe that the pupils taught with TCI will employ learning styles similarly to university students.

**The findings regarding the artistic short film**

Everybody, a film by Kirstof Deak (2016) is included in the research: pupils were to ask to fill out a questionnaire following the film. The TCI pupils found it obvious that one is responsible for their own problems and solutions. To achieve a goal, not everything is allowed. The relationship between practice and improvement was clear to TCI pupils ((p<0,037). TCI pupils could score higher in the dimensions of identifying individual and community goals, of recognising emotions, and in interpreting the film.

Our empirical research is a novelty, as the German literature has proven the efficiency of TCI the qualitative method with regard to cooperation, tackling conflicts and communication (Freitag, 2011; Ewert, 2008; Arndt, 2017). We attempted to prove the same aspects with quantitative method, with the help of adapted questionnaires. We have to highlight however that not every aspect and variable can be improved. The reason is the low number of TCI pupils and the 15% of indirect methodology. We also need to take the positive and improving effects of the traditional teaching methods as well.

**Summary**

The method of TCI leads to more motivated students and teachers. This method also develops the social competency of the students and promotes enhanced self-knowledge of the teacher. The method can establish open communication, co-operation and mutual trust, which all can bring about democracy at the school. If students can experience this at their school, then they can use and apply these experiences as adults. These will help them become an autonomous citizen who can take ownership and responsibility for their own actions, decisions and lives. We have to point out that our TCI statistical results in this school are not representative. Further research and data collection is needed in different socio-economic regions and schools, and we plan to extend our research to highly different schools in villages as well. Learner efficiency depends on
various factors, and teaching is only one of these. Teachers can provide help for pupils with learning difficulties by applying their group-dynamic knowledge and expertise.

References


The Relationship between Health-Awareness and Academic Achievement on a National Representative Sample

Karolina Eszter Kovacs

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Proposal information

According to previous researches and theories, sport and health-awareness (Kovacs & Nagy, 2017) can be determined as non-academic achievement. Thus, a student who does regular physical activity, has a healthy diet, does not do health-damaging behaviours (smoking, alcohol consumption and substance use), shows a responsible sexual behaviour (e. g. protection, ignoring promiscuity), shows an assertive behaviour instead of aggression and applies adaptive coping strategies (Kovacs, 2018). Therefore physiological (e. g. sport, nutrition etc.) and psychological factors (e. g. anxiety, coping etc.) can be seen as the elements of health-awareness as non-academic achievement. This phenomenon is influenced by several factors namely by intrapersonal (e. g. gender, personality), interpersonal (e. g. family, peers, school) and socio-cultural factors (e. g. socio-economic status). Previous researches have already measured the connection between health-awareness and academic achievement. It can be stated that it has a strong influence on school absence and dropout as well. In case of regular smoking, the likelihood of the school dropout is higher (Cox et al, 2007) regarding boys and girls too. Concerning alcohol consumption, ambivalent results could be experienced as some of the researches showed a positive connection between regular alcohol consumption and school dropout and worse GPA (Balsa et al, 2011). However, some investigations showed no relation between academic achievement and alcohol consumption. Substance use shows a positive correlation with school dropout and low academic achievement, and with low academic commitment (King et al, 2006). In addition, health-risk behaviours are in a strong connection with depression, and with lower self-esteem and body-satisfaction (Nerini et al, 2016) as many investigations had the result that the level of depression is higher among regular smokers, binge-drinkers and substance users which has a negative effect on academic achievement and it can lead to dropout at each

30 University of Debrecen, Debrecen (Hungary), Email address: karolina92.kovacs@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-1186-7836
educational level. Sport shows an ambivalent relationship with academic achievement as some reported a positive relationship between regular physical activity and learning performance, while others show a negative connection between the two factors (Kovacs, 2015). Usually, it is stated that sport and a type of hobby and recreation has a positive influence on academic efficacy while competitive sport has a negative effect as it creates a zero-sum situation. Academic achievement is also in a strong positive relation with total health and resilience (WestEd, 2003). The perceived health has an evident and positive effect on academic achievement and it is a protective factor against school dropout as well. Mental health can be detected as a protective factor too against low academic achievement (and against problematic and health-risk behaviour). As its element, higher level of anxiety has a negative influence on learning as students with high level of internalised stress (sadness, anxiety, depression, altogether distress) and externalised stress (anger, frustration, fear) correlates with low level of academic achievement and worse GPA (Roeser et al, 1998). This is in connection with the coping flexibility and strategies of the students (Nagy & Kovacs, 2017) as students who can cope with their problems more efficiently can achieve better learning results. Keyes et al (2011) stated that the dimensions of wellbeing like emotional, social and psychological wellbeing are in a negative relation with academic inefficiency and dropout.

Methods

The aim of the study was to investigate the connection between health awareness as non-academic achievement and academic achievement. The sample consists of students learning at 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade in traditional and sport schools (grammar or vocational schools) in the seven regions of Hungary and in Budapest. Three institutions were selected from each region, thus the sample has 3015 participants, 1675 sport school students and 1340 traditional sport school students. The gender distribution is representative regarding the Hungarian population, 44,6% of the participants is male while 55,4% of them is female. The mean age of the sample is 16,44 years (sd=1,122) 12,6% of the students come from Budapest, 25,6% of them from county seats, 10,1% of them from other big cities, 28,3% of them from small cities, 22,5% of them from villages and 0,9% of them from farms. Regarding the territorial distribution, 10,1% of the participants live in the North-Hungarian Region, 16,4% of them in the North-Great-Plain, 11,5% of them in the South-Great-Plain, 10,9% of them in the South-Transdanubia Region, 17,7% of them in the Central-Transdanubia Region, 6,7% of them in the Central Hungarian Region, 8,5% in the West-Transdanubia region and 18,1% of them in Budapest. Regarding the methodology, health-awareness was measured as non-academic achievement. The test repertoire contained health-awareness (Health-awareness Inventory [HAI], Nagy & Kovacs, 2017; Cronbach α=0,823), coping flexibility (Coping Flexibility Scale [CFS], Kato, 2012, Cronbach α=0,810), anxiety (Child Anxiety Life Interference Scale [CALIS], Lyneham et al, 2013, Cronbach α=0,899), well-being (WHO Well-being Inventory [WBI-5], Susanszky et al, 2006, Cronbach α=0,828), and spiritual well-being (Spiritual Well-Being Scale [SWBS], Cotton et al, 2005, Cronbach
α=0.791) were measured. Furthermore, the grades of the subjects (Hungarian literature and grammar, mathematics, history, foreign language, biology, chemistry, physics, geography) and subjective learning evaluation (“How well do you achieve according to you?”; “How well do you achieve according to your teachers?”; “How well do you achieve according to your parents?”) as academic achievement. We hypothesised that a positive relationship can be detected between health-awareness and academic achievement thus the more health-conscious the student is (namely the higher its coping flexibility, general well-being and spiritual well-being is and the lower its anxiety is), the better academic achievement it has. Parents were informed and they gave their consent in accordance with research ethics. The questionnaire data were typed into Excel and then analysed in SPSS for Windows, version 22.

**Conclusion**

Our hypothesis was confirmed as a significant positive relationship can be detected between health-awareness and all of the subjects. A significant moderate connection can be found between the whole GPA (grade point average) and health-awareness (r=0.309; p<0.001), and the subjects alone show moderate or at least weak but significant relation to health awareness too. It also shows a moderate correlation with subjective academic achievement according to their own opinion (r=0.360; p<0.001), according to their perceptions related to the attitudes of the parents (r=0.327; p<0.001) and the teachers (r=0.338; p<0.001). Thus the higher the students’ health-awareness is, the better objective and subjective academic achievement can be detected. Coping flexibility shows a positive weak but significant correlation with GPA (r=0.085; p<0.001) and with all of the subjects. In addition, a significant positive but weak connection can be found between coping and own perception (r=0.137; p<0.001), teachers’ perception (r=0.146; p<0.001) and parents’ perception (r=0.103; p<0.001). Regarding anxiety, a negative and weak but significant correlation can be measured with GPA (r=-0.109; p<0.001) and with the subjects; furthermore, it showed a correlation with own evaluation (r=-0.151; p<0.001), teachers’ attitudes (r=-0.139; p<0.001) and parents’ perception (r=-0.137; p<0.001). Finally, general and spiritual well-being shows a weak, but significant positive correlation with GPA (WB: r=0.056; p<0.001; SWB: r=0.204; p<0.001) and school subjects. Also a positive weak connection can be experienced between general well-being and subjective evaluation (r=0.168; p<0.001), teachers’ perception (r=0.123; p<0.001) and parents attitudes (r=0.086; p<0.001); and a positive correlation can be measured between spiritual well-being and own evaluation (r=0.238; p<0.001), teachers’ perception (r=0.219; p<0.001) and parents’ perception (r=0.253; p<0.001).

**Keywords:** health-awareness, academic achievement, correlation
References


Coding without (Age)Limits? Experiences with BBC Micro: Bit in Primary School

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Proposal information

STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) has an inevitable role in forming competency-based knowledge and developing of 21st century skills. The expected skills – algorithmic skills, problem-solving skills, self-directed learning skills – can also be fostered with teaching of the basics of coding. Therefore, integrating coding education and robotics into education at early ages all around the world is vital (Kanbul & Uzunboylu, 2017). As Kazakoff (2014) states, the permeation of the robotics can help the students’ thinking turn from abstract to concrete. The advent of different entry-level programmable devices (e.g. Blue-bot, Bee-bot, different LEGO sets) and software (e.g. Scratch, ScratchJr, Lightbot, Kodu) can approve the development of the algorithmic skills beginning in the kindergarten instead of IT lessons in the primary school; after all using ICT devices (e.g. tablet) – even for assessment – can help to motivate children as well (Barrett, Jozsa & Morgan, 2017). One of the above mentioned physical computing devices is the BBC supported Micro:bit designed for educational purposes (Gibson es Bradley, 2017). This device was distributed almost worldwide, the Micro:bit consortium funded and produced over one million devices, enough for every 11-12 year-old in the UK (Sentence et al., 2017). The Micro:bit is a pocket-sized computer with a 5X5 matrix LED display, with sensors (e.g. accelerometer, compass, thermometer), with programmable buttons and with numerous forms of communication. It can be programmed with a computer or with different mobile devices. For programming the device several forms are available from entry-level block-based programming language (e.g. MakeCode, Scratch) to advanced-level (e.g. Python, JavaScript, C++) (BBC Micro:bit, 2015). With the wide range of programming environments the coding can be suitable for students with different abilities and ages, furthermore their problem-solving, self-

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directed learning and collaborative skills can be developed even in a multidisciplinary environment.

Micro:Bit was started to be used almost worldwide in the education amongst students with different ages. Large number of educators from different levels started to develop algorithmic skills and coding. From this perspective it can be generally vital to know whether there is any age limit for coding. Therefore, the aim of our research was to examine the applicability of the device and its software (MakeCode) and to have a picture about the student’s attitude of programming and physical computing. We also put a stress on potential influential factors according to programming, therefore we examined the most related ones (gender, mathematical skills, frequency and insensitivity of computer usage). On the basis of our theoretical framework we hypothesized that (H1) The programming skills become better with age; (H2) The programming skills of the boys and the girls are different; (H3) The students’ programming skills depends on their mathematic results; (H4) Those students who are active computer users are likely to achieve better results in programming and likely want to be a programmer. Our research questions were (Q1) What is the students opinion about the usage of Micro:bit and the different programming exercises? and (Q2) How the students conceive of the problem-solving tasks?

Methods

We made our research in a Hungarian primary school, where students learn information technology once a week from Grade1, but they had no previous experience with Micro:bit. The lower primary pupils (Grade 3-4) didn't learn anything about programming before, the upper primary students (Grade 5-8) learnt Imagine (former Comenius Logo) and block-based programming surfaces (e.g. Scratch and the different challenges of the “Hour of Code”). All students of the school were involved in the research, the only entrance condition was the confident mouse- and keyboard handling. Fitly to this condition 11 classes (Grade 3-8) took part in the examination (N=170); we had three classes from lower primary (n=43) and eleven classes (n=137) in our sample.

In our three-week-long examination the students worked with the Micro:bit and the MakeCode software for two lessons and at the third lesson they filled out the online questionnaire. The classes were divided into two groups so during the lessons the number of participants were between 8 and 16. In the first lesson the students could have a general perspective about the Micro:bit and they learnt the basics of the MakeCode surface. In the second lesson they revised the knowledge from the previous lesson in a modified format moreover they received new exercises based on the previous ones. Ten exercise which hierarchically built on one another were used to measure if students with various ages are able to comprehend and apply the necessary knowledge for the different levels of programming. The amount of exercises was built up such a way to surely fill in a whole lesson (45 minute).
During the data collection the results of the students were immediately recorded to an evaluation sheet after every single task. The performance of the students was evaluated on four different levels in a gamified way (with “little stars”). Zero star meant no solution, one star meant a partly good solution, two star meant a good solution with a little help and three star meant an excellent solution without any help. Because of the better comparability and easier interpretation, the “little stars” were converted into percentage points (*=33,33%; **=66,66%; ***=100%). During the third lesson the students filled out an online questionnaire which had eight items with a five level Likert scale, closed questions and the necessary background questions. We used SPSS 22.0 for data processing and we applied One-way ANOVA, correlation and frequency analyses.

**Conclusion**

In the second lesson of the examination the students received ten programming exercises with Micro:bit. As the exercises got harder the less pupils could solve; while the exercise1 were solved by 93,7% of the students, the exercise7 were finished less than 9% of the students. If we analyse the achieved percentage points by classes we can see that the score got slightly higher with the age, however the differences between the classes were minimal. Grade 3 achieved 31,59%, Grade 4, 5 and 6 achieved a mean percentage score of 48%, and Grade 7, 8 achieved 54,24% and 56,1% (ANOVA: p<0,005). These results show one major step in the percentage points, between Grade 3 and Grade 4 the difference is higher than 17%; this may mean that Grade 3 is that age when starting to code is the most optimal.

![Figure 1: Achieved results (%) of the students, broken by classes (ANOVA: p<0.005)](image)

We examined the students’ results by gender if there is any statistical difference between the ability and skills according to programming. By the results of the eleven classes we can see that there is no significant difference between the genders (boys: 47,14%, girls: 49,79%). We also took a look at the students achieved results and their mathematic grade of the previous school year, but the statistical analysis doesn’t show any major difference between them. The students’ attitude towards the Micro:bit was
positive, over 90% “felt themselves” well during the programming, 57% of the students “found the programming easy”, and in the case of problem-solving more than 80% found it useful. We also found that “computer usage activity” has a mild positive correlation with “I want to be a programmer later” (Spearman’s correlation: 0.332; p<0.000) and a slight negative correlation with the achieved results (Spearman’s correlation: -0.201; p<0.009).

**Keywords:** ICT, education, primary school, coding, programming

**References**


Characteristics of Klara Kokas's Pedagogical Methods and Kokas-course at Liszt Academy in Budapest

Csilla Imola Szekely

Presented: European Conference on Educational Research 2018

Proposal information

The Hungarian music pedagogue and music psychologist Klara Kokas (who was born in 1929 and died in 2010) centered her pedagogical concept on children's creativity, human relations, acceptance and complete attention to others. This world view and ideology was constructed around a child-centered sensitivity, music being her primary pedagogical resource.

The goal of this paper is to explore the main elements and characteristics of Klara Kokas's pedagogy, which were revolutionary new on the fields of personality development, music and complex art education compared to the practices of the reform pedagogy trends in the 20th century's Europe and United States (Pukanszky-Nemeth, 1996), and to the changing attitude in pedagogy via self-development offered by scouting life since 1907 (Nyul, 2018. 252). These elements were representing a special way of education, and they are contributing to ability development through music, motion and manual arts. We call it the Kokas-method. After this there will be presented a newly developed discipline based on the music pedagogy of Klara Kokas and researches on it. This educational innovation is part of the higher education program of Liszt Academy in Budapest since 2014 (Deszpot, 2015).

The main content elements of the lecture are: presentation of specific characteristics of music education methods of Klara Kokas, presentation of music teacher training based on self-experience and music, according to the Kokas-method. There will be outlined the importance of teacher education based on improvisation and effectiveness.

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As a response to the recent Hungarian national curriculum according to the newest educational goals, the Liszt Academy of Budapest started a new optional discipline in its music teacher educational concept: the introduction of the Kokas-method. This presentation relies on this recent research of Vass-Deszpot (2017), whose research is a qualitative one, using interviews and their analytical and morphological investigations. The intention of the course works on the inclusion of alternative pedagogy in traditional teaching forms, where the accent is on the child.

Methods

We first analyze and summarize the pedagogical methods of Klara Kokas, her own musical activities, than we will methodize its principles, concepts and art pedagogical elements. There will be outlined the contours of the Kokas method. This part of the lecture uses qualitative research methods as text analysis, from a phenomenological point of view.

The presentation draws out those characteristics and specifics, which construct the Kokas-method. Our analytical and systematizing research methods rely on her publications, writings, essays, books, short-film compilation, movie archives and interviews, also on my personal experiences. The most convenient way to draw out the main elements and characteristics of Klara Kokas’s pedagogy is to analyze and conceptualize its phases and moments around some notions and principles. We will methodize, then classify and briefly display these features one by one.

After being involved in the complex art pedagogy methods of Klara Kokas, we can certainly confirm that she really is a reform pedagogue, although her concept does not cover the development of skills and competencies as a whole. It also beneficially develops socialization, association, communication, coordination skills and abilities, aesthetic sense, empathy and concentration. In other words: holistic education. The accent is on personality development and self-expression through musical inspiration.

Conclusion

As a result of our research we expect also to reveal those components, which are modifying the Kokas-activities to a reform pedagogical method, and they also turn Klara Kokas into a reform pedagogue. The expected result of the research is a presentation of an effective sample course for adult and higher education. There will be processed the documents of the lifework of Klara Kokas with new focuses. It will be explored and methodized the elements which reflect to her spirituality, her ideological approach and their effects on personality. This is the way of applying the pedagogy of Klara Kokas on new educational fields.

As an outcome of my research there will be created some methodological guidences for teachers, educators, kindergarten teachers, religious and music teachers, preceptors,
pastors and youth foundation workers, specialists or volunteers, who are working on the filed of mental health education.

**Keywords:** Kokas-method, complex art pedagogy, personality development, music teacher training, higher education

**References**


Reviewed by Valeria Markos

The book edited by Fiona Duguid, Karsten Mundel and Daniel Schugurensky focuses on the different dimensions of work, learning and social action. The book consists of eleven chapters from the volunteering through the informal learning to the social movements.

Nowadays, most of the research, dealing with the work of young people, is concentrating on paid work instead of non-paid or volunteer work. From the introduction of the book, we recognise the meaning of volunteering, so from this point, we reinterpret the meaning of the word. Besides the traditional meaning of the volunteering, we can read the formalization, institutionalization and professionalization of voluntary work. According to the authors, the biggest reason for this is due to the changing economic and political context, and the pressure of the increasing accountability on non-profit organizations. Moreover, service-learning in high schools and universities is a way to motivate young people to volunteer.

On the other hand, the authors discover the relationship between volunteer work and informal learning. The book shows that learning may take place in volunteer work because people can improve different kinds of skills and competencies during volunteering such as interpersonal, communication, organising and managing, fundraising and technical skills (first aid, coaching, computer skills) knowledge regarding different areas like health, gender, political issues and environment.

Susan Stowe presents the major international and Canadian voluntary trends. The number of Canadian volunteers and the number of hours of volunteer work from 1987 to 2007 was gradually grown. The increase was influenced by the changes in the economy and the workplace. According to the Work and Lifelong Learning Project (2004), principally youth between 18 and 24 years and in the mid-adulthood, women, married people, those who have worked ever, and graduated people are more likely to

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work as a volunteer. Most people choose religious organisations, school or neighbourhood organisations, sports or cultural organisations where they can work. The main motivational reasons are to contribute to the community or the fact that volunteering can improve their job opportunities. Most volunteers report informal learning during their activities, but the authors found differences regarding gender, place of birth, and the level of education and income. Most people learned about teamwork, problem-solving and interpersonal knowledge but only a few of them learned a language, financial management and computers. Certainly, there are differences along to the learning and background variables.

The study of Kunle Akingbola, Fiona Duguid and Martha Viveros deals with the Canadian Red Cross Volunteers. Principally, they are looking for the following answers: what types of knowledge and skills do volunteers acquire, how do volunteers learn, and who is likely to benefit from the learning acquired through volunteering? Red Cross offers different kind of programs and services (Volunteer Resource Management Certificate program, Disaster Service Level 1 training) for volunteers where there are possibilities for non-formal learning and the personal and professional skills development. The question is how volunteers learn? According to the authors, they can learn from each other and through their activities and experiences. Volunteering has a transfer effect: volunteers report to transfer dispositional learning to other areas of their life.

J. Adam Perry aims to draw attention to the learning among the Frontier College volunteers and in the labourer-teacher program. The analysis of the data collected for this research suggests that the Frontier College labourer-teacher program develops the learning of the cultural synthesis, solidarity, student-centred learning and helps to improve the transformative learning of the volunteers.

The growing trend of immigrants in Canada is doing unpaid work in the public, non-profit and private sector in order to increase their employability. The qualitative research of Bonnie Slade, Yang Cathy Luo and Daniel Schugurensky presents the importance of volunteering among Canadian immigrants. According to the participants, volunteering improves their access to the labour market such as to improve understanding and using English mainly as a work-related language, to learn about the culture, to get a job, to meet people and to involve in the Canadian society.

Fiona Duguid, Karsten Mundel and Daniel Schugurensky explore the learning experiences in housing co-operatives. According to the results of the interviews and focus groups, volunteers developed self-governance, management, leadership, attitudes and values, political efficacy and other competencies. During the interviews, the participant could reflect on the learning (primarily non-formal and informal) experiences. This helped them to retrieve different learning experiences and reflected on them.
The study of Behrang Foroughi and Erica McCollum investigates the tenant volunteers work motivation, their activities and informal learning. Most of the tenants volunteer because they want to do something for the community and want to be socially active. Further aims are to encourage people for the community involvement. During the volunteering activity, informal learning regarding confidence, connection, political efficacy and participatory citizenship could be experienced. Daniel Schugurensky draws attention to the role of volunteering and learning in the democracy in three Latin American cities. Beyond the community involvement, electoral participation and political voices of the collaborative public action are also substantial as the main aim is to investigate civic engagement. The volunteers develop civic and political knowledge, attitudes, skills and practices during their activities. Volunteers can learn about local government work, trade-offs, costs of projects and the sources of revenue, social reality, different kind of democratic skills, collaboration with others, speak in public, political efficacy, self-confidence, needs of other groups etc. Daniel Schugurensky has another study with Karsten Mundel that provides a further investigation of the learning progress of the volunteers. The authors found that during the volunteering, learning is the most important thing as learning connects to concrete experiences. The authors draw attention to organisations concentrating on those who do rather than reflect or learn. They should enhance the reflective activities as volunteers’ learning may contribute to social change.

Kate Rogers and Megan Haggerty report on the content and process of informal learning within the social movements in Cuernavaca, Mexico. A social movement is not totally considered as volunteering despite of the participants are volunteers, their work is unpaid and they work for others. During the activities, tacit learning concerning social, economic or legal issues, new attitudes and skills development is evolving. The participants can learn from their own mistakes or from reflections.

To sum up, the aim of the studies is to draw attention to the connections between volunteer work, informal learning and social actions. We can see that most volunteer activities contribute to learning, primarily to informal and non-formal learning. During the activities, volunteers can improve skills (instrumental, interpersonal, communication, advocacy, political efficacy, self-governance and social awareness) to gain experiences, to develop their civic and political knowledge. Through these studies, we can see that volunteering is one of the best ways of informal learning.
Book Review


Reviewed by Zsuzsa Nagy34 & Zsolt Kristof35

This book describes the logical conception of health and main elements of the healthy lifestyle throughout a holistic-perception. From the main elements of healthy lifestyle the authors do highlight healthy nutrition, stress management, addictions, environmental aspects, physical activities, and sports. The book has a whole chapter about the Positive effects of sports and physical activities both regarding health and prevention. The study also includes a test for health condition and level that eases the Health Check for those who decide to change to a healthier lifestyle.

As the average age-rate increases, the health, health promotion and the number of years spent in health become more and more important by the years. The sedentary lifestyle means, that the importance of popularizing the sport and the healthy lifestyle has increased a lot recently, as it plays a huge role in creating a health-centred, preventive milieu.

Sport is the perfect tool for improving both the personality and the whole human body itself, and also is a great way of creating a team-spirit, or increasing national spirit. Sport also undoubtedly does have a huge role in strengthening family relations or social skills. It is well known that sport is a great way to increase the productivity of a worker that in long term is going to lead to an environmental improvement.

In sport the most beautiful is the noble combat, the carefree fun and relaxation spent with friends and family, all of these in the name of health. I personally do play football since decades. Team sports strengthen solidarity and team spirit. The greatest miracle of ball-sports is the ball itself, with its spectacular colours and fabrics. It improves the coordination and conditional capability while symbolizing a colourful, changing word. The ball rolls over ages and borders, to symbolize that it is a recreational activity available for everyone. In sports, the game is outrageously exceptional as the game itself is an essential of the human. As Friedrich Schiller has written in his letter about the

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esthetical education: “Men only plays when he is men in the perfect and full meaning of the word itself and is only a full people when he plays.”

It is never too late to change your lifestyle, neither does start a new sports activity. I can only recommend it to everyone. This study can help both practically and theoretically those, who would like to get fit and become and remain healthy, or also increasing their work capacity. I also do recommend this book for those who would like to change their lifestyle, which is really difficult, but when you do have the willpower, nothing is impossible, and this book will be your greatest support!

I also do recommend this book for the sports experts of the future, who are going to take an important part in the health education of different age groups. The book includes the experiments of the primer-studies of the authors, and both relevant national and international studies, that are able to support or prove each chapter.

The book starts with the review, in which professor Geza Nagy phrases, that this book mainly gives a helping hand for people working or learning in the field of sport and recreation, health promotion, but he also recommends the book for people motivated for lifestyle changing.

In the section entitled Introductional thoughts, the authors do highlight the positive effects of sport and physical activities. The writers also support their thesis with health-environmental scientific researches, both theoretically and statistically which shows, how could have a nation improve its savings throughout increasing the sport and physical activities. The mentioned fact means that the savings would increase throughout the more productive workers, as the GDP would grow. With this researches, the subject is supported, as it is parallel with both the actualities and the facts about the Hungarians living an inactive lifestyle recently. Although the statistic keeps change for the better, still only a few people choose activity and athletic lifestyle. The books main message can be easily grouped into three main chapters, that is “Health”, “Lifestyle”, and at last but not least “The aspects of sport and physical activities, training in keeping our health condition”.

The chapter titles “Health” is phrasing the theoretic perspective regarding the subject, and also the historical aspects of the terminology itself. In this section, the authors describe both the determination of the exterior and interior elements of health. Our health is determined by the following elements: our lifestyle, our biological facility, the health care system, economic aspects, our relationships with both our friends and family and the authors also do list workspace here. The writers also phrase the elements of lifestyle namely work, food, sport, relaxation and amusement. The health is interpreted in a holistic and treated in a complex way, and the aim is to create a perfect atmosphere both for body and mind.
In the chapter entitled “Lifestyle’, the authors highlight, that our lifestyle is also the gage of our life-quality. The authors also describe such studies, that not only write about health, but also deals with the minimum elements of the life-quality itself, such as: health, society, family, learning, educating, work, friends, relationships, household, marriage, nationality, neighbourhood, personality, living standard or wealth.

They describe the various health-models and wellness conceptions that also means holistic health-perception. The thesis is proven by both national and international studies.

The authors list and include the main elements regarding Cooper. This motivates and directs the reader on elements and main aspects of what people must keep when changing their lifestyle and keeping their health in a perfect condition.

The chapter also describes certain lifestyle elements. First of all, it describes the healthy nutrition subject. The subsections importance is supported by statistical data proving that obesity is a worldwide known problem that affects an increasing number of adults and children in both welfare societies, and poor countries. This section also describes the preventive functions of healthy nutrition, proven and supported by researches and studies. It also phrases facts about the BMI index and the practical aspects of it regarding the nutritional value of the products. The authors review the nutritional compositions and elements, and also the groups and importance of these in health promotion. They also do share the recommendations of so-called “CleverPlate” regarding nutrition which also acts like a practical directive for everyday life.

The upcoming lifestyle elements are entitled Stress, including the exact description of the phrase itself, the stress factors, the symptoms of it, and its effects on men’s health.

The greatest achievement of the section is that it lists and briefly describes the best stress relief methods and decreasing the stress level (massage, sport, stretching, yoga, autogenic training, meditation, Qi gong, and bath therapy).

The lifestyle elements include the addiction or the lack of addiction. In this subsection the authors define the exact concept of all addictive chemicals and products such as drugs, alcohol etc. and also describe the negative side-effects of the addictions. They group the immunizing and the risk factors regarding the addictive products, according to family background, qualification, both from the aspects of the peers and society. They also notify us, that the daily activities such as sports and well-structured spare time means a highly immunizing-factor regarding the drug-usage.

Another subsection describes the importance and the effect of the environmental background on or health and lifestyle. From the environmental aspects they highlight the quality of air, and air pollution, as this element has the greatest effect on our health. The authors define that the respiratory diseases (such as asthma, COPD diseases), that are very common nowadays, could be easily cured with high climate, and clear,
unpolluted air. The authors also do support their thesis with their on researches in this field. They also do phrase the assumptions to follow to decrease the effects of air pollution.

Regarding the outer environment the authors do phrase and define instructions according to for example interior that helps health promotion easily.

The authors emphasise physical activities and sports as important lifestyle elements in different subsections throughout the book. They also support their thesis on the positive side-effects of these, and their role regarding health promotion with both national and international research.

The active, athletic lifestyle has a great role in the prevention of obesity (obesitas). The sport has an indisputable positive effect regarding cardiovascular diseases, heart attacks, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, cancers, stress-caused diseases. The writers also prove that sport activities do improve the brain functions. This before mentioned positive effect means that students are able to learn more easily, and the elder age-group is going to experiment the increase of the cognitive-functions.

The books main chapter spades the description and importation of the sport and physical activities, and the role of those in health promotion. In this before mentioned chapter the authors supports the exact numbers and percentages they do mention, regarding how do physical activities and sports increase the results of preventing people from diseases and illness, with secunder researches. They define the positive effects of psychical activities that we can experience on or bodies, and also review the recommendations of the WHO organization as daily sport activities for different age groups that also is an instruction that do helps in lifestyle changing.

Then the authors give review of sports and regular action and sport programs, also analysing the positive role and side effects of these in health promotion. People, who would just like to start a more active lifestyle can also choose from this variety. These programs include sports and activities such as hiking, nordic-walking, horse riding, fishing, but the authors also recommends team sports, such as soccer, handball, volleyball, or martial arts, and last but not least such modern activities appear in the book as aerobic, callanetics and functional training.

This book offers you the answer for the everyday challenges of the modern life, as it motivates for doing sports regularly, what is a necessary but not at all sufficient assumption of compensating the sedentary lifestyle.
Book Review


Reviewed by Zsuzsanna Demeter-Karaszi

The religion helps people to navigate their lives in society; it is built on certain values and quality standards. The religion facilitated and still facilitates the interaction of societies at all levels, considering that the value set remains a guide value. The importance of religion in societies goes back to millennium, even to primitive societies, as Barnes in the Religion in Conversation: Christian identity and religious pluralism sums up: ‘Religion is the heart of culture, that collection of mores, myths and fundamental beliefs which holds a people together and gives a society a sense of coherence and identity’ (1989).

‘The issues concerning what religion, or aspects of religion, should be taught in schools, or whether religion should even be on the school curriculum, or whether religious teaching should be simply left to parents or believers in a particular faith, have recently come to the forefront of debate in many national settings, especially in the western countries’ (Watson, 2018).

Why are we even having this debate? Recall that time, when the education of people was provided by monks, by religious figures because only they were literate before the state began to take responsibility for education. In those days religious teaching was not called into question. Each study in this volume makes an addition to our understanding of the place of religion in our world and how it is or should be approached in today’s uncertain political climate (Watson, 2018).

The study volume, entitled Religion and Education: comparative and international perspectives, was published by Symposium Books Ltd. with ISBN 978-1-910744-01-7. This publication is also available on a subscription basis as Volume 27 Number 2 of Oxford Studies in Comparative Education with ISSN 0961-2149. Its editors are Malini Sivasubramaniam and Ruth Hayhoe. Several professional experts were taken part in the

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preparation of this volume.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first one, entitled Internationalizing/Globalising Religious Values, consists of six studies. The studies of Kathrine Marshall, Jun Li, Christina Hwang, Sarfaroz Niyozov, Vilma Seeberg & Shujuan Luo & Ya Na, and Ruth Hayhoe belong to the first section. In this section, the studies help the reader to understand the impact of religion beyond the nation-state and the role of religion and also how the religious actors are emphasized in the interaction between local and global area. This section aims to draw the attention to the contribution of religious institutions, to the development of Confucian educational partnership between Chinese and African institutions, to the comparison of Christian universities in Canada and South Korea, to the Islamic education in Tajikistan, to the religiousness of the migrant workers in Western China, and last but not least, to the encounter of Christianity, Buddhism and Confucianism.

The second one, entitled Curriculum, Pedagogy and School Leadership, consists of also six researches. This section is based on the studies of Me-Yee Wong, Xinyi Wu, Prapapat Niyom & Art-ong Jumsai Na Ayudhaya & Witit Rachatatanun & Benjamin Vokes, Lauren Herzog & Nathaniel Adams, Malini Sivasubramaniam & Steve Sider, Yaacov J. Katz. This section concentrates on religious education, highlights the school curriculum and also the pedagogy of religious education is emphasised. This section also describes the religious education of four religious schools in Hong Kong, the interaction of state schools and religious education in China, the teachableness of Buddhist values, the challenges of modernizing Islamic education in Bangladesh and Senegal, the role of faith-based education in schools in Kenya and Haiti, and the religious education in the Israeli state schools.

And last, but not least, the third section, entitled Religion in Policy Progress and Conflict Resolution, consists of five studies. The third section contains the studies of L. Philip Barnes, Huma Kidwai, Elena Lisovskaya, Ratna Ghosh & W. Y. Alice Chan, Bruce A. Collet & Hyeyoung Bang. In this section, the role of the state is involved in the inheritance of religion and education. The first study presents religious education in Northern Ireland. In the second study, the author presents what kind of role the state play in restructuring religious schools in India. In the third study, Elena Lisovskaya presents the difficulties experienced by religion to return to the Russian schools. As the fourth study is presented Ratna Ghosh and W. Y. Alice Chan’s paper, entitled “The Role of Religious Education in Countering Religious Extremism in Diverse and Interconnected Societies”. The study which closes this section belongs to Bruce A. Collet and to Hyeyoung Bang and it presents that how the public schools are related to the new immigrant students in 20 countries.

Each section makes a unique contribution in enabling a comparative understanding of the role in education and the diverse geographical and political contexts bring richness to the discussion on promoting deeper religious dialogue (Watson, 2018).
Nowadays researchers feel the need to consult the study of religion as it is shown in the numerous studies mentioned above. The conditions of the investigation are the respect and appreciation against the faith and confidence of the others.

References


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