



***Supporting Adult Learning Professionals in the European Correctional Criminal Justice System***

**EISALP**

***Providing learning experience and supporting tools for those who wish to deliver effective prison education***

[WWW.EISALP.EU](http://WWW.EISALP.EU)

EIS-ALP (European Induction Support for Adult Learning Professionals) is a dynamic and innovative partnership funded by the European Union under its Grundtvig Lifelong Learning programme. It has brought together a group of active European partners from both private and public sectors each with specific experience of the adult learning sector in custody. This two years and a half project is focussed on improving the content and delivery of adult education in a prison setting and ultimately improving the outcomes for learners in prison across the European Union.

Reaching the final phases of the project, EISALP team has created a number of resources available on-line (on a dedicated platform) and off-line (downloadable from the project website and printed available at the project partners). There are two main groups targeted:

- Teachers for adults (already working or in the final stages of training) that are interested in finding out about the prison settings, the rules and regulations, the specificity of prison learners, etc.
- Teachers' trainers, that are interested in delivering initial training or CDP on prison education concepts.

By the end of the project materials will be available in English, Romanian, Maltese, Portuguese and Slovenian.

As a teaser to all interested adult educators, we will present a few extracts from one of our modules, **Specific literature regarding prison education**, available on the dedicated platform of the project.

## WHAT IS PRISON EDUCATION?

At a quick search of the Internet, Wikipedia tells us that:

**"Prison education**, also known as Inmate Education and Correctional Education, is a broad term that encompasses any number of educational activities occurring inside a prison. These educational activities include both vocational training and academic education. The goal of such activities is to prepare the prisoner for success outside of prison and to enhance the rehabilitative aspects of prison."

What do you think about this description? Besides vocational and academic, should we think of something else, maybe more important, to be delivered for a person learning in prison? Please go to your [First Assignment](#) before going any further and fill in there what your opinion is.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT.....?

.... In South Africa, prison education for young offenders is going under reform to move from "embracing education for the purpose of rehabilitation" towards installing "academic wellness"? Makes you think...

In her 2015 research [The Experiences Of Teachers In Addressing The Academic Wellness Of Juvenile Offender Learners](#) , Manzini Theresa Lydia Badiksie describes how this is happening and what is the perception of the teachers. "The fundamental goals of academic wellness are to engage juvenile offender learners in creative and stimulating activities. They also include the use of resources to expand juvenile learners' knowledge and focus on the acquisition, development, application, and be able to articulate on critical thinking (.....). Moreover, juvenile offender learners require a commitment to lifelong learning, and development of academic skills and abilities to achieve a more satisfying life." You can take a look at the full study in our Library.

## ***THE FACTORS IN PRISON EDUCATION***

Let's take together an imaginative exercise. Please hold in mind two companion ideas:

- a) Most prisoners that staff come in contact with will be released from custody to live again in our community.
- b) The staff working with offenders on a daily basis have more opportunities than most to positively influence long-term inmate success.

Now try to imagine your prison not as a correctional facility (as it is) but as a learning environment. Is this an unusual idea?

Think about this: People learn by watching the behaviors of others who they respect; therefore in a correctional environment, staff members have a responsibility to act in a respect-worthy manner at all times.

## ***THE FACTORS IN PRISON EDUCATION***

Let's go back to the learning environment: what is this?

"Learning environments are typically constructivist in nature, engaging learners in "sense-making" or reasoning about extensive resource sets. Learning environments typically include four components: an enabling context, resources, a set of tools, and scaffolds. Authentic or realistic contexts are provided to motivate learners, and typically take the form of complex, full-scale problems representative of real-world tasks. [...]To create a learning environment, it is perhaps less important to focus on developing extensive materials, and more important to provide learners with appropriate tools and resources to conduct their own inquiries." Hannafin, M., Land, S., & Oliver, K. (1999). Open learning environments: Foundations, methods, and models. In C. Reigeluth (Ed.), *Instructional Design Theories and Models* (pp. 115-140). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Doesn't sound like a prison, does it? And staff, by constant interaction with inmates and through daily programs implemented, are creating such a learning environment.

## ***THE FACTORS IN PRISON EDUCATION***

So not only education staff delivers learning?

The Oregon Department of Correction developed a state policy called the Oregon Accountability Model to provide and assure a proper foundation for inmates to lead successful lives upon release. In this model, one of the 6 components is Staff / Inmates Interaction. This interaction is seen as creating a learning environment, offering pro-social behavior as role-model, reinforce positive behavior and re-direct negative behavior. Please note that this model is addressing *all* staff in prisons, not just educators, social workers or psychologist. And what do they have to say about their model: "The nature of interactions and communications with inmates is a key to success. The Staff/Inmate Interaction Component takes advantage of the period of incarceration to clarify and shape pro-social behavior with the ultimate goal of establishing durable behaviors that will translate to the community when inmates leave incarceration and re-enter society. [...]"

[http://www.oregon.gov/DOC/PUBAFF/pages/oam\\_welcome.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/DOC/PUBAFF/pages/oam_welcome.aspx)



## ***THE LEARNER IN PRISON EDUCATION***

- The learners engaging in prison education are mostly adults. You can find a brief summary of adult learning characteristics in our library by looking up Dr. Gary Kuhne's "[ADTED 460 - Introduction to Adult Education](#)".
- But there are, in general, a special kind of adult learners, with low learning skills, negative previous learning experiences, general difficulties in communication.

"Some offenders who have problems communicating may find it difficult to express themselves through speech, writing and non-verbal communication and likewise have difficulty understanding other people. They may also have difficulty understanding and retaining information. Some offenders may have problems with speaking and understanding. Others may have problems in using language to convey information."

Read more at [Crossing the Communication Divide, National Offender Management Service UK](#)

Please read the study case in [your sixth assignment](#) and identify what prison education has to prepare a learner for, preparing yourself for the class discussion on this topic.



If you would be interested in finding out more, join us on our piloting period or use the materials, please contact any of the national partners (contacts available at [www.eisalp.eu](http://www.eisalp.eu) ) of the project coordinator at [contact@cpip.ro](mailto:contact@cpip.ro)

*EISALP project uses as internal quality assurance in implementation the SOCIETAL method and follows **Societal Responsibility***