A SAFE SPACE FOR A SECOND CHANCE:

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PERFORMATIVE SPACE IN DELIVERING EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO JUSTICE-INVOLVED ADULTS IN THE PRISON AND THE COMMUNITY

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the structure and delivery of education programs to justice-involved adults in Canadian federal prisons and in the community. A series of semi-structured interviews as well as three volumes of the *Journal for Prisoners on Prisons* were analyzed using a qualitative approach to determine whether or not principles of adult education and components of performative space are present in current correctional education strategies. The findings suggest that while there are occurrences of both elements in the education that is provided to prisoners, the programs in the community are much more reflective of these adult learning standards. This project highlights the need for research into the area of adult correctional education, increased collaboration between the fields of criminology and education, and provides a framework from which future research can continue.

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> *Education acts as a buffer against the nihilistic threat [of incarceration]; it provides structures of meaning, feeling and mutuality between teacher and student that resists the prison ethos. Schools keep a door open to the possibilities of being-in-relationship with others, rather than encouraging a "numbing detachment" from them, and furthering a "self-destructive disposition toward the world." As civil spheres, schools can be restorative and transformative because they counter the stripping away of identities and distorted forms of interaction in prisons. When ethical conversations appear, the potential for critical thought and democratic participation is likely to follow, if not in prison, then perhaps on the outside* (Wright and Gehring, 2008b, p.335).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The design and development of correctional programming involves incorporating a wide variety of strategies, theories and models in order to effectively work with diverse offender populations[1], changing social, political and economic circumstances, and varying administrative preferences. Those working in corrections already understand that "crime in almost all cases involves action...but those actions have deep roots in the inner structure of the self and in the visible structure of society" and it is these underlying elements that must be addressed (Duguid, 2000, p.3). As it currently stands, the roots of criminal behaviour are addressed through medical, psychological and psychiatric treatment, but one form of correctional programming that has been influential since the conception of the penitentiary in North America is education. Whether it is in the form of basic education, post-secondary courses, or vocational training, the "evidence suggests that carefully designed and administered education and work programs can improve inmates' institutional behaviour, reduce recidivism, and promote involvement in prosocial activities after release" (Gaes, et al., 1999, p.398). The importance of educational programming

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[1] By this I am referring to the fact that Canada's male, federal prison population is a group that is *always already* changing. While this is a group that is homogenous, in the sense that the prisoners are a vulnerable and marginalized group within society, it is also heterogeneous in terms of the crimes the prisoners have committed, their level of risk, their criminogenic needs, and their individual biological, psychological and sociological characteristics. Therefore, correctional programming needs to accommodate these differences, as well as the constant changes in these differences.

within the prison is further highlighted by the fact that "illiteracy is perhaps the greatest common denominator in correctional facilities" amongst prisoners (Bosworth, 2005, p.555) and while there are of course several other individual criminogenic factors to address during the period of incarceration, it may be hard for a prisoner to make progress in others areas of life if the basic skills of reading, writing and communicating are minimal to begin with.

Unfortunately for the many prisoners who would benefit from receiving educational training, and for the practitioners who are invested in providing such an opportunity, the policies that direct the actions of those working in correctional facilities are "based not upon research findings and expert advice, but instead upon highly politicized articulations of public sentiment that strike many criminologists as ill-informed [and] explicitly punitive" (Garland and Sparks, 2000, pp.196-197). The concerns of prison administrators which revolve around bureaucratic control and the management of dangerous groups (Feeley and Simon, 1992) do not make prison conducive to education and learning – activities that are better suited for environments that promote democracy and equality. The increased focus on risk management (and the fact that prisoners are overly constructed as dangerous) has chipped away at the rehabilitative potential of correctional programming. While correctional education began as an element of incarceration to help maintain ideals of democracy and individual autonomy, changes in correctional philosophy and practice reduced education to a very basic and often insignificant element in the rehabilitative process. Attempting to work in an institution that places such little value on quality education can seem like an impossible task for the educator who wishes to impart positive change by encouraging the adult prisoner to be an active participant in his own learning through the philosophies of adult education and the principles of democracy.

While most of the research on correctional education emerges from studies conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom, this is a topic that is extremely relevant to Canadian criminological research, Canada's federal prison system, and Canadian researchers working in the field of adult education. Given the fact that Canada is considered to be one of the safest countries in the world to live, and other nations look our way for policy and practice in a variety of areas of social life, it is vital that knowledge and resources be gathered in order to make the correctional system in this country more effective in improving public safety and individual well-being. Thirty years ago, correctional education in Canada was "characterized by a general lack of interest in genuine educational achievement, by inadequate standards of teacher selection and training...a lack of discipline and structure, and by a complete lack of educational research" (Cosman, 1981, p.40). While there is certainly progression in other areas of rehabilitation and reintegration in Canada's correctional system, educational initiatives seem to move forward at a slower pace. Correctional education remains unable to flourish under the shadow of current correctional philosophies that focus on medical treatment, rigid management and high security.

The Correctional Service of Canada [CSC] includes adult basic education as a part of their correctional programming, but it is unclear how the CSC prioritizes the educational success of an incarcerated person in relation to the other goals set out in his/her correctional plan. In a recent report published by a Correctional Service of Canada Review Panel[2] there is a brief acknowledgment of the importance of educational programming during incarceration. The focus in the report is on the direct link between education and employability, demonstrating the CSC's focus on vocational training. While statements are made by the Panel suggesting that a better

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[2] This report entitled "A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety" was completed in 2007 for the Minister of Public Safety and was intended to provide guidelines and recommendations to the CSC as to how they could improve their programs and services and thus improve public safety.

education will lead to better job opportunities and therefore a more successful and safe reintegration into the community (Sampson, 2007, pp.41-44), the issue is left without any further elaboration or recommendations on how to improve the education that is currently provided to prisoners so that both enrolment and completion rates will increase.

In a subsequent report, Michael Jackson and Graham Stewart (2009) state that:

> *The Panel not only would subordinate existing education initiatives to its flawed work strategy but pays scant regard to an education strategy that is cost effective, reflects community standards, is realistic, well researched and consistent with the core values of human rights* (xxix).

In essence, the CSC is in need of is stronger theoretical knowledge in both adult and community education so that correctional education program models can be derived from a solid base of knowledge about what works in teaching adults and more specifically what might work in teaching prisoners. Given the fact that "many prisoners have cited voluntary participation in education programs...as the only positive experience one may encounter while incarcerated" (Piché, 2008, p.4) it is important to explore how education actually fits in with correctional goals and philosophies, and within the prison environment itself.

The purpose of this research project is to explore the current role of education in correctional programming, offender rehabilitation, and successful reintegration. More specifically, it will examine the intersection of philosophies and theories of adult education with contemporary penal philosophies and practices in order to determine how the two are similar, how they are different, and how they come to co-exist within the same institutional boundaries. Data will be collected from academic journals and a series of semi-structured interviews and analysed through qualitative content analysis guided by a grounded theory and exploratory research approach. The goal of this research project is not to evaluate a specific educational program that is currently being used by the Correctional Service of Canada, but rather to gain a

greater understanding as to how education is conceptualized within this institution and to assess whether or not models of adult education and literacy programs that currently exist in the community can function successfully in the prison setting. In other words, this project explores whether or not the prison classroom is a space that can be used to promote positive change and encourage civic action amongst prisoners once they are released back into the community.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Current Correctional Programming

The CSC offers a wide variety of prison programming that is delivered in both group and individual settings. These programs are intended to reduce re-offending and re-incarceration by teaching prisoners cognitive and behavioural skills that help foster pro-social habits. The programs offered in Canadian prisons are governed through the Corrections and Conditional Release Act [CCRA] which states that the CSC "shall provide a range of programs designed to address the needs of offenders and contribute to their successful reintegration into the community" (CCRA, 1992, par.76). It is through these programs that the CSC is able to fulfill their mandate which is "to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society" (CCRA, 1992, par.2). The CCRA also stipulates that apart from obeying the rules and conditions placed upon them by the justice system, offenders must "actively participate in programs designed to promote their rehabilitation and reintegration" (CCRA, 1992, par. 4(i)).

In 2009 the CSC reviewed a number of their correctional programs, including: general crime prevention, violence prevention, family violence prevention, substance abuse, sex offender, and community based offender programs (CSC, 2009b). These programs are intended not only to reduce the risk of re-offending, but also to hold offenders more accountable for their actions. Program facilitators must "guide the offender to take accountability for their actions, while motivating them to learn the skills and competencies necessary for their safe re-integration" (CSC, 2009b). While there is certainly an element of education throughout all of these violence prevention programs, they are not educational in the sense that offenders are receiving credentials[3] that are important to achieve further success in the community, for

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[3] These programs are not counted towards receiving a grade 12 equivalency or a GED.

example, by way of getting a job or moving on to further educational opportunities. According to the available research that has been produced by the CSC, there seems to be little emphasis placed on the importance of education for education's sake inside prison walls; instead, the focus is on achieving measureable (quantitative) outcomes that can be used for evaluative purposes.

Educational Programming in the CSC

Currently, the CSC offers educational programming in four different formats: *Adult Basic Education, Secondary Education, Vocational Education* and *Post-secondary Education*. "Each program component provides offenders with opportunities to acquire education appropriate to their needs, achievement and ability" (CSC, 2009a), which helps increase access to legitimate opportunities for the offender upon their release. The need for such programming stems from the fact that "upon arrival in institutions, approximately 65% of offenders test at a completion level lower than Grade 8, and 82% lower than Grade 10" (CSC, 2009a). Both *Adult Basic Education*[4] and *Secondary Education*[5] aim to reduce the percentage of under-educated adults upon release and help to provide offenders with the skills required to actively participate in other programs that are essential for rehabilitation and safe reintegration. The CSC states that "a functional Grade 8 literacy level is a minimum requirement for participation in most programs" (Sapers, 2009, p.24). This focus on a Grade 8 education is supported both by the Government of Canada, which has stated that combating illiteracy should be a national priority, and by research that has shown a positive relationship between education and successful re-integration (Porporino and Robinson, 1992).

[4] Adult Basic Education helps prisoners upgrade their education to a grade 10 level.
[5] Secondary Education helps prisoners upgrade their education to a grade 12 level.

The Gap between Research/Policy and Practice

Despite the guidelines in the CCRA that speak to the place of education in prison, it is clear that the CSC has not yet discovered a strong enough link between education and broader cognitive behavioural changes in the individual in order to incorporate more of it into their correctional programming agenda. There is without a doubt a great need for education within the prison, but perhaps the CSC's strong focus on *basic* education is more detrimental than beneficial to the prisoners participating in the programs provided to them. For example, despite the high percentages of under-educated prisoners and the research which "consistently demonstrates that quality education is one of the most effective forms of crime prevention" (Bosworth, 2005, p.554) only 15% of the prison population is enrolled in Adult Basic Education programming, and only half of these prisoners are enrolled on a full-time basis (Porporino and Robinson, 1992). There may be issues with motivation amongst prisoners, low staff numbers and limited access to resources that can explain this low enrolment rate, but it is plausible that participation is stunted because of a watered-down version of education that is considered sufficient for prisoners.

The education that is provided to elementary level children in the community strives to be stimulating and exciting, incorporates principles of democracy and encourages active participation amongst students (Lindeman, 1961). The education provided to prisoners is not of the same calibre despite the fact that research in adult education demonstrates these principles and practices to work. This gap between research and practice can be further elaborated when we examine the literature on correctional education. Stephen Duguid (2000b) notes that:

> *Prison services have throughout the modern period made various claims to rehabilitative ideals, to teach moral virtues and forming therapeutic communities, but at their base they are bureaucratic organizations whose primary concern is a*

> *management style that centres on the basic demands of order and discipline* (p.80).

Conversely, Porporino and Robinson (1992) state that "correctional programs work, in part, because they are developed in adherence to strict criteria and follow management strategies that ensure integrity." This divergence in views begs the question of whether the implementation of successful programming is stunted by an overemphasis on prisoner management via control and discipline. Can the phenomenon of 'what works'[6] in corrections be better described as a shift towards 'what works' in population management? And if so, what changes must be made to create a better balance between the bureaucratic needs of prison administrators and the educational needs of prisoners?

Changes to the Prison Environment

There is another body of literature which focuses on explaining the changes that need to be made within the correctional environment in order for education to be administered successfully. Thomas (1995) states that because "education is an activity best pursued in an environment unconstrained by coercion, threats, and impositions on access to intellectual resources and ideas" (p.26) it is unrealistic to assume that "prison education [can] be fully implemented without a dramatic transformation of the philosophy of punishment in North America" (p.39). If it is true that "prison authorities focus more and more upon their ability to hold offenders securely in custody and no longer hold out much prospect of producing rehabilitative effects" (Garland, 1996, p.458) then there must be a greater effort made to resolve conflict between the goals of offender management and rehabilitation and reintegration. Correctional education may be an important meeting point for or intersection between these

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[6] This idea of 'What Works' is representative of a positive shift in the corrections literature which was previously clouded by the 'Nothing Works' slogan proposed by Robert Martinson (1974).

goals; the dialectic nature of prison education allows for it to be used not only by prison administrators in their efforts to govern the prison and manage the prisoners, but also by prisoners to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to become more active and pro-social citizens once they are released into the community (Germanotta, 1995, p.119).

The Importance of Literacy and Education

As mentioned previously, it is important to keep prisoners engaged in educational programming because of the fact that many prison programs require basic literacy skills for enrolment in other correctional programs. The majority of "prisoners lack basic skills because they were often excluded from school, and this simple fact requires education staff in prisons to adopt different techniques and approaches to help the prisoner to learn" (Wilson, 2000, p.11). This extra effort must be made not only for the fact that "education in prisons is generally recognized to be a "good," "humane," and "personally beneficial activity" (Duguid, 1982, p.53) but also so that prisoners will be more prepared with employment skills and life skills for greater job opportunities once they are released back into the community (Bayliss, 2003, p.163; Davidson, 1995, p.3). It is this aspect of reintegration that makes acquiring literacy and basic education skills so important while inside prison.

Adult Education

> *The central proposition on which the entire adult education movement is based is that adults can learn* (Knowles, 1996, p.94).

In order to effectively explore the phenomenon of educating adults inside prison walls, we must first understand the current theories and practices in the field of adult education in general. There is a growing body of research and academic insight into what it means to teach adults, and if those who have an interest in corrections want to be successful in using education as a rehabilitative tool then these resources must be highlighted. The following section discusses

the crisis in adult literacy and education that is becoming increasingly prominent in western society. This literature provides a backdrop that helps to explain why placing an age limit on learning is an idea of the past[7]. The next sections identify some of the leading scholars in the field of adult education and their contributions to the understanding of how adults learn and how programs should be structured in order to be successful. This leads into a discussion of current perspectives and practices in adult education, followed by a brief look at what remains to be done in this area in order to improve existing services. This overview of adult education will provide a solid foundation for a dialogue regarding current correctional education practices and ways to improve them.

Crisis in Adult Literacy and Basic Education

Living in a Western capitalist society where employment leads to status and success, it is hard for many of us to envision going through life without a high school diploma, and even harder to imagine trying to get through a single day without the ability to read or write. These basic skills are taken for granted by those of us who have successfully completed high school and are now either completing a post-secondary education or are gainfully employed. Unfortunately for the 40% of Canadians who remain trapped behind the walls of illiteracy and who continue to struggle with basic education (Taylor et al., 2007, p.4) in a society that demands an ever-increasing amount of knowledge and advanced skills may be a frightening place. Now more than ever, higher literacy and academic skills are required in order for an individual to actively participate in the labour market and become part of the consumerist and materialist culture that characterizes contemporary society (Miller et al., 2010, p.103).

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[7] Education of children and the elite was a primary concern in Ancient times and right up until the 17th century, but this ideal has changed over the years with an increasing demand on more advanced vocational, technical, and academic skills in the workforce (de Assis, 2003, p.191; Knowles, 1962, p.3).

Along with many other issues that come to our attention on a daily basis, “the crisis in the educational system has become a hackneyed subject of discussion” (de Assis, 2003, p.1), but it is definitely not an issue that should be pushed aside. Illiteracy has become synonymous with failure in mainstream society (Lipnewich and Beder, 2007) and the immense embarrassment caused by a lack of educational achievement may make some individuals refrain from seeking help. This is especially true of adults that surpass the ‘normal’ age for obtaining a formal education, and who now live with the consequences of a system that did not detect their needs or provide enough resources to help them at an earlier stage in their life. Adults without a complete education go through life feeling inferior, and this lack of self-esteem serves as a strong deterrent to participation in any further educational programming that is offered (Cohen, 2004, p.244; Lipnewich and Beder, 2004, p.73).

For undereducated adults there are a growing number of education programs that can serve as a guide to a successful future. “Whether a person is just beginning life or nearing its end, regardless of circumstances, should not affect his or her right of access to education” (Findsen, 2006, p.68) and now more than ever, adult education programs are being offered “as a ‘second chance’ system, offering the opportunity of a second beginning for those who have been held back in social status through inadequate education and training” (Rinne and Kivinen, 1996, p.183). The research and theory behind these programs emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, and as exploration and evaluation takes place, the more sophisticated the programs become in order to sufficiently handle the unique needs and characteristics of adult learners.

Notable Names Responsible for Laying the Groundwork of Adult Education

Malcolm Knowles is one of the most commonly cited names in the field of adult education. Knowles argues that despite the fact that we are concerned with continuous learning

throughout our lifespan "the adult learner has indeed been a neglected species" (Knowles, 1984, p.27). In his work, Knowles refers to Edward L. Thorndike, an American psychologist who pioneered studies on adult learning in the late 1920's: "His studies demonstrated that adults could learn, and this was important, for it provided a scientific foundation for a field that has previously been based on the mere faith that adults could learn" (p.28). During the same period, Eduard C. Lindeman also researched adult education, and introduced ideas such as the importance of the learner's experience, the influence of different teaching styles, and the understanding that for adults the purpose is not to learn curriculum and memorize facts, but to discover meaning in life and examine past experiences (Lindeman, 1961, pp.9-11, 169).

The most important finding advanced by such scholars, is that adults do not learn in the same way as children, whereby conventional methods of education are not as effective for older learners. "In conventional education the student is required to adjust himself to an established curriculum; in adult education the curriculum is built around the student's needs and interests" (Lindeman, 1961, p.8). This is a very important difference between younger and older learners as adults are primarily motivated to learn by their own needs and their interests; subsequently, organizing learning around the life and experiences of an adult is key in lesson planning and course development. Also, because adult learners have a greater need and ability to work independently, "the role of the teacher is to engage in a process of mutual inquiry with them rather than to transmit his or her knowledge to them" (Knowles, 1984, p.31). In other words, the teacher must act more as an equal partner in the learning process and work to create a more democratic environment in the classroom rather than playing an authoritative or superior role in relation to the adult student(s).

The elements of adult education that were mentioned above are just a few of the results to come out of the work of educators and academics such as Knowles, Lindeman and Thorndike. The following section will further examine current concepts and practices specific to adult education. These theories of adult learning will serve as the foundation for exploring what elements are required for a successful adult education program, and will help to examine the programs that are currently offered to prisoners in Canadian federal penitentiaries, and those offered to justice-involved adult learners in the community.

Current Concepts and Practices in Adult Education

Andragogy

Andragogy "has emerged as one of the dominant frameworks for teaching adults during the past 40 years" (Holton, Swanson and Bates, 2009, p.169) and is defined by Malcolm Knowles as the "art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1984, p.54). Advanced by Knowles in order to address the problems of using pedagogical methods[8] in adult classrooms, andragogy is tailored specifically to the learning and training needs of adults who are eager to become students once again. Unlike the pedagogical model which "assigns to the teacher full responsibility for making all decisions about what will be learned, how it will be learned, when it will be learned, and if it has been learned" (p.52) andragogy places importance "on the involvement of adult learners in a process of self-diagnosis of needs and learning" (Knowles, 1996, p.87). Andragogical practices also aim to offer education in "increasingly student-centred environments" (Birzer, 2004, p.409), which is an important element for adults who may be hesitant to go back to school.

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[8] Malcolm Knowles describes pedagogy as "teacher-directed education, leaving to the learner only the submissive role of following a teacher's instructions" (1984, p.52-53) and Alex Gitterman describes it as "subject-centred education [which] emphasizes processes of disciplining or training minds" leaving the students dependent on their teacher for guidance (2004, p.99).

The five assumptions that serve as the foundation of andragogy help to define the typical adult learner. Someone who is interested in teaching adults must first accept that the learner can work independently and wants to be actively involved in the planning process. The second element acknowledges that because adults already have the influence of previous life experiences, these experiences must be integrated into the learning schedule as best as possible. The third assumption recognizes the changes in social roles that occur throughout a lifetime and states that learning must revolve around these changes. The last two assumptions are the most important to take into consideration when designing an adult education program as they highlight the fact that the adult learner is "problem-centred and interested in immediate application of knowledge and is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors" (Merriam, 2001, p.5). For educators who follow the principles of andragogy, it is understood that the best approaches maintain that the needs of the adult learner are kept at the forefront (Holton, Swanson and Bates, 2009, p.170). This can be done primarily by "establishing a physical and psychological climate [that is] conducive to learning... [and encourages] mutual respect and collaboration" amongst all of the players involved in the learning process" (Birzer, 2004, p.401). By offering a safe space for learning, adult learners who might be hesitant to re-enter the school environment will feel more at ease, which will increase the likelihood of regular attendance and participation.

In order to maintain focus on the needs of adult learners, it is important to consistently involve the students in the planning process so that they can both diagnose their own learning needs, create a plan to address these needs, and properly understand how the evaluation of established goals will be accomplished. This important element of learner involvement is the reason why "the centrepiece of andragogy is the learning contract, which is an agreement

between the student and the instructor that describes student objectives, details the plans and resources needed to reach those objectives, the evidence to be used in evaluating the progress, and the method of evaluation" (Birzer, 2004, p.404). By keeping the adult learner actively involved in the planning and delivery of their educational materials, it ensures that the individual experiences of the learner are incorporated into the learning process. Knowles expressed this by stating that "every adult enters into any undertaking with a different background of experience from that of his youth. Having lived longer, he has accumulated a greater *volume* of experience, but he also has had different *kinds* of experience" (1996, p.89).

Andragogy separates teaching methods that are used for adults and for children, primarily based on the differences in life experiences between the two. Knowles (1996) states that "to a child, an experience is something that happens to him...but to an adult, his experience *is* him" (p.89). He goes on further to explain that:

> *These differences in experience between children and adults have at least three consequences for learning: (1) Adults have more to contribute to the learning of others; for most kinds of learning, they are themselves a rich resource for learning; (2) Adults have a richer foundation of experience to which to relate new experiences (and new learnings tend to take on meaning as we are able to relate them to our past experience); (3) Adults have acquired a larger number of fixed habits and patterns of thought, and therefore tend to be less open-minded* (pp.89-90).

While there are clearly many other differences between adults and children that may affect the learning environment and required teaching styles, the focus of andragogy is the life experience of the learner and the importance of those experiences to future endeavours. This is a common thread throughout other forms of adult teaching and learning strategies.

The idea of using past experiences to change future thoughts and actions takes on quite a different, and more complicated, meaning when speaking of prisoners. The past experiences of a prisoner, especially if he is a repeat offender who has been involved with the criminal justice

system for most of his life, will most certainly make it harder for him to contribute to his own learning. While it is true that people can 'learn from their mistakes' the prisoner has to deal not only with the mistakes that he has made, but also with the bad choices that others have made around him throughout his adolescence and adulthood. With fewer positive influences to draw from, this andragogical method will be quite a challenge in the prison environment, but with the right teachers and the right training it is certainly possible for prisoners to take their past and transform it into a bright future.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning is described by Cranton and Wright as "a process by which individuals engage in critical self-reflection that results in a deep shift in perspective toward a more open, permeable, and better justified way of seeing themselves and the world around them" (2008, pp.33-34). In other words, it is an opportunity for adults to evaluate their current physical, psychological and social situations in order to identify personal aspects to be altered so as to achieve self-improvement and future success. This "transformative learning happens when we encounter an event that calls into question what we believe and we revise our perspective. At times, this can be a dramatic event, but most often it is a more gradual, cumulative process" (p.34). A strong motivation to change can be the jumpstart for seeking higher education, as the credentials received can open up new avenues and opportunities that were not available before.

Transformative education upholds many of the teaching methods that were discussed in the previous section on andragogy. In order for transformation to occur, teachers must act as more of a "learning companion" (Cranton and Wright, 2008, p.33) rather than as a leader. This partnership ensures that the learners' needs come first and that the student does not feel as though they are alone throughout this potentially emotional transformation. It is also important

that there is a sense of trust (p.46) that is developed between the student and the teacher so that the adult learner can comfortably confide in someone who will not judge them for their past. This trusting relationship will help contribute to the safe learning environment that must be created in order for transformative learning to occur (p.38). Once again, for a prisoner this process will be much harder than for someone who despite growing up without a good education, managed to live a life free of crime. It is hard for those inside of the prison to trust anyone, especially an educator who is coming from the outside community to teach them what they think it takes to be a better person, or a better citizen. It may be common for the prisoner to be sceptical of institutional authorities. Therefore, while this method of teaching would be extremely beneficial to the prisoner, not only for better learning but also for building better relationships, it will take more work on the part of the educator to gain the trust from the prisoner-student than it would a student in the mainstream community.

Collaborative Learning

The idea of collaborative learning is prominent in adult education strategies. While a key element to this method is to focus on learners' needs, strengths, weaknesses and other characteristics, its primary component is creating supportive relationships between the learners. By pairing up with other adults who are interested in learning, the teacher can balance the strengths of some with the weaknesses of others, and this connection between the students will help to maintain motivation amongst the whole group.

> *In a collaborative learning environment, the roles of the instructor and the student gradually change. This occurs as the student moves from a position of being guided in the learning to where he or she experiences some sense of independence and autonomy. During this passage, the instructor moves from transmitting the information to facilitating the learning process* (Taylor et al. 2007, p.8).

The aim of a teacher who engages with collaborative learning techniques is to encourage his or her students to generate a "positive outlook about themselves, an increase in confidence, and improved self-esteem. These shifts in identity also affect how they view others and how they view their performance in other life roles" (Taylor et al. 2007, p.9). With this new sense of accomplishment, and a more optimistic and confident outlook on life, the students should be able to continue to make positive changes in themselves and in the people around them.

This idea of becoming more independent in the learning process will be something that takes a lot longer to occur in the prison environment. Even if the teacher in the prison classroom is offering lots of encouragement to his or her students, outside of the classroom prisoners are faced with correctional officers and prison administrators dictating their every move inside of the institution. The idea of being independent or autonomous inside of a prison does not generally exist, and it may not be something that a few hours per week in a classroom might be able to fix. If prisoners were able to spend more time in the classroom with the educators acting as positive role models, more positive changes within the prisoner could be possible.

Self-Directed Learning

While there is no doubt that even in an adult classroom the teacher still has a very vital role to play in terms of guiding the learning experience, "in recent years the notion of self-directed learning has become virtually the guiding principle for the practice of adult education" (Collins, 1996, p.109). This is a very different kind of strategy from those previously discussed, and one that has caused some controversy in the area of adult education. While "self-directed learning methods have been enthusiastically accepted by management in such institutions as the military and prisons" (p.114) they might not be ideal for education programs that are trying to influence critical thinking or transformation. Self-directed learning curriculum is standardized

and easily prescribed to adult learners who would be working alone as they require no group work or collaborative input. This type of educational strategy is described as managing adult learning rather than facilitating (p.115) and is not as progressive or inclusive as are the other available methods.

The focus on management and simplicity is the reason why self-directed learning is used most often in the prison setting. If studying is to take place alone within the confines of a single prison cell, then the prisoner is less likely to be positively stimulated by other prisoners and less likely to experience any real transformations in attitude or behaviour. While the goal of the CSC is to rehabilitate prisoners so that they are able to safely reintegrate into the community, it does not seem to try to reach that goal by promoting positive communication and regular interaction between prisoners. With self-directed learning, the CSC can say that they offer prisoners education that will provide them with credentials for future employment without having to worry about truly expanding the minds of the men behind the bars.

Some Barriers to Adult Participation in Education

While the barriers to participating in educational programming later on in life is something I discuss later (in the section on correctional education), it is important to introduce the idea before talking about the characteristics of successful adult education programs. In most cases, adults are hesitant to return to the classroom because they remember it “as a place where one is treated with disrespect” (Knowles, 1996, p.85). This may be due to the fact that they had a learning disability or another psychological or behavioural issue that was not properly managed by the teaching staff during their childhood and adolescence. Others might be deterred from education due to boredom caused by a “lack of creativity in teaching approaches” (Gitterman, 2004, p.97) or a lack of courses offered to meet various interests and skill levels.

Regardless of the reasons why one chooses to leave school, it is important to create programs that will make the individual want to come back. "If these adults are to be enticed back to systematic learning, the rewards of learning must be made so great that they outweigh the anticipated pain of learning" (Knowles, 1996, p.85). There must be a conscious effort made by educators and others involved with program development to provide courses that actively catch the attention of adult learners, and make them feel comfortable in an environment that they have avoided for so long. "Adults who have been away from systematic education for some time may underestimate their ability to learn, and this lack of confidence may prevent them from applying themselves wholly" (Knowles, 1996, p.94), therefore the teachers must constantly be thinking about what can be done to make education more appealing to those who can benefit from it most, but are still unsure about making a commitment.

The Key Elements of a Successful Adult Education Program

Patterson and Mellard (2007) identify several characteristics that should be readily present in a successful adult education program. Some of these important elements include innovation and creativity in programs and services, appropriate qualifications for staff and maintaining a strong focus on the needs of students (pp.84-86). With the exception of self-directed learning, these characteristics can be found amongst all of the forms of adult education discussed thus far and should serve as the foundations for adult education programs developed both inside and outside of prison[9].

One of the primary focuses of andragogy is changing educational strategies from teacher-centred to student-centred (Birzer, 2004, p.397; Knowles, 1984). By formulating lesson plans that maintain a focus on the needs of students (Findsen, 2006), adults will be more interested in

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[9] Although as we will see throughout the section on correctional education, there are other specific characteristics that are unique to educational programs in the prison setting.

returning to class because they know that the teachers have a vested interest in their success. If there is “a preoccupation with what students *must* learn [this will overshadow] how they should be taught” (Gitterman, 2004, pp.95-96), which creates both passivity for the teacher as well as for the student. This is unacceptable given that “a basic element in the technology of andragogy is the involvement of the learners in the process of planning their own learning, with the teacher serving as a procedural guide and content resource” (Knowles, 1996, p.87).

Not only should teachers make a conscious effort to tailor the curriculum to learner needs, but they should also act as a guide to help adults absorb the material rather than standing at the front of the classroom and simply dictating course material (Cohen, 2004, p.250; Gitterman, 2004, p.100). A teacher’s attitude must always remain positive, and they must remain open and approachable to the adult students who require their support (Knowles, 1996, p.86). Along with the tone set by the teacher, “the physical environment [of the classroom] should be one in which adults feel at ease...Even more importantly, the psychological climate should be one which causes adults to feel accepted, respected, and supported...in which there is freedom of expression without fear of punishment or ridicule” (p.86). Andragogical, transformative and collaborative teaching and learning methods work best in “informal, comfortable, flexible, nonthreatening settings” (Knowles, 1984, p.52), and this type of environment is crucial if adults are to open up about themselves and their life experiences.

As discussed earlier, in order for adults to overcome their fears of learning and to move forward in their education it is important that they disclose details about their past experiences in order to incorporate them into the learning plan (Birzer, 2004, p.396; Knowles, 1984, p.56). By examining this collection of experiences and adapting them into the learning process “students can more capably comprehend and utilize a theory, concept or fact [because] they have

discovered its personal meaning" (Gitterman, 2004, p.106). Being able to reflect on one's past is also a key difference between teaching adults and teaching children, and maintaining this distinction between pedagogical and andragogical methods is probably the most important characteristic of adult education programs.

> *Skilful adult educators have known for a long time that they cannot teach adults as children have traditionally been taught. For adults are almost always voluntary learners and they simply disappear from learning experiences that don't satisfy them* (Knowles, 1996, p.83).

This is certainly true for prisoners who may have had negative experiences with education in the past and who will need extra stimulation and positive reinforcement if they are going to initiate and maintain participation in an educational program inside of the prison.

Correctional Education

> *The objectives of imprisonment in the modern world are confused; they range from deterrence to retribution and from punishment to rehabilitation. This confusion makes it imperative that we consider the role of imprisonment and reflect on the contribution of education within such an institution* (Behan, 2007, p.157-158).

Research completed in Canada shows that nearly "half of the adult population reads below the sixth-grade level, and many [prisoners] read below that" (Taylor and McAtee, 2003, p.476). While there are certainly a great number of people outside of the prison system with low levels education and a variety of learning disabilities, there is an extremely high concentration of these individuals inside prison walls. Many prisoners have a lack of schooling experience, short attention spans, dyslexia, low self-confidence and poor long-term memory (Fox, 1998, p.108; Vacca, 2004, p.301). "The low educational level of prisoners is a problem because a sizeable body of literature has indicated that it is getting more and more difficult for high school dropouts to obtain jobs that pay a living wage" (Bracey, 2006, p.253). Without the possibility of gaining employment after being released into the community, the prisoner will have a higher chance of

returning to prison and this cycle could continue for the rest of his life. It is for this reason that prison administrators must learn to create a balance between management and successful rehabilitation.

The Benefits of Participation in Correctional Education

Being able to identify "effective strategies for reintegrating the thousands of men and women who return home from prison and jail each year is critical not only for them, but also for the health and stability of their families and the safety and well-being of their communities" (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.2). The benefits of receiving a good education are apparent in a society where more credentials mean more opportunities. The benefits of receiving a good education in prison are even greater as learning to read and write can bring someone from the lowest point of their lives to a fresh new beginning. One of the most basic and obvious benefits of correctional education is that it lowers recidivism rates (Duguid, 1982, p.54; Farabee, 2005, p.29, Porporino and Robinson, 1992). If provided with a proper education, an offender can go back into the community with something to offer rather than looking to find something to take.

> *Instead of threatening community safety and draining economic resources, formerly incarcerated people with educational preparation and other supports can provide for themselves and their families and contribute to the economic and social well-being of their communities* (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.3).

Having the skills to participate successfully in the labour market, as well as having the skills to actively participate in a democracy, will reduce the likelihood of resorting to criminal activity in order to make ends meet (Cosman, 1981, p.38).

While still inside the prison, educational programming is seen as a "purposeful activity" that can be used to get "prisoners out of their cells and actively engaged" thus reducing things like depression and anxiety (Owers, 2007, p.8). For many, the prison is a black hole that can take

the life out of all who are trapped inside of it. Education can serve as a bright light in such a dark place and encourage the prisoner to make the best of a bad situation. Collins (1995) notes that:

> *At a fundamental level, the provision of adult literacy [and education] programs in prisons can be justified simply on the grounds that it provides prisoners with another chance to learn to read, write, work with numbers, and converse with a reasonable degree of assurance* (p.50).

While these are beneficial aspects of receiving a basic education, there are certainly more meaningful benefits to learning. It is believed that "the basic nature of education is change. Regardless of the purpose for a particular education process, the end result is that somebody and/or something is changed" (Reagan and Stoughton, 1976, p. 14) and this is ultimately the goal of corrections – to change an individual from someone he or society does not want him to be into someone who, upon release, will be accepted into a community and help contribute to the well-being of that community.

Transforming Identities

There are many labels used to describe the prisoner such as 'criminal', 'offender', or 'convict', but with the advent of correctional education programs in prison, there is potential for a prisoner to find a new identity as a 'learner' or as a 'student'. This new identity might be hard to come by because of other preconceptions that are made about prisoners.

> *To certain people, the prisoner is a polished and cunning hypocrite. It would thus seem quite inadvisable to provide him, through education, with the means to revise his vices. For others, it is the opposite which is true. The average inmate is so completely devoid of the ability to learn that it would be perfectly ridiculous to even pretend he has a right to education* (Morin, 1981, p.25).

These negative connotations regarding prisoner identity can stand in the way of having them achieve their full potential through education. By identifying oneself as a student or as a learner, the prisoner can start to see himself in a more positive light and can start to challenge some of the negativity that surrounds the construction of his character. Also, by participating in

educational programs he opens himself up to participation in other rehabilitation initiatives such as anger management or drug counselling. The lessons learned and the information gained from these programs will help to empower the prisoner to take control of his own life and aid in reducing the negative effects of punishment and incarceration (Bayliss, 2003, p.160). Stephen Duguid notes that prisons have become:

> *unfortunate containment institutions in which little 'correcting' can be done...All that one can hope for in such institutions is the provision of a humane environment and possible education and training programmes which can provide a means for greater access to the levers of power and control in society and possibly acquiring a new language, a new set of skills, and thereby a new identity* (2000a, pp.54-55).

By providing prisoners with better access to successful adult education programs, prisoners can have a better chance of combating the oppressive environment that exists not only inside of the institution but also on the outside where their voices are rarely heard due to their structurally disadvantaged positions. If the prisoner learns that he has a voice inside one of the most dehumanizing of places, then not only will he have the confidence needed to proceed with his educational goals but he will also be able to take control and break down other barriers, such as drug addiction, that might be impeding his successful re-integration.

Barriers to Participation in Correctional Education

Management, Security and Control

The current relationship between corrections and education is extremely one-sided. "The desire to offer basic literacy and numeracy skills seems to stem not so much from a wish to understand why the prisoner has offended, and what will help him to change, but from a more atheoretical interest in managing the prison population" (Wilson, 2000, p.11). This idea of using education as a form of prison management is frequently noted in the literature (Bayliss, 2003; Brazzell, 2009; Collins, 1995; Farabee, 2005; Owers, 2007) and is seen as the reason why

correctional education is unable to reach its full potential as a successful rehabilitation and reintegration strategy. It is often the case that "program success or failure is hampered...by the values and attitudes of those in the authority position" (Vacca, 2004, p.297) primarily because they are the ones allocating the money to specific features of the prison. Due to the fact that prison administrators are driven by a mandate that focuses on management, treatment and security, "educators are in constant danger of having their programs eliminated" (Davidson, 1995, p.10). When prison administrators are more concerned about offender management it is no surprise that money is allocated to stronger security measures rather than to programs that are shown to improve rehabilitative and re-integrative potential. As Wright and Gehring (2008a) have noted, "in prisons, the harsh reality of brittle interactions between keepers and kept echoes the stark, oppressive physical reality of steel and concrete" (p.245).

Security is becoming more and more of an issue because "prisons are dealing with an increased, and increasingly diverse, population" (Owers, 2007, p.4) and it has become the primary strategy of those who run the prison to focus on the more negative aspects of imprisonment such as confinement, control, and punishment in order to deal with this diversity. Therefore, "the more correctional educators can represent schooling as quasi-punitive, the more likely it is that they will be spared severe cutbacks" (Davidson, 1995, p.7), and it is by making basic education programs a mandatory component of the correctional plan that this punitive aspect of education is achieved. "Along with forced labour, schooling is a principle method for controlling prisoners" (Davidson, 1995, p.1) who are seen to be unruly by correctional officers and prison administrators. While most might see education as something that can free the mind and encourage action amongst people, the requirement of individual study combined with the very basic curriculum that is offered to prisoners serves more to mellow the mind than to activate

it[10]. "Most prison administrators who advocate prison [education] programs do so from an institutional management perspective rather than a presumption that they will have an impact on recidivism" (Farabee, 2005, p.65) and this strong focus on confinement and control detracts from any hint of positive change that could be influenced by a well-tailored education program with stimulating curriculum.

Unfortunately "the goals of prison security and the ideal of academic freedom often conflict" (Thomas, 1995, p.32) and perhaps this is because prisons are "first and foremost, institutions of control and security, not classrooms or schools" (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.24). When the focus of the prison is to manage offender populations there is little room for education programs that have unpredictable outcomes. A good adult education program must be individually tailored and allow room for creativity within the participant, this is so different from all of the other correctional programs that are developed based on their ability to deliver predictable results regardless of the recipient of the material. Freedom of thought, expression and behaviour is a threat to the strict environment of the institution, and the high levels of security and control in the prison is just one of the many barriers that exist between prisoners and participation in educational programming.

Other Barriers to Education

A common sentiment is that the prison environment is so negative that it is hard to get benefits from programming no matter how well it is designed or implemented (Bayliss, 2003, p.166). Prison administrators commonly say that the current state of overcrowding in prisons makes it hard to deliver the perfect amount of programming to all prisoners, and while "population pressure is a reality, and a damaging reality, in prisons...it is easy for that to become

[10] In essence, the quality of the education received by prisoners is not a focus, but simply that prisoners have something to do with their time other than causing problems inside the institution.

the excuse...for deficits in education and training" (Owers, 2007, p.10). The fact is, that the priorities in correctional funding do not land on basic education or literacy training (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.14) and without adequate funding or steady support from prison administrators, correctional education cannot work to its full potential to help prisoners build the basic skills that will allow them to participate more readily in society.

Another major barrier to prisoners receiving a proper education while incarcerated is that prisons are not exactly spaces that are designed for educational purposes (Reagan and Stoughton, 1976, p.17). "Educators and students are frequently locked in rooms that are monitored by prison guards and the inmates often face peer pressure where achievement and attendance in school are discouraged" (Vacca, 2004, p.302). The presence of the correctional guards is a major issue as their job is to maintain security and order in the prison and this leaves little to no room for the concerns of the individual prisoners (Bayliss, 2003, p.166). With the occurrence of lockdowns in the prison, it is hard for a prisoner to receive educational training on a regular basis, and this lack of consistency in the programming can discourage participation and encourage dropping out of the program all together (Thomas, 1995, p.28).

Other significant barriers that stand in the way of education are mental illness and depression amongst prisoners, and the potential of being transferred from one institution to another (Thomas, 1995, pp.33-35). Given that there is virtually no standardization in the implementation of educational programs across institutions (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.11), it would be extremely difficult for a prisoner to pick up where they left off if they are moved to different facilities throughout their sentence. Moreover, even if the new institution to which the individual is transferred offers better educational programming, he must still adjust to a different correctional environment with its own administrative style and a different group of prisoners.

Even after the adjustment period there may still be challenges with the prisoner's attitude towards education in general. "If prisoners shied away from education, or viewed it as a source of failure in the past, it will appear as an unattractive option" (Bayliss, 2003, p.165) in the future. Subsequently, it is important for correctional educators to work with prison administrators and correctional guards more closely in order to show them the benefits of having prisoners participate in education and literacy programs. Educators must try hard to work in an environment in which a great imbalance of power and control exists, in order to improve the chances for a successful future amongst prisoners who are unmotivated or who have lost hope.

The Key Elements of a Successful Correctional Education Program

Obtaining and Maintaining Motivation

One of the key success factors to any sort of correctional or rehabilitative program is the ability of that program to first capture and then to maintain participant motivation. A high level of motivation is especially important in any educational program "particularly in settings such as [the prison] where many students have been discouraged by their past educational experiences" (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.34). A correctional educator not only has to deal with getting students to overcome their fears of the classroom, but he or she also must work hard to demonstrate the value in participating in education. By helping to improve internal motivation towards education the facilitator can help prisoners ignore the fact that they may be in the classroom as a mandatory requirement of their correctional plan[11]. When education is deemed mandatory, it is viewed as yet another form of punishment that the prisoner has to endure, and in order "to improve the

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[11] "Some systems require participation in adult basic education, GED preparation, or other courses for individuals functioning below a certain level. The goal of such requirements is to ensure that all inmates reach a certain level of literacy and abilities" (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.35). Being enrolled in an educational program is a requirement of the Correctional Service of Canada if the prisoner is deemed to have an insufficient level of education upon admittance to the institution.

ethos, [prisoners have] to believe that earning a GED or [participating in basic education is] something needed and desired" (Alewine, 2010, p.10).

Correctional educators can improve prisoner motivation in several ways. Sometimes "well-designed incentive structures can encourage individuals to participate in and complete education programs" (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.34). Such incentives might include payment (the same that would be received for participating in vocational programs) or other privileges such as more phone time or additional family visits. Motivation to remain in educational programs can also be achieved if "the [learning] environment is psychologically and academically safe, when choice is provided, and when clear achievable goals are present" (Taylor and McAtee, 2003, p.477). By creating a safe space where prisoners do not have to feel embarrassed about their current level of education and by providing adequate support for achieving educational goals, prisoners will be more likely to complete the programming that is required of them (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.35).

In studies of motivation and psychological readiness to learn, it has been found that:

> *Motivated learners were more cooperative and spent longer time on tasks, which was related to achievement. Motivated learners were more psychologically open to learning material and processed information more efficiently. Motivated learners benefited more from instructors than unmotivated learners. Adults worked longer, harder, and with more energy and intensity when they were motivated than when they were not motivated* (Alewine, 2010, p.11).

It is therefore clear how important it is for correctional educators and other program facilitators to ignite motivation in prisoners so that they will be more willing to actively participate in their educational plan. How much effort is actually put in to such a task remains to be seen.

Moral Development

Stephen Duguid claims that an important element in any correctional education program should be a strong focus on moral development (Duguid, 1982; Duguid, 2000a; Duguid, 2000b). He states that "the kind of program needed in prison education is not one oriented to facts or information but rather one emphasizing problem-solving strategies" (Duguid, 1982, p.58). By switching the focus of education from learning content to learning how to make good life decisions, prisoners will be provided with skills beyond the ability to read and write. This type of education can help to develop more mature thought patterns (Griffin, 1981, p.104) as well as much needed critical thinking skills (Vacca, 2004, p.299). While this focus on moral education might be more suitable for more advanced learners, it is something to keep in mind even when the focus is on literacy and basic education as "moral education can enable individuals to look at themselves in different ways and to begin to make decisions based on moral reasoning rather than self-satisfaction" (Ubah & Robinson, 2003, 117). Developing a higher level of morality will not only be beneficial to the prisoner when going into other correctional programs, but it will also help him to create a new life once released back into the community.

Duguid's description of moral education is aligned with the cognitive-behavioural model that serves as the basis for most other CSC institutional and community programs. Correctional programs work under the assumption that offenders are inherently amoral and require immediate instruction on how to solve problems and make decisions in a more pro-social manner. In other words, a moral education curriculum would be another way for the CSC to morally regulate prisoners and shape them using the same strategies that appear in all other areas of their correctional plan. This, in effect, may deter prisoners from actively participating in education as they would be receiving the same kinds of lessons and materials as they get in all of the other

programs they are required to attend. While I am not disagreeing with Duguid's statements on the importance of self-regulation, the education that a prisoner receives in the classroom should be of an academic nature and should complement the skills that they are learning in the other correctional programs.

Other Factors for Success

There are several other characteristics that should be present in order for an educational program to be successful in the prison setting; the first being the proper training and appropriate qualification of teachers (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.31; Fox, 1998, p.112). "No matter how well a program is designed, its effectiveness ultimately depends on how well it is implemented" (Farabee, 2005, p.38), and proper implementation depends on the quality of educators that are hired by the institution to run the programs. Teachers should be fully certified and have enough experience in the field to effectively handle all sorts of learning styles. It would also be beneficial for the teachers to have knowledge of the prison population, as it is a unique population with distinct characteristics and difficulties that complicate providing education in this setting. The teachers should also feel comfortable with being in a prison setting, and should be free of biases towards the population that they will be dealing with. It is important for the prisoner-students to feel comfortable with the educator and for the educator to feel comfortable addressing the needs of the prisoner-student.

A second factor that is important in a correctional education program is that the curriculum is learner-centred and places emphasis on the needs of the prisoners (Fox, 1998, p.107; Vacca, 2004, p.302). Because prisoners have other priorities in their correctional plans such as drug counselling, anger management, or other cognitive-behavioural programs, the teacher must try to accommodate materials into the programming that will correspond with all of

these other issues (Reagan and Stoughton, 1976, p.105). By doing this, the educator is not only tailoring the curriculum to meet the needs of the prisoner, but he or she is also working to meet the objectives of the correctional system (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.29). Even though trying to incorporate cognitive-behavioural aspects into an educational program might seem like an effective way to offer education to prisoners while at the same time trying to address other criminogenic factors, it is problematic for several reasons. First, it assumes that offenders can only be educated through "correctional education" and not by using mainstream curriculum that can provide them with actual credentials they can carry into the community. It also assumes that correctional program facilitators are best suited to offer this education to prisoners rather than having fully certified teachers from the community come into the institution to teach. Perhaps instead of trying to mould education into something that it is not so that it fits the carceral setting, changes should be made to the prison environment in order to make it better suited for educational endeavours.

Another way that prisoners' needs can be met in education is to ensure that the material given to the student is at the corresponding level of educational ability. If prisoner-students are expected to complete activities that are above and beyond their level of comprehension, motivation will be lost and the prisoner will feel discouraged and is likely to drop out of the program (Taylor and McAtee, 2003, p.477). In order to reduce the occurrence of having students drop out because the material is too hard, "the research suggests that programs will have the most impact if inmates are intensively involved in the educational process" (Linden and Perry, 1983, p.55). By involving the prisoner in the creation of their educational plan, the teacher is ensuring that the focus is placed on what the student *can* do as opposed to what they *cannot* do (Vacca, 2004, p.297). In working harder to understand more about the prisoner's individual

needs and interests, the correctional educator is ensuring that the prisoner remains actively involved in the educational process and also helps the prisoner to realize that they are capable of being successful in a schooling environment.

The Need for Further Research in Correctional Education

Even though it is clear to see how a properly developed and implemented educational program can drastically help in the rehabilitation process, "education is not readily accessible to many people involved in the justice system" (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.2). This is partly due to the

> *conflicting interests and ideologies of [those working in the] penal system and the education system [who] instead of reaching some kind of compromise...lose sight of the individual prisoner who wants to learn something for personal benefit. This confusion makes any attempt at offering a 'way forward' problematic* (Reuss and Wilson, 2000, p.175).

Apart from this, there are also serious methodological issues with the evaluation of correctional programs, many of which are discussed in the methodology section of this paper. While the barriers to education in prisons make it hard to establish a strong foundation for basic education in the institution, this should not be cause for turning attention away from educational strategies. "There is still a great deal to learn about what program models work and what instructional methods, staff training and qualifications, technology applications, participation incentives and other program components are effective for different types of students" (Brazzell, et al., 2009, p.42) and further research in this area can help to discover what works in correctional education. Those who research for the CSC already collaborate with people from other fields such as psychology, psychiatry, sociology and of course criminology, so a stronger effort should be made to collaborate with the field of education so that theory and practice in adult education can expand in order to better serve the prisoners who would benefit from another chance at receiving a proper education.

Integrating Research on Adult Education into Corrections Policy

Even though almost a century has passed since Thorndike, Lindeman and Knowles began pioneering research and sparking interest in the field of adult education, it is still a small area of academic exploration. "Compared to the large amount of research conducted with younger [learners], there has been a relative paucity of work describing the nature of the literacy [and academic] skills possessed by students of adult basic and secondary education" (Miller et al., 2010, p. 101). As Malcolm Knowles pointed out in his studies, the majority of materials provided to educators is based on the learning needs of children, and these pedagogical methods are not sufficient for keeping the attention and interest of adults who are entering into the classroom voluntarily (1996, p.82). In order for us

> *to better prepare our current workforce and prepare to meet the needs of future adults who may struggle with literacy, we need to place increased attention on the specific nature of the difficulties that these adults face in acquiring or strengthening their reading and writing skills* (Miller et al., 2010, p.103).

Luckily for those who have a vested interest in the ongoing education of adult learners in our society, this field is "enriched and enlivened by contributions from employers, policy-makers, active politicians, academics from different disciplines and research studies" (Raggatt, Edwards and Small, 1996, p.1). One of the recent topics of exploration is the idea that adult learning can take place in a variety of locations other than the conventional classroom located in a school. Adult learning is so flexible that it can easily and successfully occur in the workplace, church, in the home, and even in other social institutions such as the prison. The idea of having various sites of learning "has produced new practices and a new challenge has arisen as how best to accredit learning which takes place in these non-formal settings. But by focusing on learning, in contrast to education or training, attention has been directed to the individual" (*ibid*).

This avenue of research which focuses on creating a space that is conducive to adult education is especially important for the development of successful education programs for prisoners who are in dire need of another chance at receiving an education. The following chapter will continue with this idea by examining the creation of a positive learning space using a combination of theoretical constructs. After outlining a theoretical framework to complement the philosophies and practices of adult education that were discussed in the literature review, it will become clear as to how research in education can be combined with knowledge of the prison environment in order to develop a comprehensive model for providing better education to prisoners.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Performative Space

After examining several philosophies and practices of adult education implemented in the community, and understanding the barriers that exist within the prison that inhibit the full implementation of these effective educational strategies, it is necessary to explore the ways in which researchers and practitioners alike can collaborate to create a space within the prison where adult education can occur. In the community, schools are regarded as places where young people have the ability to flourish to their full potential with the guidance of teachers, peers, family members and others in the community. Within the classroom, students are encouraged to participate in discussion, raise questions and concerns, and work on skills that will be transferred into their everyday lives as prosocial citizens in their respective communities. Learning how to participate actively and successfully in a democratic and capitalist society is a primary goal of completing school – from kindergarten to grade twelve and beyond – and without these years of preparation one may find it very difficult to play an active and meaningful role in mainstream society. Following this line of reasoning, it is easy to see why such a large percentage of adult prisoners did not successfully complete high school and, in many instances, elementary school.

While a classroom in the community is a space conducive to learning the skills needed to succeed in life, a room inside of a prison does not have the same ability to encourage participation in learning – especially amongst a population of adults who have several other issues to deal with during their period of incarceration. It is for this reason that educators working in the institution (alongside other prison staff and administrators) must work to create an environment that provides the same elements and resources that are available to students on the outside. Prisoners need a place in the prison where they can become students and where new

skills can be transferred more easily than what most prison environments allow for. It is at this point that I would like to introduce the idea of *performative space* – a concept used by Randall Wright and Thom Gehring to explain a space within the prison that is favourable to philosophies and practices of education as well as ideals of democracy and civility. Performative space provides a greater chance for academic and personal success amongst prisoners. "It is difficult to imagine an active citizenry if persons are imbued with a sense of worthlessness, despair and are hungry for identity" (Wright and Gehring, 2008b, p.333) but with the creation of performative space inside prison walls, a sense of hopelessness can be transformed into an opportunity for positive change.

What is Performative Space?

In its simplest form, performative space can be defined as a "sphere of civility where ethical forms of communication such as respect, politeness, reciprocity, and inclusiveness in teacher-student dialogue are examined – or recommended" (Wright and Gehring, 2008a, p.244). In other words, it is a place inside of the prison where prisoners are treated as human beings rather than numbers and are given the opportunity to achieve more than what their correctional plan initially allows for. Prisons are primarily viewed as a space in which prisoners are passive actors and participate in correctional programming without fully engaging with the material, the instructor, or with other individuals in the program. The prison classroom, on the other hand, can be viewed as a meaningful space in which prisoners become active students and learn to build relationships with others, and skills for themselves (Wright and Gehring, 2008a, p.245-46). There are several elements of performative space that are important to explore if one is to either evaluate the existence of it within a correctional facility, or if one is attempting to create such a

space inside of the prison in order to enhance the prisoners' experiences with education during incarceration.

The key elements of performative space include: civility, ethical conversations, democracy and social capital. The first three elements are very similar to concepts that arise throughout discussions on adult education, as they promote a more equal relationship between teachers and students, as well as allow for students to become more active in their own learning. The fourth concept – social capital – can be viewed more as an outcome of performative space and is important when speaking to the benefits of improving correctional education programs for the purposes of increasing successful rehabilitation and reintegration. All elements must be recognized together along with philosophies and practices of adult education when exploring and evaluating the current state of education in Canadian federal prisons.

Civility

Earlier, I presented performative space as being a civil space where learning can occur in ways that it cannot in other areas of the prison. According to Wright and Gehring (2008b) "civility is a manner of communicating with others in a manner that is respectful, empathetic, and reciprocal" (322). Being treated with respect is something that most of us in society expect, and we are usually upset when people do not show us respect in everyday interactions. Unfortunately, respect inside the prison is somewhat of a rarity and there seems to be little time for learning empathy or reciprocating politeness during lockdowns or while spending time in segregation. While there may be instances of respect amongst prisoners, (for example, when new prisoners show respect towards lifers) this is not the kind of respect that one needs in order to succeed in mainstream society as it often involves showing power and creating fear. Also, while there can be a level of respect between prisoners and correctional officers, it is

well known that developing respectful relationships between the keepers and the kept is a difficult task.

A classroom inside of a prison can be referred to as a ‘sphere of civility’ where “value, respect, worth and even choice appear” (Wright and Gehring, 2008a, p.246) for the prisoners who enter into it. The teachers who choose to enter the prison environment come in with the understanding that “prisons are usually oppressive, bureaucratic, alienating places that sever or suspend the prisoner’s sense of community and restrict the possibility (or desire) for social and civic participation” (Wright and Gehring, 2008b, p.322). But teachers also come in with the understanding that misbehaviour in prison is brought on by these dehumanizing circumstances, and hope that civility can be taught even in such harsh conditions. A ‘sphere of civility’ or a performative space can only occur when positive two-way communication is promoted between prisoner-students and correctional educators.

Billante and Saunders (2002) speak to three elements of civility that can be considered when speaking to performative space and to the civil classroom inside of the prison. The aforementioned first element is that civility involves showing respect for others through both verbal and non-verbal communication (p.32). “The second element of civility relates to *public* behaviour in the sense that it governs relations between people who may not know each other” (p.33). This aspect of civility is important for prisoners to learn while they are inside of the prison, so that once they are in the community they are able to form amicable relationships with people who will be able to help them adjust to their new role as a pro-social citizen. In addition to respecting others, the ability to trust is important if one is trying to gain new resources to help themselves integrate into society. The third element of civility involves “holding back in the pursuit of one’s own immediate self-interest” or in other words, self-regulation (p.33). This is

perhaps the most important element of civility for prisoners who are encouraged to self-regulate according to standards set in correctional programming.

Creating a civil space inside of the prison is a starting point for harnessing ideals of democracy and mutual respect between the keepers and the kept. Clearly evident in the Mission Statement of the CSC, however, is the tension created by the conflicting desire to "encourage and assist" offenders, while simultaneously "exercising humane control" over them (Eggleston and Gehring, 2000, p.10), which makes it hard for elements of civility to emerge in the prison environment. Those who work as educators inside of the prison have the chance to break this tension by establishing an atmosphere of respect in the prison classroom to allow the opportunity for prisoners to practice civility. "Prisons do not prepare offenders for political discourse and citizenship when they breed indifference" (Wright and Gehring, 2008b, p.328) and the creation and practice of civility inside can help to alter this occurrence.

Ethical Conversations

In order to continue the idea of civility within the prison classroom, there must be a vehicle through which respect, relationship building and self-regulation can travel. In this case, "dialogue is the vehicle for civility" and more specifically *ethical* dialogue is what is used in performative space to enhance relationships between teachers and prisoner-students (Wright and Gehring, 2008a, p.246). Ethical conversations can be described very similarly to civility in the sense that they are characterized by mutual respect, empathy, good relationships and a positive attitude. "In ethical conversations, individuals are recognized as subjects who share a common humanity" (p.250). This may seem impossible to achieve in an environment where there is a constant divide between "us" (correctional staff) and "them" (prisoners), but keep in mind that

we are speaking to communication that happens inside of the performative space in which educators can act as an effective mediator between these two conflicting parties.

Teachers are able to help prisoners deconstruct the negative labels attributed to them through the use of ethical communication, which helps them reconstruct more positive identities that have nothing to do with "their criminal past and their incarceration" (Wright and Gehring, 2008a, p.254). This type of communication is especially important for adults who are not only learning new curriculum/educational materials (such as literacy skills or mathematics) but who are also learning how to transform themselves and their lives. It is at this point that we can start to see the creation of an ideal model or theory for Adult Correctional Education. In other words, performative space and the elements that constitute it, such as civility and ethical communication, is neither simply adult education nor education that happens inside of a prison, but rather a new understanding of what it means to offer educational programming to incarcerated or justice-involved adults.

An easy way to understand ethical communication is by comparing it to the type of communication that normally occurs in prisons. "In most prisons, most forms of communication appear to be monological" (Wright and Gehring, 2008a, p.252) which serves only to widen the gap between "us" and "them". Czubaroff (2007) describes monological communication as being completely one-sided and states that it is beneficial only to the person that is initiating the communication.

> *When we take a unilateral or monological orientation, we are so firmly committed to our own needs, ways of seeing the world, and purposes, that we are only able to relate to and treat our partners as objects…In the process, the others' independent interests and claims are eclipsed, disregarded, or dispatched…The result is a communication and relational climate which is not safe, free, or respectful for all individuals* (p.29).

Monological communication is used by correctional guards to "control and manipulate" prisoners (p.252) and leaves no room for the prisoner to voice his needs or concerns. Dialogic communication, on the other hand, allows for the interests of all parties involved to be expressed with equal consideration and leaves room for mutual understanding in all situations. This type of communication is practiced frequently by educators as "schools are often dialogic spheres of civility" (Wright and Gehring, 2008b, p.323). So even though it may be hard to play out ethical conversations inside of the prison as "communication may be systematically distorted by the pervasive goals of punishment, surveillance and control" (Wright and Gehring, 2008a, p.257) dialogic spaces – such as the prison classroom – help to "resist overarching program prescriptions and produce different discourses of literacy…that prepare the ground for democratic social relations" (Wright, 2001, p.86). This communication strategy promotes inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness and is an excellent stepping stone in teaching the prisoner how to actively participate in a democracy once they are released from prison and become part of the community.

Democracy

The third element of performative space, and possibly the most important aspect, is democracy. The idea of democracy inside of a prison is an oxymoron to most who study corrections, and has even been described as a "hidden heritage" in the sense that any research or literature on the topic is not widely promoted amongst correctional practitioners or administrators (Eggleston and Gehring, 2000, p.306). But in the same way that civility and ethical conversations can be promoted by educators who work inside the prison, democracy is used as a model of educational intervention within the performative space. When respect and trust are combined with dialogical communication "classrooms, schools and interactions between

school personnel and prison staff can provide opportunities for nascent forms of democracy to appear" (Wright and Gehring, 2008a, p.250), even inside the prison.

Eggleston and Gehring (2000) describe three models for democracy as an educational intervention in the prison. The first model is "the democratically managed classroom in the prison" (p.307). In this model prisoners are encouraged to participate actively in their own learning and create a working partnership with teachers. These methods strongly resemble those of adult education and are a good first step in introducing these more collaborative teaching practices to the prison setting. The second model is "the democratic school enclave within the institution" (*ibid*). This model is the most reflective of the idea of performative space as its purpose "is to establish a democratic/educational community that contrasts with other institutional components, in which students assume some responsibility for their own education" (*ibid*). It is with this model that the classroom within the prison becomes a source of democratic learning that will encourage democratic action in the community. By having a space (or enclave) inside of the repressive prison environment that gives prisoners the opportunity to become subjects with a voice rather than objects without one, learning is able to flourish.

The third model of democracy in the prison is the "management of the entire institution according to democratic principles" (Eggleston and Gehring, 2000, p.307). The overall goal with this model is a fantastic notion for educators and prison reformers. The purpose "is to transform the prison into a school, which can develop better citizens instead of better prisoners" (*ibid*). This statement should appear redundant given that the purpose of a correctional facility is to reform criminals into law-abiding citizens. But as stated earlier, the correctional system is becoming increasingly concerned with strategies of management and control rather than actually treating or helping offenders through effective programming. "With few notable exceptions, prison cultures

are antithetical to democracy" (Wright and Gehring, 2008a, p.249) and with this in mind, transforming the prison into an educational institution seems like a daunting task even for those who are passionate about the transformative power of education.

While the transformation of the prison to a school is an unlikely endeavour, increasing the use of democratic principles inside of the prison is a good way to move forward. Becoming more involved in processes of "participatory decision-making and freedom of choice" (Eggleston and Gehring, 2000, p.307) is important for the prisoner who is the victim of low social interaction and no civic activity on a daily basis. "In addition to its accepted role in fostering habilitation, democracy provides a potentially nurturing environment for rehabilitation" (p.308) which is a goal of correctional education programming. Democracy itself is synonymous with education in the sense that they are both antonymous with corrections. Basic education and literacy "enables [prisoner] students to make room for themselves" (Wright, 2001, p.87) inside the prison walls, and down the road it helps them to form an identity (as well as a life) in the community. Within the school enclave "literacy provides students with shelter, time to spare themselves and others… [and] bonds the student and the world" (p.88). Education and the use of democratic practices within curriculum helps to fight back against the alienating and dehumanizing circumstances of incarceration and play a role in teaching civility and positive socialization (Billante and Saunders, 2002, p.35). Incorporating ideals of democracy into education also helps to move education beyond a basic level of teaching and learning and helps to further the philosophies of adult education in order to improve the quality of education that is offered to prisoners.

The topic of discussion amongst those interested in creating a space within the prison for education revolves primarily around the dichotomy of corrections and education.

> *At the most theoretical level, both corrections and education share a single mission; both have the common goal of behaviour change. However, the form this mission takes is very different between corrections and education* (Eggleston and Gehring, 2000, p.307).

When presented together, civility, ethical conversations and democracy form a certain type of educational environment that can be created within the prison to help eliminate the destructive divide between educational and correctional strategies. The performative space, or the school enclave within the prison, is a place where adult education can function according to its own philosophies and principles and not according to those that guide other correctional practices. This safe space is amplified if the teachers working within it are removed from the CSC as this creates a kind of confidentiality that allows the classroom to remain autonomous and removed from the supervision of the correctional regime. The sphere of civility that is created in the classroom by nurturing relationships of trust and fostering a stronger sense of autonomy amongst prisoners helps to better prepare students for life outside of the prison walls. The education provided in the performative space delivers basic literacy skills, necessary workplace skills, but most importantly it helps the prisoner-students develop social capital – the key to successful reintegration and meaningful citizenship in society.

Social Capital

> *The theory of social capital is, at heart, most straightforward. Its central thesis can be summed up in two words: relationships matter* (Field, 2003, p.1).

Social capital is a term that is relatively new to the field of criminology, but gained much popularity in the social sciences and education over the past few decades. It is of great interest to researchers as this concept focuses on the connections between micro and macro elements of social life. Being able to analyze situations at the individual and structural levels is essential to understanding the choices that people make and the factors that may or may not influence those

choices (Lin, 2001, p.3). At the individual level social capital theory is concerned with understanding "how individuals access and use resources embedded in social networks to gain returns" (p.21). In other words, analysis revolves around the relationships and connections available to the individual and whether or not these linkages will lead them to success in society. At the group level, social capital theory is concerned with "how certain groups develop and more or less maintain social capital as a collective asset and how such a collective asset enhances group members' life chances" (p.22). Therefore, the macro level is concerned with institutions in society that shape and control social capital and dictate who should or should not have access to it. Colloquially speaking, macro level considerations of social capital question not *what* you know, but *who* you know; this is one of the most important concerns for prisoners who are in a situation where they do not know anyone with significant access to social capital. By understanding social capital at both the micro and macro level one might be in a position not only to identify the groups who currently maintain social capital but also to be able to discover ways that individuals who lack said privilege can obtain such a resource. Education may be one method of developing that kind of access.

While understanding the micro and macro elements of social capital is important, it is also a very simplistic way to understand the concept. Although several theorists have engaged this theoretical concept, for the purposes of this project I draw on the explanations provided by Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman. Each scholar contributed different definitions and has demonstrated different applications of social capital, and those that are relevant to this research project will be described throughout this chapter. First, it is important to distinguish social capital from human capital, as the two are sometimes confused or used interchangeably in research and in general conversation.

Human Capital vs. Social Capital

Most of us are familiar with the concept of capital, but perhaps we too quickly associate it with a more Marxist notion revolving around finances, production and class divisions. While these ideas are taken into consideration when speaking to social capital, there are definite differences between human capital and social capital that must be pointed out if we are to argue the case for the importance of developing social capital amongst prisoners. In essence, human capital "represents investment in training and other programs of activity to acquire skills, knowledge and certifications" (Lin, 2001, p.24). This is the type of capital that prisons typically purport to instil in prisoners by creating programs that help them develop work related skills. An example of this within the CSC is CORCAN, a training program "mandated to provide employment training and employability skills to offenders in federal correctional institutions" (CSC, 2009c). On top of the 31 correctional institutions that offers this training, CORCAN also operates 53 community employment centres across Canada that are set up to help prisoners find employment once their term of incarceration is complete. Research conducted by the CSC "has shown that experience in the CORCAN work program leads to a reduction in recidivism" (Gillis, Motiuk and Belcourt, 1998) and while learning hands-on skills is no doubt very important for prisoners wishing to gain employment upon re-entry into the community, there are skills and knowledge that go far beyond basic construction techniques that employers are looking for.

Correctional education programs (if structured appropriately) have the ability to help prisoners develop another form of capital – social capital – that will help them to not only gain employment but to gain relationships and build long-lasting networks. Social capital is different from human capital in the sense that it influences actions at a group level and helps create a stronger sense of community rather than building a limited set of skills for individual

achievement (Field, 2003, p.9). Coleman (1988) distinguishes the two in terms of their ability to influence a person to take actions in society. He states that

> *human capital is created by changes in persons that bring about skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways. Social capital, however, comes about through changes in the relations among persons that facilitate action* (p.100).

Once again this places emphasis on the individualized nature of human capital compared to the more collaborative nature of social capital. Both forms are important for successful (re)integration, however, current correctional programming emphasizes only human or individual capital. In terms of correctional education, GED or high school completion programs are generally accessible, but within the current format these programs offer little networking and/or relationship building, which is characteristic of not only social capital but also civility and democracy.

Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman

Pierre Bourdieu, as a sociologist and a philosopher, is one of the pioneers in the field of social capital and speaks to it very much in terms of social reproduction and the creation and maintenance of symbolic power. James Coleman, another sociologist, is also known for his work on social capital and is influenced by a more Durkheimian tradition resulting in a structural-functionalist approach to the concept. “As a result [of these two researchers], social capital has been elaborated in two principle ways: in terms of norms and in terms of access to institutional resources” (Dika and Singh, 2002, p.33). Bourdieu’s focus on the symbolic nature of social capital is important, as it helps to distinguish it from the more tangible capital that we see in society such as money and class position. While social capital is still seen “as a form of capital [that is] possessed by members of a social network group” (Lin, 2001, p.22) it is a possession that is harder to capture through quantitative measures. In this sense, it is not only the quantity of

relationships that matter when one is trying to build up their social capital, but also the quality of the connections that is taken into consideration. When stronger connections are formed with others in a community, a person has the ability to use these connections as a way to improve their social standing. Social capital, in the form of social relationships, will provide one with the currency needed to advance their position in a community and to gain respect amongst other community members (Bourdieu, 1977, p.503).

Bourdieu suggests that social capital (as a collective asset) is similar to other forms of capital as it can be used by "the dominant class to maintain and reproduce group solidarity and preserve the group's dominant position" (Dika and Singh, 2002, p.33). If social capital is defined in terms of quality as well as quantity of relationships, then it is easy to see how the type of social capital obtained by certain groups in society would be more valuable than others. For those who have grown up in more privileged situations, the relationships that they have built over time will be characterized by trust, respect and reciprocity. With stronger family and community networks and greater resources to rely on, the dominant class has an easier time making and maintaining quality relationships. On the other hand, those from more disadvantaged situations do not have access to the same communities and resources, making their access to social capital more difficult. For prisoners, access to social capital is lower as isolation from the community inhibits access to resources. While education inside of the prison might help to increase human capital, Bourdieu would say that depending solely on education does not make up for a lack of valuable relationships with people who have access to the market (Field, 2003, p.28). This is not to say that Bourdieu does not value education in its relation to social capital, but that it requires a certain type of education that is more readily available to those who are economically privileged.

Coleman tends to move away from classist notions of social capital in the sense that he feels that "all social relations and social structures facilitate some forms of social capital" (Coleman, 1988, p.105). He does recognize, however, that there are some groups and social networks in society that create different levels of social capital that may or may not be recognized by other networks. This is important when speaking to prisoners, because even though they are a group isolated from society for the most part they are not completely isolated from one another and are thus able to make connections within the prison. Prisoners are able to build a certain kind of social capital within the institution that will allow them to take action and maintain agency while still inside, but these forms of social capital may be limited to the prison setting. "Social capital, according to Coleman, represents a resource because it involves the expectation of reciprocity, and goes beyond any given individual to involve a wider network whose relationships are governed by a high degree of trust and shared values" (Field, 2003, p.20). Therefore, if the prisoner has learned neither how to establish a relationship of trust nor how to respect the values of society, then the transference of social capital from the prison to the community is impossible.

According to Coleman, the truest and most valuable form of social capital can only be created when there are high levels of trust and reciprocity in a community or in any structure (Coleman, 1988, p.102). These elements help to create relationships that "facilitate action" (Coleman, 1990, p.302) for both individuals and groups and also help to build other forms of capital that will lead to success in mainstream society. "The concept of social capital was for Coleman a means of explaining how people manage to cooperate" (Field, 2003, p.21) and therefore this term has become very important when trying to create a form of education that can be successfully achieved inside of the prison. If social capital is important in "not only the

acquisition of credentials but also in both cognitive development and in the evolution of a secure self-identity" (p.24) then it should be a focus for those involved in the development and implementation of Adult Correctional Education programming in the CSC. Social capital changes education from being concerned solely with absorbing standardized materials to being concerned with influencing substantial changes within the individual so that they are able to form meaningful relationships with people – a staple for successful reintegration (Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009).

Social Capital and Performative Space

Wright and Gehring (2008) speak to social capital within their discussion on performative space and make reference to the importance of "mutual trust and norms of reciprocity which enable members of a social group to cooperate spontaneously to achieve shared outcomes" (p.335). It is only within an environment where trust and respect are valued that social capital can be instilled in those that are participating in the interactions – without these basic elements individuals are unable to work together and will have a hard time later on in life with taking action on their own (Billante and Saunders, 2002, p.34). Even though this may seem like a common sense notion, in prison the environment and resources (both material and human) are not conducive to building social capital. When those managing the prison are more inclined to wanting prisoners to be passive and easily controlled, it is unlikely that institutional authorities will encourage programs that prepare prisoners for active and democratic participation. Once again, it is through the creation of performative space that social capital can be accessed by prisoners as a successful tool for reintegration.

As mentioned earlier, social capital is not so much an element of performative space as it is an outcome of the education and exposure to civility, ethical communication, and democracy

that is provided in the classroom. Social capital is used in discussions of performative space due to its relationship to the concept of civility, in the sense that they both require an atmosphere of cooperation, mutual respect and trust. Both help to create better structure in a prisoner's life and aid them in successfully navigating through power and knowledge structures that were previously inaccessible. But just as human capital and social capital differ in terms of being individually focused (micro) versus collectively focused (macro), it is the same situation with civility and social capital.

> *Individuals are civil or uncivil – this is something they are taught, and they bring this virtue with them when they enter social situations. Social capital, by contrast, is the quality of relations between individuals – trust and reciprocity are based in relationships, not people* (Billante and Saunders, 2002, p.34).

While the two can be distinguished in this way, it is important to note that civility is a prerequisite for social capital as successful interactions cannot occur without it (*ibid*); these concepts must be considered together if we are able to create education that purports to influence civic action and pro-social behaviour.

The elements that make up performative space are also essential for the creation of social capital and subsequently for prisoners who want to be in the community. Examining the value and power of performative space demonstrates a new approach to correctional education programs and how they should be developed, implemented and evaluated on their ability to aid in the development of social capital.

Performative Space and Social Capital in Adult Correctional Education

As mentioned previously, social capital is a growing concept in social science research. The popularity of this concept can be attributed to the fact that it has the ability to "capture the essence of many sociological concepts (i.e. social support, social integration, social cohesion and even norms and values) and serve as an umbrella term that can easily be understood and

transported across many disciplines" (Lin et al., 2001, p.vii). It is for this reason that it is a useful theoretical construct to use for this research, where ideas from the fields of criminology and adult education are trying to work together to create something that works for prisoner-students. With a great "lack of connection to "mainstream" individuals and institutions, job networks, and the information and influence that these networks provide" (Hurlbert et al., 2001, p.220) prisoners need access to educational programming that will help them close the gap between the prison and mainstream communities so that the transition from one to the other is smoother and they are more inclined toward a successful reintegration. "By making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty" (Field, 2003, p.1). It is within the performative space that prisoners can begin to make connections with not only each other, but also with educators that can provide them with further connections to the community in a way that cannot be achieved through the more individually focused programs offered by the CSC.

The school environment within the prison can "prepare [prisoner-] students for citizenship in democracies because schools are often dialogic "spheres of civility" in institutions characterized by monologic and strategic forms of communication" (Wright and Gehring, 2008b, p.323). Within the performative space, prisoners can begin to access the forms of symbolic power that Bourdieu speaks to through relationships of trust and reciprocity that are advocated by Coleman. If "social capital develops and is sustained through face-to-face encounters where trust is nurtured" (p.335) then programs must be developed in a way that encourages this more personal type of interaction rather than putting resources towards education that requires filling out workbooks in the confines of a prison cell. The performative space inside the prison is

somewhat of a meso-structure that acts as a link between the micro and macro elements at play. Within this space educators can address both individual and structural factors that lead to continued criminal behaviour and intervene with appropriate education materials and effective communication strategies. The ability to build social capital while inside the prison will transform the prisoner into a community asset rather than a burden. If the CSC develops their programming based on the assumption that offenders sometimes make bad choices because they lack pro-social associates, then creating educational programs that incorporate opportunities to build socially appropriate networks makes sense[12] and works in harmony with the goals of adult education and the stated goals of the correctional system.

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[12] "There appears to be clear and often strong positive links between social capital and educational attainment, economic success, health and freedom from crime" (Field, 2003, p.62).

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Concerns with Current Research on Correctional Education

As I have alluded to in previous chapters, the research conducted on prison education by the CSC provides little insight into how education can be used to maximize successful reintegration amongst criminalized populations. The most effective way to problematize the research methods that are used to assess the effectiveness of correctional programming is to point out the fact that the correctional researchers conduct their own program and policy evaluations. This is apparent in Canada's correctional services. As Carter (2008) points out "the organization conducts most of its own research and statistics. It also formulates (or does not) policy and procedure on the same (p.69). This internal investigation is especially unfavourable to the evaluation of prison education programs as research in this area is "predicated upon an institutional model of the academic enterprise, which generally measures itself on accreditation and curriculum versus self-transformation" (Chauhan, 2005, p.25). When the research goals set out by the institution do not match up with the program goals of adult educators working within that institution, it is the student who suffers as attention is drawn away from providing good quality education and is instead directed towards producing satisfactory reviews of corrections.

Much of the existing research on correctional education programs utilizes quantitative research methods. While numbers may be useful for program evaluation purposes and to inform prison administrators which programs are successfully completed by prisoners, simple number patterns are irrelevant unless they are supplemented by qualitative information about specific program elements that encourage or deter prisoners from full engagement with their education (Costelloe, 2007, p.211). In other words, when evaluating prison programs there is such a concern with the use of quantitative data that the only available information is a simplified

version of the real picture, offering nothing of value to those who are interested in providing quality programming to prisoners. Danermark et al. (2002) reinforce the need for qualitative elements in research by stating that "data do not speak for themselves [and] strategies are needed to enable the discovery of concepts and categories" (p.133). Some strategies used to add depth to the numbers include ethnography and case studies (McKee & Clements, 2000, p.270) but these approaches also have limitations. "Prisoners are observed, examined, analysed, and categorized by those in positions of power on a daily basis" (Costelloe, 2007, p.206) and therefore the last thing that they need in their already vulnerable position is to be examined and questioned by a researcher who is a representative of that authority. "By positioning oneself as a researcher, one is automatically positioning the subject(s) and shaping the research, and this, if nothing else, reveals the extent of the power" (*ibid,* p.207). Therefore, convict criminology – where prisoners provide insight on their experiences of incarceration, the impact of specific programs, and the importance of achieving higher levels of education in order to succeed upon release – is required.

If we consider the quantitative focus that overshadows most research conducted by corrections, we see that many programs, including prison education programs, are typically evaluated as successful when measured against recidivism rates (Reuss & Wilson, 2000, p.175). This reliance on recidivism rates is problematic due to the fact that there is no single definition of this concept. In most of the CSC reports, a recidivist is "defined as any released federal offender who was convicted within [a] three-year period following release of a new indictable offence that led to a custodial sentence" (CSC,1993). In other areas of research the follow up area might be longer or shorter, the arrest may or may not have to lead to a custodial sentence, and the arrest or charge could be for a simple breach of conditions rather than a new indictable offence. It is this arbitrary use of the term 'recidivism rate' that gives little credence to most program effectiveness

evaluations in corrections, especially when it comes to basic education programs. More than that, it seems that "the over-emphasis on the recidivism rate and at times its use as the sole means of measurement is particularly damaging to the ongoing debate about education within correctional settings" (Behan, 2007, p.159). The use of such an arbitrary concept that can be used to forward the interest of prison administrators demonstrates that "we have become discouraged with our pursuit of understanding" (Williams, 1984, p.98). We have become so dependent on positivist/scientific research methods that we have failed to take into account the "complexity of our object of study" (Kraska, 2006, p.174) and have underestimated the changes that occur within the prisoner after being exposed to a new learning environment. "With innovation and adequate evaluation, there is no doubt that the importance of education for the rehabilitation of offenders can be established" (Reagan and Stoughton, 1976, p.111) by those who are interested in offering more basic education and literacy programs to the adult prison population.

Another major problem with the research in this area is that "researchers in the field have yet to determine how incarcerated adults best learn, resulting in wide variation in program models across jurisdictions" (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.28). This is why it is important to collaborate with those working in the field of adult education, so that correctional education programs can be based on community adult education models (rather than existing cognitive-behavioural correctional programming) that have proven to be successful. The focus on program evaluation is extremely important for those working in the CSC, and therefore it should become the priority of program developers. As it currently stands "most evaluations of correctional education programs do not provide the information on program characteristics – such as curricula, dosage and staffing – that is necessary to determine best practices" (Brazzell et al., 2009, p.20).

It is quite clear that "educators need to create an alternative discourse about how we define our progress" (Behan, 2007, p.160). This means moving away from our obsession with numbers and reductionist statistical methods and instead being more reflexive and creative in our pursuit of knowledge by using both quantitative and qualitative methods when researching the effects of correctional education. Instead of focusing on the number of prisoners that do or do not participate in programs and the number of prisoners who do or do not reoffend, "future research should focus on measuring inmates' educational gains, aligning job training with actual employment opportunities, updating vocational curricula, enriching quantitative data with qualitative research, and analysing statistics correctly (Wade, 2007, p.30). If a useable theory of correctional education is to be developed then we must be willing to try new methods. Hunt (1989) would agree with this idea stating that "there can be no single set of criteria employed to evaluate alternative theoretical positions; the hope of such a consensus is merely the illusion of rationalism" (p.159).

Improving Research in Correctional Education

Research that is conducted outside of the CSC by adult educators, academics, and those who work in the community is far more advanced in its ability to offer good solutions to the declining level of education in the prison. For example, research published in the *Journal of Correctional Education [JCE]* offers a wide variety of perspectives to help build a solid foundation for successful prison education strategies. Much of the literature reviewed thus far comes from the JCE and was used to create a conceptual framework for this research. Unfortunately, most of the research published in the JCE is not context specific to Canadian prisons. Most of the research on prison education is produced in the United States and the United Kingdom, leaving no practical research findings to be applied directly to Canadian institutions.

By combining a variety of research methods and concepts from different fields of study, this research project on correctional education aims to add a Canadian element to the field of correctional education. While I am not suggesting that this research is revolutionary, it can at least provide something different than what currently exists and thus may offer suggestions for future research projects in the same area.

> We need to
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> *recognize that correctional education is a unique discipline operating within an exceptional educational setting with an exclusive set of factors acting on it...The onus is [therefore] on the researcher to be cognizant of the power relations and how they affect the research process and its outcomes* (Costelloe, 2007, p.207).

The exposure of such power relations and the underlying processes that are at work within the correctional system can be better exposed through qualitative research than through quantitative methods. "Qualitative research is typically inductive, places a high value on preliminary exploration, extols the virtues of target or purposive sampling, and emphasizes that one should maintain flexibility and reap the advantages of more open-ended research instruments" (Palys, 1997, p.313). This type of research will allow us to better understand the "processes through which phenomena are produced" (*ibid*) and in essence will be a more effective way to explore the intersection of correctional and educational philosophies, which is the crux of this research project.

Research Problem and Questions

While there are several education-based programs offered to prisoners by the CSC, the calibre of these programs is not entirely up to par with those offered to adults in the community. The structure and delivery of education programs on the inside does not meet all of the needs of prisoner students, despite numbers from a few studies that say participation in these programs lowers chances for recidivism (Linden & Perry, 1983; Porporino & Robinson, 1992; Vacca,

2004). As noted in the literature on adult education, there are many components of teaching and learning that must be present in order for an adult education program to be successful (which in itself is a contested and vague term); there is a need to examine education programs offered in Canadian prisons to see if these elements are present. By looking at education as a way to provide prisoners with increased social capital, as a way to encourage democratic action, and to increase levels of citizenship, we can begin to move past the idea of providing education merely as a way to pass time while inside. Combining knowledge from the field of education and the field of criminology in order to explore and develop correctional programming is something new and refreshing for those interested in prison reform, and it is this multi-disciplinary approach that will help us to understand what needs to be done inside prisons to help prisoners successfully reintegrate into our communities.

Research Questions

This project was guided by several questions, both general and specific in nature; these questions went through several transformations throughout the course of my research. At the beginning of this research endeavour I focused on more general questions because there is sparse information on the education that is provided to prisoners in Canada or on how it compares to the education that is provided to justice-involved adults in the community. I therefore thought it necessary to begin by asking exploratory questions, and as my project developed to create more specific research questions that would guide the creation of my semi-structured interview schedule. Some questions were used to glean information regarding the current state of adult education in Canadian federal prisons and in the community, with additional questions created in order to explore whether or not the five assumptions which serve as the foundation of

andragogy[13] are present in the education programs that are provided by the CSC and those that are present in the community. The combination of these guiding research questions allowed me to gather the necessary information to assess the nature of education that is provided both in the community and in the prison environment.

Following the completion of the literature review and the development of a theoretical framework for this project, my research questions went through one final transformation, and I was confident in drafting questions that would help guide the analysis and discussion of my data. After expanding my knowledge on adult educational practices and theoretical concepts surrounding education in prisons, I have come to two primary conclusions. First, in order for someone to offer education to adults there must be certain elements present in both the curriculum and in the delivery of the learning materials. Secondly, the learning must occur in a space that is safe, respectful, democratic, and open to all learners. Therefore, the research questions that are the focus of this thesis revolve around these two pillars of providing education to adults in the prison environment that will allow for the development of social capital. By focusing on the principles of adult education and the concepts associated with performative space, I endeavour to answer the following questions:

- Does education in prison utilize principles and practices of adult education? If so, how?
- Does education in prison occur in a performative space and promote the concepts associated with such a space? If so, how?
- Does the occurrence of these two elements differ between the education that is provided to prisoners within the institutions and the education that is provided to justice-involved adults in the community?

Data/Information Sources

I utilized three bodies or groups of data for this research project: correctional data; community educational data; and prisoner specific/generated data. These three bodies of data

[13] These five factors were listed previously when explaining andragogy.

consist of different sources and required that I use different methods to acquire and analyse them. To contextualize the current state of educational programming in Canadian prisons, I drew primarily upon research published by CSC, including any secondary data produced on educational program completion and its relation to re-offence, participation in other correctional programming, and offender attitudes. I also examined correctional policies that direct education, namely the Commissioner's Directive number 720[14]. This information was used primarily throughout my literature review in order to form an understanding of what education looks like inside of Canadian federal prisons. It was also used throughout my analysis in order to make comparisons between the themes that emerged regarding correctional education, and the themes that emerged regarding adult education in the community.

In order to glean first hand experiential knowledge of the dynamics of offering education to justice-involved adults, I conducted five interviews with actors involved in education both within the CSC and in the community. All participants were first provided with a recruitment text[15] which explained the details of my research and what would be expected of them during the interview process, and also a consent form[16] to read through and sign before the interviews commenced. Three of my interview participants are employees of the John Howard Society of Ottawa [JHS Ottawa], and work as educators within the organization in the various education programs that JHS Ottawa offers. As a result of a referral from one of the teachers at JHS Ottawa, I also conducted an interview with an adult educator from Algonquin College who teaches within the academic upgrading program. My fifth interview was with an employee of the

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[14] The objectives of this policy are (1) To assist offenders to reintegrate into the community as law-abiding citizens by increasing education levels through the provision of provincially accredited or certified programs and (2) To provide appropriate library services similar to those in the community, while taking into consideration the requirements of the correctional environment (CSC, 2007).
[15] Appendix A.
[16] Appendix B.

CSC who helped to provide me with information about the policies, practices and developments that are taking place within the education provided by the CSC.

Finally, it was important to include the voices of prisoners in my research. However, due to the vulnerable nature of the prison population it was not viable for me to receive ethics approval (from both the University of Ottawa and the CSC) in time to complete the requirements for this degree. Therefore, rather than interviewing prisoners I chose to analyse three issues of the *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons* that have dealt specifically with education in prison (Volume Number 4 (1), 1992; Volume Number 13 (1), 2004; and Volume Number 17 (1), 2008). The individual and prisoner penned accounts of education inside prison shared in these scholarly publications helped me answer questions regarding the nature of education in prison and allowed me to complete a more thorough thematic analysis of adult education in prison. It also provided a viable method of re-centring the voices of prisoners and their views on the education they receive in prison.

Qualitative Research Methods

Exploratory Research

Layder (1993) states that exploratory research needs to be “both systematic and flexible” (p.121). This means that while the research process itself might seem unstructured and causes the questions being asked to change throughout the process, there is always an overarching goal that is used to keep the researcher on track. By adhering to specific methodological rules, one is ensuring that the project is not simply research for the sake of research, but rather research leading to conclusions that address gaps in existing knowledge and that offers practical solutions to the problem at hand. In the area of correctional education there *is* a problem to be solved, but there is much exploration that needs to be done before we have the concepts and tools available

to solve it in an effective manner. In this sense, there is great value to exploratory research, especially in an area that is both under- and poorly studied.

It is said that "researchers explore when they have little or no scientific knowledge about the group, process, activity, or situation they want to examine but nevertheless have reason to believe it contains elements worth discovering" (Stebbins, 2001, p.6). There could not be a more perfect way to describe correctional education in Canada. As mentioned before, while some research was conducted in this area, it lacks qualitative insight and fails to offer solutions regarding how to develop more effective correctional programming. Because of the limited amount of information available to me, I had no choice but to complete an exploratory study and by doing so I was able to make broader claims regarding the quality of education in Canadian prisons. The primary goal of exploratory research "is to learn "What is going on here?" and to investigate social phenomena without explicit expectations" (Schutt, 2006, p.14). While this may seem like an elementary goal, research of this kind is required in order to develop an accurate conceptual framework with which to complete more refined research in the same area.

What strengthens this research project is my ability to be active and reflexive throughout the research process. Andrew Sayer (1992) states that engaging in "active manipulation and exploration" of the material we are given will only increase our ability to be effective and influential scholars in the field of our choosing (p.52)." Through the use of the following methods, this project will add value and may spark further interest in studying the importance of education in the correctional setting. Maintaining flexibility and open-mindedness throughout the research process is no easy task (Stebbins, 2001, p.6), but it is essential to research that aims to be ground-breaking and wants to create new knowledge about an old problem.

Grounded Theory

> *The main goal of exploratory research is the production of inductively derived generalizations about the group, process, activity or situation under study. Next, the researcher weaves these generalizations into a grounded theory explaining the object of study* (Stebbins, 2001, p.6)

Grounded theory is a research methodology that holds "the assumption that the social world must be discovered using qualitative methods and employing an exploratory orientation" (Layder, 1993, p.39). This is a more inductive approach to research that allows for concepts and theories to be drawn from the data and information sources rather than making assumptions prior to the research which might skew results. It is this ability to be reflexive throughout the research process that sets grounded theory apart from more linear qualitative and quantitative methods. When a researcher begins a project with a hypothesis in mind, it may become difficult to make sense of conflicting findings, causing conclusions to be weak and difficult to apply to "real" situations. Grounded theory, on the other hand, allows for the consideration of all observations and research findings, and therefore provides a more complete picture of the phenomenon being explored.

Sampling in grounded theory is conducted on a theoretical basis, meaning that the "sample is not defined prior to the research but as theoretical dimensions emerge during the research" (Ezzy, 2002, p.74). In this research project initial themes were discovered after completing a survey of the literature in the areas of corrections, adult education, and correctional education. After having a foundation of understanding, three issues of the *Journal for Prisoners on Prisons* were analyzed and more concepts and themes were formulated and used to structure the interview schedule. Information gathered from interviews was then used to enhance conceptual categories, to reconsider and analyse the three issues of the JPP, and to provide answers to the research questions.

This process of exploration and reformulation (which will be explained in more detail in the following chapter) allowed for a stronger understanding of what it means to provide good quality education to prisoners. The process of "grounded theorizing" (Stanley and Wise, 1990) allowed for the development of a new conceptual framework, which over time can be refined (Schutt, 2006, p.348) and used to make a larger space for research on correctional education in Canada. Conducting research in such a way "results in a more sophisticated and subtle analysis of the data" (Ezzy, 2002, p.78) and was especially important for this research project as my aim was to provide an holistic picture of the way that education is conceptualized and practiced within the community and inside the prison.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The use of semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to explore the topic and research questions in an open and flexible manner and allows the research participants to share their ideas and opinions in their own words (Esterberg, 2002, p.87). As the purpose of a semi-structured interview is to obtain enough information from the participant that a story can be created and re-told after the research process (Ezzy, 2002, p.68), it is important to create questions that will "allow for a much freer exchange between interviewer and interviewee" (Esterberg, 2002, p.87). The room for reflexivity in this method worked well with the theoretical framework and exploratory nature of this project, and allowed me to develop a good understanding of adult education in both the community and the prison setting.

A semi-structured interview is comprised of a pre-determined list of topics and themes, and questions that correspond with those categories. The questions are developed in such a way that the researcher can change, add, or remove questions depending on where the participant is taking the conversation. The open-ended nature of the questions allows interviewees to share

their full and complete answers without being restricted in any way. In essence, "the semi-structured interview is geared to allowing people the freedom to respond in any way they choose. In this manner, the individual's own interpretations and meanings are allowed to surface in the interview data" (Layder, 1993, p.41). While such an interview schedule[17] does require a lot of work on the part of the researcher in terms of probing for further information while maintaining a good rapport with the participant, it also allows the researcher to obtain information pertinent to the experiences of the participant that are unlikely to have been explored in previous research.

During the five interviews that I conducted, there were adaptations that had to be made in order to maintain the flow of productive and informative conversation. Some participants spoke more freely than others, and with those who were more reserved I had to improvise probing questions to get to the information I was seeking. My first interview[18], which was conducted with a teacher who works in the academic upgrading program out of the John Howard Society of Ottawa, was perhaps the easiest of all of my interviews. The participant had a lot of information to share with me regarding their work as a teacher and they were excited to have the chance to speak to the importance of educating adults – especially those who have past and current involvement with the criminal justice system. I did not have to divert very far from my initial interview schedule during this meeting, and I received a lot of personal and anecdotal information throughout the conversation. My second interview[19] with yet another teacher working out of JHS Ottawa was structurally similar to the first, but not quite the same in content. This interview lasted just over twenty minutes, yet the information was still quite useful. I was able to ask all of the questions but due to several interruptions that occurred while the interview

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[17] Appendix C.
[18] Conducted on January 21, 2011 at the John Howard Society of Ottawa.
[19] Conducted on February 18, 2011 at the John Howard Society of Ottawa.

was taking place, the participant's answers were rushed. This was due to no fault of the research participant, but rather the time of day that the interview was conducted and the nature of the busy work environment in the classroom.

My third interview[20] was with a teacher who works in the academic upgrading program at Algonquin College in Ottawa. This interview took me in a bit of a different direction than the first two, but the information acquired was nonetheless invaluable. While the topics explored were somewhat removed from the idea of providing education to justice-involved adults, this educator had several years of experience working in adult education and added greatly to the information retrieved throughout the textual analysis. The questions revolved more around the changing policies and practices that have taken place when it comes to providing education to adults in Canada and the general theme of how important it is to continue to make progress in this area.

The fourth interview[21] brought my focus back to educating adults who have spent time in and out of correctional facilities and are now turning to school as a primary avenue for achieving reintegration. This research participant works in various educational programs that are offered by the John Howard Society of Ottawa including the basic education program and several outreach initiatives. This interview followed a very similar structure to the first two and I was able to stick to my initial interview schedule quite strictly. This participant had a wealth of knowledge to share regarding the positive effects that education can have on an adult who is struggling in other aspects of their lives. They shared a number of personal stories and were very open to all of the questions that were asked.

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[20] Conducted on March 15, 2011 at Algonquin College in Ottawa.
[21] Conducted on May 29, 2011 at the John Howard Society of Ottawa.

I had to patiently wait for three more months to conduct the final interview[22], but considering the quality and depth of the interview it was certainly worth the wait. Given that all of my other research participants were individuals working in community education programs, I wanted to make sure that I spoke to someone who could give me more (and perhaps more accurate) information about what the Correctional Service of Canada does to provide incarcerated adults with educational opportunities. My interview with the CSC employee was very informative and despite the fact that I had to change my interview schedule quite a bit, the conversation flowed very smoothly. The knowledge gained throughout this interview helped me to understand what is being done by those working closer to the top of the organizational structure at the CSC. What I discovered through this conversation is that there are people at the CSC who are passionate about providing education to prisoners and who appreciate research and efforts that are made to show that education is one of several key components to a successful reintegration strategy. Rapport emerged quickly with this participant, who answered all of my questions with ease.

At the beginning of this research project I had some concerns with only having five scheduled interviews. Thankfully I was lucky enough to meet and speak with five individuals who were both willing and excited to share information with me. Each participant added their own voice to this project, which complemented not only the framework outlined in both the literature review and theory chapters, but also the findings gleaned from the analysis of the three issues of the *Journal for Prisoners on Prisons*.

[22] Conducted on August 26, 2011 at National Headquarters of the Correctional Service of Canada in Ottawa.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Quantitative content analysis is a rigid scientific process that involves counting words, phrases, and classifying information according to pre-defined categories. Qualitative content analysis is far more complex and "involves exploring the documentary materials for cultural meanings and insights" (Noaks and Wincup, 2004, p.127). This process allows the researcher to contextualize the information in a way that quantitative research cannot do, and is a very useful way to explore a topic that requires more in depth examination. Ezzy (2002) refers to this method as *thematic analysis* and states that it "is more inductive than content analysis because the categories into which themes will be sorted are not decided prior to coding the data. These categories are induced from the data" (p.88) allowing for a flexible interpretation and fitting into an exploratory research design built using grounded theory.

Qualitative content analysis involves three levels of coding. The first level, open coding, involves the creation of initial categories after all of the information is gathered and reviewed by the researcher. During the second stage, axial coding, the researcher must begin to make more concrete links between the categories and attempt to construct a more comprehensive conceptual framework. In the third level, selective coding, discussions and conclusions revolve around the core categories that are derived from all of the data, and the researcher is able to make recommendations for practical action or suggestions for further research (Noaks and Wincup, 2004, p.131). After these three levels of coding are completed the researcher should be able to iterate a story that emerged from the data in order to explain and offer strongly developed answers to the research questions that guided the project. By engaging in the process of 'constant comparison', which "allow[s] data to be grouped and differentiated, as categories are identified", events that at first seemed entirely unrelated may be grouped together as different types of the

same category, or events that seemed similar may be categorized differently" (Ezzy, 2002, p.90). Using a variety of data sources for this research project not only allowed me to see patterns from different angles, it also encouraged the use of the comparative method.

My data took many different shapes and forms before I was able to narrow it down to the four main themes presented in the next chapter. After reading through the prisoner penned articles from the *Journal for Prisoners on Prisons* and my interview transcripts several times, I was able to work my way through the three-step coding process that was just described. I created several tables in order to help me organize my data and I worked with those at length, making logical connections between the various themes until I was left with four categories that captured all of the important and relevant information.

Evaluating Trustworthiness

Just as with quantitative studies, it is important in qualitative research to assess the reliability and validity of the research project. I have already spoken to the benefits of an exploratory approach alongside the use of grounded theory and qualitative content analysis in that all three encourage reflexivity and a comprehensive understanding of the data, but there are other evaluative criteria that need to be addressed. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a framework for evaluating qualitative research and utilize the term *trustworthiness*.

> *The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?* (p.290).

In order to demonstrate the trustworthiness of a project the researcher must establish four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility is achieved by presenting an "adequate representation of the constructions of the social world under study"

(Bradley, 1993, p.436); there are several methodological strategies to ensure this, including triangulation[23].

One of the main limitations to this research project is the sample size required to reach theoretical saturation. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that:

> *Theoretical saturation occurs when: (a) no new or relevant data seem to emerge regarding a category; (b) the category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation; and (c) the relationships among categories are well established and validated* (p.212).

Given that I had a small sample size (five interviews) it proved difficult to achieve theoretical saturation. Triangulation was the strategy invoked to secure theoretical saturation within my research project. In addition to the existing scholarly literature, I incorporated research and policy from the CSC as well as the articles from the JPP, which also infused the project with the voices of prisoners that would otherwise have been silenced. This strategy provided me with three different data sources (interviews, official research, and prisoner penned literature) and cross checking all of these sources served to strengthen the validity of the research (Palys 1997; Silverman 2006).

Another way to achieve credibility is to "ensure honesty in informants when contributing data" (Shenton, 2004, p.66). This was accomplished in my project by first building a rapport with all interviewees and giving them the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and express concerns if required. Participants were informed in both the recruitment text and the consent form that they could withdraw from the project at any point and were guaranteed anonymity if it was requested. I also promoted honesty by asking open-ended questions and remaining flexible throughout the interview process; this made sure that I retrieved as much information as possible

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[23] Triangulation in social science generally refers to the use of two or more methods of collecting and/or analyzing data in order to verify results.

in the short time that I had. Similarly, the use of purposive and snowball sampling help provide credibility because they allowed me to choose participants (experts) who have experience with the phenomena under study and were therefore able to provide rich and informed data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Transferability, the second criteria of trustworthiness, is not a large concern for this research project as it is exploratory in nature and meant only to elicit further research projects that utilize the principles of adult education and the framework of performative space in evaluating correctional education programs across Canada. Shenton (2004) explains that “since the findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of particular environments and individuals, it is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations and populations” (p.70). While the contributors to the JPP may reside in various locations, the variety is not great enough that their experiences with education inside prison can be generalized to the experience of all prisoners. Also, interviews were conducted with four community educators who all work with the same program in the Ottawa area and the same can be said for the lack of generalizability here. While critics may suggest this is a limitation to this project, exploratory research is often required before more detailed and generalizable projects may be devised (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Palys 1997; Shenton 2004; Silverman 2006).

Dependability (or reliability) “is a matter of whether a particular measurement technique, applied repeatedly to the same thing, will yield the same result each time” (Maxfield and Babbie, 2006, p.104). In qualitative research, dependability is achieved by documenting all of the decisions and steps taken throughout the research process and by providing details around the use of these techniques and research methods (Creswell, 2009, p.190). I have achieved this by explaining the development of my coding process, providing information about the development

and adaptations made to my interview schedule, and by elaborating on the rationale behind all research methods used and how they served to answer my research questions. Future researchers may also access my interview guide in Appendix C.

The final element of trustworthiness is confirmability. “Here steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work’s findings are the result of experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher” (Shenton, 2004, p.72). As this is an exploratory project, meant to elicit information on a phenomenon that is commonly overlooked, it was very important to be cognizant of my own researcher bias and to make sure that it did not interfere with the analysis of the data. While grounded theory and qualitative content analysis allow for a great deal of reflexivity, the themes that emerged from the data were dictated by the data itself, and it was only in the discussion of the data that reflexivity was used. Triangulation was also used to increase the confirmability of this research project.

Being able to recognize the strengths and limitations of a project is an important part of the research process. The beauty of research, and especially qualitative research, is that the same topic can be studied using many strategies and assessing the ability of those strategies to effectively answer specific research questions is important if further inquiries are to take place. Achieving all of the elements that make a study trustworthy is not easy, but the reliability and validity of a research project can be achieved as long as the researcher remains open and honest about the procedures they use and about their thought processes and decision-making throughout the research journey.

Concluding Remarks on Research Methods

John Creswell (2009) emphasizes having a specific intent for every research project, stating that all researchers should take the time to reflect on why the research problems and questions at hand are so important (p.111). The purpose or intent of this particular research project comes not only from the literature, but also from my personal experience working with individuals who have spent time in federal prisons. More often than not an individual walks away from the penitentiary with no more of an education than they had going in. In fact, some might argue that the individual learns things that are not conducive to successful reintegration. The result of the lack of helpful prison education is that it then falls to community agencies and programs[24] to address this need; unfortunately, most community agencies are overloaded with addressing other issues such as housing, employment and substance abuse and are also dealing with extreme funding and resource restrictions.

With a stronger focus on adult education in prison, and the creation of a space within the institutions where a good education can be achieved, offenders would be better prepared to deal with the struggles that await them once they are released back into the community, thus helping to reduce the frustrations that cause many to re-offend. Rather than deepening the divide that exists between academics, policymakers, prison administrators and the prisoners themselves, my aim with this research is to help reconcile the gap between theory and practice that exists with correctional education.

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[24] For example, the John Howard Society, the Elizabeth Fry Society, or other community programs which offer educational programming to offenders who have been released into the community.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The Struggle for Common Ground

> *The mandate of prison schools conflicts with the mandate of security and the will of the public…Schooling and security clash, and the weaknesses and failures of prison education are the dire results* (Davidson, 1992, p.2).

The first theme that I will discuss highlights the complications that arise when attempting to offer educational opportunities to adults within the prison setting. I felt it necessary to begin with this particular theme because it links directly to the contradictions between corrections and education that were brought to attention throughout the literature review. The ongoing struggle between punishment and learning emphasizes the fact that in order for education to be a valid tool for encouraging positive change amongst prisoners, prison staff members must take the effects of incarceration and the prison environment on prisoners seriously. One of the first questions I am asked when speaking about this research is 'how can you provide good education in such a bad place?' This question is a perfectly reasonable one as a number of authors discussed in the *Journal for Prisoners on Prisons*. While there are attempts made to offer literacy and education programs to incarcerated adults, there are many obstacles that may stunt learning and create tension between the different groups of people that occupy the institution.

Conflicting Philosophies

The first obstacle to providing quality education inside prison is the fundamental difference in philosophies between education and incarceration. When I questioned educators in the community about their knowledge of prison school programs there was a fairly standard response, which was that no one seemed to have a clear idea of the type, quality, or level of education that is provided to prisoners. This indicates that there is a severe lack of collaboration between the education that is offered in the community and that, which is provided inside

correctional institutions. One of the teacher-participant's stated that "the prisons keep introducing the idea of adult education in prison and then they take it away, and then they put it back in and then they take it away" (Interview #3). Another educator noted that "even the clients that I work with now say that it was good to be able to do school inside but they couldn't get what they'd done inside transferred or recognized outside of the institutions" (Interview #4). The lack of dedication to maintaining both a successful and credible adult education program could be explained by the fact that it is hard to offer education in an environment that is resistant to its purpose – to help people learn and to help people change.

This polarization appeared repeatedly throughout the JPP. In Jones' (1992) article, he speaks to the idea that while there *are* education programs offered inside, it is not the same as what we see in the community. He expresses this concern by stating that "entry into the prison milieu transforms the fundamental character of education. Its basic premises and values are undermined by the coercive environment in which it operates" (p.17). This is troublesome for a number of reasons, but primarily because it is a perfect example of how an initiative that works to encourage positive change is reduced to a way to pass time for someone behind bars. This obstacle is a difficult one to overcome because it requires a shift in the thought processes and goals of everyone involved in the functioning of the prison – from the guards to the administrators to the decision makers in policy positions at National Headquarters. Deutsch (2004) echoes this when he writes, that "on the whole, traditional education in a correctional institution is an enormous challenge. The trouble is that so many of the problems the school faces are inherent to the realities of prison life in and of itself" (p.104). And as we are aware, the reality of the prison environment revolves around security and control.

Security and Control

The focus on security and control within the prison environment blocks most opportunities for positive experiences. This point was highlighted in the literature review, and it is unsurprising that it emerged as a concern throughout the data. As discussed when speaking to the principles of adult education and performative space, in order for a program to be successful in stimulating learning it must be offered in a flexible and relaxed environment where learners can be free to exercise decision-making skills. Unfortunately, as JPP author Charles Huckelbury writes:

> *In prison schools, as in prison in general, there is no flexibility; the rule is the rule is the rule. Educational opportunities are therefore little more than another means to control behaviour, a management tool by which prison staff achieves results by threatening to remove the only redeeming program available* (Huckelbury, 2004, p.37).

Without adults being able to make their own decisions about whether or not to participate in an educational program, and what kind of education they would like to participate in, prison schools run the risk of becoming yet another form of punishment and promote the same level of monotony as other aspects of prison life. Moreover, while education is promoted as a beneficial opportunity for prisoners it also serves the guards and wardens who are concerned with keeping tabs on prisoners. Jones (1992) points to this in his article by stating that "education in the prison provides an opportunity to increase the surveillance of prisoners" (p.6).

When prisoners participate in education (whether forced or not) the quality of education is diminished greatly due to security concerns that overshadow rehabilitative needs. This is stated throughout several articles in the JPP:

> *The reality of institutional security issues also has a dramatic impact on the effectiveness of prison education* (Deutsch, 2004, p.102*).*

> *The major program in prison is to program the prisoner. They key to success is to contain and maintain prisoners, not to educate us. In short, this sort of policy actually translates into the continual development of the underdevelopment of prisoners* (Salah-El, 1992, p.46).

Another concern created by the need to control every aspect of prison life is that the quality and availability of education, just as it is with most other rehabilitative programs, decreases as the level of security increases (Jones, 1992, p.6). For example, it was explained to me during my interview with the CSC employee that in a medium security facility you might see up to 15 students in a classroom. In a maximum security facility, however, "you will not find 15 guys sitting and learning in the same classroom, because the higher you go in security levels some other aspects are considered" (Interview #5). In this instance, prisoners who wish to participate in education are expected to do so through correspondence (self-directed learning), and as previously discussed this is not the ideal method for educating someone who has historically poor experiences with education.

The situation is even more severe for prisoners in solitary confinement. While I was assured that "the teacher will go from the school to segregation and meet face-to-face with the offender" (Interview #5) it is more likely that solitary confinement and other disciplinary measures that occur within the prison environment serve to inhibit the learning process (Steffler, 2008, p.30). It is yet another example of punishment being prioritized ahead of progress. In these high security situations there is no breathing space for education. Teachers are expected to work within the timelines provided to them by the guards, which rushes the learning process and effectively slows down the progress of the prisoner-student who might need more time and support in completing the required tasks. It is unlikely in this instance that a learner would be able to participate in the development of their learning plan as there is no time for communication between assignments; instead, the learning process is scheduled according to a

series of successive pre-determined modules. Security and control work in direct opposition to the principles of adult education and performative space, making it very difficult for teachers to provide prisoners with the education required to develop social capital or academic skills that will be useful once released.

Motivation to Learn

Apart from the obstacles to education that involve the very nature of the prison environment, there is also the issue of motivation amongst prisoners that stands in the way of learning. As one participant stated:

> *The challenges we face, it's because of our environment and because some offenders are not motivated* (Interview #5).

The problem here is that CSC staff and prisoners interpret motivation very differently. For example, guards may assume that low levels of motivation are due to laziness, or a lack of willingness to cooperate with a correctional plan. For prisoners, low motivation is often derived from anxiety about re-entering the learning environment.

> *They feared being laughed at by other prisoners, many of whom are neighbourhood friends, we understood their reasons and feelings. In prison, image can be survival* (Graves, 2004, p.93).

> *I had always been in trouble at school; that left me with a clear dislike of the school atmosphere* (Collins, 2008, p.78).

Even for students who are motivated, this excitement to learn can quickly be stunted by guards who have their own agenda for power and control.

> *I never thought I would see the day when "correctional officers" would work in concert to suppress a prisoners' education* (Steffler, 2008, p.30).

Educators from the community were similarly quick to recognize that it can be hard to motivate oneself to participate in school while inside prison.

> *I don't know if every person in the institution, even though they like to do education, if they would be able to or if they would be more inclined to, or if they want to because they are in prison. It's not the happiest place, so they might be in a better mindset when they are in the community* (Interview #1).

What is important to recognize here is that prisoners are often labelled unmotivated and lazy simply because they are prisoners. But whether you are in a school within a prison or not "there are some students in class who are highly motivated to learn and others who do not care about learning at all. The difference is that in a prison setting there are already in place mitigating factors that work against attempts to motivate students to learn" (Deutsche, 2004, p.104).

When education is provided to adults in the community, every effort is made to make the experience as seamless as possible. This is due to the fact that adult educators understand that returning to the learning environment is not an easy decision for a mature student. "We work with the students to make sure that they are successful. So instead of putting up barriers, we try to help take them down and sometimes that takes a really long time" (Interview #2). In the community, the classroom is a completely accessible environment and help is offered to those who need it or ask for it with every effort made to provide encouragement. One teacher reported that she has "never said 'no' to a client" (Interview #1) even if their skills are lower than they need to be for her program.

> *If their writing is weak…if they don't meet the level, we refer them to another organization, usually Skills Plus*[25]*, and then they work on their writing or they work on their reading comprehension until they can get to that level* (Interview #1).

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[25] The Skills Plus Program is an adult literacy program that is run out of the John Howard Society of Ottawa and funded in part by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The program acts as a stepping stone for those who are interested in attending the ACE Links high school equivalency program. Students in Skills Plus receive help from tutors with their basic reading, writing, math and computer skills and are connected with all other programs that are run by the John Howard Society of Ottawa as needed.

This flexibility will help encourage adult learners to stick with the education program and complete it successfully despite the obstacles that they may face along the way. Already it is becoming clear that the education provided to justice-involved adults in the community is more aligned with the philosophies of adult education including building the curriculum around the needs of the learner (Lindeman, 1981) and being flexible and supportive throughout the learning process (Taylor et al., 2007). Also, the community programs allow more room for student input and for adult learners to be active in the decision making that is required to build a productive and comprehensive learning plan.

Inside the prison too much time is spent making education unachievable, which only lowers prisoner motivation. One article in the JPP focuses specifically on the ways in which the CSC prevents the advent of successful educational achievement in their institutions. It is worth quoting from this particular article at length.

> *I have observed that CSC wields mandatory minimum education levels as a tool to punish prisoners and as a method to artificially raise people's security levels* (Collins, 2008, p.78).
>
> *CSC placed insurmountable hurdles in front of me and made it impossible to accomplish anything…I also learnt that CSC was more interested in denying real opportunities than they were in helping a prisoner develop the skills and tools to become a useful member of the community* (Collins, 2008, p.81).
>
> *Correctional Service of Canada demonstrates in many ways that they do not value or support higher learning and they continue to use mandatory education levels to force unwilling prisoners to attend prison schools, or stay in prison longer, regardless of their situation. The person may, for varied reasons, not wish or need to attend school, but regardless they are forced into school. In these cases, the prisoner is not even permitted to take a test to receive a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and in this way CSC creates an oppressive atmosphere in the school with disgruntled prisoners who interpret prison schooling as a forced punishment, and the ensuing resistance to education is purposely cultivated by the organization* (Collins, 2008, p.82).

These statements are in line with what community educators said when asked about what they have heard about the experience of education in the prison. For example, one participant stated:

> *They reported that it was positive to be able to do the learning, but they were frustrated that it could be taken away from them as punishment* (Interview #4).

Other contributors to the JPP noted that good quality education is impossible because the prison is such an oppressive and dehumanizing environment, which does nothing but discourage the prisoner from participating in programming (Jones, 1992, p.16; Salah-El, 1992, p.47; and Steffler, 2008, p.30). It is hard to expect the required level of civility to help foster a performative space in a place such as this. When correctional guards have little respect for the needs of the prisoners in their care it is no surprise that education would be removed from the daily agenda when it is known to be something that provides help and hope to those who have none. These statements about the ease with which guards are willing to punish prisoners, also indicate that the prison is not at all conducive to ethical conversations. There seem to be two options here when it comes to accessing educational programming inside of the prison: either it is forced upon the prisoner or it is taken away from him. Neither of these situations includes the opinions or feelings of the prisoners who appear as pawns in an oppressive bureaucracy.

The Purpose of the Prison

The final point of conflict between corrections and education has to do with the purpose of incarceration. The focus on running the prison as a business that is responsible for a successful balance of inputs (high-risk prisoners, correctional guards, program materials) and outputs (low-risk parolees, decreased recidivism rates, safety in the community) and being strategic about where funds are allocated gets in the way of providing effective programming (Harris, 2004, p.59; Davidson and Taylor, 2004, p.1). While the CSC promotes itself as an agency responsible for promoting positive change amongst justice-involved individuals, the contributing authors to

the JPP seemed fully aware that there is an underlying agenda within the organization that detracts from this mission statement.

> *Prisons warehouse men and women that desperately need higher education to remake their shattered lives* (Richards et al., 2008, p.58).

> *I am not entirely sure how to go about detailing the way I see the Correctional Service of Canada undermining educational potential or their systematic methodology of rendering people useless through mindless institutional existence. There are just so many ways in which CSC conduct underlines the contradictions and failures of meaningful education in the prison system* (Collins, 2008, p.71).

> *The Work Board at the time, even though they were pushing to get you your ABE, they needed people to work in the institution in laborious positions – like dining, kitchen, cleaners, laundry; they needed people to perform laborious functions to keep the institution tidy and that. They put me in the kitchen apart from the fact that I wanted to go to school. They said that I wasn't going to need my education when I got out* (Bell and Glaremin, 1992, p.36).

The path of rehabilitation for a prisoner is outlined in his or her Correctional Plan and it is in the hands of case workers and parole officers who work in the institutions to decide what appears in this document. Unfortunately, education is not at the top of the list when a prisoner is assessed for their risks and their needs, despite the fact that a Grade 8 education is required for participation in other correctional programs and a high percentage of incarcerated individuals do not meet this requirement (CSC, 2009a; Interview #5; Sapers, 2009). The reality of the situation is that,

> *…an offender may have educational needs but at the same time have other needs like substance abuse programs to do or sex offender programs to do, so the case manager or the parole officer will have the task to see which one should come first, to prioritize. So education may fall second* (Interview #5).

In many situations, the prisoner is told that they can do education on their own time through correspondence, but as Day (2008) explains:

> *Prison is a tough place…a few semesters of correspondence is not enough to meet all the needs of some prisoners. Many are unable to take full advantage of a rare*

> *opportunity, indicative of how difficult it is to foster change in a correctional setting* (p.40).

Overall, the prison is a less than ideal environment to ignite the passion for learning. There is no indication at this point that any of the elements required for a performative space are present in the institution and the education that is provided to prisoners is certainly not at a level that would help one to produce social capital. Apart from these broader issues (security and control, diverging philosophies, motivation, and the focus on punishment) there is also the basic issue of funding and support that stands in the way of delivering adult education to prisoners and which furthers the divide between those who are interested in education and those who are not.

Resources and Support

> *Without any rational explanation, CSC has reduced educational opportunities for those prisoners who desire it and to add insult to injury, it forces remedial educational processes on those imprisoned adults who do not wish it. This creates the misleading impression that CSC is promoting and facilitating education* (Collins, 2008, p.78).

The previous section might lead one to believe that there is little hope for education to thrive in the prison; however I do not wish to promote this idea. The second theme that emerged from the data highlights the efforts made by different social actors to encourage educational achievements within the correctional plan. Moreover, specific issues like low levels of support – both financial and otherwise – were found to affect what can be offered as education within the prison and what can be offered in the community. While the topic of budgets, materials, and support for teaching staff was neither a prominent theme within the literature review nor a concern within the theoretical framework, it is important to discuss because it came up several times in the JPP articles as well as the interviews. Also, while not explicitly apparent in the descriptions of adult education or performative space, access to adequate resources is an essential pillar for quality education and is vital if one wants to promote democracy, ethical conversations

or create social capital. The lack of fiscal and philosophical support for education stunts most initiatives for adult learning, again demonstrating the harmful effects of the prison business.

Assessing and Meeting Student Needs

When I spoke with the CSC employee, he had a lot to say about the quality of education that is offered to prisoners. First of all, he mentioned that "education is offered in every institution" (Interview #5) and then spoke to the intake process during which prisoners are each assessed to determine their educational needs.

> *They will be referred to school, they will meet the teacher or the principles to determine which level they were before and which level they should go to, and once all of those tests are done and the level is clear they are referred to school, and if there are any seats available they can even go the following day* (Interview #5).

This participant also suggested that there is an emphasis on assessing any learning disabilities, and the procedures for dealing with more specific learning needs.

> *Once the learning disabilities of offenders are flagged, identified, they will go to the sites and the principle – the Chief of Education – on that side, they are trained for that, they are experts in the area and they are going to see what kind of learning disabilities the offenders have and they are going to deal with it. If it takes a specialist, depending on the resources and depending on the money they have they are going to call the specialist. If it takes individual, face-to-face learning instead of having the offender in the larger group, they are going to set a class aside and make sure that he is going to have the kind of help that he needs* (Interview #5).

There was also a discussion on the professionalism of the teachers who are hired by the CSC to work in the prison schools, with an emphasis on the specific training that is required.

> *[The teachers] are trained and they have professional development courses, so we make sure they are very well skilled and equipped to face [any] situation* (Interview #5).
>
> *Teachers are also accredited and they have degrees from the province that they work in...So everything is the same when you compare community education and institutional education* (ibid).

Finally, he spoke to the collaboration that takes place at both the provincial and national level to ensure that the quality of education remains consistent throughout all of the CSC institutions.

> *We have regular meetings, we have conference calls...we are always in communication because what is done in terms of education for offenders has to be the same in all regions* (Interview #5).

> *We know what is expected for every level...CSC manages to make common ground for every region, so that's why it's manageable* (ibid).

> *The curriculum is from the Ministry of Education...so courses that you find in the community from the Ministry of Education in Ontario are going to be exactly the same courses that will be in our institutions* (ibid).

After this discussion I was more confident in the kind of education being offered to Canadian prisoners, but there were a lot of 'if' statements made in reference to resources and support. Unfortunately it seems as though what is being done at the top levels of government to ensure strong educational standards is having difficulty trickling down into the prison schools. Despite the efforts made at the CSC's National Headquarters by those involved specifically with educational programming, there is still a struggle between students, teachers, and administrators that prohibits the advent of positive learning. While the statistics regarding GED graduation look impressive, Huckelbury (2004) notes that students are pushed through the basic education courses to make the numbers look good.

> *In those secondary classes or GED preparation programs inside prison, they are often fed a diet of intellectual pabulum and passed along from grade to grade to pad the numbers... The students emerge convinced that they are doing well in complex tasks when their skills are rudimentary at best* (p.39).

Collins (2008) speaks to the same occurrence in his piece:

> *As time went by, I noticed that the guys I was working with who could not put a sentence together – verbal or written – were being passed by the Millhaven prison school at Grade 9 and 10 levels. This was clearly a statistical scam perpetrated by the school for some kind of funding manipulation* (p.76).

The quantitative results reflecting how many students complete their Grade 12 equivalency seem to once again outweigh the quality of education that is received. Student needs are sacrificed for attractive bar graphs and year-end statistics that keep the program in good standing[26].

Despite being told by the CSC that education is a top priority, there appears to be a large gap in understanding regarding the standard of learning and accreditation that is expected and that which is maintained by the prison school. There are accounts from prisoners stating that the courses they took while inside are not fully accredited on the outside (Interview #4; Jones, 1992, p.7) and that education is something correctional administrators expect them to do on their own time once all other requirements of the correctional plan are met (Bell & Glaremin, 1992, p.36). There are also concerns about the limited courses available in prison (Richards, 2004, p.64) as well as the improper placement of learners into the various levels of curriculum.

> *Students at the most basic level of education are almost always correctly placed in the proper class, but it is not unusual to find students with a higher skill level in there with them. In that situation the material being presented can be too hard for some and too easy for others. In both of these cases the educational process is then inhibited because some students are bored and others are overwhelmed by the lessons being taught. This is not to say the same phenomena does not occur in all educational systems, but a prison environment is already a place that is not particularly conducive to the learning process* (Deutsch, 2004, p.103-104).

Of even greater concern is that contrary to the information that was shared with me by the CSC employee, adult learners with special needs or learning disabilities seem to be hindered rather than helped inside the prison.

> *There are no classes for special education; even students with significant learning disabilities find themselves being "mainstreamed" into regular classes which may*

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[26] I was unable to find updated completion rates from the CSC for their education programs. The last empirical study completed by the Research Division was in 1992 (Porporino and Robinson) and any numbers provided since then are not comprehensive enough to provide a detailed account of prisoner participation in school programs. During my discussion with the CSC employee I was informed that a large study was currently underway and more up-to-date results would be available in the near future.

> *present great obstacles to their ability to absorb the lesson being taught* (Deutsch, 2004, p.102).

While I am sure that there are efforts made to accommodate all sorts and all levels of learners by those who have a vested interested in providing education to prisoners, it is likely that efforts are stunted by a lack of money, resources, and support, which may be directed into extra security and surveillance measures.

Concerns with Statistics and Funding Allocation

I quickly noticed a major contradiction when examining the availability of educational resources. It was stated above that prisoner-students are pushed through the schooling programs in order to create statistics that make the schools appear more successful in order to ensure funding, but if this was the case then there should be more money available to provide resources and support to students. However, education is grouped together with all of the other reintegration programs that are offered to prisoners both inside and outside of the institution. Therefore, the money that is allocated to education[27] must be shared amongst all of these programs; the reality of this situation is that the programs that focus on risk and security management receive more funding than the programs that address prisoner needs (Interview #5; Jones, 1992, p.10; Toews, 2011). While those working in education at the CSC are working hard to provide proper educational upgrading to prisoners, there are many hands in the pot and unfortunately whenever there are pennies to be pinched and changes to be made, the prison schools are often the first to receive budget cuts:

> *It is common to read about the lack of funding for education in the larger society, so certainly one would not realistically expect the situation to be any different in*

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[27] For the 2011-2012 fiscal year, 17% of the CSC's $3-billion budget is allocated to all correctional interventions. This funding must be used to pay for all case management activities in this area as well as the resources and materials required for all correctional programs. Offender education is considered to be a "sub-activity" in this financial report (Toews, 2011, p.7).

> *prison. In fact, one would expect the public to be even less concerned about prison education because prisoners are viewed by society primarily in a punitive way* (Deutsch, 2004, p.101).

> *Budget cuts and changes in the tide of bureaucratic or public opinion always threaten the existence of prison educational programming* (Graves, 2004, p.94).

In other words, it is easy to justify taking something good away from someone constructed as bad, criminal and/or unworthy.

There are certainly individuals who would defend the institutions at this point, and even I had to stand back and question this concern about a lack of funding for education. I was informed by the CSC employee that schooling is offered in every institution and that it is a staple in the Correctional Plan for most federal prisoners. With such a vast need for educational upgrading amongst the prison population surely there must be money available to provide it? While the CSC works to provide the bare minimum when it comes to education, the situation becomes more complicated when it comes to higher educational achievements.

> *In the penitentiary you do not have access to university or public libraries, so you have to beg friends to mail books in, or work through the shoddy paperback collection of worn out copies in the library* (Richards, 2004, p.63).

> *I have seen a marked reduction in recreational funding and reductions in post-secondary education. I have seen the introduction and then removal of computers from prisoners' allowable cell effects. It is reasonable to recognize that long-term prisoners' will be computer illiterate in society's computer age. It seems clear that this policy is indicative of the extremely narrow range of possible futures and employment opportunities that CSC envisions for those under its control* (Collins, 2008, p.75).

Therefore, while the CSC can safely answer questions about how it provides rudimentary education to prisoners, it seems to be a completely different story when it comes to the credentials that are required for most people to gain successful employment in contemporary mainstream society. However, Collins (2008) also points out that when the CSC is questioned on the integrity of their spending practices they revert to a standard discourse on the importance of

safety, security and control – the three elements that are most important for the effective functioning of a correctional facility. This reaction sparks a never-ending cycle through which educational needs are deprioritized in favour of risk management.

> *As reduced educational and recreational opportunities predictably translate into prisoner unrest or violence, the system then claims they need more cash and more security to deal with the unruly prisoners* (Collins, 2008, p.75).

Support for Teaching Staff

One can assume that the teachers who work inside prisons are trying to do their best to work with what they have, but may struggle to maintain a guise of optimism given all of the hardships that come with being a teacher in such a difficult environment. There was a strong connection between the themes found in the JPP journal articles and the interviews with respect to the characteristics of those who dedicate their lives to teaching adults. Adult educators, both inside and outside of the prison, are highly motivated and genuinely care about the knowledge shared inside of the classroom. This sentiment is prevalent throughout many articles in the JPP.

> *These are people who firmly believe in the importance and value of education. Their sense of concern and their commitment to helping these men stimulates the learning process, in part because the men are very appreciative of the fact that these outside people are there strictly to help them* (Deutsch, 2004, p.105).

> *The teachers who came into the prison were influential in ways beyond being educators…unlike almost everybody else who works in the criminal justice system, they treated us like human beings* (Terry, 2004, p.23).

It is intriguing that teachers who work in the prisons seem to embody the goal of corrections, which is to provide the type of support that will have a lasting positive and rehabilitative impact on an individual as they re-enter the community. The teachers who work with adults, both inside and outside, also strive to provide the kind of education that goes beyond the basic curriculum.

> *The best thing about being a tutor is seeing the students' progress, from watching the self-esteem of an individual grow as he moves from learning the alphabet to typing letters to his children* (Graves, 2004, p.94).

Unfortunately, as was mentioned in the previous section, these caring teachers and tutors constantly struggle with the correctional staff (Deutsch, 2004, p.101). There is very little support for teaching staff from correctional guards (Jones, 1992, p.16; Richards, 2004, p.65; Steffler, 2008, p.30) and despite everyone's best efforts it still seems as though "anyone associated with higher learning in the prisons whether as a prisoner/student or faculty member has experienced the hostility an resentment of lower-level personnel" (Jones, 1992, p.16). Lynes (1992) confirms this in his article by stating that "the relationship between educators and correctional authorities has always been contentious" (p.53) and given that this seems to be a very one-sided relationship, wherein teachers make efforts to be accommodating and understanding while correctional officers continue to be harsh and condescending, this coupling does not look to be one that will be mended any time soon. This is a very serious barrier to offering adult education in a performative space. If the guards and teachers cannot engage in ethical conversations, then how are they supposed to promote respect and positive attitudes to the prisoners who are looking for guidance?

What makes for an even more frustrating situation is that prisoner-students are aware of their own educational needs that are not being met by the pedagogical style offered to them. Several contributors to the JPP made note of the fact that the education they should expect to receive as adults needs to be student focused and should make use of a variety of teaching styles including one-on-one learning. The learning environment should also promote collaboration between students and teachers and the prisoners should be able to find comfort in the fact that the teachers support them in all of their educational pursuits (Rucier, 2004, p.96; Salah-El, 1992, p.46). Finally, there is an acknowledgement of the importance of setting goals for oneself because "being goal oriented means people focus sharply on an activity and achieve more than

people who do not set goals for themselves" (Deutsche, 2004, p.107). By setting their own goals, prisoners are more likely to actively participate in the educational programming, setting school apart from the other CSC mandated programs that are mandated in their correctional plan. All of these suggestions are reflective of the philosophies and practices of adult education, and more importantly they demonstrate both the elements and the outcome of performative space.

This supportive learning environment that was described in the JPP would amplify all elements of performative space and in effect would increase the occurrence of prisoners building social capital before re-entry into the community. Promoting respectful and positive communication between teachers and students (civility and ethical conversations) and encouraging active participation in all learning activities (democracy) would help prisoners to develop the healthy relationships that are required for them to be successful in the future (social capital). Despite the fact that many incarcerated adults know what they need in order to succeed they are also aware that they will probably not receive it while they are still behind bars. Fortunately for those prisoners who will be released back into the community, the level of support is quite different than in the prison. Teaching practices and classroom settings in the community better reflect the principles of adult education and the concepts of performative space. Both teachers and students are well supported in their educational endeavours and there is a general atmosphere of reciprocity and respect. All of the interview participants reiterated this sentiment and it is important to present what was shared as a stark contrast to the lack of support (both emotionally and financially) that is provided to the educators and students who struggle on the inside.

Supports for Adult Education in the Community

Community educators discussed their willingness to provide support and to be flexible to the various needs that adult students have when they are re-entering not only the classroom but also the community. The second teacher that I spoke to works with the ACE Links program out of the John Howard Society of Ottawa and emphasized that a different approach must be taken when working with justice-involved adults because of all the other factors that are at play when they are trying to resettle back into society.

> *We work with the students to make sure that they are successful. So instead of putting up barriers, we try to help take them down, and sometimes that takes a really long time* (Interview #2).
>
> *We have to be much more empathetic and open to [students] moving in and out of the program as they adjust to things that are happening in their lives* (ibid).
>
> *It's not really their academic skills [that act as a barrier] because it's amazing the skill level that comes through here. They're very smart, but it's always personal stuff that they have going on…Every adult student has other things going on in their lives outside of the classroom and you have to be respectful of that and make sure that you are working with them so that you're not creating barriers for them…you want to take those barriers down so that they can succeed in the program* (ibid).

Recognizing the fact that adults have their own lives and that education is not always going to be their first priority is built into the program, thus allowing for the flexibility required to accommodate the stressors of day-to-day living. This is vastly different from the program structure in the prison where you are told what to do, when to do it, and personal problems must be dealt with on your own time so as not to cause disruption to your correctional plan.

Another issue that was highlighted in the interviews with community educators was that adults should be allotted a certain level of input and control over what it is they will be learning in the classroom. This connects with the element of democracy in the performative space and

emphasizes that adults should be active in all decisions that affect them directly in order to promote the motivation to learn.

> *When you are an adult and you are coming back to school, you're more inclined to want to improve your reading, writing, the math skills you need and your computer skills and you only want to do what you need to do in order to get on to the vocational part* (Interview #3).

In other words, it is important that adult learners see the value in what they are learning so that they do not feel as though their time is being wasted. By acknowledging that adults have years of life experience that translates into knowledge of the world around them, educators can create a more appropriate learning plan that meets the needs and interests of the adult learner while at the same time developing a working partnership with students.

> *[The learning materials are] definitely tailored to the person's learning needs... The student has a fair amount of input in that they set their own goals and they are given options with what work they would like to do to a point…For some students they really just need someone to give them the work and they can read the instructions from the work and work very independently, and for some students they need for a tutor to sit down with them and explain what they are going to be working on first and do some teaching before they can do their own work. So even how the program works depends on each student* (Interview #4).

> *We have training plans and we review them on an ongoing* basis (Interview #3).

These quotes reflect what Birzer (2004) calls a learning contract, which ensures that adult learners are motivated primarily by internal factors rather than feeling like they are being forced to participate in educational programming (Merriam, 2001).

When it comes to the quality of education that is provided to adults in the community, it is easy to see that there is a lot of effort put into the curriculum. There also seems to be more care taken to assess learners' abilities and needs for educational programing, and there is more time spent on exploring the possibility of continuing education in the form of a college diploma or a university degree. It is important to note that teachers working in the community are under

similar budget constraints to those working in prisons. Adult education still receives very little attention from the government and the funding is not always consistent[28] (Interview #3), but teachers make the most of what they have and the result is a stronger educational program for adults who wish to upgrade their knowledge and skills. The strength of the program offered by the John Howard Society of Ottawa can be seen in the intake assessment process, which can take up to several days and incorporates a variety of activities in order to ensure that each student is placed in the appropriate program.

The first part of the intake process involves a reading comprehension component as well as the production of a writing sample, which help to assess the student's literacy skills (Interview #1). Following this brief assignment, the next two weeks of the program focus on goal setting and the creation of a structured plan that will allow the student to achieve those goals in a reasonable amount of time.

> *The first two weeks of the program, it's called goal orientation – and that really just sort of sets the stage for what it is to be a student. What are your challenges? What are your barriers? How can we support you? What are your values?* (Interview #1).

This goal setting piece is vital to the process as the ACE Links program has a "mission statement that tries to make it clear that [there are] expectations around academic progress and attendance and independence" (Interview #3). This orientation portion of the program also reinforces the fact that the learning process is a collaborative effort between the student and the teacher and allows for the student to express any concerns right away so that the teacher is aware of what must be done in order for that student to be successful. Once again, we can see here that the elements of performative space are at play in the community classroom. By working together on

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[28] The John Howard Society of Ottawa received $188, 875 in Provincial funding and $8,277 in Municipal funding for education programs in 2011 (Raymond Charbot Grant Thornton, 2011).

setting goals for future achievements teachers are demonstrating that they trust students to make the right decisions regarding their education. The dialogical and active communication that takes place during the orientation phase serves to create a relationship between student and teacher that will serve as the base for all future interactions. If respect can be developed at this early stage of the program, then civility between all parties should be easy to maintain and students will remain active throughout the learning process.

In order to keep adult learners on track with the goals they set during the orientation, the ACE Links program offers a mixture of provincially administered materials as well as texts that are developed by the teachers themselves.

> *We as a faculty have written all of the curriculum that we use here…it's all built around learning outcomes and the ability to be able to do stuff, and our biggest thing is to be able to make sure that people that are leaving us are able to read comprehensively and critically and they are able to write well, and that's sort of our vision* (Interview #3).

This is an important difference to the education provided in the prison; the ACE Links material is developed with adults in mind as opposed to the materials provided by the Ministry of Education, which are created for students of a high school age. Also, being that the teachers are the ones developing the material it is easy for them to make alterations that respond to the feedback they receive from students. This is adult education in its truest form as the needs of the learners guide the development of the program.

Another benefit of learning in the community, and perhaps the most obvious one, is the fact that the students are *in the community* (Interview #1). While most prisoners will be released from the institution with certain parole conditions they must abide by, when it comes to education they are not free to make their own decisions. The passivity that comes from someone else dictating your daily activities is damaging to the reintegration potential of an adult because,

unfortunately, "many clients get institutionalized from years and years in jail where they don't know how to run their own lives anymore without someone telling them what to do" (Interview #4). It is a great success to everyone involved when adult students can realize their own worth and start to feel comfortable working independently and making decisions that will have a positive impact on their lives. When a student completes the ACE Links program there is an obvious sense of accomplishment, but beyond that, there is the realization that one's future can involve more than crime and prison sentences. Learning in the community helps to foster a new and non-criminalized identity, that of the student.

> *You know the best thing? When we bring them to the college, they feel proud, like they have a sense of pride that they are a student…they feel proud that they've done something* (Interview #1).

Another benefit of learning in the community is that the individual has access to other services that will assist them to successfully reintegrate. Considering all of the expectations that are placed on prisoners upon their release (including finding gainful employment, seeking counselling services and securing stable housing), it can be overwhelming for an individual who spent several years inside and who may be moving to a community that they have never been to before (Shantz, Kilty & Frigon, 2009; Strimelle & Frigon, 2011).

> *The benefits of having [the school] in the John Howard Society is because we have so many other programs, it's kind of a one stop shop for people. We have a crisis counsellor on site…we have housing workers on site…we have an employment service program. So there's a lot of services that they can get at the John Howard Society that they wouldn't get at another literacy program* (Interview #4).

Having convenient access to different services makes the transition from prison to community much smoother and may reduce the stress that causes many individuals to re-offend. The teachers in the Skills Plus and ACE Links programs also help students make connections with the correct people – another example of how community educators go above and beyond their

call of duty. Because the resources and support are readily available, it is much easier to encourage students to build relationships and as a result, build their social capital.

Despite the supports that are available in the community, there is a lot of work to be done by teachers when it comes to keeping an adult interested in education. Most adults are at a point in their life where they think that upgrading credentials takes more effort than it is worth; subsequently, it can take some convincing before they realize the value of education. The first teacher that I spoke with mentioned this, stating that sometime they have "to do everything for some of these clients. [I have] to do everything in [my] power to make them stay here, and to be motivating" (Interview #1). The difference between the prison and the community is that the community teachers have more support and are therefore willing to work harder to motivate adult learners to remain in the classroom. Inside the prison, teachers are often working against the guards and administration rather than with them, and it is hard to keep up morale in this contentious atmosphere. This is not to say that the teachers inside do not care about educating adults; rather, it is another example of how the prison environment acts as a barrier to successful education.

The teachers that I spoke to in the community clearly have a strong passion for what they do, and this adds to the success of the educational programs that are provided at the John Howard Society of Ottawa.

> *I love it, I love it. You know, it's hard sometimes because you're dealing with so many different personalities and things going on in their lives, but it's very satisfying and I really enjoy being here. I like the students; they are good people* (Interview #2).

> *I have lots and lots and lots of wonderful, wonderful stories and that's what motivates me and that's what is so great about having this career* (Interview #3).

The notion that the students are “good people” demonstrates a very different view of justice-involved adults from when they are inside of the prison. While these adults certainly still struggle with stigmatization out in the community, within the classroom at the John Howard Society of Ottawa the “us” versus “them” dichotomy disappears and these individuals are greeted with a much more friendly approach. The students who participate in these programs benefit from the positive attitudes and dedication of the teaching staff, which is in stark contrast to the uncaring environment that they experienced while inside.

> *Another big positive feedback is that they really feel that the staff and the tutors really care that the participants succeed, so that they're not just a number. They really feel like they are being treated like a person in our program which especially for the people who have been through the institution is a really big thing* (Interview #4).

The relationship that is developed between an adult learner and their teacher should be a supportive one that will help them to succeed as they move beyond their identities as offenders, prisoners, and parolees.

The purpose of demonstrating the difference between the classroom in the prison and the classroom in the community was not simply to say that one is better than the other. The goal of this section (and of this entire research project) is to demonstrate that there is an effective way to provide education to adults who have struggles in many aspects of their lives, and to show that if it can occur in the community, then there is a chance that it can also occur in the prison. There are of course plenty of reasons to be pessimistic and to leave things as they are – critics may suggest that prison is for punishment and learning is to be left for law-abiding citizens in the community – but it is difficult to maintain such a hardened viewpoint when we take into account the instances where education *is* successful behind bars.

The Better of Many Evils

> *My exposure to that educational environment and all I was learning, amidst the monotony of the prison experience, was stimulating, nurturing, and life enhancing. Instead of hanging out in the furniture factory or the yard thinking about how to hustle another high, I found myself in classrooms with the minority of other convicts interested in learning; in my cell reading, studying and writing* (Terry, 2004, pp.22-23).

> *I had never placed education at the top of my to-do list. I was content to function at a basic level, thinking only when I was forced to do so. But prison makes us hungry, if for no other reason than to counter the mind-numbing routine of doing time* (Huckelbury, 2004, p.32).

Despite the abundance of anecdotes within the data pointing to the prison's ability to inhibit meaningful education, there was also plenty of evidence to show that education was still the better of many evils that an individual faces while serving time. Davidson (1992) was the first to highlight this in the JPP by stating that "the popularity of prison education among prisoners [is] a popularity which is unequalled when compared to other prison programs" (p.1). He also described education as "a little bit of intellectual freedom in an otherwise coercive environment" (p.2). Expressions like this indicate that the classroom is considered a safe space within the prison. The atmosphere in the classroom is a microcosm that is less threatening than the broader atmosphere of punishment and control that structures prison life, and serves to encourage positive change by helping to foster a student identity and helping to pass time constructively. When a lifer is able to express that he is "relieved to have something positive to report to his family" (Day, 2008, p.36) it becomes clear that while the education received inside the prison might not be at the top of academic standards, the classroom itself serves a purpose.

> *As a prisoner I cannot stress enough how important education is* (Bonafanti, 1992, p.43).

> *I enrolled in school because I wanted – needed – to do something constructive with my time. I wanted to make sure that I would avail myself of any opportunities in these gulags, these treacherous human warehouses* (Collins, 2008, pp.78-79).

> *The [education] programs are literally the only positives in an ocean of negativity* (Day, 2008, p.38).

The CSC employee was also able to recognize the different value that is placed on education programs by prisoners in relation to the other programs that they are mandated to attend.

> *It's encouraging, those who participate in education it's because they really want to learn something new and they may just be there because they want to* (Interview #5).

Activities that take place in the classroom have the capability of being individually tailored to the prisoner, unlike other program materials that are given to prisoners in standardized modules. One example of this is writing.

> *Writing by prisoners becomes in large measure the only available vehicle to counter the stultifying existence they encounter daily. Education, and writing in particular, opens the doors to a closed world, by providing prisoners with voices that have previously been silenced* (Nagelsen, 2008, p.107).

By having this opportunity to express individuality in an institution that treats everyone the same, prisoners begin to realize that they do have a voice and that they can use their time behind bars productively. Other contributors to the JPP expressed this same idea.

> *This course made me realize that being an [offender] doesn't mean that you can't succeed* (Richards et al., 2008, p.54).

> *They can succeed through hard work and dedication. I've seen some of my classmates who were, frankly, knuckleheads, completely turn lives around because of this program* (Day, 2008, p.36).

> *When I got my certificate I was really proud, and then I decided that I wanted to move on* (Bell and Glaremin, 1992, p.36).

What is important for everyone to realize is that "prisoners, like anyone else, have the potential to be good students" (Richards et al., 2008, p.46) and despite the difficulties that are present in offering education to prisoners, there is comfort in knowing that there are efforts being made to encourage academic pursuits amongst these adults.

> *It's not an easy task, any work in the institution is not an easy task, but we have people who are dedicated, they love what they do* (Interview #5).

I would like to return to the idea that prisoners see the classroom as a separate space that allows for a bit of illumination in an otherwise dark and dull institution. The JPP articles were full of evidence that supports this phenomenon; similarly, the teacher-participants noted that justice-involved adult learners in the community see the school as a place where they are safe from many of life's other stressors such as living in a homeless shelter or spending time with people who might encourage them to fall back into old patterns of substance abuse, violence, or other criminal activities (Interview #1, Interview #2 and Interview #4). The classroom allows for the development of new coping strategies such as effective problem solving and positive communication skills that can be used elsewhere, and promotes healthy relationships with other adults who are working towards similar goals. In prison we see a similar occurrence as learning in the classroom becomes equated with freedom; this point was expressed repeatedly in the JPP articles.

> *For me education was becoming 'freedom inward bound'* (Carter, 2008, p.62).

> *The classroom has become for me, as it has for many others, my sanctuary* (Taylor, 2004b, p.128).

> *While in those classrooms it was almost like being somewhere in the free world. In the presence of these teachers we were not degraded for simply existing* (Terry, 2004, p.23).

The classroom also provides an escape from negative interactions with prisoners who are not as concerned with engaging in educational or rehabilitative programs while inside. Examples of this include prisoners who use drugs, who remain active in various gangs, or who continue to use violence. The school also gives prisoners a break from the correctional guards who show them little respect despite efforts made to stay out of trouble. The dialogue that occurs between

students and teachers is more positive and productive (reflective of the dialogical communication that occurs in the performative space), and it allows the prisoners to practice civility which will help them to succeed in the community rather than continuing to fuel the anger and aggression towards others that helped to land them in prison in the first place.

> *[The teacher] treated us with decency, respect, and obvious compassion. And he did so every single time he came* (Terry, 2004, p.23).

> *I loved the books and lectures, but more than that, I looked forward to the dialogue with professors; real people who treated me like, well, like a real student* (Huckelbury, 2004, p.32).

> *The level of mutual respect that exists between tutor and student is probably higher than one would find in most other situations* (Deutsch, 2004, p.106).

Regrettably, this illusion of freedom is short lived inside the prison. The door to the classroom is not strong enough to keep out the production and effects of punishment that finds their way into every aspect of the institution. Security is still a primary concern in the prison-school and disciplinary strategies are invoked should prisoners or teachers be seen as potentially threatening security in some way (Huckelbury, 2004, p.37). Inside of the prison classroom,

> *…there's the teacher, there's the students…and probably there are many cameras in the corridor, and there should be some officers somewhere near the area, the teacher has the panic device…So in terms of seconds if he just pushes his red button then the security is going to be there. But for it to be not really intimidating to the students, the guards should not be in the classroom or into the windows. So they are nearby, the teacher has the system of communicating with them if there is an issue* (Interview #5).

> *When the security or discipline is compromised, the teachers still have the authority to send back the offender to his cell…the discipline, the security of the learning environment is very well respected in the classroom* (ibid).

Aside from the hovering nature of prison security there is also the constant reminder that the bodies inside of the classroom are prisoners and not students. As one prisoner writes: "[*The guards] call us "offenders" as if this is all we are and all we ever will be"* (Collins, 2008, p.73).

The idea of a safe space is interpreted very differently on the inside than it is on the outside, and after speaking with teachers who work in the community education programs this distinction became even more obvious. First of all, in the community, conflicts in the classroom are dealt with in a non-punitive manner. If there is a disagreement between students or between a student and the teacher, everyone is given a chance to express their concerns without fear of punishments or negative repercussions (Interview #1; Interview #3). Secondly, adult students in the community are referred to as 'students'. The negative labels of offender, prisoner, convict or parolee are checked at the door when entering the John Howard Society of Ottawa (Interview #1; Interview #4) or any other community classroom (Interview #3) and it is in this space that an individual truly has the opportunity to redefine who they are.

> *There's just a non-judgmental atmosphere that makes students feel more comfortable here than they would feel somewhere else. A lot of times people have anxieties about having a criminal record and having people judge them or having people fear them, and they don't get that at John Howard. We take people as they are, we don't ask, we don't judge, we kind of know what their background is but we don't ask questions, they don't have to justify, they don't have to explain it* (Interview #4).

Finally, there is a feeling of safety inside this classroom that comes without caveats.

> *I think the philosophy [of ACE Links] would be that we offer education in a supportive, safe environment…and I think the biggest thing that also should be in there – non-judgmental* (Interview #1)

> *I had a student during the fall who was living at the Mission, so a very unstable life, and he was here every day because he had nowhere else to go…it was a really safe place for him to come* (Interview #2).

> *We get positive feedback all the time from students, which is amazing. They just feel very safe, they feel like they are in an environment where they can actually learn, they enjoy that there's people who are patient with them* (Interview #4).

The purpose of this distinction between how safety is defined in the prison versus how it is defined in the community is not meant to take away from the fact that prisoners are able to

seek solace in the prison classroom. Rather, I am pointing out that if one is to foster a performative space then there are certain characteristic elements of the prison environment that must be abandoned. Learning may only occur in a space where the student does not have to keep looking over their shoulder at a guard and where respect is mutual and free of coercion or threat. It may seem comforting to know that there are a few rooms inside of the institution where a person can be reminded of their humanity and of their potential, but for the most part this is a false sense of comfort and is reflective neither of the principles of adult education, nor of the elements of performative space. Again, while it may seem as though I am negating all of the good that education can do for a prisoner while he is behind bars, it is important to be critical when examining the potentiality for the creation of a performative space in an atmosphere like the prison. The good news is that the groundwork for this undertaking has already begun, as demonstrated by the positive effects in terms of successful reintegration that prisoners report regarding their participation in prison education programs.

Education is the Key to a Successful Reintegration Strategy

> *All available evidence demonstrates that educational upgrading, even in prison, results in increased self-esteem, critical thinking and self-discipline. These personal gains combine to reduce the likelihood of a released prisoner coming back in conflict with the law* (Collins, 2008, p.78).

> *Education is often associated with light, knowledge, understanding and awareness. Learning, especially when sparked by enthusiasm and motivation, can be an exciting, rewarding journey. With education comes new ideas, ways of seeing, beliefs, possibilities, and action* (Terry, 2004, p.16).

The correctional programs run by the CSC are designed and implemented based on research that suggests their effectiveness in lowering risk and increasing the chance that prisoners will re-enter the community with the skills and knowledge required to live a pro-social life (CCRA, 1992, par.76; CSC, 2009b). There is ample research available to show that

educational programming has the same effect (Bayliss, 2003; Bosworth, 2005; CSC, 2009a; Davidson, 1995; Duguid, 1982; Porporino and Robinson, 1992; Wilson, 2000), but unfortunately this does not seem to be enough to make literacy and learning real priorities in the correctional plan. Given the lack of trust and respect for prisoners' decision-making skills, correctional administrators do not see the gains gleaned from education in the same way prisoners do.

> *In my view, education is the key to a successful life out on the street* (Harris, 2004, p.59)

> *The former prisoners are now university students living in dormitories, with meal tickets and tuition paid. This means they will not be homeless, sleeping on park benches, eating in soup kitchens or in other situations where they would be easy prey for police to arrest and return to prison* (Richards et al., 2008, p.46).

Prisoners also recognize that by participating in education they will be able to successfully complete the other programs in their correctional plan with greater ease so as to use all of the skills being taught to help them cope once they are back in the community.

> *The real purpose of education in general has been variously described as individual empowerment, personal development, formal instruction, enlightenment, guidance, and discipline…In my opinion, education instruction in prison serves a dual purpose. It enables a prisoner to overcome deficiencies such as being illiterate, under-educated, and/or under-qualified for trade training. And it serves to prepare a prisoner to better comprehend, and thus benefit from, the rehabilitative programs that he or she will be required to participate in* (Rafferty, 2004, p.51).

While the institution as a whole seems to be lagging in terms of the quality of education that is provided to prisoners, there is hope amongst the individuals who are working specifically in the development and implementation of prison education. During the interview, the CSC employee emphasized the fact that education should be acknowledged as a pillar for a successful rehabilitation and reintegration plan.

> *For CSC education means a lot – it's a key to success, we believe it, and in fact the reason why we try to offer what they can find in the community is because there is no doubt education is the key for everybody. So for that reason everything*

> *that can be done is being done so that we can make sure we provide quality [education], we provide that kind of assistance to offenders…I believe the higher level they go, those who have a high school diploma; I believe they do not really come back* (Interview #5).

When asked specifically why education was such an important component of correctional programming, the participant responded that it would help to increase employability in a society that is demanding increasingly higher credentials, no matter what the job is.

> *Now Grade 12 is the minimum, you cannot really get a nice job if you do not have a Grade 12, so education is vital to re-integration and success* (Interview #5).

The support for education as a valuable program option was consistent throughout all of the interviews; the teachers who work in the community further elaborated that higher learning positively influences how prisoners comport themselves.

> *The students that come here it's kind of first steps towards integrating back into a normal life* (Interview #2).

> *We recognize that the education is what's going to allow them to keep that housing in the future and keep them motivated and focused and keep them in employment…We want people to succeed and we want people to do well and we know that education is how they are going to succeed in the future and it's how they are going to be able to keep that job and break that cycle of crime* (Interview #4).

There were also several suggestions from prisoners throughout the JPP as to why they believe education is such a successful tool to include in a reintegration strategy. Collins (2008) indicated that a prisoner who engages in learning while they are inside will be more successful on the outside "because the 'educated' person is more able to effectively look for and secure employment, and generally is more likely to feel socially viable and useful to others, perhaps developing a sense of purpose" (p.78). I found this to be a very important statement because it speaks to the things that education can do for a person that the other correctional programs cannot. For example, a program that focuses its content around violence prevention or substance

abuse can teach someone the skills to deal specifically with those two issues, and while there are transferable skills that are taught in each of these programs the teaching materials continually reinforce the belief that the prisoner made poor choices and needs reminding of their past actions. While one of the principles of adult education speaks to the idea that adult learners need to acknowledge their past because it will help them move forward positively, this should be done in a supportive fashion and not in a damning one. Also, there needs to be a point in the rehabilitative process when the individual no longer has to revisit their past, as doing so may inhibit the progress they have made. The education that is required to motivate change and transformation needs to have a much broader scope to allow room for the prisoner to re-create their identity with the new knowledge that they acquire about the world. Harris (2004) echoes this thought in his piece by pointing out that "educated individuals are much more likely to use their minds than their fists" (p.58) and we see the same justification for education again in Taylor's (2004a) writings when he noted that "regardless of the date you walk out of the prison…further education will improve confidence and self-esteem, and improve how you feel about and treat others" (p.76). This sentiment is what makes education so attractive to the prisoners who are looking to escape the constant reminders of their past and who are looking for new tools that they can use to ignite change in their future.

One of the reasons education works so well as a tool for successful reintegration is that in the classroom setting teachers are able to show prisoners that there is an alternative to a life of crime. Some prisoners have become so accustomed to "a lifetime of using their cognitive skills primarily to promote another agenda [that] providing higher education to them while in prison gives them a chance to use their intellect in a legitimate manner" (Day, 2008, p.34). While the basic goal of most educational programs is to have students exiting the program at a higher grade

or skill level than they were at when they started, many prisoners and teachers indicated that "higher education in prison, however, goes far beyond the utilitarian implications for reducing crime; it develops the individual to the extent that criminal behaviour is simply no longer an option" (Huckelbury, 2004, pp.38-39). The real benefits of education arise when individuals are pushed to actually use their new-found knowledge to become active in their own decision making processes (Bonafanti, 1992, p.43 and Rivera, 1992, p.31) or in other words, when prisoners learn to participate in more democratic activities.

While it is important to maintain provincial standards in terms of the academic material that is taught in prison education programs, efforts should also be made to promote changes in other areas that will help prisoners to improve their confidence, self-esteem and to make them see that they are capable of more than cycling in and out of correctional facilities. There is a strong effort to do this in the educational programs that are offered to justice-involved adults in the community.

> *What we're really about in the Skills Plus program is building stability into people's lives, and a lot of times their offending comes from not having any kind of stability. So part of what we do is get people set up in routines – getting people used to being somewhere at certain times every day and a lot of them say that having a place to come keeps [them] out of trouble, keeps [them] focused* (Interview #4).

By instilling this sense of stability, students are able to see that they are capable of participating in the community in a pro-social manner and can be comfortable knowing that there is a support system in place if stressful situations do begin to arise. The structure of the education provided by the John Howard Society of Ottawa is once again very similar to the idea of performative space in the sense that there is a strong effort to promote the development of greater social capital as one of the primary outcomes of the education process.

Beyond building self-confidence within the adult learner, there were many indications throughout the JPP that education has actually served to ignite transformation in and empowerment of the prisoners who participated in higher education programs while behind bars. Huckelbury (2004) wrote in his article that "because of higher education, [he] took another giant step on the road to becoming a better person" (p.42). Once again, this helps to promote the idea that education is very important to the rehabilitation and re-integration process. The time that the prisoner spends in the classroom learning about other cultures and societies can open their minds and help them to see the effects of their previous actions in a different light. In a very subtle way, education can help to instil a sense of community within the learner and this alone will influence the decisions that are made once an individual is released.

> *The classes I would take during that period provided me with the windows into worlds I never knew existed…And as the classes came and went, the views I had about the world and myself continually changed* (Terry, 2004, p.22).

> *The education I was receiving inside the classroom expanded my constricted worldview and introduced me to men and women whose work I could admire and try to emulate. This enabled me to understand why prison was an aberration in every conceivable way and not even remotely comparable to the real world outside* (Huckelbury, 2004, p.32).

> *Higher education imparts the abilities to analyze, reason, and think for yourself in any situation. As a powerfully liberating tool, it can never be taken away; it can only be ceded by your choice not to utilize those skills* (Taylor, 2004a, p.76).

All of these excerpts highlight the influence that education has on other programs that are provided to prisoners during their period of incarceration. Once a person steps into the classroom they are not limited by their correctional plan, they are not working under policies and directives that may not speak to their broader needs, and they are not taught materials based on their level of risk or what they have done in the past. The activities that take place in the classroom are completely removed from the rest of the activities that take place inside the prison and it is this

distinction that allows prisoners to see the true value in learning as well as their own personal value, which encourages the development of individual social capital.

In terms of reintegration, one of the most important things to emerge from the data was the idea that there should be a stronger effort to change public opinion about offering educational opportunities to prisoners. Correctional policies and practices may be influenced by public opinions (or emotions); therefore, in order for prison education to continue to gain popularity there must be a stronger campaign to secure public support for increased resources. Given the testaments supporting the reintegrative potential of education programs it is clearly "in society's best interest criminologically, economically, and socially to provide and even encourage prisoners to complete as much education as possible" (Taylor, 2008, p.21). The general population is often quick to judge prisoners' motives and intentions, which makes something as simple as pursuing a Grade 12 education seem like a potential waste of the tax dollars of hard working citizens. Several JPP contributors recognized this as a large barrier to promoting educational programming inside the prison and they subsequently provided a discourse for action amongst prisoners and educators.

> *We must be adamant in showing to people in society the importance of mandating prisons to provide all prisoners with a decent education, tangible job opportunities, and hope for the future…The so-called stigmas placed upon prisoners, like poor motivation, low self-esteem, discipline problems and even perceived learning disabilities, can be overcome for the vast number of prisoners* (Salah-El, 1992, p.47-48).

> *Many prisoners are illiterate, or at least semi-literate, but once individuals are taught to read well, comprehending what they read and how to use their own intellect and logic to examine material in detail, they have the key to all knowledge… Only through progressive and radical changes in educational opportunities in prison can we ever hope to live in a world free of crime and violence, where individuals love their neighbours as they love themselves* (Harris, 2004, p.57 & 59).

> *If the education is there, if prisoners are motivated, if their efforts are supported, prisoners will take advantage of these opportunities. Prisoners will change, even in spite of our past or immediate perceptions. We can learn to become more humane, socially conscious citizens that strike to complement and cooperate with the larger community, rather than to continue to prey upon it and ultimately upon ourselves* (Taylor, 2004b, p.129).

The generalizations that the public make regarding the nature of prisoners is damaging not only to the prisoners themselves, but also to the quality of programming that is provided to them once they are behind bars. People must be able to recognize that "there are very few prisoners who are not capable of becoming productive members of society" (Harris, 2004, p.59) and that the reduction of funds that would be used to improve educational programming eliminates all possibilities that something good can come out of spending time in a correctional facility. There is so much effort that goes into separating prisoners from the rest of society but what needs to be realized is that "the more education prisoners acquire while inside, the safer, more stable and richer our communities will be" (Taylor, 2008, p.21). Education plays such an important role in "strengthening the bond between individuals in prison and society" (Beck, Richards and Elrod, 2008, p.91) by promoting civility, ethical conversations, democracy and social capital, and it is publications like the JPP, conversations with adult educators, and research that brings together criminological knowledge and educational philosophies that bring attention to the importance of learning behind bars that may help to change how education is structured and implemented in the prison setting.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Inside the Walls

During the time that I was working on this research project, I was given the opportunity to visit the prison school inside of Collins Bay Institution [CBI] in Kingston, Ontario. CBI is a medium-security facility[29] and has the capacity for approximately 500 prisoners. Being that this was my first time inside a federal institution I was slightly nervous – not because of a fear of the prisoners, or the barbed-wire fences, or the stern looking guards, but because of all the things that I have learned about prisons over the years that I feared would be confirmed. My nerves were calmed by one of the staff members at CBI who kindly answered any questions I had and provided me with as much of a tour of the prison as he could.

It was early in the morning when I arrived at the prison, and when we entered the yard in the middle of the giant, fortress-like structure I experienced my first glimpse of prison life. Groups of prisoners were being directed to their respective morning activities and groups. Some were going to the cafeteria, others were going to the CORCAN workshops[30], and another group was headed to the programs building where I was going as well. There was nothing extraordinary about the programs building at first glance. The walls were grey, the guards were present, and the prisoners filed one-by-one through the security check-in at the front entrance. The

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[29] A medium-security facility holds prisoners who demonstrate both interest and ability to participate more actively in their correctional plan by attending programs and is a less structured environment than a maximum-security facility. Movement and interaction is still supervised in a medium-security facility, but the presence of arms is not as strong as in a maximum. The prisoners in a medium-security are likely to cascade down towards a minimum-security facility before their eventual release into the community (CSC, 2010).

[30] CBI is one of the 31 CSC institutions that houses CORCAN training programs which serve to help prisoners increase their employability skills by offering hands on experience in a variety of workshops and job placements (CSC, 2009c).

appearance of the programs building seemed uniform to the rest of the institution, until I was led upstairs to where the prison-school was located.

I was told by CSC employees that the classroom was a unique place inside of the prison, but I remained sceptical. When I got to the top of the stairs the first thing I noticed was the occurrence of colour. The walls were brighter, there were posters on the wall, and there were windows looking out onto Lake Ontario. The second thing I noticed was that prisoners were not being herded around like cattle, they were walking around in the classrooms, working at computer stations, and communicating with the teachers. It felt like a school in this space and after being there for about ten minutes I had to remind myself that I was still inside of a federal prison.

One of the staff members that works within the prison school walked me around to each of the classrooms, explaining all of the resources that are available to students, what courses can be taken, and how education is worked into the correctional plan. He then introduced me to several teachers who were not only excited to speak to me about their experiences with teaching inside of a prison, but were also thrilled that someone from outside of the CSC was showing interest in providing a better education to incarcerated adults. One teacher told me about a prisoner who had been inside of CBI for almost two years before he started receiving any programming. The prisoner was referred to the school to start working toward achieving his Grade 12 certification and upon his arrival to the classroom he stopped and stared out the window. When asked by the teacher what was wrong, the prisoner proceeded to explain that before his arrival at CBI he had never been to Kingston before and he was gazing out the window because he struck by the beauty of his surroundings which he did not have visual access to from the yard. This made me think about the placement of the school inside of CBI and

whether or not it was intentional. While students are learning and experiencing freedom in their minds, they can look out the windows to the freedom that awaits them upon release. Perhaps this provides motivation; personally, I think that it provides hope.

The school was a very welcoming atmosphere, nothing like I expected upon entrance into the institution, and I was grateful to have been given the opportunity to see firsthand what a learning space can look like inside prison walls. This experience confirmed two things for me. First, it confirmed that there actually is learning happening inside of the prison and that there are genuine efforts being made by the CSC to ensure that there is a space for academic achievement within the correctional atmosphere. Secondly, it confirmed that despite these positive observations this particular classroom was still located inside of a federal correctional facility and the bright colours on the walls and the view of the lake are only a temporary escape from all other aspects of life in prison. Ultimately, while there are some attempts at civility occurring in this institution and the building blocks for adult education are present, the emphasis on security, control and punishment continue to hinder the attainment of a true performative space.

Summary of Findings

> *So, to those of you who teach us, and to my brothers and sisters in cages, keep thinking, keep learning and growing, keep the fire burning for those following. And never forget to watch your back* (Huckelbury, 2004, p.44).

The above quote reflects perfectly what was discovered throughout this research process; there is education happening inside of prisons, but it is not perfect. Following the examination of research and literature in the area of corrections, adult education, and correctional education and exploring Wright and Gehring's theoretical framework of performative space I set out to answer three questions:

- Does education in prison utilize principles and practices of adult education? If so, how?

- Does education in prison occur in a performative space and promote the concepts associated with such a space? If so, how?
- Does the occurrence of these two elements differ between the education that is provided to prisoners within the institutions and the education that is provided to justice-involved adults in the community?

After analyzing the information provided to me in the five semi-structured interviews that I conducted, as well as the prisoner-penned accounts of education in the *Journal for Prisoners on Prisons*, I was able to answer these questions.

In terms of adult education, it is apparent that despite the good intentions of those working in education at the CSC (including both the frontline teachers and other staff who work at National Headquarters) there are still a lot of obstacles to overcome. The focus on security and management continues to provide a constant challenge to the freedom that comes with learning, and while prisoners demonstrate the motivation to participate in education and the teachers work to guide them in the achievement of their goals, there is just not enough support for all of the central formative aspects of adult education to thrive in this environment. It remains that prison is for punishment and punishment alone and any hint at escape, even if it is only in the mind, is unwelcome.

We see a brighter image when it comes to the elements of performative space and their appearance inside prison walls. Many contributors to the JPP described the classroom as a separate space from the rest of the facility, and saw it as a place where they could be productive rather than waste away in their cells. The teachers in the classroom provide support, show them respect, allow them to have their voices heard and teach them the skills necessary for building successful relationships in the community. Within the classroom all of the ingredients necessary for building social capital are present, but outside the classroom is a different story. It is not enough for a prisoner to experience civility, ethical conversations, and democracy in only one

space for a limited amount of time each day. The performative space must extend beyond the confines of the classroom in order for it to have a stronger influence on rehabilitation and reintegration, but given the negative relationships with guards, parole officers, case managers and other individuals within the prison this is a difficult task.

Throughout the analysis of the data, it became clear that my third research question would be the easiest one to answer; there is a very clear difference between the occurrence of both adult education and performative space within the prison and out in the community. The structure of adult education that is provided to students at the John Howard Society of Ottawa incorporates everything that is required in order for a school program to be successful in the reintegration process. There is a strong level of support for all students, flexibility is a pillar of the program, and learners are very actively involved in every aspect of the process. Respect, trust and open communication are requirements in the classroom and are principles upheld by all other services within JHS Ottawa. Apart from the academic achievements that occur in this space, it is the building of valuable relationships that help maintain motivation and encourage the positive communication skills that are to be used in every aspect of an individual's life. While there are still improvements to be made in how we provide education to adults, it is more so within the community that models for successful adult education can be found.

The four themes that emerged from the data, and the subsequent analysis of these themes, demonstrate that both the principles of adult education and the elements of performative space are apparent in these two different classroom spaces, but the levels of each vary depending on whether or not that classroom is located inside of a prison or outside in the community. Given the exploratory nature of this project, these findings prove to be very important as they serve as a baseline for more directed empirical research. With the knowledge that education is provided

successfully to justice-involved adults in the community and that the building blocks for similar programming can be found inside correctional facilities there is no longer an excuse for a lack of development in the area of adult correctional education.

Recommendations for Future Research

> *The specifics of...the manner in which educational programs are designed, funded and made available to prison populations, remains one of the least examined areas in related disciplines* (Nagelsen, 2008, p.106).

> *It is unlikely that much will be said about the many prisoners who, while in prison or after leaving, go on to succeed in higher education. Their achievements often go unheralded, unable to fit into the language of failure. In my view, I think that all incarcerated women and men need to hear something other than the constant negativism that is directed their way* (Salah-El, 1992, p.45).

This research project was meant to be an exploratory one from the start, and while valuable conclusions were drawn from the interviews and journal articles there is still a plethora of information to be gathered from other sources in regards to the education programs that are provided to justice-involved adults in Canada. Future studies would benefit from taking a different methodological approach while using the theoretical framework that was outlined in this project. Evaluations that focus on the utilization of practices of adult education and the elements of performative space in all of the CSC institutions and in a variety of adult education programs in communities across the country would strengthen the framework and would help to build a universal standard as to how adult correctional education programs should be developed and delivered. Considering that the creation and implementation of educational materials is something that varies from province-to-province in Canada, it would be interesting to see whether or not there are varying levels of performative space between each region depending on the strategies being used.

Another important component of any future research in this area would be to continue to include the voices of the prisoner-students. While I was able to get a glimpse of what prisoners are saying and thinking about education by reading the articles in the JPP, it would be beneficial to conduct participant observation of and in-depth interviews with individuals who have spent time in a prison classroom. Again, the focus on qualitative research would help to build knowledge of what works and what does not work when it comes to teaching justice-involved adults. In addition to this, it would be advantageous to conduct interviews with the teachers who work inside of the prisons. From the research that I conducted for this project it is clear to see that the teachers hold a very different role inside of the institution than other employees, and it would serve to improve the professional efforts of others who are looking to teach inside the prisons to have a better understanding of the interactions that occur between teachers and prisoners as well as between teachers and the CSC staff.

In terms of improving the quantitative research in the area of prison education there are a couple of suggestions to consider. First of all, there needs to be more comprehensive data available to indicate the participation and completion rates of adult education inside of the CSC institutions. While the CSC has access to these numbers, it is not easily accessible to the public, and a project that extracts these numbers would be valuable for all who are interested in examining the basic statistics. These numbers could be used to compare the advent of education between all of the CSC's five regions, the difference in educational achievement between the various security levels of the institutions, and could even be used to determine any demographic

variables[31] and their relation to going to school while inside. Quantitative research could also be completed in the community with similar goals in mind.

Regardless of what form it takes, multi-disciplinary and mixed method research in the area of correctional education is imperative if education programs have any hope of being seen as a viable rehabilitative tool that will have lasting positive effects on prisoners' reintegration. As I mentioned early on in this thesis, most of the research about correctional education comes from outside of Canada, making it difficult to perform noteworthy evaluations on the education that we provide to incarcerated adults within our own border. This project highlighted a strong theoretical foundation for future research endeavours in this area of criminology and education, and if other research projects focus on making use of the principles of adult education along with the elements of performative space then it will become easier to develop a comprehensive model for federal prison education programs.

Criminology and Education

As I mentioned earlier, this project went through several transformations with each stage reflecting a different level of inquiry and exploration. The previous sections provide answers to the more specific research questions and reflect the information that was acquired through the use of interviews and qualitative content analysis. However, it also became clear throughout the development of the literature review that there is very little collaboration between criminologists and educators despite the fact that the prison milieu is an area of interest for both disciplines. This realization gave rise to a much larger question involving the intersection of criminology and education. If future research (and subsequent action) is to occur in the area of correctional

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[31] Gender, age, race, nature of offence, etc.

education in Canadian prisons, then it is imperative that knowledge from both fields be taken into account.

Theoretical works from the likes of David Garland, Malcolm Feeley and Johnathan Simon provide us with an epistemological framework that encourages criminologists to complete empirical work in the prison environment. By taking a more critical stance on the daily occurrences within the prison, notably, these authors (among others) identify flaws in the system such as power imbalances between guards and prisoners, decisions about programming that are based on managing the risk of large groups rather than meeting individual needs, and an increased focus on surveillance and control that undermines efforts for rehabilitation (Feeley and Simon, 1992; Garland, 1996). Questioning the internal workings and machinations of the prison – its processes, technologies, and strategies of governance – allows those interested in evaluating the effectiveness of correctional programs to be better positioned to examine what does and does not work and also allows us to analyse the prison outside the state and institutional discourses that make it up, so as to better prioritize the needs and concerns of the prison administrators, in relation to those of the community, and the prisoners themselves. In effect, critical criminological research often sparks more questions than it answers, questions that, depending on the topic or issue, must be at least partially answered by scholars outside the discipline.

In the area of adult education I highlighted the works of Malcolm Knowles, Edward Thorndike, and Eduard Lindeman. All three of these authors contributed to the development of adult education first at a theoretical level, but more importantly they ignited research at a practical level by emphasizing the fact that adults learn much differently from children and therefore must be taught using different strategies. The field of adult education contains much literature on 'best practices' so those teaching adults are now provided with a set of standards

that dictate how to properly engage with adult learners. This more pragmatic research, which includes evaluative studies generated via positivist theoretical and methodological approaches, helps to provide answers to the questions raised by more critical researchers. If criminologists concern themselves with outlining what is wrong with the prison system then they must also concern themselves with what can be done to fix it, and crucial information required to fix what is wrong with correctional education programs can be found within the adult education literature.

I suggest that Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman's work on social capital makes it possible for criminologists and educators to work together towards the same goal. I already spoke to the fact that the term 'social capital' is becoming more popular across the social disciplines given its flexibility in describing the social world at both the micro and macro level. This concept also allows the researcher to see what is problematic with certain social relationships (for example, the tensions that arise within the prison setting between prisoners and guards) while at the same time offering a solution for how to strengthen social ties (for example, by offering programming in a setting that promotes respect and collaboration). Social capital not only reflects the ideals of rehabilitation and reintegration that are supposed to be the aims of the correctional system, but it also works in harmony with the goals of adult education, namely building knowledge, respect, and collaboration (Knowles, 1984), making it the perfect tool to meld these two disciplines together.

At first I thought that finding a harmonious relationship between criminology and education would be a difficult task, but after reflecting on all the information that I accumulated throughout the past three years it is now easier to see how well these two disciplines can work together to achieve a common goal. The more critical nature of the criminological literature is complementary to the pragmatism of educational research and both lenses (along with social

capital and the model of performative space) are necessary for studying the advent of adult education programs in the prison environment. While some penal abolitionists may take issue with my endorsement of education program evaluation and the development of critical and engaged prison educational programming for being a reformist rather than an abolitionist exercise, I suggest this position partially silences the voices and positions of the prisoners who yearn for and value what educational opportunities and experiences offer them. For as I discovered through the analysis of the various prisoner-penned pieces in the *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*, actively engaging in or supporting the penal abolitionist movement, as these authors do, does not preclude the value and significance of creating a performative space for prisoners (although, preferably outside the prison context) that is ruled by the principles of democracy, civility, and ethical conversations that help to promote social capital for this marginalized group.

Concluding Thoughts on Correctional Education

> *[Education] alone is not enough, but it should be one of the penological pillars on top of which rehabilitation is founded* (Day, 2008, p.40).

> *Educational access must be expanded so that no prisoners are denied a chance to better themselves* (Harris, 2004, p.58).

I mentioned my personal motivations for pursuing a research project about education in prisons at the beginning of this thesis. When I first started working at the John Howard Society of Ottawa during the final year of my undergraduate degree there was a great deal of excitement about the fact that I would finally get to put years of textbook knowledge to good use. I expected that as part of this field placement I would be working to help people overcome addictions, learning about strategies in anger management, and using all of the other intervention strategies that I had learned throughout my courses. When I was told I would be completing my placement in the adult literacy program I became concerned. I did not know the first thing about teaching an

adult how to read, or how to ‘do math’, or how to use a computer; I went to school for Criminology, not Education. For the first few weeks I was very nervous and unsure about what the next four months of my field placement would bring.

I quickly learned that not only was working in the Skills Plus Program one of the greatest challenges that I had encountered in my life up to that point, but it was also a challenge for the adult learners that I was working with. Sitting next to a 40-something year-old man who could not read or write was a wake-up call and an indication to me that education is a form of intervention that was left out of my courses. Seeing so many adults leaving the system with not much more than a Grade 8 education was a huge red flag to me regarding the state of education inside of our prisons, and it is this phenomenon that sparked my interest in exploring how people spend their time while they are incarcerated and more specifically whether or not they spend some of this time in a classroom. While I faced many challenges throughout my time working in the literacy program, the students that I worked with faced much greater challenges; being able to play a role in helping former prisoners overcome at least one of the hurdles related to reintegration was, and continues to be, very rewarding.

Considering the recent policy changes[32] that are reflective of a conservative ideology regarding prisons and corrections, it is more important than ever to focus on education as a primary form of intervention. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the positive outcomes that can occur as a result of combining research and knowledge from the field of education with the expertise of criminologists in delivering effective programming to justice-involved adults.

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[32] In March of 2012, Bill C-10 known as the Safe Streets and Communities Act received Royal Assent. This Bill contains several amendments to the Criminal Code, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Records Act, the International Transfer of Offenders Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Of note are the increases in mandatory minimum penalties for certain offences and harsher sentencing for youth (Parliament of Canada, 2012).

With the lack of 'common sense' that is quickly becoming characteristic of the prison system in Canada[33], it is vital to use and build on knowledge that we already have about what works in adult education and what works in rehabilitation to expand programs that we know to be successful. By having a space inside of the prison where civility, ethical communication, democracy and the principles of adult education work together to nurture the development of social capital, prisoners will have the chance to develop the skills, knowledge, and relationships that are required to be successful upon their release to the community.

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[33] The following is a list of resources from the media demonstrating the lack of informed decision-making on part of the Conservative Party which led to the passing of Bill C-10.

http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2012/03/06/f-bill-c10-objections.html
http://www.ccla.org/rightswatch/2012/03/12/bill-c-10-passes-despite-concern-and-opposition/
http://www.fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2012/02/14/mcmurtry-greenspan-doob-harpers-incoherent-crime-policy/
http://www.guelphmercury.com/opinion/editorial/article/682294--they-re-not-listening
http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/irwin-cotler/billc-10_b_1335564.html
http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/irwin-cotler/harper-bill-c-10_b_1278449.html
http://www.thesudburystar.com/Community/NewsDisplay.aspx?c=291248

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Text

Recruitment Form for Participation in the Research Project:
A Qualitative Analysis of Educational Philosophies and Practices in Canadian Federal Prisons

Dear prospective research participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Criminology Master's student, Samantha McAleese (primary investigator) and professor of criminology, Dr. Jennifer Kilty (supervisor) from the University of Ottawa.

For the purpose of this study, those working in the field of adult education are encouraged to participate in a single, hour-long interview session. Recruitment will focus specifically on educators who work in *adult basic education* classrooms rather than those who work in a post-secondary setting. Recruitment will also include those who have worked in the area of educational training with the Correctional Service of Canada. Also, it is a requirement of participation that individuals are fluent in English.

Your participation in this study will help the primary researcher complete the necessary program requirements to obtain a Master's degree in Criminology from the University of Ottawa.

This research aims to fill a significant gap in the current literature surrounding correctional education and will focus primarily on the importance of creating a safe and productive space within Canadian federal prisons in which prison administrators and program facilitators can offer proper educational training to male federal offenders who have not yet completed a Grade 12 level of education.

I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help us to better understand the important role of education in the correctional process, as well as the importance of improving literacy and academic skills during adulthood.

If you are interested in participating in this study or require further clarification please do not hesitate to contact Samantha McAleese via mail, e-mail or telephone. Please note that participants in this study will be selected on a first come, first served basis.

Sincerely,

Samantha McAleese and Dr. Jennifer Kilty
Email: name@domain.ca
Cell Phone Number: (###) ###-####
Street Name
Department of Criminology | University of Ottawa
Ottawa | Canada
POSTAL CODE

Appendix B: Consent Form

Consent Form for Participation in the Research Project:
A Qualitative Analysis of Educational Philosophies and Practices in Canadian Federal Prisons

Principal Researcher: Samantha McAleese (MA Candidate)
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
(###) ###-####
name@domain.ca

Thesis Supervisor: Jennifer M. Kilty
Assistant Professor
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
(###) ###-####
name@domain.ca

Purpose of the Research: This research aims to fill a significant gap in the current literature surrounding correctional education and will focus primarily on the importance of creating a safe and productive space within Canadian federal prisons in which prison administrators and program facilitators can offer proper educational training to male federal offenders who have not yet completed a Grade 12 level of education.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: For the purposes of this study you are asked to participate in a single, audio-recorded, interview session lasting no longer than one hour.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research: Your participation in this study will help the primary researcher complete the necessary program requirements to obtain a Master's degree in Criminology from the University of Ottawa.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with the University of Ottawa either now, or in the future.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. If you do choose to withdraw from the study, and data that you provided will be destroyed and disposed of and will not be included in the final report. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, the University of Ottawa, or any other group associated with this project.

Confidentiality: All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and conserved for a period of five years after the final report has been completed and only the principal researcher and thesis supervisor will have access to this information.

Anonymity: As you may be quoted directly in this publication as well as in future publications, your anonymity will be preserved through the use of pseudonyms.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Samantha McAleese or Dr. Jennifer Kilty either by telephone by e-mail.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I *(___________________________________)*, consent to participate in the research study being proposed by Samantha McAleese and Dr. Jennifer Kilty. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature__________________________________ Date_____________________________
Participant

Signature__________________________________ Date_____________________________
Principal Investigator

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE #1 – CSC ACTORS

Introductory Statement

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is Samantha McAleese and I am conducting this interview as part of the requirements for my MA thesis project in the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa. Today I would like to talk to you about your experiences with, and/or opinions on, the Adult Basic Education programs that are currently being offered to male inmates in Canadian federal correctional facilities.

This interview should take no more than one hour. I will be writing down notes throughout the session, as well as recording the interview to ensure that I am obtaining all of the information that is shared. You can be assured that all responses will be kept confidential, meaning that your interview responses will only be shared with my thesis supervisor and I will ensure that any information included in my report does not identify you as the respondent if you do not wish to be identified. Please remember that you do not have to answer all of the questions that I ask, and you may end the interview at any time.

Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Topic #1: General Information on Involvement with and Development of ABE Programs

Question 1: Please describe your current or past involvement in the educational programs that are provided to federal male inmates by CSC.

Question 2: What kind of educational training was provided to you or to others within CSC who are involved with the development and implementation of correctional ABE programs?

Question 3: What theories, models, strategies, resources or tools are used to guide the development and/or implementation of correctional ABE programs? Which of these would you consider to be key elements of correctional education? Please explain.

Topic #2: Inmate Participation in Correctional ABE Programs

Question 4: Who currently participates in correctional ABE programs? How do inmates gain access to educational programming? Which inmates do you think benefit most from such programming?

Question 5: How is participation in correctional ABE prioritized on an inmate’s correctional plan? What tools are used to assess an inmate’s current academic level? Do you think that these tools are successful?

Question 6: Are inmates able to participate in the development of their educational training plans or are educational objectives predetermined by a case manager or program facilitator?

Topic #3: Inside the Learning Environment

Question 7: Are inmates given adequate time and resources to complete their academic goals? What is done by correctional educators/program facilitators to ensure that educational goals are attained?

Question 8: Do correctional educators serve as a knowledge provider or as a resource person within the classroom? How would you describe the relationship between educators and inmates within the institution?

Question 9: Is there a strict curriculum that is maintained throughout the course of educational training or is the material flexible to the needs and characteristics of the individual inmate?

Question 10: Does the learning environment allow for independence amongst inmates? Is interaction encouraged or allowed within the classroom setting?

Topic #4: Impact of Correctional ABE Programs

Question 11: What impact do you think current correctional ABE programs have on inmates who are being released into the community?

Question 12: What barriers currently exist that may inhibit the full implementation of correctional ABE in federal correctional facilities? Are there solutions being offered to these barriers? Do you have any solutions to offer? Please explain.

Question 13: How would you rank the importance of correctional ABE in comparison to the other correctional programs that are offered by CSC? Please explain.

Concluding Remarks

I thank you very much for your time. I hope that what is learned as a result of this interview, and the others that I have or will be conducting, will help me to better understand the important role of education in the correctional process, as well as the importance of improving literacy and academic skills during adulthood.

I expect to have my thesis completed by approximately August 2011. If you would like a copy of the final product, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

If you have questions, concerns or require more information about the research project itself, please contact me or my thesis supervisor.

Thank you again for your participation.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE #2 – COMMUNITY EDUCATORS

Introductory Statement

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is Samantha McAleese and I am conducting this interview as part of the requirements for my MA thesis project in the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa. Today I would like to talk to you about your experiences with, and/or opinions on, Adult Basic Education programs that are currently being offered in the community.

This interview should take no more than one hour. I will be writing down notes throughout the session, as well as recording the interview to ensure that I am obtaining all of the information that is shared. You can be assured that all responses will be kept confidential, meaning that your interview responses will only be shared with my thesis supervisor and I will ensure that any information included in my report does not identify you as the respondent if you do not wish to be identified. Please remember that you do not have to answer all of the questions that I ask, and you may end the interview at any time.

Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Topic #1: General Information on Involvement with and Development of ABE Programs

Question 1: Please describe your current or past involvement in the educational programs that are currently offered to adult learners in the community.

Question 2: What kind of educational training was provided to you or to others within this organization who are involved with the development and implementation of ABE programs?

Question 3: What theories, models, strategies, resources or tools are used to guide the development and/or implementation of ABE programs? Which of these would you consider to be key elements of adult education? Please explain.

Topic #2: Adult Participation in ABE Programs

Question 4: Who currently participates in ABE programs? How do people gain access to educational programming? Which adults do you think benefit most from such programming?

Question 5: What tools are used to assess an adult's current academic level? Do you think that these tools are successful?

Question 6: Are adult learners able to participate in the development of their educational training plans or are educational objectives predetermined by a program facilitator?

Topic #3: Inside the Learning Environment

<u>Question 7:</u> Are adult learners given adequate time and resources to complete their academic goals? What steps are taken by program facilitators to ensure that educational goals are attained?

<u>Question 8:</u> Do community educators serve as a knowledge provider or as a resource person within the classroom? How would you describe the relationship between educators and adult learners?

<u>Question 9:</u> Is there a strict curriculum that is maintained throughout the course of educational training or is the material flexible to the needs and characteristics of the individual learner?

<u>Question 10:</u> Does the learning environment allow for independence amongst learners? Is interaction encouraged or allowed within the classroom setting?

Topic #4: Impact of ABE Programs on Adult Learners

<u>Question 11:</u> What impact do you think current ABE programs have on adult learners?

<u>Question 12:</u> What barriers currently exist that may inhibit the full implementation of ABE in the community? Are there solutions being offered to these barriers? Do you have any solutions to offer? Please explain.

<u>Question 13:</u> How would you rank the importance of ABE in comparison to the other goals that an individual may have? Please explain.

Concluding Remarks

I thank you very much for your time. I hope that what is learned as a result of this interview, and the others that I have or will be conducting, will help me to better understand the important role of education in the correctional process, as well as the importance of improving literacy and academic skills during adulthood.

I expect to have my thesis completed by approximately August 2011. If you would like a copy of the final product, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

If you have questions, concerns or require more information about the research project itself, please contact me or my thesis supervisor.

Thank you again for your participation.