

**OPENING YOUNG MINDS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
A WESTVILLE PRISON EXPERIENCE**

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ABSTRACT

This study is an exploration of prison learners' experiences of the educational rehabilitation programmes offered in the Westville Youth Centre School. The study was done in the Westville Youth Centre, which is situated in the Durban Management Area in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The sample consisted of eleven prison learners of the Usethubeni Youth School, nine educators from this school and one control educator (who is responsible for co-ordinating the educational rehabilitation programmes in the Durban Management Area).

Data was collected through interviews and questionnaires. Interviews with learners were done at different intervals. There was an in-depth interview with one of the learners and two focus group interviews, which consisted of five learners in each session. A questionnaire was used to gather data from educators and finally an in-depth interview was conducted with the co-ordinator of educational rehabilitation programmes. Photographs of the prison classroom and the cell were taken by the researcher to illustrate the context in which the research was done.

The varying methods of data collection revealed that what is referred to as "educational rehabilitation programmes" are programmes similar to any school curricular outside the prison. There is nothing unique about this curriculum. The participants felt that this curriculum was not rehabilitative because it did not include programmes that could curb

recidivism (relapsing into crime) by empowering prison learners and helping them “unlearn faulty behaviour.”

This study concludes with the recommendations for the Department of Correctional Services’ policy makers and planners as well as the managers of educational rehabilitation programmes in the Durban Management area.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work with love, to my beautiful and precious daughter OLWETHU KUNENE for allowing me time to do this study, accompanying me to each and every interview, even before she was born. I could not have done it without you,

and

to all the prison learners of Westville Youth Centre School.

Thank you for the valuable experience and lessons that you have taught me about life.

These could not have been learnt anywhere in the world.

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- And finally, to God the Almighty, who continues to bless me even if I least deserve it. Thank you for the wonderful ideas you put in my mind all the time. Thank you for using me to change the prisoners' lives. I know it is not just me being passionate about them. It is special anointing from you!!!

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Hloniphile Kunene declare that this dissertation is my own work, and has not been submitted previously in part or full for any degree at any other University.

.....
RESEARCHER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
APPENDICES	xiii
CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.0. Preamble	1
1.1. Context	4
1.2. Rehabilitation at the Westville Prison	9
1.2.1. The Curriculum	10
1.2.1.1. The ABET Programme	10
1.2.1.2. Mainstream Educational Programmes	11
1.2.2. Organisation of the School	11
1.3. Purpose of the Study	13
1.4. Research Questions	14
1.5. Operational Definition of Key Terms	14
1.6. Limitations of the Study	15
1.7. Overview of Chapters	15
1.8. Conclusion	16
CHAPTER TWO	
LITERATURE REVIEW	17
2.0. Introduction	17
2.1. Rehabilitation	18
2.2. Literature on Education of Offenders	20
2.2.1. The International Review	20
2.2.2. The South African Context	22
2.3. Evaluation of Educational Rehabilitation Programmes	25
2.4. Barriers of Educational Programmes in Prisons	26
2.5. Conclusion	26
CHAPTER THREE	
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	28
3.0. Introduction	28
3.1. Sample Used in the Study	28
3.1.1. Learners	28

	PAGE
3.1.2. Teachers	30
3.1.3. The Control Educationist	30
3.2. Instruments	30
3.3. Methodology Used in the Study	31
3.3.1. Semi-Structured Interviews (with learners)	32
3.3.2. Interview with the Control Educationist	32
3.3.3. Questionnaires	33
3.3.4. Photographs	33
3.4. Limitations of the Research Methods Used	33
3.5. Conclusion	34
CHAPTER FOUR	
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	35
4.0. Introduction	35
4.1. Findings	35
4.1.1. Learner Interviews	35
4.1.1.1. Individual Learner : Linda	35
4.1.1.2. Focus Group Interviews	43
4.1.1.2.1. Profile of Sample	43
4.1.2. Teacher-Questionnaires	51
4.1.2.1. Profile of Prison Educators	51
4.1.3. Interview with the Chief Educationist	57
4.1.3.1. Mr Pillay's Profile	57
4.2. Conclusion	67
CHAPTER FIVE	
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	69
5.0. Introduction	69
5.1. Summary of Findings	69
5.2. Recommendations	71
5.2.1. Rehabilitation	71
5.2.2. The Status of Prison Schools	72
5.2.3. Curriculum	72
5.2.4. Teacher Development	73
5.3. Conclusion	74
BIBLIOGRAPHY	76

LIST OF TABLES

	PAGE
Table 1.1. : A typical day in a prison learner's life activity	6
Table 4.1. : Profile of prison learners who took part in focus group interviews	43
Table 4.2. : Gender, age and rank profile of prison educators	51
Table 4.3. : Organogram of Educational Programmes in Westville Youth School	59

LIST OF FIGURES

	PAGE
Figure 1.1. : Organogram of rehabilitation programmes	9
Figure 1.2. : Disciplines for educational programmes	10
Figure 1.3. : Organogram of educators of the Durban Westville Youth School	11

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0. Preamble

Statistics of male juveniles between the ages 17 to 19 years, who kill, hijack and rape in South Africa:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Figures</u>
17 years	1 879
18 years	7 700
19 years	7 309

City Press (03/06/01:1)

I cannot see how this information indicates an "increase" in crime. Are you pointing to an increase as offenders get older or over time. Neither possibility is at all "clear".

I am doing this study because I am intrigued by the general increase in crime and the increase in the number of young offenders who are recidivists (ex-offenders who return to prison). The statistics above are a clear indication of the increase in crimes committed by young people in South Africa. Statistics as in March 2001, according to the Management Information System, (MIS) of the DCS recorded the following statistics of male juveniles incarcerated:

- S.A. = ±13 283
- KZN = 2 495
- Westville Youth Centre = 736

An equally high percentage of male offenders are still awaiting trial in the 17 prisons in KZN.

^{concerned} Intrigued by this increase in young offenders in S.A. in 1994, ^{needs greater clarity of explanation} the DCS, in line with its policies as in the Correctional Services Act 8 of 1959, Section 2(2), opened youth centres where young offenders could be educated. This was done also because of the pressure exerted by the Human Rights Commission on the department and from the constitution's point of view that very young people have a right to being educated.

Over the past 6 years I have been involved in ~~the~~ educational rehabilitation programmes. I have witnessed with shame a high percentage of inmates, who after undergoing rehabilitation programmes leave prison only to come back a few months later having committed even more serious crimes. This experience has robbed me of satisfaction ^{with} and fulfillment ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ my work and I have decided to take a closer look at the curriculum offered in this centre to examine its impact on these young offenders. This is in line with what other institutions are doing i.e. to review the curriculum for purposes of restructuring and re-shuffling to ascertain relevance of the curriculum offered to clientele. With the advent of the new democracy, curriculum review has been the main issue of contention, this is clear in the introduction of OBE and C2005. Outcomes are seen as pertinent to learning.

I look ^{ed} forward to doing this study because I ^{felt} ~~feel~~ I ^{would} ~~will~~ get an opportunity to interrogate the relationship between passing academic courses and rehabilitation (unlearning criminal behaviour). There is ^a ~~a~~ disturbing silence in ^{the} ~~the~~ literature on the problems, challenges,

failures and successes in juvenile education programmes. I see this study as crucial in contributing to the knowledge base on educational rehabilitation programmes. Such information could assist national and regional policy makers and curriculum designers in ascertaining that future programmes are in line with the needs of the our clientele.

On a deeper personal level, I am curious to get into the prisoner's world and mind, to look at the world through the prisoner's lenses and to understand how learners learn behind closed doors. What do they think of crime, education and rehabilitation? What are their needs and what do they think is the ideal educational rehabilitation programme? It is hoped that in part, this study would respond to some of the personal questions asked.

Mtshali (1999) a proponent of rehabilitation in prison, conducted a study in Westville Prison in which he looked at all rehabilitation programmes offered to juvenile offenders i.e. custodial, welfare, educational, religious and psychological programmes. He concluded that these programmes were effective in changing the criminal behaviour and attitudes of these young men. This seems a little bit strange as it does not tally with statistics, unofficial surveys, independent research reports and other sources including media reports, which are unanimous in suggesting that crime in South Africa appears to be on the increase and that there is a high recidivism (ex-offenders who return to prison) rate in South African prisons. Bukurura (1999:16) and City Press (03/06/01:1) recently released shocking statistics showing an increase in juveniles who kill, rape and hijack.

According to preliminary interviews with Mr P Pillay, the Control Educationist and co-ordinator of educational rehabilitation programmes in Westville Prison, educational

programmes in Westville seem to be failing. This he maintains is evident in the high drop out rate of learners and poor results in general. In some courses, pass percentages of between 0-1% have been recorded such as in English and Numeracy for ABET levels 1-3. In the mainstream section (Grade 10-12) subjects like Mathematics, Geography and Technical Drawing have proven to be too difficult for students and they have failed them dismally since the beginning of the school in 1996. Although schooling is seen as important by the Department of Correctional Services and the community at large, it is faced by different challenges, which include lack of exposure to information by students because they do not have library facilities. Newspapers and magazines are highly censored and are not given to certain categories of juveniles such as maximum offenders for security reasons. Most teachers do their best but threats such as the absence of proof of previous class passed (report form) seem to cause major hurdles, very little can be done to ascertain the correct placement of learners. Teachers rely on information given by learners and more often than not the information given is not true.

1.1. Context

Westville Prison is the biggest prison of the 17 prisons in KZN. It has 5 prisons; Medium A, which houses unsentenced adult male prisoners; Medium B, a maximum security prison which houses sentenced adult male prisoners; Medium C, a minimum security prison where adult male prisoners who are about to be released stay; Medium D, sentenced and unsentenced young male offenders are housed and Medium E, which houses unsentenced and sentenced female offenders.

Medium D, also known as the Westville Youth Centre is where the study ^{was} ~~will be~~ conducted. It is home to ±1 400 inmates. Of the ±1 400 inmates, ±740 are sentenced and 150 of them are involved in academic activities that are offered in this centre.

Before I embarked on this study, I explored ideas and thoughts with individual prisoners. This was done in order to understand the learner prisoner's world, the dynamics, challenges and experiences that prisoners who are involved in educational rehabilitation programmes are faced with. From these explorations, I put together the following data which marks a day in the life of a learner prisoner:

consistency of usage - see next page.

a learner prisoner - suggests someone learning - - - - - prisoner
 which is not quite what you are focusing upon

preferable term

Table 1.1. : A typical day in a prison learner's life activity

TIME	ACTIVITY
06h30	Unlocking of the section and counting of prisoners by the prison correctional officers. Prisoners are given 10 minutes to bath. (A selection of ±30 learners share a single shower and 2 toilets and 10 minutes is all they have to get ready.)
07h00	Learner prisoners are taken to the dining hall for breakfast.
07h15	Learner prisoners leave the dining hall, they go back to the section where they are given ±10 minutes to prepare for school.
07h30	Morning assembly, which marks the beginning of a school day. (During the morning assembly which is conducted by the teachers in conjunction with the religious workers – choruses are sung and a word from the scripture is read and occasionally motivational talks are given.)
07h55	Learners go to their respective classrooms.
08h00-10h25	The first four periods of the forty minutes each are taught.
10h25-10h55	BREAK – During which learners get a chance to smoke and use restrooms.
10h55-13h25	Periods five to eight are taught.
13h30	Afternoon assembly.
13h40	Learners go to the dining hall for both their lunch and supper
14h30	Learner prisoners are counted again.
14h55	Learner prisoners are locked up.

During breakfast porridge is served with a cup of coffee. Lunch varies from samp and curry; samp and 2 boiled eggs; phutu and curry. Curries are either beef, or chicken.

Occasionally they get fish or pork and one fruit (an orange or apple). Supper consists of 7 slices of brown bread and a cup of coffee or juice. During lunch they are given these 7 slices to take with them to the sections and eat them later.

Lock up is from 14h55 until the next day at 06h30. During this time learner prisoners are all by themselves in the section. They are 30 in a cell and if there are more learners, they can be 40 in one cell. This is a picture of what a typical cell would look like:

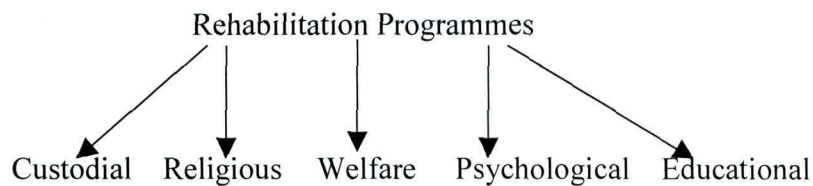
It has double bunks, study lamps (if there are any in stock), a television is a luxury that may be enjoyed by some prisoners but definitely not all the sections have televisions. There is a single shower and two toilets that are without doors, there is no privacy whatsoever. The learner prisoners explored ~~with explained~~ how frustrating it is to share a cell with 30 other inmates who all have different interests and upbringing ^{and} with different sentences. The 15 hours that they are locked up for can be hell itself. It is during this period that they are expected to study and do their homework. They admit that this is a big challenge, since most prisoners use this time to watch television and to compete with the radios ^{makes} studying ~~can be~~ difficult. The main challenge though is the activities that different gang members practice especially at night. It is the survival of the fittest. Gang members use this time to hold "meetings" wherein fights and attacks of other prisoners and staff members are planned.

Why is this page blank?

1.2. Rehabilitation at the Westville Prison

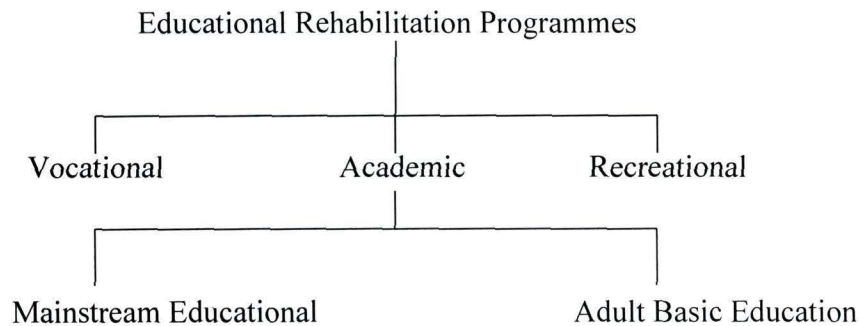
Section 2(2) of Correctional Services Act 8 of 1959 clearly defines the role of the Department of Correction Services (DCS) as two-fold i.e. safe custody and treatment of inmates, which refers to rehabilitation of convicted prisoners in order to “improve” the prisoner as a “person” (Cootzee 1995:13). In line with the vision and the mission of DCS, a variety of programmes are offered in all prisons to ensure the rehabilitation of offenders. Rehabilitation programmes offered at the Westville Youth Centre are illustrated below:

Figure 1.1. : Organogram of rehabilitation programmes



For the purpose of this study, focus will be on the academic educational rehabilitation programmes in general and the mainstream educational programmes in particular. About 180 young male offenders are involved in the educational programmes. The different disciplines that fall under educational programmes are illustrated below:

Figure 1.2. : Disciplines for educational programmes



Educational rehabilitation programmes include vocational training programmes, academic programmes and recreational programmes. Under academic programmes there are two streams, the mainstream and the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). Vocational programmes are looked down upon by prisoners and a lot of emphasis is put on academic programmes. The study will focus on the mainstream educational programmes, i.e. Grade 10-12 and nine subjects from the curriculum of these grades, i.e. IsiZulu, English, Mathematics, Geography, History, Technical Drawing, Business Economics, Accounting and Economics. One would notice that this is a “normal” school curriculum. There is nothing different or special about it. One wonders then why it is called a rehabilitation programme when it is no different from a curriculum offered in schools outside the prison.

1.2.1. The Curriculum

1.2.1.1. The ABET Programme

The Adult Basic Educational Training programmes offer tuition to ±90 students, ranging from those who are illiterate, i.e. level 1 to level 4 (See appendix 5). Five educators offer the above-mentioned subjects to male juvenile offenders, ^{and include} three qualified teachers and two

hyphenate

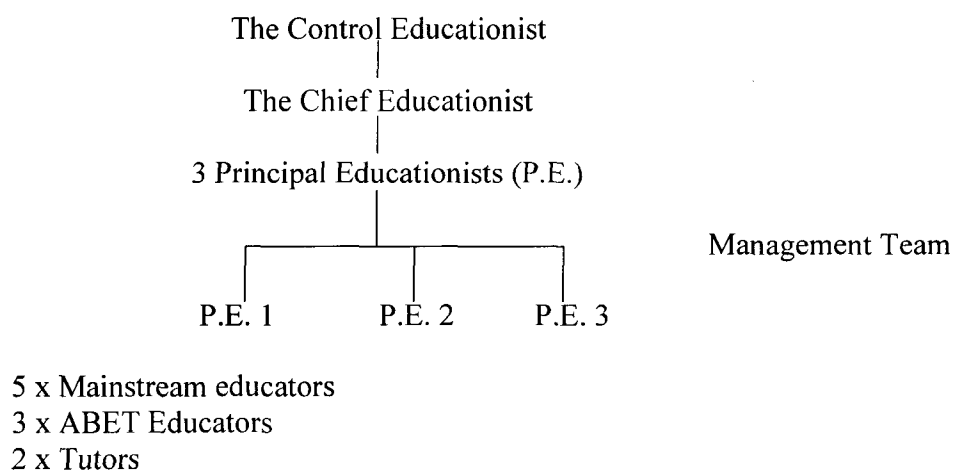
tutors. Prison population has a very high percentage of illiteracy which leads to crime. Most of the young juvenile offenders are unskilled and illiterate. An ABET programme is an attempt to make these learners literate and eventually enable them to lead a crime-free life after release.

1.2.1.2. Mainstream Educational Programmes

Grade 10 to 12 has ±80 students. These learners are offered a curriculum that is similar to that of an outside school. They choose between two streams, the commercial stream and the general stream. All students regardless of their choice of stream do three subjects. These include isiZulu, English and Mathematics. General subjects include Geography, History and Technical Drawing. Commercial subjects offered include Business Economics, Economics and Accounting.

1.2.2. Organisation of the School

Figure 1.3. : Organogram of educators of the Durban Westville Youth School



The school has got 11 full-time teachers, 3 prisoner teachers who are used as tutors, a Principal and a Chief Educationist, who co-ordinates all the educational programmes offered at Westville Prison. Of the 11 full-time educators, 9 have got teaching diplomas, 2 hold B.Ed degrees. Four of them are involved in the ABET programme and the other 7 offer subjects in the mainstream section (grades 10 to 12). Only 1 of the 4 ABET teachers has a post-graduate diploma in Adult Basic Education, the other teachers don't have any specialised training in ABET. Fifty percent of the teaching staff are senior teachers with teaching experience ranging from 5 to 13 years. The other 50% of the teaching staff have a minimum teaching experience of 2 years. The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) employs all teachers and has no in-services courses such as the ones offered by the Department of Education. Only 1 of the 11 educators has been to an OBE course in 1999, and no workshops/courses were attended by the other staff members.

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The learners who attend this youth school are male young offenders. They are all Black students except for the 5 Indian students. The large percentage of them are isiZulu speaking and the reason for this is; the study is done in KZN where Zulu-speaking Blacks are a majority. It is interesting to note that a majority of these learners come from poverty-stricken families. Only a handful of these students come from stable, well-to-do families with both parents. Most of them have single parents; others are staying with relatives or on their own, because they have no parents. The crimes they are incarcerated for range from very aggressive to minor crimes. Aggressive crimes that are commonly committed by these students are murder, rape, robbery, and hijacking. Minor offences include theft,

hyper
words
function
as a
adjective

pick-pocketing, assault and the possession of stolen goods or illegal substances like dagga.

The learner numbers are very fluid in that they come and go. The enrolment sometimes drop considerably because schooling is not compulsory. Whether or not one continues to learn depends on whether or not he is still motivated to go on attending classes. This leads to several problems such as a high absenteeism rate, which disturbs the smooth running of the school. There is no continuity because of learners who are paroles, and ^{parolees?} others who are transferred to other prisons, on request or for security reasons. Learners who go out on parole are assisted by the teachers to enrol in schools outside of prison, where they can continue with their studies. This is done purely on a voluntary basis, there is no fixed/organised programme for the placement of students. Due to the fact that the school is autonomous and as such not in line with the outside programmes, problems have been experienced with the placement of parole-learners. There have been many cases where a student is placed only to find he is far behind the other learners who had already been attending “outside” school. This could be one of the reasons for high dropout rate of parole-learners after placement outside. Other challenges that threaten the smooth running of the school include smuggling, drugs and gangsterism within the prison. X

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore prison learners’ experiences of the educational rehabilitation programmes offered in the Westville Youth Centre School. This will be

done by analysing and evaluating the curriculum that is offered in this school and to establish its effectiveness in changing the criminal behaviour of these juvenile offenders. An attempt will also be made to flash^e out gaps in the existing educational rehabilitation programme by looking closely at the underlying beliefs and assumptions upon which the curriculum was designed.

1.4. Research Questions

The study will attempt to answer the following critical questions:

- What educational rehabilitation programme is being offered to the young juvenile offenders?
- How is this programme experienced by the young juvenile offenders?

1.5. Operational Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are used frequently in this study. I find it important to provide their meaning as used in this study:

- Rehabilitation programme – in this case, it means the educational rehabilitation programme designed to assist young offenders to “unlearn” faulty, criminal behaviour and become responsible, law-abiding citizens.

Cootzee et al (1995:156) define rehabilitation as a multidisciplinary treatment programme designed to meet the particular needs of offenders with an aim of equipping them ~~with~~, as far as possible, with the life skills they will require to function effectively in society (this concept is further explored in Chapter Two).

- Juvenile offenders – young offenders who are incarcerated for the crimes they have committed and are between ages 16 and 21 years.
- Prison school – a school within the prison walls in the Westville Youth Centre, which offers educational rehabilitation programmes to young male offenders who are between the ages 16 and 21.
- The Curriculum
Schubbert (1987) defines curriculum as a continuous interaction among the four commonplaces: teachers, learners, subject matter and milieu. Anything that influences or shapes the thought, feeling, outlook and behaviour of a learner in a school is the curriculum.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

Due to the fact that the study was done in only one prison there was a limited number of interviews, so the findings may not be generalised to other prisons in South Africa.

1.7. Overview of Chapters

Chapter 1 : Is an introduction to the study which gives the general scenario of where the study will be done and outlines the research plan broadly. It attempts to define terminology used in the study and presents limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 : Examines existing literature on educational programmes offered in South African prisons and abroad.

Chapter 3 : Presents the research methodology employed in the study. The methodology that has been used is qualitative.

Chapter 4 : Outlines data interpretation and analyses in light of the key research questions.

Chapter 5 : Presents conclusions that were reached from the findings of the study.

1.8. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the context in which the study was conducted and gave the general scenario of the educational rehabilitation programmes in the Westville Prison. It also outlined the purpose of the study and the critical questions to be researched. The limitations are presented and a few terms defined. The next chapter will review literature of studies that have been done on prison education.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

In examining literature over the decade on research done in prisons, it became clear that the different research ~~done~~ has focused on gangs and delinquency, e.g. Glanz, 1990; Trojanowics and Morash, 1992; Houston and Muller, 1997. Rehabilitation in general has also been looked at by researchers who wanted to establish whether or not it is effective.

These researchers include Stevens, 1991; Cootzee, 1995; Bukurura, 1999 and Mtshali, 1999.

- Glanz (1990:188) states that society is not doing what it should towards a successful re-integration and re-socialisation of released prisoners. This is caused by a lot of factors and stigma attached to imprisonment. He suggests that the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has a duty of encouraging the public to become involved in the re-integration of released offenders.
- Trojanowics and Morash (1992:9) argue that even if prisoners do undergo programmes, programmes are considered effective when they accomplish one or more of several objectives including reducing recidivism, increasing restitution payment to victims, providing education and job training to offenders.
- Houston and Muller have done research on prison gangs. They quote Jackson (1997:1) who believes that gangs and gang membership are more complicated than most people will acknowledge and that very few people recognise that gangs serve a legitimate purpose. This resounds with Everret (1994:83) and Lotter (1988-89:70-71).

- Prison is castigated as being “...the most expensive and futile of all the ways currently used to try and combat crime...” (Stevens, 1991:5). X
- Cootzee et al (1995:118) advocates rehabilitation programmes i.e. treatment programmes as being useful in the “unlearning” of criminal behaviour. He goes on to say that criminal behaviour can be attributed to certain internal factors and that this behaviour has to be exposed and treated. He emphasises the importance of humane conditions in prisons, prisoners must be treated with dignity. X
- Bukurura (1999:16) states that crime however measured appears to be on the increase in South Africa. This he says is indicated in police statistics, unofficial surveys, independent research reports and other sources including the media reports. X
- Mtshali (1999:145) concluded his study on the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes, which he conducted in Westville Prison, that these programmes are effective since the analysis of the data he collected demonstrated that the sample had more first time offenders, than recidivists (ex-offender who get re-arrested). X hyper

There are gaps and silences in literature on studies focusing on the five programmes offered in prisons i.e. custodial, welfare, educational, psychological and religious programmes. In this chapter, the concept of rehabilitation is explained. Selected literature on South African prisons is discussed and international trends examined.

2.1. Rehabilitation

According to Carney (1979:407) rehabilitation is the restoration of an individual to a useful place in the society, through therapy and education. For Cronklin (1986:433) rehabilitation in general is the restoration of criminals to a law-abiding way of life X

through treatment. More specifically rehabilitation is the result of planned intervention focused on the offender that reduces criminal activity, whether the reduction is achieved by changes in personality, abilities, attitudes, values and behaviour. Excluded from rehabilitation are the effects of fear and intimidation or specific deterrence and the maturational effects that cause older offenders to live a life of crime. Cootzee et al (1995:156) define rehabilitation as a multidisciplinary treatment programme designed to meet the particular needs of offenders with an aim of equipping them, as far as possible with the life skills they will require to function effectively in society. From these definitions it is clear the rehabilitation is aimed at “unlearning” of faulty behaviour by offenders so as to become law-abiding civilians, who are self-sufficient.

In the literature that was reviewed the researcher came across two main, conflicting notions on rehabilitation, viz. the notion that rehabilitation is effective in changing a person’s behaviour and attitude (Stein 1961; Cullen & Gilbert 1982; Gendreau & Ross 1983; Greenwood & Zimring 1985; Stevens 1991; Mtshali 1999) and the notion that rehabilitation is not effective and thus cannot change criminal behaviour (Cohen 1956; Schur 1971; Martinson 1974; Adams 1977; Bukurura 1999).

- Stein (1961:73-76) as quoted by Cootzee (1995:14) is of the opinion that first time offenders are likely to be rehabilitated and that recidivists cannot be easily corrected through treatment. This, he adds, is due to the differences in their needs and in their experiences.
- Steven’s (1991:4) point of view is that the prisoner has been physically rejected by society and subjected to a totally abnormal environment with its own culture, values

and norms. Most prisoners in their need to belong, will identify with the prison sub-culture, which usually acknowledges a negative and antisocial code of behaviour. Irvin and Shaw, quoted by Stevens (1991:5) indicate that the United States' prisons failed miserably to rehabilitate their inmates. World-wide recidivist rates of between 60% and 86% further prove that prison does little to rehabilitate (Stevens, 1991:5). He goes on to argue that "...the prison is, in spite of all the treatment facilities and professional personnel, the least suitable place where personality development and therefore behaviour changes could be engendered." Rehabilitation of the general so-called "prison population" does not appear to be possible in so negative an environment.

Cohen maintains that through imprisonment a new culture can be learnt, new tactics and advanced methods for committing further crimes. Older inmates may transmit this new culture through shared experiences. A delinquent subculture is a way of dealing with problems of adjusting to the norms and values of the society (Cohen, 1956:13).

2.2. Literature on Education of Offenders

2.2.1. The International Review

For the purposes of this study, the researcher looked at juvenile prison educational programmes of several countries such as Canada, Denmark, Massachusetts, Virginia, London, North Carolina and Saudi Arabia. Most of these countries do not have specialised programmes for juvenile offenders, they are catered for in programmes similar to those of adult male and female prisoners. Denmark, Canada and North Carolina

do have programmes designed specifically for juvenile offenders. According to the Journal of Correctional Education of 1999; the educational programmes for juvenile offenders in Canada include living skills programmes where prisoners are taught the following:

- Cognitive skills which include problem solving skills and critical thinking skills. X
- Leisure educational programmes and community integration programmes which includes courses dealing with health, wellness, nutrition, recreation and counselling. Prisoners are prepared for going back to the community and as part of the programme they are exposed to release strategies such as temporary absences, work releases and day parole.
- Literacy and continuous learning programmes, which include basic writing and numeracy skills.
- Substance Abuse Programmes which addresses unique needs and ^{the} social context in which offenders find themselves such as histories of dependence, financial difficulties etc. X

Learners also do programmes that include understanding of multicultural dynamics, vocational training, peer support, all of which are educational and intervention programmes. Each programme component looks at the problems that led to imprisonment and addresses these problems. Educational programmes are unique to each and every juvenile offender depending on that individual's needs, achievements and abilities. According to Rentzmann (1998:19), in Denmark, the justification for existence of prisons is "normalisation", which is part of the educational programmes' vision. Normalisation

means that conditions in prison must be arranged so that they correspond to conditions outside to the extent possible. Punishment is solely the deprivation of liberty. Prisoners retain their civil rights e.g. the right to vote, conjugal rights etc. Their educational programmes include reading, writing, Mathematics and there are more specific programmes such as those for drug addicts, daily life skills, anger management and conflict resolution. In Denmark ~~the prisoners~~^{are} by law, obliged to work. Programmes are designed such that they cater for working hours (Rentzmann, 1998:19).

Unique individual based programmes are possible in Denmark because it is a small country ^{of} which ~~is~~ ±47 000 km² with a population of ±5,5 million people. The country is wealthy and they do not have a poverty problem. Danes enjoy free education including universities, free medical care and a fine social security system (Tolstrup 1999). Jacobsen (2000) in his article "Prison Education needs to be more relevant" stated that most programmes offered in prisons were not relevant to the needs of the prisoners. He further stated that most prisoners regard most of these courses as "Mickey Mouse Courses" with no relevance whatsoever. Many prisoners according to this research, only participated in these courses because they wanted to be seen as being pro-rehabilitation and to ensure that they qualify for parole (early release from prison). Prisoners who display good behaviour are released early from prison as an incentive for good behaviour. Prisoners know about this and they sometimes pretend to be good and rehabilitated just to qualify for parole. According to Young (1997) North-Carolina, prison authorities make it their responsibility to ensure that all their inmates are skilled upon release. Education is seen as a critical process of preparing inmates for their return to society. Their programmes

include Adult Basic Education, high school education and vocational education. Community colleges and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill play a pivotal role in ensuring that inmates study through correspondence. Courses are voluntary and they include basic academic, auto mechanics, wiring, plumbing and computer literacy. The University also offers Psychology, English, Business Administration and Business Management. Inmates involved in educational programmes are given some responsibilities that include running of the library, taking messages and working in kitchens – reading recipes etc. Young (1997) maintains that educating prisoners is necessary, it is not just being “soft” on crime but is one of the ways of making sure that they do not keep recycling through the system. She argues that educating prisoners helps them in becoming self-sufficient and further points out that the cost of education is minute in comparison to its long-term benefits because unskilled prisoners are twice likely to re-offend due to unemployment.

2.2.2. The South African Context

Everett (1994:36) quoted a preamble to a code of conduct passed at the National Education Conference in 1992 which says “A whole generation of our youth have grown up believing that education and learning has no value”. This suggests that a shift in the mindset is critical for any meaningful education and learning to take place. Education and learning in general must be seen to be adding value. Stein, quoted by Cootzee (1995:4) is of the opinion that first time offenders can be rehabilitated and that recidivists (ex-offenders who get re-arrested) cannot be easily corrected through educational programmes. This suggests that perhaps different programmes should be designed for

first-time offenders and recidivists because of their different needs and different experiences (Cootzee, 1995). At the moment all prisoners undergo similar educational rehabilitation programmes. The high rate of overcrowding in prisons would make it very difficult and expensive to cater for the different types of inmates. Similar treatment programmes offered to inmates without a proper needs analysis being done, leads to most prisoners ^{who} to undergo them ~~and~~ ^{to} not benefit in any way (Cootzee, 1995:119). Another main problem with the education of offenders is the stigma that imprisonment carries. Schur (1971:7) states that when an individual is given a label as a criminal, that person behaves according to the label attached on him. What are the implications of offering educational programmes to prisoners? Is it fair to ask them to rise above the “labels” given to them coupled with the daily challenges of being in prison to behave like and be learners?

Consider the following analogy by Cohen (1955:3) on ~~the~~ delinquent subcultures that through imprisonment a new culture is learnt where new tactics and advanced methods of committing further crimes are acquired. Does teaching and learning stand a chance if these are the effects of imprisonment in an offender’s mind? South African educational rehabilitation programmes seem to be geared at skilling a small percentage of inmates and preparing them for employment after release. ^C Sadly South Africa is one of the countries with a high level of unemployment, a lot of graduates and highly skilled people are without employment. Most inmates end up in prisons, precisely because of that. People then resort to crime and invest in it for a living. The problem therefore is not just lack of skills but unemployment coupled with poverty. Ex-offenders are not guaranteed employment after undergoing educational programmes and thus are likely to go back to

crime. An interesting observation in both scenarios (South African and Internationally) is that the role of prison education is seen as skilling offered to inmates with an aim of preparing them to be job seekers, ^a Although very few companies or individuals would be keen to employ an ex-offender (Glanz, 1988:188).

2.3. Evaluation of Educational Rehabilitation Programmes

The evaluation of educational programmes is important to establish if they serve the needs of the clientele – the prisoners. According to Trojanowics and Morash (1982:9) even programmes that have been planned properly, on a sound theory, when evaluated they have ^{proved} revealed not to be effective. Their argument is that programmes are considered effective only when they accomplish one or more of the several objectives including ^{the redoc} recidivism, increasing restitution payment to victims, providing relevant education and training to offenders. They further quote Robert Martinson who claims that there are no successful programmes for either juvenile or adult offenders because programmes have failed to treat delinquency effectively. In Martinson's view rehabilitation does not work. People who disagree with Martinson's view argue that there is a need to match offenders with programmes designed (Trojanowics and Morash, 1992:9). It would seem that rehabilitation could be effective if it serves best the needs of the clientele – prisoners. Most citizens and juvenile justice personnel are cynical about trying to help juvenile delinquents in special treatment programmes because of the overcrowding in juvenile prisons coupled with the increase in serious juvenile crimes, the absence of resources and trained personnel to put programmes into operation (Trojanowics and Morash, 1992:10);

Lamar Empey, a noted criminologist quoted by Trojanowics and Morash (1992:2) enthuses that “faith in the concept of rehabilitation has been seriously eroded”.

2.4. Barriers to Educational Programmes in Prisons

Educational rehabilitation programmes are threatened by a handful of barriers/blocks that are evident in all the prisons, nationally and internationally. The main threat to educational programmes in prison is prison gangs [Lotter, 1988-89:70-71)]. Everett (1994:83) agrees with Jackson and Lotter, he further adds that gangs offer certain services to its members e.g. protection from victimisation by other inmates, ^{the} alleviation ~~of~~ ^{of} some of the pains of imprisonment, e.g. idleness, boredom, institutionalisation and powerlessness. By joining a gang, feelings of powerlessness and low-esteem are easily overcome. Given all these facts, one could safely argue that educational programmes should be seen to be relevant and value adding by “gang members”, otherwise they do not stand a chance to succeed. Other threats to educational programmes include drug dependency and smuggling, which is practised by almost all prisoners. In order for any prison programme to survive it must put in place mechanisms to deal with these threats.

2.5. Conclusion

A Literature review of juvenile educational programmes internationally and in South Africa, clearly demonstrates that we are faced with different challenges and barriers. Other countries do not have an unemployment rate as high as ours, this makes it easy for other countries to have specialised, need-based programmes for their juveniles because they do not have a very ^{large} high prison population. Another main problem in South Africa

besides unemployment is illiteracy. The total population in South Africa is ±42 000 000, out of this figure 15 540 000 have less than standard five of formal schooling. This works out to about 37% of the total population of ±5 358 032, out of which 1 607 410 people are illiterate, which is about 30% (Edu – Source number 24 May 1999). The rate of illiteracy coupled with unemployment leads to more crime. Crime may lead to imprisonment and this explains the high population ~~rate~~ of prisons. X

This chapter was an attempt to look at education and rehabilitation, what it is and to find out whether prison education is rehabilitation or just a mimic of the curriculum offered by outside schools. It survey selected international literature on the issue of prison education. The South African context was then examined and a few ideas on why evaluation of prison educational programmes postured. Barriers perceived by the researcher to the success of educational programmes were presented. In the next chapter the research methodology incorporated in this study is discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.0. Introduction

In this chapter I ~~will~~^{shall} describe the methodology that was used in order to produce data for the main question of this study: ↗

How is the educational rehabilitation programme being experienced by young offenders?

I ~~will~~^{shall} explain how I selected my sample and a description of the instruments used to produce data will be clearly presented followed by a discussion on how data was collected. I will also discuss the limitations of the research methods used.

3.1. Sample used in the study

3.1.1. Learners

The learner prisoner I did the pilot study with, was very bright, a rich informer who was willing to assist me with the data I needed. In fact he is the reason I started this study. I first came across this learner in 1999 when he mysteriously landed in my class. I say mysteriously because he was not even supposed to be in the Juvenile Centre where I teach. He is a high risk prisoner who was supposed to be housed in a maximum security prison (i.e. Medium B, in Westville Prison). He is serving a 20 year sentence for murder and robbery. He was sentenced in 1998. He says he requested in court to be sent to the Juvenile Section because he wanted to pursue his studies. Permission was granted for that – which is very strange, since Correctional Services is about security but the judge in this case was sympathetic. I had read a lot about his case, it was highly publicised because he

killed a ^mMedical ^dDoctor, a White tourist for his car. He was 17 years old when he committed this crime and being imprisoned rescued him from an angry community who wanted to take the law into their own hands. Needless to say, I had formed my opinion of him even before he came to our section. I must say I was surprised when I finally met this learner prisoner because he was a direct opposite of what I had expected. He came across as cultured, very positive and very serious about his school work, not the aggressive murderer I had warned my colleagues about. By the end of the first quarter I was singing his praises. I went on to the extent of calling him "an ideal learner prisoner". I met his family and had a deep-seated interest to understand him and his experiences more and find out where he drew his strength from. That is how he became the first learner that I had a detailed personal interview with. The qualities that he possessed and the unique experiences that he had undergone made him a rich informer.

The ten learners who took part in the focus group interviews were chosen randomly. My main dilemma was the fact that the prisoners in general are not happy with disclosing their views and feelings for a variety of reasons. Some are forced not to do so by the gang ringleaders of the gangs they are involved with. Some are just not comfortable with opening up because of the many bad experiences they had been through. Over and above that, research in prison is very rare, so if you talk about a study that you are conducting that must involve them, it is a bit foreign. My main concern was conducting a study on a sample with a variety of crimes, in order to get rich data (i.e. From petty crimes to more serious, aggressive crimes). Age and grade was also taken into consideration. I involved 2

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recidivists (ex-offenders who have been imprisoned again) on purpose to make the study more meaningful and more exciting.

3.1.2. Teachers

A total population of 9 prison teachers was involved in educational rehabilitation programmes was used purely because it was a manageable population and I was curious to truly understand how each one of them created meaning and interpreted the curriculum they offered these young men and what their varied experiences had been. This population consisted of 6 males and 3 females. There were 4 respondents between the age of 30-34 years, 3 were 35 years and above and 2 of them were between 25-29 years. Seven respondents have teaching diplomas, two have degrees namely B.Ed. Degree and a B.Compt. Degree.

3.1.3. The Control Educationist

Mr Pillay, the co-ordinator of educational rehabilitation programmes formed part of the sample due to his position and experience in prison education. He is the most senior person in the department of education in prison. He has been with the Department of Correctional Services for the past 18 years. He heads a staff of 38 personnel, which includes educators, recreation officers and clerks. Gaining access to the prison was easy because I teach there and enjoy a good relationship with the learners and prison warders.

3.2. Instruments

The instruments for this study consisted of semi-structured interviews for the learners and

the co-ordinator (Mr Pillay) and a questionnaire for the teachers. All interviews were tape-recorded and interview schedules were used during the different interviews. Photographs of the prison section (the cell) where learners are housed were taken and two classrooms were also photographed.

3.3. Methodology Used in the Study

The following research design was used in this study:

- Interview with an individual juvenile prisoner
- Two focus group interviews with juvenile prisoners
- Interview with co-ordinator
- Questionnaires to educators

Although my study was qualitative, I made use of the questionnaires to gather data from the educators of the Westville Youth School. The main reason for this was that I wanted to triangulate my data. I made use of focus group interviews because they are a useful tool in triangulating with the more traditional forms of interviewing and questionnaires (Cohen et al, 2000:288).

Morgan (1988:9) is of the opinion that focus group interviews help participants to interact with each other rather than with the interviewer. This is significant because it makes their views to emerge above the interviewers' agenda. Focus group interviews also helped me to gather rich data in a short space of time. An interview guide approach was used during the collection of data. According to Cohen (2000:271) this approach increases the comprehensiveness of data and thus data collection becomes systematic for each

respondent. The interviewer ^{is} ~~can~~ be able to anticipate logical gaps and gets a chance to close those gaps. Interviews thus become fairly conversational and situational.

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3.3.1. Semi-Structured Interviews (with learners)

Semi-structured interviews were preferred because of their flexible nature. I had to be very careful when it come to prisoners. They have a very difficult time sharing their feelings openly especially during the focus groups interviews where I had 5 learners all in one group. Although I had explained the motives for this study, because of my position, as a member of the management team of the educational programmes, I could not help but notice some hesitation in the participant's faces and responses. The semi-structured interview enabled me to interact with the participants, by probing for further information. This made it easy for me to get answers to all the questions I had asked. Prisoners have a tendency of straying away from direct questions asked, they tend to give responses that are too long or dramatise a lot. Semi-structured interviews enabled me to steer our discussion towards the right direction. Using the interview guide I coded and categorised responses, this was very useful later on when I analysed data. I followed 4 types of questions in the guide i.e. basic descriptive questions, follow up questions, experience and example questions and comparison and contrast questions (Janesick : 1998).

3.3.2. Interview with the Control Educationist

For the interview with Mr Pillay, no other instrument would have been more appropriate. He is somebody who draws from vast experience of his service in this department and has so much to share. Any other instrument would have dampened his high spirits and

certainly the rich data that was collected would not have been possible. All interviews were taped with permission from interviewees and transcribed by myself. They were later coded and categorised for analysis.

3.3.3. Questionnaires

Although this study was mainly qualitative, I used ^{an} ~~a~~ open-ended questionnaire to produce data from the educators. Although this method has a number of limitations, it was preferred by the researcher due to the time constraints. I would have liked to have semi-structured interviews with individual teachers if I had more time. Interviewing learners and co-ordinators of programmes was not enough because I wanted to use an integrated approach (triangulation) to increase the validity of my findings.

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3.3.4. Photographs

Photographic evidence was vital as it captured visually, the context in which the research participants interacted. The photographs were taken with the permission of the prison authorities.

3.4. Limitations of the Research Methods Used

Interviews have their limitations because participants are not always honest in their responses and they tend to give socially desirable responses. Also, being a teacher in the prison school, learners perceive me in certain ways and this might have affected their responses. I am sure my position, coupled with my tone of voice or emphasis influenced participants responses. The interview guide approach has its shortcomings. It can lead to

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the interviewer to becoming too flexible in sequencing and wording of questions. This can reduce the comparability of responses since different people interviewed are likely to give different responses (Cohen et al, 2000:271). The questionnaire I gave to the teacher was too long. This I only realized when I analysed the data and I am sure it affected the way they responded. Being an educator myself and having had the experience of filling questionnaires, I am aware of how annoying it may be, when you have ~~tons of~~ ^{large amounts} administrative duties to fulfil. I am sure semi-structured interviews would have been more appropriate than using questionnaires.

3.5. Conclusion

During data collection, I tried to take off the cap of being a teacher and colleague to my sample and it was very difficult. They could not understand the new cap I had on which was one of “researcher”. My role was that of an observer and participant, and I tried to create a cordial atmosphere with learners, my colleagues and boss, Mr Pillay. Our relationships were that of trust, mutual respect and deep commitment on my part, to listen and understand each participant’s experiences. If you put “prisoner” and “trust” in one sentence, it is always very difficult! In this chapter, I outlined the decisions for the methodology and strategy for data production. The sample used in the study was described in detail and the instruments used explained. ^{The} Time factor was the principal ^X influential factor for the research design. In the next chapter data that was produced through interviews and questionnaires will be presented and analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation and Analysis of Data

4.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter ^{the} methodology used to produce data in this study was examined. In this chapter data that was produced through interviews and questionnaires will be presented and analysed. The main question that this study is trying to look at is, how is the educational rehabilitation programme being experienced by juvenile offenders? The discussion will thus commence with the learner interviews that would include one personal interview and two focus group interviews. Thereafter the teacher questionnaire responses will be presented and the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the interview held with the Chief Educationist.

4.1. Findings

4.1.1. Learner Interviews

4.1.1.1. Individual Learner : Linda

Linda is serving a sentence of 20 years imprisonment in Westville Prison. He is a first-time offender and is in for murder and robbery. He is 21 years old and is a first born of the 3 children of Mr and Mrs Mchunu from Esikhawini in Zululand. He has been incarcerated for 3 years and is doing Grade 12 in the Westville Youth School. His favourite subjects are History and English. After finishing Matric he would like to study law and be either a Lawyer or a Political Analyst.

Out of the interview with Linda, the following themes emerged:

Have these identities were changed to protect individual rights to confidentiality?

- Rehabilitation
- Curriculum issues
- Differences between inside and outside school
- Gangsterism and its impact
- Best experiences in class
- A vision behind closed doors

The above categories will be discussed below:

i) Rehabilitation

When Linda was asked about his views on rehabilitation and his experience of imprisonment, his response was that rehabilitation is an individual issue. The prison and its personnel ^{are} ~~is~~ not responsible for a person's rehabilitation. X

"...here in prison, actually you are not rehabilitated, you are the one who rehabilitates yourself..." X

His experience of imprisonment is that there are no good experiences in prison; prison is a different environment with bad experiences. He is quick to point out that he has learnt a lot though, out of the bad experiences he has encountered in prison. This response clearly demonstrates that it will take more than prison programmes to rehabilitate individuals. The question that arises is whether prison life really rehabilitates, and how could the formal educational programmes turn an individual away from a criminal life? If rehabilitation depends on every individual prisoner, it goes without question that not all prisoners can be rehabilitated hence recidivism (prison return rate) will always be part and parcel of the prison system.

ii) Curriculum Issues

When asked questions concerning the curriculum offered at the Westville Youth School, Linda acknowledged that the time-table is adequate, they have enough time to learn and to do their homework. The main problems pertaining to the curriculum that Linda highlighted included the fact that the school had a very limited choice of subjects that learners can do. The problem is that learners are exposed to a new curriculum for the first time in prison, e.g. Technical Drawing and no assistance is given to bridge the gap between work done in outside schools and that done in the prison schools.

“They just told you that you are either going to do this or either this, if you don’t fit in this means you don’t have a space in this school...I never did technical drawing in my life but I was compelled to do it...”

The learner prisoner’s response displays an understanding of the curriculum as “string of subjects to be followed” hence he limits his responses on concerns around Technical Drawing. Such an understanding of the curriculum is not in keeping with Schubert (1987) who defines curriculum as a continuous interaction among the four common places: teachers, learners, subject matter and milieu.

Linda felt that the curriculum offered in the prison school was still very “primitive”; learners were not exposed to computers, as is a trend with outside schools. The school did not have a library and learners were not exposed to current information because they did not read newspapers and books. When it comes to the actual teaching, Linda enjoys it but complains that most teachers use the mother tongue (even in Grade 12) but expect

learners to answer in English and to write essays in English. Linda felt this is bad and that teachers did not realize that they were destroying the learners.

"...they (teachers) are not using English during class which I think that will destroy the future of the learners because they are not exposed to English..."

Clearly language is "troublesome" with regard to examinations. Grade 12 learners from the prison school write examinations identical to those written in Grade 12 from outside schools. Being taught in the mother tongue (Zulu) does not give learners a chance to practice English, which is so vital for them to do well in examinations. How then are they expected to compete with reputable schools where ~~only~~ English is the ^{medium} medium of instruction? It is a battle they lose even before the fight has begun. To what extent then is this serious teaching and learning? Is this not just tokenistic learning where teachers have secured, well-paying jobs at the expense of punished learners?

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As far as the assessment of learners is concerned, Linda felt more could still be done at this school, e.g. monthly tests for continuous assessment purposes could be administered.

In respect of the learner's perception of teacher attitude, Linda responded that only a handful of teachers were supportive, most of them do not care. *"...the problem is some of the teachers are not interested in supporting the learners at the school...they only care for their own benefits, because sometimes they confess that they are only earning money for their living."*

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Linda had this to say about his favourite teachers. *"...they are very supportive of me. They don't only teach me the subject, they support me in everything, about the career guidance..."*. When Linda was asked ~~of~~ how learners perceive schooling in prison, his

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response was that most learners were not serious about schooling, he even added that “...the majority of learners go to school with the aim of just wasting time, because when you are going to stay in the section for the whole day it is very boring – but when you are there at school time is going”.

Learners felt that they are in prison to serve their sentences not to learn. For effective teaching and learning to occur a relationship of “trust and common vision” between teachers and learners is crucial, this response clearly demonstrates lack of commitment and co-operation in the prison school. It comes as no surprise that there are problems in this school. Learners see the school as an exciting alternative to a boring prison cell: what an interesting reason to attend school. This bears serious implications and challenges to schooling in prison and the question is, how can teachers begin to teach learners who self-profess to be criminals and not learners?

iii) Differences Between Inside and Outside School

In respect of the question, “What are the differences between the prison school and the outside school?”

Linda’s response was that in the prison school he had been given a lot of guidance and support around his career choices, this is information that he was not exposed to in the outside school. He says there was a lot of “time” in prison to introspect and focus on the future, this has helped him to be more positive about what lies ahead. His whole perception of schooling has changed. He says “...because of the experiences I came across, now I am more prepared to go that extra mile compared to when I was outside.” He admitted though that he missed the fun and entertainment of the outside school, where

he was free to do as he pleased. Schooling in prison is divorced from entertainment and activities that a normal school has. Most of these differences are due to security concerns. Anything, no matter how useful or positive it may be, that threatens security is out of question. Excursions, visits to outside, laboratories are out of question.

iv) **Gangsterism and its Impact**

Responding to the question on whether or not gangs contributed negatively towards teaching and schooling, Linda said that gangs have a negative effect on schooling because when you are involved in gangsterism, you do not have enough time to concentrate on your schoolwork. He went on to say that *“the gang ring leaders of the gangsters are the ones who must be targeted because if they are the ones who are involved in the front, that will have a good effect to other prisoners and other gangsters in prison.”*

Linda was asked about his views on gang activities and how these impacted on him as an individual. He said that gangsterism had advantages and disadvantages. The main advantages of being a gang member is that you are given a “voice” – you get a chance to “stand and fight” for yourself. When you are not a gang member “...you are treated so harshly.” On the other hand, he says gangs could “destroy” a person because if you are involved in a gang you are forced to perform certain activities such as smuggling and you are bound by the rules of the gang you belong to. Sometimes being a gang member means learning more about criminal life. It’s always said that gangsterism already exists in that prison. Gangs are a major hurdle to programmes in prisons; most of the gang members are anti-rehabilitation. Literature review bears witness to the fact that

gangsterism is practiced in all prisons world-wide. Parry (2000) says “being in a gang has become a way of life”. He refers to prison gangs as a “cancer” to the community. An attempt to do away with it is a lost cause. Prison officials should come up with strategies of using gangs to their advantage. Gang ringleaders should be targeted and engaged in dialogue that is aimed at finding middle ground because experience has shown that they are a force that cannot be wished away.

v) Best Experiences in Class (at school)

In respect of the most memorable experience in class, Linda gave me this response, “...my best experience... was in Grade 11 where one of my teachers was having a birthday party and she included us in her birthday party, I was very surprised to be involved because I never thought that some teachers can do that to prisoners because some of the members they treat prisoners as if they are no longer human beings”. Being included into a personal festivity affirms the learner. This shows clearly why humane conditions are important in prison, after all prisoners are human beings and ought to be treated as such.

vi) A Vision Behind Closed Doors

The issue of change is located at two levels for Linda:

- Personal change
- Administrative change to the management of education

On a personal level, upon release, Linda wants to start a new life. He wants to plough back into the community he caused pain and heartache in the past, by getting involved in community projects to prove to everyone that he has “changed.”

Administratively, Linda feels that the management of educational programmes should be more committed.

“...I think the management should be reviewed. The management is not so strong...” X

Teachers should investigate the profile of their prospective students, i.e. their interests and attitudes towards schooling. This, he said was very important because a large percentage of learners attending the prison school were not interested, they are just “killing time” and this hampers the progress of the school.

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vii) Significance Findings from Personal Interview with Linda X

Seminal writers on rehabilitation define it as “a result of planned intervention focused on the offender that reduces criminal activity” (Cronklin, 1986:433). This definition is ⁱⁿ ~~a~~ X direct contrast with the findings from Linda’s interview. It suggests that rehabilitation can be put in black and white, in a form of a plan or a programme and be imposed on prisoners to assist them to “unlearn” faulty behaviour. Linda’s views were that rehabilitation is an individual responsibility. ^{These who start programmes of} X of rehabilitating people should understand the dynamics coupled with such a responsibility. Failure to understand this contributes negatively to services rendered. The numerous problems associated with the curriculum offered in the prison school is as a result of its rigidity. Teaching and learning behind closed doors faces challenges which, according to Linda, include interference by gangs,

lack of accountability and commitment from teachers and management. Language concerns are expressed, and attitude towards schooling is negative within a context of non-caring teachers in the prison school.

4.1.1.2. Focus Group Interviews

4.1.1.2.1. Profile of Sample

Two focus group interviews were done, each with 5 learners. The profile of these prisoners is indicated in the table below:

Table 4.1. : Profile of prison learners who took part in focus group interviews

Prisoner	Age	Sentence	Type of Offence	Grade
1	20	5 years	Attempted robbery	12
2	20	5 years	Rape	12
3	22	10 years	Armed robbery	12
4	19	12 years	Murder	11
5	17	7 years	Theft	10
6	21	2 years	Attempted theft	12
7	18	15 years	Murder	10
8	17	3 years	Culpable Homicide	12
9	18	18 years	Robbery	10
10	16	4 years	Assault	11

All ten pensioners who were interviewed are involved in educational programmes in the Westville Prison School. Prisoners 5 and 6 are recidivists. Prisoner 5 is in prison for the third time for the same crime, i.e. car theft. Prisoner 6 is back for the second time. Both of them have been in and out of prison for not more than a year before coming back again. Questions that the focus groups were asked appears in appendix 2. Out of the responses given by the focus groups I elicited the following themes:

- Rehabilitation (unlearning of criminal behaviour)
- Gangsterism
- Curriculum (Timetable Resources)
- Management/Control of educational programmes

These themes are similar to those that emerged from Linda's interview to facilitate discussions between Linda's interview and the focus group interview.

i) **Rehabilitation**

When prisoners were asked of their opinion on rehabilitation, the feeling was that rehabilitation was "possible" with prisoners who wanted to "change". The general view was that it couldn't be imposed; it depends on the "individual prisoner". Intervention of any sort, be it programmes could not "force" any prisoner to get rehabilitated. Life skills were seen as crucial for rehabilitation to occur because they could help change people's (prisoner's) perceptions and attitudes. These responses were particularly interesting to me because they resonate with sentiments that Linda echoed in the personal interview, i.e. rehabilitation is an individual responsibility that cannot be imposed in any way. The focus group members felt that they could not trust the prison personnel, i.e. prison warders, teachers and social workers. From experience they had learnt that the prison personnel are not genuine nor trustworthy. Friends (peers) who are positive about rehabilitation were seen as more influential and trustworthy than the prison personnel. Two prisoners who were in the focus group, narrated stories that supported the above argument. They had confided in the prison officials about two very sensitive and delicate issues (one was on HIV/AIDS and the other on gangsterism). They both learnt the hard

X
control

X

way that prison officials could not be trusted because on both occasions those discussions, which were private and were to be kept as such, soon became public knowledge. The question that arises is, can trust exist in a prison environment? For me the whole notion of trust in such an environment is impossible, yet for any learning to be successful trust is a fundamental and critical component. How then is rehabilitation possible if there is no trust between the inmates and the people who are tasked with rehabilitating them?

ii) Gangsterism

In response to the question “Is gangsterism important in prison?” The prisoners felt that gangsterism is part and parcel of imprisonment and that to combat it would be a daunting task. Feelings about it differed, some were in favour of it and others were against it. Reasons for favouring it ranged from those who felt that it contributed to “brotherhood” and friendship to those who felt “survival” without gangsterism would be impossible. Those opposing it, felt that it led to conformity thus prisoners were discouraged from being “individuals”, gangsterism confines people to a life of dependency, they are not allowed to think for themselves, they are not taught responsibility – since the group does all this for them. All of them though, shared the same sentiments about schooling vs. gangsterism. They felt that it should not be practised at school, because it disrupted the teaching and learning. Gang leaders were seen as the people who should ascertain that gang activities were only done after school in the sections. There was no agreement though on how this could be done since gang leaders are a biggest kept secret in prison. Again the issue of the importance of gang leaders’ role as highlighted by Linda was

mentioned. Success of any programme in prison depends on winning over the gang members and this can only be done by roping in gang leaders and not by alienating them, as is the case in most prisons.

iii) Curriculum Issues

The researcher asked the focus group “*What do you think of the curriculum offered in the prison school?*”

The response was that the subject choices were very limited and there was not enough options given to learners. Some of them were concerned with the lack of information and/or marketing of educational programmes as such. This was seen as very important because some subjects offered at this school were not “common subjects”. Two of the focus group members confessed to hearing about Technical Drawing for the first time here in the prison school. Lack of exposure to computer literacy at this day and age was seen as very primitive and there was a feeling that the whole idea of schooling in prison was just a token to “bluff” prisoners. Limited and narrow subject choices seem to be the main flaw with the prison school. Prisoners who are incarcerated come from all walks of life; the curriculum of the prison school must cater for such diversity if serious learning is to occur in the school. The main purpose of the school should be to serve the prisoners; taxpayer’s money must be used effectively and efficiently.

When asked about the timetable and the availability of resources, learners responded by praising the good effort that went toward the drawing-up of a good timetable, the biggest

concern was that the timetable was not honoured. *“Teachers who do not want to teach get away with it because the principal is hardly at school...”* .

The principal’s office is not in the school premises, so the principal does not know exactly what is going on at the school. Learners felt that the main challenge that faced the prison school was lack of “accountability and commitment” by teachers.

On the issue of the availability of resources, the learners felt that there were adequate resources at this school but they were not used effectively. The quoted that only one or two teachers used teaching aids, e.g. the overhead projectors and charts. Some of the resources are used to *“...decorate the staff room...”* . The availability of current and relevant information in a form of newspapers and books was seen as a big stumbling block. The school does not have a library so subjects like Accounting, History and Economics, which need more insight on current issues were seen as irrelevant curriculum for a school with a library. Grade 12 learners felt disadvantaged when compared to Grade 12 learners from other schools because of lack of exposure to information, i.e. library books, newspapers, radios and televisions, yet they write examinations similar to those written by learners who enjoy these privileges. Their greatest concern is how external examiners perceive their work, their answers may be seen as irrelevant when compared with those of learners from outside schools. The feeling was that in a way they were alienated and made to feel that they are prisoners and not learners. It is such a sad state of affairs that learners from this “deprived environment” are expected to write examinations identical to those of learners from outside schools who are not only exposed to

computers, internet, newspapers both at school and in their homes but who have schools with libraries and laboratories.

The researcher asked the focus group about the attitudes of teachers towards teaching/learning and towards them as learners. Most of them responded by saying that teachers were not serious with their work, *“some of the teachers are known for not finishing the syllabi...they have never finished it since they started teaching here 5 years ago”*. Teachers were perceived as not being accountable; *“they do as they please.”* This they said was displayed by the high rate of teacher absenteeism, which contributed to syllabi not being finished in time. One prisoner specifically responded by saying that *“these teachers must make this school a “school” not a “jail school”.*” Such a response suggest that perhaps teachers are not educating with honesty they are just tokenistic and not serious about rehabilitating their learners. Although some of the teachers were reported to be very supportive *“seeing us as learners not prisoners...”* Others were seen as not having the best interest of the learners at heart. Linda echoed similar concerns about the attitudes of some of the teachers, one that clearly demonstrates ignorance and a lack of commitment and accountability.

iv) Management/Control of Educational Programmes

Responding to the question “What changes would you like to see at the school?” Learners responded by saying, they would like to see the principal/management getting “organised”. They would like to see the school being controlled and managed better. Teachers should honour their periods and cover the syllabi. Teachers should be

accountable and committed. The principal should arrange for class visits so that he can identify the teachers who are “lazy”. Teachers should keep registers to discourage learners from absenting themselves. Linda was also concerned about the way in which educational programmes were managed; teacher commitment to schooling in prison was seen as very crucial.

The learners’ greatest concern was that the school should be registered as a public school because since the school is registered as a private school they are not allowed to write supplementary examinations. Another perceived advantage of registering the school as a public school would be the involvement of the department of education in the prison school, which would lead to “more accountability and proper control of the school.”
Supplementary examinations are not written in this school since it is registered as a private school, this is to the detriment of learners who have to repeat the subject for the whole year even when the mark they got qualifies them for a re-write.

The focus group echoed Linda’s sentiments of having the principal’s office moved down to the school premises in order to decrease teacher absenteeism rate and so that the principal could get a chance to be more involved in the school. A general feeling by the group was that they would also like to have a student representative committee so that students could have a “voice” and be free to give inputs towards effective running of the school without being victimised. It is interesting to note that there is a school where the students have “no voice” where teachers just do as they please. Elsewhere there are SGB’s (School Governing Bodies) to ascertain that all stakeholders have a platform to air

their views and contribute to the smooth running of the school. How is effectiveness expected in a place where there is only one-way communication?

Other suggestions were that parents should play an active role at the school. The group's observation was that prisoners who have ^{the} support of friends and relatives performed much better than those who were not enjoying such support. Suggestion ^s to shift lock up time from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. was unanimously echoed to give learners more time for doing homework, tutorial^s and discussions. This time was seen as suitable also for library visits (if and when they have one).

X
X
X

v) Significance of findings from the focus groups interviews

There were notable similarities in views echoed by the focus groups and those echoed by Linda. This to me was an indication of ^{the} how serious and valid ^{ness} ^{they} most of the problems that the school is faced with ~~are~~. General basic concerns have to do with the lack of visibility of the management of the educational programmes, lack of commitment and accountability from teachers, the absence of a platform where learners can make inputs and the narrow choices in this deprived learning environment. Issues pertaining to rehabilitation and gangs could be handled well if all the other basics are given the attention they deserve. These learners are optimistic, they strongly believe that the situation in the prison school can still be turned around.

X

4.1.2. Teacher-Questionnaires

Table 4.2. : Gender, age and rank profile of prison educators

Teacher	Male	Female	25-29 years	30-34 years	35+ years	Diploma	Degree	Management	Teacher	Tutor
1	X			X			X		X	
2	X			X			X	X	X	
3	X			X		X				X
4	X				X	X		X	X	
5	X		X		X	X				X
6	X					X			X	
7		X	X			X			X	
8		X		X		X			X	
9		X		X		X			X	

4.1.2.1. Profile of Prison Educators

A total population of 9 prison educators were given questionnaires, which explored a variety of issues (see appendix 3 for the questionnaire). Of the 9 educators 6 were males and 3 were females. There were 4 respondents between the age bracket of 30 to 34 years, 3 were 35 years old and above and two of them were between the ages of 25 to 29 years. Seven of the respondents have teaching diplomas and the other two have degrees; namely a B.Ed degree and a B.Compt degree. All respondents are educators and two of the 9 respondents belong to the management team of the educational programmes in the Westville Youth School (see table 4.2.).

i) Perceptions on Rehabilitation (Q2)

When respondents were asked if they felt educational rehabilitation programmes offered in prison were relevant in equipping learners with survival skills, different view points were expressed but the feeling was that programmes were too academic and thus not

doing enough to equip and prepare learners for life outside prison. An interesting reason cited by one of the respondents, who felt that programmes were necessary was that; “...they can pass matric which is a key to University and Technikons”. Such a response tells me that some educators are still pro-academic courses, whereas there is a general shift in learning institutions towards skills based education. Another main challenge that learners could face with tertiary education is the whole issue of affordability. These learners come from poverty stricken families, for them ~~chances of affording~~ tertiary fees are a luxury they can barely afford.

ii) Discipline and Control of Learners (Q4, 7, 15)

All respondents answered “no” when asked if they had ever been provoked in class (Q4). This supports an earlier view of ^a “disciplined”, controllable teaching environment. Learners were however perceived as “different” by most teachers, most of them were said to “have had a difficult childhood”. A general response on how these learners differed from any other learners was that they were “older” than learners in the same grades in outside schools. Age is such an important aspect that the prison school does not seem to consider, most learners are in grades they are too old to be in. This limits chances of them attending school upon release. In view of the above, it is not clear why there is no system in place to cater for these young men. With respect to questions seven and fifteen; as per Appendix 3, teachers were asked of their view on “special different training” of teaching in prison schools. The response was “from what we studied in different tertiary institutions yes” special training was essential “to be able to handle prisoners well.” (T7)

needs different presentation

"...because the environment we work under is unique and totally different we studies in different tertiary institutions" .

"...we also need to be trained on how to handle learners with behavioural problems which resulted in some of them being incarcerated"

"A prison school is such a different teaching environment it makes a lot of sense to me that its educators ought to have specialised training that would enable them to manage challenges of a prison environment, e.g. counselling of learners" .

iii) Job Satisfaction (Q5)

With regard to the question, "Do you find teaching in the prison school satisfying?" (Q5).

Five of the 9 educators felt that teaching in prison was fulfilling and that teaching in prison was preferred due to the availability of resources and a controlled and relatively safe environment compared to outside schools these days. A lot of reasons were given for this, but what was common in the responses was that teachers feel they are making a difference teaching here. These are some of the positive reasons given:

"...imparting knowledge and basic skills to young offenders who come from the previously disadvantaged communities" (T1);

"...making a contribution towards the reduction of illiteracy in the KZN province..." (T3); and,

"...working under controllable environment..." (T5).

These responses show that educators are committed to the notion of reduction of illiteracy. Clearly an advantage of working in a controllable environment is seen as different to the pressure of normal public schooling. However one of the reasons given

for the dissatisfaction in teaching prisoners is the lack of flexibility in the Department of Correctional Services with regard to those security measures which do not allow for excursions. Other reasons were lack of support and proper control. One of the respondents said, “...*teachers’ potential and abilities are not explored and used...*”.

It is obvious that teachers feel limited and confined with this teaching strategy. There are no opportunities for growth since the Department of Correctional Services is so isolated from the Department of Education.

iv) Teacher’s Attitude to Learner Absenteeism (Q10)

Responding to the other question; “How is the rate of absenteeism, and how do you control it?” The general feeling was that it was very high. Of the six teachers who responded to that question, four felt it was very high and one of the reasons given was proper control measures, e.g. attendance registers, time books and the custodial personnel. Another problem cited was the issue of courts/hospital for “sick” prisoners and for those prisoners who have further charges against them. Other reasons which lead to a high rate of learner absenteeism include the fact that attendance registers are not kept by teachers and that schooling is optional, learners have no obligation to attend, they can leave whenever they choose. What kind of school is this where you have 30 learners today and only 2 the next day and continue teaching any way?

v) Medium of Instruction (Q11)

Teachers were asked if they use code switching in class (Q11). Responses indicated that code switching is used by all teachers and they all felt it was to the benefit of the learners.

It helps them to understand better, thus making teaching and learning easy and interesting. "...English is their second language, it is to their advantage..." •

Since mother tongue (isiZulu) is used to teach learners in the prison school they are deprived an opportunity to practise English thus they are ill-equipped for examinations, which are in English.

vi) Assessment, OBE/C2005 (Q12, 13 and 14)

With respect to the question on the importance of monthly tests, respondents felt that monthly tests were essential as they are a good measure of progress in the teaching scenario. Monthly tests are not administered in this school and teachers feel that they should be administered as they would assist with continuous assessment and make teaching and learning interesting. With regard to issues of the OBE/C2005, the question asked was "What is your view on OBE/C2005?" Views given were a bit ambiguous since most teachers seemed to confuse the above with the availability of resources. Most respondents did not give their opinion and as such no valuable data was obtained. Most of them felt that OBE and C2005 would not be suitable for the teaching environment of the prison school. Only two respondents felt that the OBE and C2005 would be effective in the prison teaching environment "*...because its emphasis is on knowledge and skills, it touches on values and attitudes...a very critical factor,*" •

Only two respondents had attended a workshop on OBE and C2005, others did not really understand these aspects. All educators emphasised the importance of seminars/workshops so as to stay abreast with the current information during this transformational

phase. All educators said they were not exposed to any seminars or staff development workshops. Clearly this is an unfortunate state of affairs. Every teacher should be kept abreast with the changes taking place in the teaching profession. It is criminal to keep such valuable information from educators, they should challenge it. Every employer is duty bound to provide a working environment that allows for growth opportunities.

Correctional Services must not be allowed to get away with murder.

"colorful" sentiment
but choose a more
academic phrase

vii) Management of Prison Education (Q9 and 17)

When asked if daily preparation is done and how it is monitored (question 9 of the questionnaire), some respondents said "yes" they did prepare but that they are not monitored; others said "no" they did not prepare and there was "...absolutely no control,"

A number of responses were given on change issues that teachers would like to see at the school (see question 17 of the questionnaire). The most common ones from all the respondents were: putting in place control measures for both teachers and students, the keeping of school records, access to libraries and excursions, teachers should also attend seminars and workshops, proper administration and management, regular attendance and dedication/commitment by teachers and the school principal, thorough screening of learners and meaningful links with the Department of Education.

viii) Significance of findings from Teacher Questionnaire

From responses given by the teachers I came to the following conclusions: that as much as they prefer teaching in the prison school, it comes with an expensive price to be paid, that of being cut out from seminars/workshops that teachers from normal schools enjoy.

By virtue of being in the teaching profession, they ought to be exposed to information and changes that take place in this profession. Sadly this is not the case. There seem^s to be a general consensus with regard to problems and challenges facing the prison school, e.g. lack of control measures, fluidity of learners, teacher demotivation and absenteeism, staff development and the visibility of the management team. Solutions to most problems seem to lie on the principal's shoulders. This is interesting to note, because learners had a similar view.

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4.1.3. Interview with the Chief Educationist

4.1.3.1. Mr Pillay's Profile

Mr Pillay is the co-ordinator of educational programmes in the Westville Prison command area. He has been with the Department of Correctional Services for the past 18 years. He heads a staff of 38 personnel, which include educators, recreation officers and clerks. He is married and does not have any children kids. He holds a teaching diploma; several prison management diplomas and is currently studying Industrial Relations. The following themes emerged from the interview I had with Mr Pillay:

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- Rehabilitation
- Management issues
- Relationship with the Department of Education
- Outcomes Based Education
- Teacher training
- Curriculum

X

i) Rehabilitation

The Control Educationist's view on rehabilitation is that it is possible because *every individual has a capacity to change*", but he stresses that there should be paradigm shifts and change of mindset around it. He feels that the prison has a population that is too big for its human resources, therefore he sees the role of the prison teachers "as being catalysts for change". Teachers are supposed to be good role models so that they can "motivate the prisoner to take a decision to make change", however this seems not to be the case. Although he is advocating for humane conditions in the prison, he feels that there is a need for some degree of punishment of prisoners. "I think a blanket correctional intervention cannot work, there needs to be remorse, that's a starting point". He feels that if prisoners do not feel remorse and do not have a will to change nobody can change or rehabilitate them. In fact the same view was shared by a learner, interviews that rehabilitation is impossible if it is "imposed". He advocates for a systematic system or method to be put out in place to address rehabilitation because currently he feels it is still theoretical.

When asked about the increase in the rate of prisoners who go out to come back (recidivists) and how educational rehabilitation programmes are intervening towards increasing this rate, he said programmes done cannot bring about rehabilitation. He further stated that education and training are not the source of the societal problems, but challenges like 48% unemployment rate, unstable economy and irresponsible communities hamper rehabilitation and encourage recidivism. In my view, rehabilitation should make prison learners feel good about themselves, they should feel a need to contribute positively to the citizenship of South Africa. Prison education is not "real

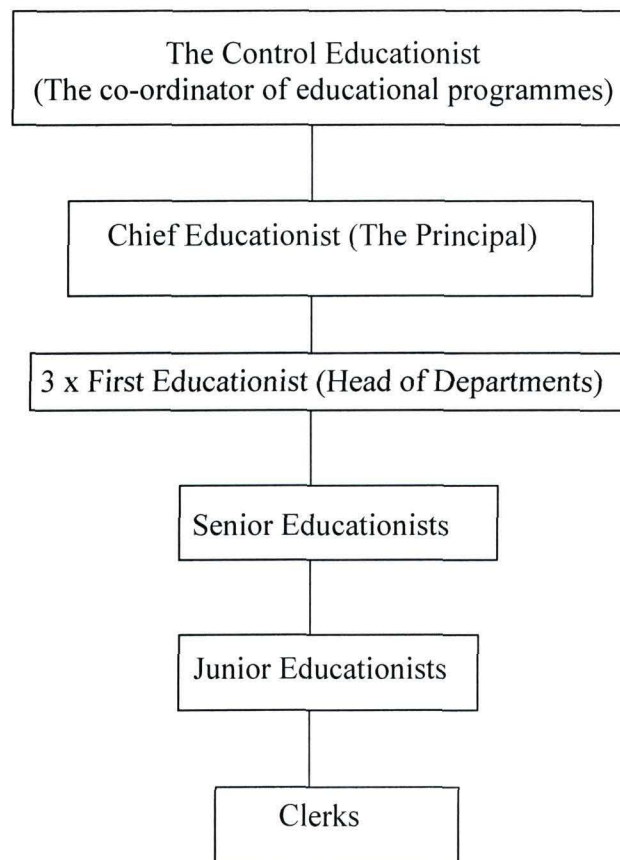
rehabilitation". It is keeping prisoners at school to learn and prepare for examinations. It is just schooling, and schooling is not rehabilitation. A rehabilitation programme should be much deeper than that, it should include psychoanalysis^{logical} and reparation issues. The prison is not doing that. X

ii) Management Issues

The organogram for the educational programmes in prison looks like this:

Table 4.3. : Organogram of Educational Programmes in Westville Youth

School



The Control Educationist (CE) Mr Pillay feels that the organogram in the prison school is not effective because educators are not properly placed “...we have here a set of misfit teachers...” meaning that teachers are not placed in positions where their full potential (expertise) can be exploited. He feels that proper placement of teachers would be a bid plus to educational programmes, but ⁱ on the same ^{vein} ~~tone~~ he sees this leading to “...a diminishing of the job status of certain people in the organogram.” This response clearly indicates that the CE is more concerned with the staff than the clientele. It is disturbing that a person in his position who is tasked with a responsibility of rehabilitating prisoners would prefer securing well paying jobs for the staff than pushing forward what he is mandated to do. As a manager, he should understand that the dynamics of his responsibility go way beyond staffing issues.

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I asked Mr Pillay to whom he is accountable. His response was that he is accountable to the Area Manager (Director of the Prison) through a structure via the Head of the Prison. Both these people have nothing to do with education and the rehabilitation of prisoners. It is well understood that he does not have the necessary support to push forward anything related to education because the people he is accountable to are keen on punitive and security issues than education. It comes as no surprise that he does not walk his talk. In a manner of speaking he is handcuffed and chained. He must be loyal to his masters to avoid trouble and save his face. Most of the questions that were asked around issues were simply dismissed as legal issues, which were not related to his portfolio. What is surprising though is how can a person on top of the ladder of management, be so helpless

and chained? What are the implications for such a manager? What should one expect from his subordinates?

iii) Relationship with the Department of Education

When the CE was asked of the relationship between the prison school and other schools and the Department of Education (DET), he said that there was no meaningful relationship, since there was no official link. Whatever assistance ^{the} DET offered was purely out of goodwill since these departments are separate entities. The main link between these departments is in Grade 12 examinations. Learners from the prison school write inclusive Grade 12 examinations. The prison school operates like a private school, and is registered as such. The main flaw with it, is it does not have the luxurious human and physical resources that the “real” private schools enjoy. Although Mr Pillay feels that it would be advantageous for the prison to enjoy more than just a bureaucratic relationship with DET, he maintains that such a relationship would come with a price, i.e. structural changes, salary implications. Again this response shows clearly where his loyalties lie. Compared to other schools, Pillay says, “...we are far lagging behind with regard to other schools.” The main weaknesses that Pillay highlights are act, policies and administration. Prison is a state institution, there is no reason for it to be “private”. Education is so critical in terms of Human Rights and the Bill of Rights, its proper management and control should always receive the seriousness it deserves especially in the prison where it depends entirely on the taxpayer’s money.

iv) Outcomes-Based Education

In respect of the question “Is OBE/C2005 relevant in the prison environment?” Pillay’s view was that as educators, they are “...*definitely subscribers to C2005 as well as OBE...we have no choice...*”. He is of the opinion that the prison environment is in line with these policies, since learners from this school are far “too old” when compared with their peers in the outside school. Chances of these learners continuing with tertiary education upon release are minimal, since they are generally poor (tertiary education is expensive). From the interview I gathered that most of these learners do not have the academic inclination because of this age. Why then even bother to educate them? What is Mathematics and Technical Drawing going to do for them?

The main objective underlying C2005 is citizenship, to produce adults who are thinking, who are responsible. How is prison education aiming to achieve this if learners are not offered a skill’s based education? How can prisoners develop creativity if they are taught Zulu, History and Geography? Surely prison education is merely cosmetic, it is merely teaching subjects and is not rehabilitating offenders. Even the co-ordinator of the programmes feels that the focus should be on providing the necessary skills for these young men. Why then is it not happening? How can people preach something and practice a totally different thing?

v) Teacher Training

With regard to prison educators, Pillay said prison educators should be people who have at least 3-5 years teaching experience, this he said was important because over the years

he has found that “...*teachers that come out from normal colleges of education have a great shortfall...*”; He said to understand prison dynamics and be able to work in such a “*demotivating and depressing environment...*” a special calibre of people (educators) are needed. According to him working for DCS is a “calling”. Pillay further feels that if inexperienced people continue to be recruited to prison school, they will end up being frustrated and corrupted by the prisoners who are normally far too manipulative and have inadequate financial resources. New teachers come with an “*enormous monetary deficit*” which may lead to them being influenced by prisoners. The teachers did not necessarily indicate this point of view.

He emphasised the need for every prison educator to have confidence and counselling skills. For purposes of role modelling, Pillay felt that the prison must employ older people who are mature. According to him the process of employment is not done appropriately since it is not conducted according to “...*job specifications and descriptions*”. Pillay’s concerns regarding inexperience pedagogues and management in prison can be understood, as the prison environment can be very challenging. The learners also echoed the same view.

vi) Curriculum

Responding to he question, what is the nature of the organisational structure, for example time table, curriculum, libraries, computers and the vision around these? Pillay said that due to lack of communication, the vision of the leadership is unclear to the subordinates. This implied that there is no shared or common vision. It therefore came as no surprise that the prison school has enormous problems. How can an institution such as

a school be operated and managed in this fashion? Regarding computers, Pillay felt that the prison school was far behind in this technology. The school is dealing “*with illiteracy, we still have to catch up with illiteracy, then have to catch up with computer age and the information technology age*”. In a nutshell, he said the prison has to move in a very fast pace towards technology. Linda, who felt that it is a matter of urgency at this day and age to be computer literate, shared the same view. In Pillay’s view the curriculum itself has to be dynamic, address issues of change, rehabilitation and re-integration into modern, technologically advanced society. He is of the opinion that the curriculum must be constantly evaluated and reviewed by looking at “symptomatic indicators” to inform changes that need to take place. Subjects that learners do grapple with, for example, Technical Drawing, which he says for the last 5 years he had a pass average of 3% to 5%, should be replaced. He even asked a question “Where are we going with subjects like Mathematics with a 2% pass rate?” All of the concerns around the curriculum seem genuine, but what is he doing about these “symptomatic indicators”. What has he in the past five years done to make sure the learners do well in Technical Drawing? If his concerns about review and evaluation of curriculum are sincere, what has stopped him from initiating something to rectify the process? Is it not a matter of too little too late?

vii) The Control Educationists’ Vision on Education Behind Closed Doors

According to the CE, the most contributing factor to the failure of educational rehabilitation programmes is running education as a separate entity in the Department of Correctional Services that is not linking it with the Department of Education. Due to this,

there are no policies in place to govern the employment of teachers and as such employment is not done according to job specifications. This impacts negatively on the curriculum. The subjects offered are based on what teachers can offer, “...*the curriculum is dictated by the available human resources*”. Pillay’s vision is that “...*teachers should be placed in appropriate positions*”. Teachers must give a service that will help prisoners to change their mindset. He feels that for future employment procedure, more mature and experienced teachers should be employed. He further argues that all prison educators have an obligation to be role models. In view of the fact that the majority of the prison population is black, Pillay feels that people below the age of 25 years should not be employed because of the dynamics of the prison environment and such people cannot be good role models because he claims the African culture does not allow for a young person to be a role model for a person older than him. Pillay feels that there is a need to evaluate the curriculum to find out if it is suitable for the client. His main concern is that education and training are not effective ways of addressing the damages of the past political dispensation, which has left a great percentage of the previously disadvantaged people, unskilled and unemployed. He feels that only educational rehabilitation programmes can make a marginal difference. For him the most important thing is that teachers make committal role in addressing issues of the community. They need “*to re-assess the community to find out if they have satisfied the expectations of the society, the economical environment and then design a curriculum that is need based*”. Pillay’s vision is well and good but what is not clear is the mission to realise the vision. How is he going to initiate the processes that will ensure that his vision becomes a reality? In order to combat or reduce recidivism, Pillay feels that proper database must be in place to

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establish the exact percentage of recidivists. Over and above that the prison should not be as lenient as it has been over the years. It must not be a lodging house for street kids, AIDS victims and pregnant females who are committing crimes so as to enjoy free benefits such as shelter, food and medical benefits.

viii) Significance of the Findings from Mr Pillay's Interview

A Grade 12 learner in a prison school setting is not the same as another one in the outside formal school. Prison learners come with all sorts of negative experiences that the prison educator will have to grapple with when teaching them. I therefore feel the competency of the prison educators is a critical issue. Younger diplomats may not always manage to handle learners who have committed all kinds of horrendous crimes. Prison teachers should be teachers of a special calibre: people who can offer counselling to learners in a prison setting as problems are bound to happen. Teachers with a psychological training background would be in a position to manage challenging situations and alleviate difficulties faced by two psychologists for every ±10 000 prisoners who are housed in the Durban Prison Management Area.

After interviewing Pillay I came to a conclusion that curriculum review of prison educational rehabilitation programmes is long overdue. This curriculum has to be analysed first and foremost, before other issues such as employment of the teachers and staff development are addressed, because there seems to be a noticeable gap on the beliefs and assumptions upon which the curriculum is based. Clearly there is no shared common vision between teachers and Mr Pillay, the co-ordinator. Pillay seems to be

pointing fingers at the teachers claiming that they need to change their mindset and be catalysts for change. How can this be possible if teachers are employed inappropriately – as the interview confirms. Whose responsibility is it to ensure a proper working environment, which allows for growth and maturity of employees? Why are there no seminars in this school setting? What is the vision around staff development? Is it not his responsibility to ensure that his staff is developed? I also wonder why for the past six years he has not facilitated any process towards a curriculum review, which he advocates. Pillay seems to present bright and brilliant ideas but no clear vision on how to make them a reality. He argues that very little is possible without developing a strong relationship with the Department of Education.

4.2. Conclusion

Mr Pillay said that for changes to take place the National Commissioner of the DCS has to be involved since this is a legislative issue. The main question though is what is Pillay doing to initiate and facilitate such a process. As somebody tasked with providing the rehabilitation programmes in prison, there is something that he can do in this regard. However, having been mandated by people who are not directly involved with education, he seems to have failed completely.

It is also clear from the learner interviews and teacher questionnaires that education in prison is failing. Little learning occurs, given the high failure rate of the Grade 12 learners. The idea of rehabilitation by most respondents is seen as a private issue and no amount of learning at school can unlearn criminal behaviour.

This chapter presented and analysed data that was produced. The learner interviews, that is, the personal interviews with Linda and the focus group were looked at in depth. The teacher questionnaires were also analysed and discussed, as was Pillay's – the Control Educationist's, interview. The next chapter will present the significance, recommendations and conclusion based on the data that was collected.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.0. Introduction

The previous chapter presented and analysed data that was produced. This chapter will present the findings and recommendations based on the data that was collected.

5.1. Summary of Findings

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions were reached:

Rehabilitation is not impossible, both the learners and the educators including the Control Educationist echoed the same sentiments that suggested that every individual has a capacity to change.

Educational Rehabilitation Programmes face the following hurdles:

- Fluidity of learner intake: Learners who are here today and gone tomorrow, this hampers smooth progress at the school.
- Interference by gangs: Gangs in prison are a way of life and a big challenge to all rehabilitation programmes. Gang members are supposed to behave in a certain way that is in keeping with the “culture” of that particular gang that he is a member of. Data collected clearly demonstrate that gang leaders do not consider schooling important.
- Learner voice: The absence of the platform where learners can make inputs has a negative impact to the educational rehabilitation programmes. Teachers do as they

please and they get away with it. It is surprising in this day and age that learners are not given a “voice”. Learners are not empowered, and this is by design.

- **Management:** The management of educational rehabilitation programmes is not visible. Both learners and educators think that the programme’s management is not visible. There is lack of accountability and commitment. No control measures are in place. There is no school policy, no guidelines whatsoever to ensure that there is order and progress in the school. The school is run as a private school. Prison education is managed as a separate entity from the Department of Education. This poses serious problems with the way it was managed. There are no policies in place to govern the employment of teachers and the curriculum that is offered. The learners are on the receiving end of all these problems. The school operates like a private school with no link to the subject advisors. Teachers are not accountable to anyone. Most teachers do not finish the syllabi and they get away with it since no proper control measures are in place. Teacher absenteeism rate is very high and this demotivates learners. Grade 12 learners do not qualify to write supplementary examination since the school is registered as a private center. This has a lot of financial implications because learners have to do the same subjects for the whole academic year all over again even if their mark qualifies them to sit for a supplementary examination.
- **Curriculum:** The school curriculum is not need-based. It is similar to that of outside schools. It is not rehabilitative. No prior research was done to establish which subjects would be relevant for prison school, over and above there since its inception 6 years ago, the curriculum has never been analysed to see if it meets the needs of the

clientele. Teachers are unaware of critical things pertaining to their profession e.g. Outcomes-based education, C2005, SACE etc. When it comes to teaching methods, most of them still use methods that they used a decade ago. They are not exposed to new teaching methods because they are not exposed to workshops.

5.2. Recommendations

5.2.1. Rehabilitation

Having done the study, the following are the recommendations that can be suggested. Mechanisms should be put in place to address rehabilitation of offenders in general, particularly rehabilitation through education. Mechanisms that can record the success programmes offered to offenders to ensure that programmes do change the mindset of offenders. These mechanisms can include statistics of offenders who undergo programmes and a percentage of those that undergo programmes but still relapse to crime after release (recidivists) because educational programmes are optional. A lot of investments is made in these programmes, sadly the returns are very low. High returns can only be feasible if there is a visible shift from the emphasis given to academic programmes towards a more skills-based, vocational educational programmes. The Department of Correctional Services has a duty to gather data on recidivists (ex-offenders who are re-arrested). This is not only significant for assessing if rehabilitation programmes yield the desired results, but to establish what can be done to combat recidivism which makes a joke of all the services provided by this department.

5.2.2. The Status of Prison Schools

The prison school should be registered as a public school so as to allow for a meaningful relationship between education in prison and the Department of Education (DET) to exist. A lot of problems/challenges that this school is faced with could be turned around if it is not managed privately. Amongst other things teachers could enjoy the luxury of being exposed to current information through workshops and seminars. Learners would benefit a lot if they get guidance from subject advisors and get exposure to “common papers”. This would lead to more accountability and commitment from the teachers to ensure they cover the syllabi and prepare thoroughly for examinations, which would be set externally. ↗

If the school enjoys good relations with the DET, a lot of policies and guidelines will be put in place to make sure that the school is managed well. Teachers would be employed using job specification and duplication of resources can be avoided. Grade 12 learners would be able to write supplementary examinations thus saving a lot of the taxpayers money.

5.2.3. Curriculum

The curriculum of the prison school should be reviewed. Thorough research should be done so as to establish what the clientele (learner prisoner) want. As it is, there is a noticeable gap on the beliefs and assumption upon which the whole curriculum is based. A more needs-based curriculum that is rehabilitative should be offered to learners. The importance of a library cannot be stressed enough. Considering that these learners are in a “closed” environment where they are not exposed to information. They should be

provided with all the assistance possible, so that they stay abreast with recent information. Newspapers should be made available to them so that they are always up to date with what is happening in the world around them. Students should be given a “voice” in this school. Learners’ inputs are very important if the school is to operate well. The learners are the clientele, they are the ones who should benefit from the programmes and its only common sense that they should be given a platform to make their voices heard. Shutting them up seems criminal, especially if the prison educators are committed in changing their lives. Learners should be vocal; this can also contribute positively in assessing the successes of the programmes offered.

5.2.4. Teacher Development

Teachers should be trained as counsellors. This should be done with immediate effect to avoid further damage of relations between educators and learners. Teachers are better positioned to be catalysts for change. With the relevant skills they would make wonders for the prisoners they work with. The Westville Prison has only two psychologists to attend to thousands of prisoners. Clearly two psychologists cannot service a total prison population of ±8 000 offenders. If the teachers have psychological training or counseling skills they can alleviate the burden that psychologists are faced with. A learner prisoner is likely to have problems than a “normal” learner. The prison environment is also a contributing factor. It makes a lot of sense that someone who works closely with the learner prisoners should have the capacity to handle their frustrations and problems in a professional manner.

The above recommendations are for the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) policy makers, the management of educational rehabilitation programmes in the Westville Prison, at the Provincial Office in Pietermaritzburg right up to the Head Office in Pretoria. Hopefully this study will be given the seriousness it deserves and that not another cent of the taxpayers money will be wasted. Further research around recidivists is necessary. As DCS, we cannot afford to keep on referring to ex-offenders who come back without having a proper database of who they are and how many they are. For future plans and programmes to combat recidivism, such database is crucial. Research is also required that explores prison gangs and their influence. During this study I realized that there is so much more to gangs than meets the eye. Finally, I recommend that the management of educational rehabilitation programmes in the Westville command, come together with the teacher, re-visit their mission and vision and try to establish a shared, common vision, if not for anything else, for the benefit of the young men they are trying to rehabilitate.

5.3. Conclusion

As this study concludes and as I reflect on the data collected, the wonderful interaction I had with the participants, the literature I came across, as well as the conclusions I made after analyzing data, I am touched by the status of prison education. I am touched by the eagerness and zeal I saw in the students' faces during the interviews. The frustration echoed by prison educator and Mr Pillay, the co-ordinator of educational rehabilitation programmes, suggests a cry for improved situations. According to this study, the principal challenge to any prison programme is the extent to which it helps prisoners

“unlearn” faulty behaviour and get rehabilitated. But what is rehabilitation? Is it not a theory that looks good on paper? These are some of the questions that this study attempted to provide answers to: “that rehabilitation is possible because every individual has a potential to change...”,

X

My ^{position} ~~take~~ is, education is a worthy investment! Even if only one prisoner out of a thousand is rehabilitated, it is one person away from a criminal life and that one person is reason enough for continuing to open minds behind closed doors... .

X

Interview Schedule

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

Questions to be asked

Family background

1. What is your name and where are you from?
2. Tell me about yourself, mainly your interests.
3. Tell me about your family, whether or not your parents and siblings are still alive.
4. How old are you?
5. Are your parents working, what do they do?

Criminal Offences

1. Why are you here?
2. What is your sentence?
3. How many times have you been imprisoned?
4. What is your experiences of prison life, your best and worst moments?
5. What is your view on gangs and gangs' activities?
6. What are your view son smuggling?

Schooling

1. In which grade are you?
2. How is the timetable?
3. Do you enjoy the teaching here?
4. Do you have enough time for homework?
5. How is the support system, do you have access to the library and newspapers?
6. Are there any tutorials offered?
7. What has been your worst and best experience in class?
8. Who is your favourite teacher and why?
9. What is your favourite subject and why?
10. Do you find the best offered relevant to what to you would like to do after matriculation?
11. Do you think there is a difference between your previous school and the prison school?
12. What do you miss mots about you previous school?
13. When you arrived in the prison school were you given assistance to bridge the gap between the work that had already been done in your previous school?
14. Do you think that gang activities affect the school?
15. What changes would you like to see at this school?
16. What concerns do you have about this school?

17. What are your plans when you leave prison school?
18. In which language are you taught?
19. Are you comfortable with the language used? Why?
20. What is your feelings towards examinations?
21. Are the examinations up to standard?
22. How are they different from your outside school?

B. REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

- (1) Do you think the educational rehabilitation programmes offered in this prison, equip inmates with the necessary skills to deal with life outside prison?

YES

NO

Please explain briefly:

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- (2) Do you find teaching in the prison school satisfying? Explain briefly.

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- (3) What is the attitude of the learners towards schooling, do you think they are serious about their school work?

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- (4) Have you ever been provoked in class? If yes, please explain briefly.

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(5) Are you comfortable with being alone with the learners in class when you teach or do you think it is necessary for a discipline member to be present for your safety?

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(6) How are these learners different from the learners you have taught in the “outside school”?

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(7) Do you think “special training” is necessary to deal with this diverse group of learners?

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(8) How do these learners handle themselves in the class? Are they cooperative? Do they respond to questions you ask?

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(9) Do you do daily prep? Is it monitored?

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(10) How is the rate of absenteeism? How do you control it?

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(11) Do you use code switching to accommodate your learners? Do you think it is to their advantage?

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(12) What is your view on monthly tests, do you think your school should administer them?

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(13) What is your view on OBE/C2005, do you think it could work in your school?

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(14) Have you been workshopped on OBE/C2005?

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(15) Do you attend any seminars (e.g. on staff development)?

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(16) Do you think it is essential to be exposed to such seminars, Why?

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(17) What changes would you like to see in your school?

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Are you happy with the way in which the educational programme is organised (organogram)?
Is it effective? If not, why?
2. Is there any continuity and collaboration on work done in a normal school and the prison school?
3. Is there any linkage between the prison school and the department of education? How deep is the involvement of DET in prison?
4. How do you screen prisoners who are interested in educational programmes?
5. Does your directorship of education in prison dovetail with outside policies such as C2005 and OBE.
6. Is it not punitive not to offer OBE, which is an exciting education system to prisoners because they are prisoners, aren't they still learners?
7. How much of the outside policy lends on your table, how much of it do you take seriously? What criterion do you use?
8. In your view what is the status of prison teachers, how are they different from any other teacher who teaches in a normal school?
9. What is your vision for staff training?
10. What is in place for staff development?
11. How is your organisational structure e.g. the curriculum, the time - table, libraries, computers, do these serve the clientele-prisoner? What is your vision about them?
12. Are there any tutorials offered to students? When and how?
13. To what extent is schooling in prison linked with other departments e.g. NGO's, Unions, Universities, etc. What is your vision about such linkages?
14. Who are you accountable to?
15. Who do you get your mandate from?
16. What is your vision about schooling in prison?

THE ABET CURRICULUM

Level 1

IsiZulu
Izibalo

Level 2

IsiZulu
Numeracy
Communications in English

Level 3

Communications in IsiZulu
Communications in English.
Mathematics
Business Economics
Accounting

Level 4

IsiZulu
English
Mathematics
Business Economics
Accounting

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