

## Lead Editor's Welcome

CORMAC BEHAN

Welcome to Volume 6, Number 3 of the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*.

Our cover art image, *MYVIEWOFTHEWORLDISOBSCUREDBYSTEELBARSOFIN-CARCERATION* was produced by a student at the Midlands Prison, Ireland. In the prison's education department, he participates in art classes and has had his work shown at exhibitions. He works in his cell, often painting on the back of discarded cereal boxes, demonstrating a resourcefulness typical of artists in prison. Prior to his imprisonment, this student had little experience of creating art; however, after his experience in the education department, he now intends to continue painting following his release.

As always, we begin with our historical vignette from Thom Gehring. Thom outlines how the death of George Floyd has focused attention in the U.S. on the issue of racism. Black Lives Matter and other organizations helped frame subsequent protests around the relationships between racial slavery, incarceration, and policing. He argues persuasively that educators in prison have an important task, which is "to stretch toward clarity". He contends that we need to locate recent developments in historical context, by examining racial slavery, the Genocide against Indigenous Americans, and the development of the penitentiaries.

In Samantha McAleese and Jennifer Kilty's paper "Walls are put up when curiosity ends": Transformative Education in the Canadian Carceral Context', the authors conceptualize the prison classroom as a performative space. Using the Walls to Bridges program as a case study, they consider the dynamics of navigating institutional policies and practices when teaching inside carceral spaces, and the constraints that structure these classrooms. Significantly, they demonstrate ways in which learners and educators become more resourceful, and consider how prison classrooms can become critical public spheres.

Lovell et al. in their paper, 'Learning from the Outcomes of Existing Prison Parenting Education Programs for Women Experiencing Incarceration: A Scoping Review' believe that we can learn much from prison parenting education programs for women. This review offers insights to those who wish to develop a parenting program specifically for women. The authors conclude that prison can be an opportunity for parenting education and support.

Kariane Westrheim and Helene Marie Eide in their paper 'Norwegian Prison Officers Perspectives on Professionalism and Professional Development Opportunities in their Occupation' note the paucity of research into the education and training of prison officers. In particular, this article investigates how Norwegian prison officers understand their own professionalism and seek opportunities for professional development. The authors point out that education and training for prison officers in Norway is far more extensive than in other countries, and argue

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Cormac Behan teaches criminology at the School of Languages, Law and Social Sciences, Technological University Dublin. His research interests include penal history, prisoners' rights, comparative penology and prison education. Prior to taking up this position, he taught criminology at the Centre for Criminological Research, University of Sheffield. From 1997 to 2011, he taught politics and history in Irish prisons. Cormac has served on the executive boards of the Correctional Education Association and the European Prison Education Association. He was the founding chairman of the Irish Prison Education Association.

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that prison officer education and training deserves more research studies.

Precious Skinner-Osei and Peter Claudius Osei in their paper, ‘An Ecological Approach to Improving Re-entry Programs for Justice-Involved African American Men’ posit that reentry programs need to utilize a different approach. They argue that reentry programs should not focus solely on the individual, but also consider environmental and societal factors. They put forward the CARE model, which proposes that re-entry programs implement four steps (i.e., collaboration, amend, reintegration, and empowerment) to successfully reunite former prisoners with their families, the labour market, and their communities.

In this edition’s practitioner paper, Kevin Windhauser considers the challenges of adapting a humanities program in an environment which lacks digital and physical research resources. These challenges will no doubt resonate with many teachers working in coercive environments internationally. Despite the logistical obstacles, he argues that ‘Inquiry-Based Learning,’ helps students take on the role of an active researcher which can have long-term benefits: it promotes student confidence, independent learning and autonomy. Further, it prepares students interested in pursuing further higher education after release.

We hope you enjoyed and were challenged by some of the papers in this volume of the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*. As we look forward to our next issue of JPER in 2021, we invite prison and correctional educators to join the conversation as we endeavor to cultivate our research outputs and develop pedagogical approaches together. I invite all those involved in prison education and learning to consider writing a research paper, contributing examples of best practice, writing a book review or updating us on policies. I look forward to working with prison education researchers, prison educators and learners inside on our next edition of the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*.

Finally, we have extended our call for papers for our Special Issue “Critical Reflections on Philosophy, Education, and Prison Sociology” to 31 January 2021. This Special Issue of the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry* will focus on the intersection of the practices and disciplines of philosophy, education, and prison sociology, with a particular focus on the tensions, difficulties, and challenges that arise from their interaction. Further details are available here: <https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/jper/callforpapers.pdf>

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