Prison Libraries Literature Review for
PRISM Planning Study: Are <u>PRIS</u>on libraries <u>M</u>otivators of pro-social behavior and successful re-entry?
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In the last 30 years, several major paradigm shifts related to Corrections in the United States have captured the attention of a wide range of individuals and groups, including law enforcement officials, legal professionals, criminologists, politicians, political activists, and increasingly, members of the general public. One particular phenomenon of interest has been rising rates of incarceration and increasing populations in federal and state prisons. According to a 2018 Pew Research Report, the U.S. prison and jail population peaked in 2008 at 2,310,300 - meaning that at that point, about 1 in 100 adult Americans were incarcerated. As of 2018, the incarceration rate in the U.S. was at a two decade low, with 1.5 million individuals under the jurisdiction of federal and state prisons and roughly 741,000 in the custody of locally run jails. While the U.S. prison population has decreased steadily over the past 20 years, the U.S. still has the world's highest incarceration rate, according to the World Prison Brief (2018). Additionally, rates of incarceration and prison population vary widely by state, with some states slowing rates of incarceration, and others (e.g., Arkansas, Kentucky, West Virginia) continuing to see increases (Hinds et al., 2018).

The term "mass incarceration" has been used to refer to continuous, unified growth in prison and jail populations between the early 1970s to early 2000s across states and counties. The financial and societal costs of recidivism are high. In Illinois, for example, the average cost associated with one recidivism event is $151,662 and given current recidivism trends, over the next 5 years recidivism will cost Illinois over $13 billion (Illinois Sentencing Policy Advisory Council, 2018). According to Vera Institute of Justice, the U.S. prison population increased by

400% between 1970-2000 (Kang-Brown et al., 2018). A number of scholars (Zimring et al., 2003; Alexander, 2011; Pfaff, 2017) have examined the rise in the U.S. prison population, attributing it to a number of factors, including stricter sentencing policies (e.g., the adoption of habitual offender and "mandatory minimum" laws), increased prosecution of drug offenders as a result of the War on Drugs, and even an increase in the number of prosecutors, with Pfaff noting that as the U.S. crime rate began to fall at the beginning of the 1990's, the number of prosecutors increased 50% between 1990-2007. Mass incarceration has disproportionately impacted communities of color. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2015) reports that 35% of state prisoners are white, 38% are black, and 21% are Hispanic. Overall, blacks are incarcerated at a rate of 1408 per 100,000, while whites are incarcerated at a rate of 275 per 100,000.

Evidence-based prison practices and programs

Over the past decade, there has been growing consensus on the need for prison reform. At the same time, the rising prison population has led to increased interest among corrections experts in "evidence-based prison practices." The Crime & Justice Institute (CJI) at Community Resources for Justice (2009) defines evidence-based practice as "the objective, balanced, and responsible use of current research and the best available data to guide policy and practice decisions, such that outcomes for consumers are improved." The aims of evidence-based prison practices include increased pro-social behavior while inmates are in prison, which contributes to safer prison populations for both inmates and corrections staff. Another goal of evidence-based prison practices is more effective prisoner rehabilitation, which may ultimately lead to more successful re-entry into society upon the release of prisoners and reduced recidivism.

First introduced in the early 1990's by Canadian psychologists (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990), the Risk-Need Responsivity (RNR) model became the "core of the theoretical framework used in those correctional systems around the world that use science as a basis for offender rehabilitation" (Polaschek, 2017, p. 1). Today, much empirical evidence supports the RNR model (Hanson & Mourton-Bourgon, 2011; Thanner & Taxman, 2003; Dowden & Andrews, 1999). Inherent to the RNR model is the concept of "criminogenic needs" which can be defined as dynamic risk factors that are directly linked to criminal behavior. Latessa & Lowencamp (2006) list antisocial peer associations, antisocial personality traits, substance abuse, lack of problem solving and self control, and antisocial attitudes as criminogenic factors. They argue that prisons should focus their recidivism reduction efforts on antisocial, high risk offenders and on programs that teach prosocial skills, structuring social learning programs where new skills are taught and behaviors and attitudes are consistently reinforced.

The American Enterprise Institute has issued a report that laid out a three-pronged plan for evidence-based reform to U.S. prison systems - 1) increase the delivery of correctional programming, 2) reduce the size of prison populations, and 3) increase the use of risk assessment instruments (Duwe, 2017). The report states that in order to be "effective in reducing recidivism, a correctional intervention must be rooted in theory, meaning it addresses known criminogenic needs such as criminal thinking, education, employment, substance abuse, or antisocial peers" (p. 20). Correctional programming must also have "integrity," meaning the program's design and operation are consistent with the established principles of effective correctional interventions. The report lists cognitive-behavioral therapy, chemical dependency treatment, social support interventions, and education and employment programming as specific programs that can begin to address the criminogenic needs of prisoners. In a study completed with the Rand Corporation,

the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (Davis et al., 2013) found a 43%

reduction in recidivism rates for those prisoners who participate in prison education programs.

Recidivism rates further decline in relation to the level of degree obtained - 14% for those who

obtain an associate degree, 5.6% for those who obtain a bachelor's degree, and 0% for those who

obtain a master's degree.

Prison libraries

As Corrections administrators and policymakers shift their focus to evidence-based

prison programming, the question of the potential role of prison libraries has emerged.

According to Rubin (1973) the existence of prison libraries in the U.S. dates back to the late

eighteenth century when the Philadelphia Prison Society began furnishing books to inmates at

the Walnut Street Jail. Today, both international and national standards exist as tools to guide the

management of prison libraries. The Library Services and Construction Act was authorized by

Congress in 1964, leading to expanded growth of prison libraries. *Wolff v. McDonnell* (1974)

mandated that prisons provide on-site libraries and *Stone v. Boone* (1977), ruled that prisons

were required to provide access to people trained in law or law library collections in order to

meet the constitutional requirement of meaningful access to the courts.

Today, every prison within the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) has an inmate

community library and an inmate law library. According to section 7E of the American

Correctional Association's Performance-Based Standards and Expected Practices for Adult

Correctional Institution, prison library services should be "comparable to a public library" and

provide the following:

> …logical organization of materials for convenient use, circulation of materials to satisfy
> the needs of users; information services; reader's advisory service to help provide users
> with suitable materials; promotion of use of library materials through publicity, book

lists, special programs, book and film discussion groups, music programs, contests, and other appropriate means, a congenial library atmosphere; and educational and recreational audiovisual materials. The reference collection should contain specialized materials on such subjects as consumer skills, prerelease, finding employment and education (p. 242).

The ACA standards also include qualified staff including a "qualified librarian," a written policy which defines "the principles, purposes, and criteria used in the selection and maintenance of library materials," participation in interlibrary loan programs, availability of evening and weekend services, and a written policy for the "selection, training, and use of inmates as library assistants." Libraries are typically housed within the institution's Education Department and are accessible to all inmates in the general population. Lehmann (2011) notes that "access to reading materials and information is provided in practically all federal and state correctional institutions in the United States" and that "access is also provided in most local jails, although the level and quality of these services are not easily ascertained" (p. 490). In Colorado, "correctional libraries hold intellectual freedom and the Prisoners Right to Read in uniquely creative tension with the demands of security in a sometimes volatile environment" according to the Colorado's State Prison Libraries section of the Colorado Department of Education website. The Federal Bureau of Prisons website (n.d.) states that all BOP institutions offer "literacy classes, English as a Second Language, parenting classes, wellness education, adult continuing education, library services, and instruction in leisure-time activities," but does not specify additional information in regards to library collections, staffing, resources, or services. The American Library Association's Library Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions (1992) reports standards for prison library access, administration, staffing, budgets, facilities, services, and library materials. The International Federal Association of Library Institutions (IFLA) offers a Guidelines to Library Services to Prisoners document in order to serve as a tool for the planning,

implementation, and evaluation of library services to prisoners. The 2005 version provides

guidelines for prison library scope, administration, access, information technology, staff, budget,

library materials, services and programs, and communication and marketing. This document

adheres to the philosophical framework of Rule 40 of the United Nations Standard Minimum

Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which states, "Every institution shall have a library for the

use of all categories of prisoners, adequately stocked with both recreational and instructional

books, and the prisoners shall be encouraged to make use of it." A 2015 report by the U.S.

Department of Education on Educational Technology in Corrections recommended that to

achieve the goal of learning in correctional education, students in prison should be provided with

"access to library e-books and other library resources to improve literacy skills" and that prison

officials should "encourage reading as a leisure-time activity" (p. 21). Conrad (2016) explains

how providing access to library materials can help prisoners stay abreast of technological

developments taking place in the outside world.

Impact of prison libraries

Prison libraries provide many benefits outside of providing access to these materials.

According to Conrad (2012), the prison library should perform a variety of functions, including

addressing the inmate's requirements for information on institutional policies, enhancing

vocational skills, providing educational materials, and providing information on re-entering the

community after incarceration. A 1990 report on prison education by the Council of Europe,

Legal Affairs, states:

> The value and the possibilities of [prison] libraries are often underestimated. Their
> educational function for prisoners has two dimensions to it. Libraries support and extend
> the learning that takes place in classes by providing books and other materials, and by
> serving as locations for organised activities. But libraries are also an important source of
> informal education in their own right and are often used by those who do not join other

educational activities or courses... a good library will also seek to develop and widen tastes and interests, and thus be a vehicle for cultural pluralism (34).

Many authors have also spoken to the ability of the prison library to provide a place of retreat for prisoners in a typically stressful environment. Through interactions with prison library staff and prison library resources, inmates can experience a place of quiet, contemplation, and self reflection. Prison libraries can potentially help to reduce feelings of social isolation and despair. Crewe (2011) highlighted the psychological "pains of imprisonment," describing them as feelings of "depth, weight, and tightness" that result from social isolation and a lack of situational control. In a study presented at the Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services in the U.K., Lithgow (1994) reported that study respondents, including inmates and correctional staff, agreed that the prison library could play variety of roles in term of education, recreation, personal and academic development, but could also serve as a place of enlightenment. There was a general consensus that the role of the library extended beyond that of its materials by acting as a social amenity in terms of a meeting place, providing an opportunity for inmates to escape from themselves and keep in touch with the reality of the outside world. In this respect the library was a way of maintaining a degree of normality in inmates' lives. Ljødal & Ra (2011) state that the library's role as a meeting area and social space is particularly important in the prison environment, "where this space functions almost like a sanctuary—a place where one can find solace and peace in an otherwise stressful environment" (p. 486). Emasealu (2019) in a survey of 393 inmates in two Nigerian prisons noted that the attitude towards the prison library has a strong relationship with overall psychological well-being.

As part of doctoral research at the University of Sheffield, Stevens (1995) found that some inmates felt reading certain material had helped them address particular aspects of their

offending behavior and that some librarians considered that the inmate's view of the library as a neutral area was an important factor in assisting the reduction of levels of stress. Use of libraries was identified by some staff members as fostering critical reasoning and abstract thinking, cognitive deficits which have been identified in many offenders. London (2017), a prisoner from the Oakhill Correctional Institution describes how the library allows him to stay connected with life outside prison. When discussing the inevitable isolation from developments taking place outside the prison walls, he identifies the library as a means to bridge the divide this creates, stating that "there is a gap in our lives and the library can be the conduit to establish a sense of continuity we need to stay current" (p. 22). Knudsen (2017) quotes an inmate who describes how the library environment can help to alleviate the stress of everyday prison life. He explains, "more than simply providing dissipation for me when I become bored, the library provides a means of letting my mind elude the everyday monotony and tensions that can build up and cause a person to end up in solitary confinement" (p. 20). Jordet (2011) argues that inmates are in prison *as* punishment for their crimes, not *for* punishment and that the goal of prison administrators then, should be to manage the library to be an experience of pro-social life.

The UNESCO study *Books Beyond Bars* (Krolak 2019) takes a global view of prison library use and its impact. Data varies by country and by prison, but Krolak estimates that overall, "at least half of all inmates tend to use the prison library, if available, regularly" (p. 14). Krolak discusses Chile's wide-ranging program that involved strengthening the collection, improving the physical space, and regular group discussion sessions as well as book clubs and writing workshops. "Security personnel report that inmates attending workshops have lower levels of anxiety, and that the general level of violence has decreased in the prison environment…As of May 2018, about two-thirds of inmates are registered library users. The

number of users and book loans is constantly increasing and, regarding the social impact, job placement of former prisoners is increasing and criminal recidivism is decreasing" (p. 30).

The Library's Role in Prison Education

The benefits of prisoner education are well established. Davis et al. (2013) found that inmates who participate in correctional education programs have a 30% chance of recidivating, compared with 43% for those who do not. They also found that prison education programs are cost effective - for every $1 spent on correctional education, $5 is saved on the cost to reincarcerate. In their 2014 meta-analysis, Davis et al. found that participation in correctional education programs is associated with a 13 percentage-point reduction in the risk of reincarceration three years following release. Thus, correctional education programs appear to far exceed the break-even point in reducing the risk of reincarceration. The debate, they argue, should "no longer be about whether correctional education is effective or cost-effective but rather on where the gaps in our knowledge are and opportunities to move the field forward" (p. iv). A 2011 study by Evans & Koenig tracking participants in academic degree programs from Walla Walla Community College showed that their employment rates were 25.5% one year after release, versus 15.7% of similar populations who hadn't received these educational opportunities. Further, the recidivism rate for the program participants was 19.6% versus 36% for similar populations.

In recent years, interest has evolved from the impact of prison libraries on the daily lives of prisoners to their potential to contribute to successful re-entry upon release from prison. These conversations go beyond the idea of libraries providing access to resources and promoting reading, to supporting education, literacy, and other essential skills that assist in re-entry. One

obvious way that libraries can contribute to successful prisoner re-entry is by providing appropriate space, materials, staffing, and programs to support prisoner education. A 2007 report by Greenberg et al. found that a higher percentage of inmates with Basic, Intermediate, and Proficient prose literacy than with Below Basic prose literacy used the library. Moreover, prison inmates who used the prison library had higher average prose literacy than prison inmates who never used the library.). In a 1994 study Lithgow notes that prison library and prison education professionals "perceive that the way forward for prison libraries is to promote them as 'information centres' as opposed to static book collections, as in this way it is believed that they have the 'potential to support the whole ethos' of an establishment" (p. 1010).

In an analysis of existing knowledge of Australian Prison Libraries, Garner (2017) explains that prison libraries have "great potential to provide support to prisoners who take part in educational programs while incarcerated" (p. 336) and greatly benefit prisoners with low literacy and education levels. Garner also suggests that prisoners have unique "information needs" that prison libraries can help to address. In a 2015 content analysis of reference questions directed to the New York Public Library's Correctional Services Program, Drabinski and Rabina attempted to determine the information needs of prisoners in New York state prisons and jails and found that 35% of inquiries were related to re-entry. Garner argues prison libraries can serve to meet the on-going information needs of prisoners not just during times of incarceration, but as they re-enter society at the end of their sentences. She notes that in "an environment where access to information sources outside of the prison environment has been removed, the prison library has the potential to be of great use in satisfying the information needs of prisoners, and is very often the only option available" (p. 336).

Zybert (2011) identifies a number of ways in which a prison library can contribute to prisoner education. She writes specifically about Polish prison libraries and identifies various programs in which they play a role, such as rehabilitation and reintegration programs, culture and art programs, and the general promotion of reading to raise literacy levels, and facilitate knowledge attainment. Lehmann (2000) identifies prison libraries in the U.S. as being integral to the education programs in prisons. Her examples indicate that prison education staff can integrate library materials into their curriculum and that the presence of a library can enable independent study by prisoners. Ljødal and Ra (2011) describe Scandinavian prison libraries as important resources in the informal education of prisoners by providing mental stimulation from the outside world in the form of literature and access to knowledge of current events. They see the libraries as gateways to education, rehabilitation and socialization of prisoners. Greenway's study of American prison libraries (2007) identifies the important educational role of prison libraries in the areas of personal health and parenting for prisoners with health issues, or those who are parents needing help in learning how to better parent their children.

Results from the U.S. PIAAC Survey of Incarcerated Adults (2016) found that "compared to incarcerated adults who do not have library access, those who have access to library services scored higher in literacy and numeracy" (p. 32). A 2007 National Center for Education Statistics report (Greenberg et al.) states that prisoners who used the library weekly had higher prose literacy and that 75% of inmates report using the library at least once or twice a year. Prisoners who used the library daily had had higher average document literacy. The report points to two possible correlations – (1) adults who already have higher literacy levels are more likely to want to use the library and (2) library use may increase literacy skills. According to Bowe (2011), in the U.K., the Prison Libraries Group (PrLG) of the Chartered Institute of

Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) found that the prison library plays an important role in not just functional literacy, but also *information literacy*, defined as the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, and communicate information in an ethical manner. In fall 2005, students in college-level classes in 10 Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) facilities participated in a study "to examine the impact of correctional libraries on students' academic pursuits, with emphasis on the impact of skills taught by librarians" (p. 1). This study (published in 2016) found that CDOC students who were taught by a librarian were "about twice as likely" to cite sources appropriately, explore subjects of interest outside their classes, and critically evaluate information" compared with those who were not taught by a librarian.

Finally, leveraging the prison library as a resource for prison education may benefit other prison departments. Bouchard & Kunze (2003) found that educators who collaborate with prison librarians and apply a team approach will benefit from positive inter-institutional relations that may eventually diminish staff division and result in "higher morale and smooth-running facility operations" (p. 69). In a study of 488 inmates, Brosens et al. (2015) found that visiting the prison library increased prisoners' involvement in other life-long learning programs. Garner (2017) states that the relationship between prison libraries and prisoner education needs to be explicitly recognized by prison administrators and that "without such recognition, prison libraries are likely to continue to be considered irrelevant to prisoner education, and will remain peripheral to the goal of educating prisoners to reduce recidivism" (p. 210).

Prison Libraries & Skills for Re-entry

It is important to acknowledge the challenge of connecting prison programming, be it educational or otherwise, with successful re-entry. Lynch (2006) states that "reentry is more than recidivism," meaning that simply because a released inmate does not re-offend does not indicate

they have successfully reintegrated into society. Sedgley et al. (2010) argue that past studies have

shown inconsistent findings on the impact of educational programming on recidivism

specifically, and that this may be because these interventions occur relatively late in life and in

an artificial environment. They do state, however, that prison "education programmes serve an

added function of resocialization toward prosocial norms while productively occupying the

inmate's time" (p. 499).

Stevens and Usherwood (1995) argue that while "use of the library may help inmates

attain educational qualifications, they can also have an impact in changing patterns of offending

behaviour" (p. 47). Prison libraries can provide materials and support to initiatives that have been

correlated with successful re-entry, including behavioral courses, job skills programs, and

courses to improve literacy, develop numeracy/money management skills, and obtain educational

qualifications. Lehmann (2000) explains that prison libraries must operate within the larger

prison environment and that prison security policies may inherently conflict with traditional

library values related to free access to information. Yet to date, the evidence seems to indicate

the prison libraries are most successful in contributing to preparing prisoners for societal re-entry

when they employ a public library service model. Peschers & Patterson (2011) explain that the

prison library services in the North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) correctional system in Germany

are "founded on modern principles of public librarianship" and are used for "entertainment,

personal development, continuing education, and independent study" (p. 524). They explain that

one of the goals of the prison library is to create lifelong public library users, imbuing a cycle of

curiosity, learning, and increased literacy and educational skills. Library services in NRW

libraries include access to the Munster City Library via interlibrary loan, as well as educational

support for inmates with low literacy skills. Vaccarino & Comrie (2010) describe prisoners' use

of public libraries in Australia and note that being amongst the public is overwhelming for some inmates, which underlies the fact that getting used to wider social interaction is an important outcome of public library visits. In the U.S., prison libraries have been less apt to adopt a public library model, but have still had success in meeting the re-entry related information needs of their users. Colorado State Library's Institutional Library Development unit (2020) crafted their Institutional Library Model with public library service as a base, for users that need more. The model states that library staff are "learning guides and links to the outside world" for prisoners that "especially require user-centered services at their point of need, so they can get what they want, when they want it, at the place where they are."

Zybert (2011) describes rehabilitation programs of the Polish Prison Service wherein the prison library plays a key role. She explains that in the wake of political and social changes starting around 1989, the Polish Prison Service changed the nature of its cultural and educational programs, expanding their scope. Library activities are planned according to "the overall rehabilitative goals of the institution and the needs of the inmate" (p. 418). She argues that "each library constitutes an integral component of the overall prison operation and, as such, plays an important role in the rehabilitation of the inmates" (p. 412). Library resources are geared towards rehabilitation and focused on activities such as providing support for reading as a constructive use of free time, as a method to reduce stress, and as a means to minimize undesirable behavior, meeting emotional needs and intellectual interests, developing cognitive skills, preparing for life and work after release, developing aesthetic sensibility and appreciation of art and education, etc. The library offers programs which "take a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the offenders and prepares them for their return to society" (p. 419) - inmates learn how to locate and apply for a job, prepare a resume, and how to interview for a job. Other library-based

rehabilitation programs are aimed at treating inmates with substance abuse issues, including the U.S. based Alcoholics Anonymous and a program where inmates with substance abuse problems work with young people with disabilities.

Lehmann (2000) describes the Colorado State Library's Institutional Library Development, which has created useful reentry resources for offenders and their families, including referrals to public libraries who will serve them in the community. LSTA funds were used to develop the "Out for Life" project that purchased library materials on job seeking, affordable housing, budgeting, addiction recovery, mental health, and recreation. In a 2009 "Out for Life" brief report, it was noted that" 83% of participants surveyed after program implementation said that the prison library was at least somewhat helpful in preparing for re-entry, up from 77 percent prior to program implementation" (p 3.) 83 percent of program participants also indicated that the prison library assisted in the acquisition in one or more "Life Skills" (e.g., skills related to mental health services, education, health care, etc.). Lehmann also describes the activities of prison libraries in Wisconsin, where in 1997-98, twenty-seven prison and psychiatric facility libraries undertook a strategic planning project aimed at having the prison library function in a variety of roles. These included popular reading materials center, independent learning center, formal education support center, legal information center, treatment program support center, and information center on the outside community (e.g., re-entry information, social service agency referrals). Services include the use of interest and ability assessment tools, videos about various careers/jobs, and assistance with job applications, resumes, and job interviews. She states that prison libraries can play "an important role in… reentry initiatives" and notes that in Wisconsin, prison libraries have "built substantial career and employment collections, and these materials have been expanded and enhanced over several

years through LSTA grants and funding from the U.S. Department of Education (approximately $50,000)" (p. 506). These centers contain not merely print and multimedia resources, but staff who can help inmates with resumes, cover letters, job applications, and referral to appropriate community agencies and services. The inmates have access to resume-writing software, career interest and aptitude software, and can practice interview skills. When offenders are close to release, they can search the Job Center of Wisconsin website from the library's computers. In many Wisconsin Department of Corrections (WDC) prisons, the librarians are Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) tutor trainers who tutor inmates in both English and Spanish. Libraries in WDC prisons also collect children's books in support of the prisons "Fathers Sharing Books" parenting program, wherein fathers are allowed to make video recordings of themselves reading books to their children. Pierce (2015) argues that as the number of children of incarcerated parents continues to increase, evidence suggests that family support, even when a parent is incarcerated, can decrease negative outcomes in children and that fostering family relationships among correctional populations may help prevent intergenerational criminality and reduce recidivism. Walden (2004) describes a prison library program called Read to the Children (RTC), created by correctional librarian Joyce Attebery in 1999, which connects children and their incarcerated parents through reading. Positive changes observed as a result of this program include increased literacy skills of offenders and children, improved parenting skills, strengthened parent-child relationships, increased enthusiasm for reading and eased family reunification upon the inmate's release" (p. 4-5). In a 2017 brief report compiled by Doran-Myers, the results of a survey of 253 caregivers' and 366 offenders who participated in Read to the Children (RTC) between 2013-2016 were highlighted. The survey found that 92% of

offenders felt it was helpful as a way to connect with their child and that 84% of caregivers found that RTC helped the offender's relationship with their child.

Conclusions

Latessa et al. (2002) describe a lack of systematic program and service evaluation as a form of "correctional quackery" and implore correctional officials to employ an evidence-based approach. Stearns (2004) notes that criminologists rarely write about the potential benefits of prison libraries, instead most of literature comes from prison librarians and inmates. Thus far, much of the literature on prison libraries has centered on program descriptions, rather than program evaluations or experimental studies designed to test the efficacy of prison library services. Thus, the impact of prison library services is ripe for further study. As this is largely unexplored territory, and particularly given the methodological challenges such research faces, both quantitative and qualitative strategies—even a mixed-methods approach—should be considered. While conditions for a natural experiment may exist, practical obstacles may recommend a correlational or causal-comparative approach for this first study. Regardless of the approach, however, statistical analysis should be pursued as rigorously as possible. The foundational research questions are substantial ones: how do prison libraries promote pro-social behavior while offenders are incarcerated, and how do libraries contribute to preparing them for successful re-entry?

To date, there is significant evidence (Davis et al., 2013, Evans & Koenig, 2011, Fabelo, 2002) on the power of *educational programming* in prisons to effectively address the criminogenic needs of inmates and even reduce recidivism. Research on prison libraries should examine the nature of educational programming not only within prison library spaces, but in

terms of how prison libraries actively contribute to prison education and learning. Do prison libraries, for example, offer unique educational programming, such as information literacy, consumer health information literacy, or research skills which contribute to successful re-entry? Does the prison library create an environment that is conducive to learning, discovery, and intellectual exploration, and if so, how is this accomplished? Do library resources or library staff directly contribute to student success in terms of increased literacy, numeracy and subject knowledge? Are prison libraries leveraged by prison education departments, case managers, and personnel overseeing prisoner pre-release and re-entry as partners, in a supportive role, or not at all? Lehmann (2000) describes prison libraries as a "a vital link between education" and "rehabilitation" - analysis of longitudinal post-release data and further original research on this topic will make this "link" less tenuous. First, however, it is important to begin this line of research with those currently incarcerated and those about to be, or only recently, released.

While not as well-established as educational programming, there is some evidence to indicate that *other types of prison programming*, such as vocational training (Davis et al., 2013) and parenting skills training (Pierce, 2015), can contribute to successful societal re-entry for formerly incarcerated individuals. Researchers should ask what role the prison library can play in skills-based training. Again, beyond providing a space, how can prison library resources, services, and personnel contribute to successful skills training? And how does one measure "success" in this regard? For example, if participants engaged in a parenting training course offered by the library, how would one ultimately assess the success of this program? Increased parental engagement can be challenging to quantify (Webster, 2004) - increased school attendance or improved educational achievement might be one indicator, but these measures do not paint the whole picture. Increased confidence in parenting skills and/or decreased parental

anxiety may be another indicator, but these qualities may prove challenging to measure. While a quantitative approach can get at the "who," and the "what," (e.g., do prisoners who use the prison library experience higher or lower incidents of disciplinary action?"), a qualitative approach (i.e., focus groups, interviews) can begin get at the "how" and "why." Therefore, a mixed methods approach should be employed in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the impact of prison library programming.

The literature also indicates the important role prison libraries can provide in terms of acting as a *positive space* - be it space for reflection and contemplation, or simply as a refuge from a stressful environment. For this topic, data collection should center around not only current uses of library space, but should also consider the lived experience of prisoners from a phenomenological perspective - how do prisoners, prison librarians, correctional officers, and other correctional staff feel before, during, and after using the prison library? For example, do prison libraries contribute to prisoners feeling more or less hopeful for the future or more or less calm, more or less aggressive? Do prisoners feel more connected to the outside world after using the library, or less? Other research approaches that take a more positivistic approach (i.e., surveys) may further shed light on the function of the prison library as a positive space.

Finally, the potential of the prison library's ability to serve as a *connection or bridge* between other prison departments and units should be explored. Public libraries often serve a connective role in their communities (Scott, 2011), helping individuals and groups who have been historically marginalized (e.g., recent immigrants, Veterans) to navigate complex bureaucratic structures through a variety of resources and supportive services. It is this "bridging" effect which results in a type of "community building" that can benefit not only library users, but external groups who are trying to support these same users. Likewise, prison

libraries do not exist in a vacuum - their success and the success of other prison departments depends upon collaboration. Areas for further study may include how prison library staff members communicate between departments, the level of integration between the prison library with other prison departments and units, and the perceived challenges/benefits of cross-departmental collaboration. While collaboration, like parental engagement, may be difficult to measure, the application of a mixed methods approach may be able to get at the who, what, why, and how of the connective capacity of prison libraries. A professionally developed prison library collection, along with professional library staff, innovative programming, and an educational mission all work together to shatter the misconception that a prison library can simply consist of a collection of donated books. As this review has demonstrated, the impact of prison libraries extends far beyond the materials they contain.

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