

RESPONSE

Looking Back on Learning Inside the Walls: A Review of Previous JPP Special Issues on Prison Education

Samantha McAleese

As a prisoner I cannot stress enough how important education is.

– Bonafanti, 1992, p. 43

I enrolled in school because I wanted – needed – to do something constructive with my time. I wanted to make sure that I would avail myself of any opportunities in these gulags, these treacherous human warehouses.

– Collins, 2008, pp. 78-79

INTRODUCTION

Thirty-five years ago, education inside Canadian prisons was “characterized by a general lack of interest in genuine educational achievement, by inadequate standards of teacher selection and training... a lack of discipline and structure, and by a complete lack of educational research” (Cosman, 1981, p. 40). Still today, prison education programs remain unable to flourish under the shadow of contemporary correctional philosophies that focus on punishment and isolation, medical and psychiatric treatment, and the rigid management of people deemed dangerous or risky by the penal system. Despite the poor quality of learning opportunities offered to prisoners, those educational programs that do exist are well attended. In fact, “many prisoners have cited voluntary participation in education programs... as the only positive experience one may encounter while incarcerated” (Piché, 2008, p. 4).

The ability to learn and to grow intellectually within the prison environment is not an easy task and many prisoners have shared their struggles and successes with this endeavour in three previous special issues of the *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*¹ (*JPP*) that were dedicated to examining educational efforts and experiences in carceral environments. In this paper, I document the main themes presented in these previous journal submissions in order to reflect on the experience and nature of prison education. Previous contributors to the *JPP* have effectively highlighted both the positive and negative aspects that shape the experience of seeking

and attaining education in prison. I examine the first-hand testimonials of journal authors as they discuss the effects of control efforts on the classroom experience, their motivation to learn, the lack of resources and support, the benefits of prison education, and the role of education in the broader reintegration project.

In addition to the three special issues of the *JPP*, much has been written about the advent of learning in prisons by criminologists and those studying in the field of adult education. Most authors agree that prison is not the ideal environment for educational activities as “the goals of prison security and the ideal of academic freedom often conflict” (Thomas, 1995, p. 32). The idea of using educational programming as a form of prison management is frequently noted in the literature (Bayliss, 2003; Brazzell et al., 2009; Collins, 1995; Farabee, 2005; Owers, 2007), and is seen as the reason why education is unable to reach its full potential as a successful rehabilitation and reintegration strategy. There seems to be little emphasis placed on the importance of education for education’s sake inside prison walls; instead, the focus is on demonstrating measurable (quantitative) outcomes (i.e. program completion rates and recidivism rates) that can be used to validate the effectiveness of the carceral institution.²

Despite the institutional barriers that prevent many prisoners from accessing quality educational materials, there are certain spaces within the prison where learning does happen. Such *performative spaces*³ are created by the people within them – both teachers and prisoners – who foster a “sphere of civility where ethical forms of communication such as respect, politeness, reciprocity, and inclusiveness in teacher-student dialogue [are present]” (Wright and Gehring, 2008, p. 244). In these spaces prisoners are treated as human beings, they can identify as “students” rather than as “offenders”, and they are provided with the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with others in the classroom.

METHODOLOGY AND MOTIVATION

The content presented in this article is the result of a qualitative content analysis conducted as part of a larger project on prison education (see McAleese, 2012). The data set included all *JPP* content on education, five semi-structured interviews with practitioners in adult and correctional education and secondary data/research, policies, and directives related

to education produced by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). In order to conduct a thematic analysis of the corpus of data (Ezzy, 2002), I performed three levels of coding (Noaks and Wincup, 2004).⁴

For this article, I focus on the analytic findings generated from analysing the *JPP* content on education. A total of twenty-five *JPP* articles were reviewed for this research project. Sixteen of the contributors identified as current or former prisoners, three as academics, one as a practitioner (teacher), and four as a combination of these roles. Beyond these broad labels, the authors also described themselves as activists, advocates, writers, artists and parents. Despite these variations in roles and experiences, most contributions to the *JPP* reflected similar concerns around prison education (discussed below), while also highlighting the resilience and determination of prisoner-students.

The motivation for this research project stemmed from my experience working in an adult literacy program in the community. As I began this work during the final year of my undergraduate degree, I felt very excited that I would finally get to put years of criminological knowledge to good use, but I did not expect to be placed in a role where I would be teaching adult men how to read and write after they had spent several years in a federal prison. After my nervousness subsided, I quickly realized that education is a form of intervention that was unaddressed throughout my criminological training. Witnessing so many adults leaving the correctional system without much more than a Grade 8 level education was a red flag as to the state of education inside our prisons, which subsequently sparked my interest in exploring how people spend their time while incarcerated, whether or not they spend some of this time in a classroom, and their educational experiences while inside.

CONTROL IN THE CLASSROOM

The mandate of prison schools conflicts with the mandate of security and the will of the public... Schooling and security clash, and the weaknesses and failures of prison education are the dire results.

– Davidson, 1992, p. 2

The polarization between security and education is a theme that appears repeatedly throughout the *JPP* content on prison education. Jones (1992,

p. 17) indicates that while there are educational programs offered inside, it is not the same as what we see in the community. He states, “entry into the prison milieu transforms the fundamental character of education. Its basic premises and values are undermined by the coercive environment in which it operates” (ibid). The fundamental philosophical differences between education and punishment create a tenuous environment that is not conducive to learning or transformation. Deutsch (2004, p. 104) echoes this when he writes, “on the whole, traditional education in a correctional institution is an enormous challenge. The trouble is that so many of the problems the school faces are inherent to the realities of prison life in and of itself”. Despite efforts by teachers and facilitators who wish to encourage active participation in the learning process, the overpowering culture of the prison seeps into the classroom and distorts good intentions. As Huckelbury (2004, p. 37) notes:

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

Without granting the ability for adults to make their own decisions about whether or not to participate in an educational program, prison schools run the risk of becoming yet another form of punishment and promoting the same level of monotony as other aspects of prison life. Moreover, while education is promoted as a beneficial opportunity, it also serves the guards and wardens who are concerned with keeping tabs on prisoners and managing their movements throughout the institution (Jones, 1992). As Salah-El (1992, p. 46) wrote:

The major program in prison is to program the prisoner. The key to success is to contain and maintain prisoners, not to educate us. In short, this sort of policy actually translates into the continual development of the underdevelopment of prisoners.

Overall, previous contributors to the *JPP* emphasized that the prison’s priority focus on security interferes with the creation of meaningful

educational experiences and also often affects the motivation required to participate in educational programs.

MOTIVATION TO LEARN

Amongst prisoners, low motivation to participate in educational programming is often derived from anxiety about re-entering the classroom where they often struggled while growing up.

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

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

Unfortunately, prisoners are often assumed to be unmotivated and lazy simply because they are prisoners. However, Deutsche (2004, p. 104) reminds us that whether you are in a school inside or outside prison walls “there are some students in class who are highly motivated to learn and others who do not care about learning at all. The difference is that in a prison setting there are already in place mitigating factors that work against attempts to motivate students to learn”.

Inside the prison, too much time is spent making education unachievable, which only serves to lower motivation levels. The late Peter Collins (2008) wrote specifically about the ways in which the Correctional Service of Canada prevents the advent of educational achievement within their institutions. It is worth quoting from this particular article at length:

I have observed that CSC wields mandatory minimum education levels as a tool to punish prisoners and as a method to artificially raise people’s security levels... Without any rational explanation, CSC has reduced educational opportunities for those prisoners who desire it and to add insult to injury, it forces remedial educational processes on those imprisoned adults who do not wish it. This creates the misleading impression that CSC is promoting and facilitating education. (Collins, 2008, p. 78).

CSC creates an oppressive atmosphere in the school with disgruntled prisoners who interpret prison schooling as a forced punishment, and then ensuing resistance to education is purposely cultivated by the organization. (ibid, p. 82).

Many other contributors to the *JPP* have similarly noted that offering good quality education is difficult and at times impossible because the prison is such an oppressive and dehumanizing environment.

Following Collins, it appears as though education inside prison is either forced upon the prisoner or it is taken away as a punishment. While the CSC promotes itself as an agency responsible for promoting positive change and encouraging rehabilitation, *JPP* contributors identify an underlying organizational agenda of prison agencies, whether in Canada or elsewhere, that detracts from their mission statements.

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

There are just so many ways in which CSC conduct underlines the contradictions and failures of meaningful education in the prison system. (Collins, 2008, p. 71).

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

In some situations, prisoners are told that they can do education on their own time through correspondence, but as Dey (2008, p. 40) explains:

Prison is a tough place...a few semesters of correspondence is not enough to meet all the needs of some prisoners. Many are unable to take full advantage of a rare opportunity, indicative of how difficult it is to foster change in a correctional setting.

Overall, the prison is a less than ideal environment to ignite the passion for learning, and even when prisoners are motivated to participate in educational upgrading the resources and support within the institution are often lacking.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Budget cuts and changes in the tide of bureaucratic or public opinion always threaten the existence of prison educational programming.

– Graves, 2004, p. 94

For those prisoners who are motivated to upgrade their educational credentials during their prison sentence, the type of educational training they do receive is often weak due to lack of resources and access to proper educational supports. Writing about the American experience, Huckelbury (2004, p. 39) notes that while the statistics regarding GED completion might look impressive, students are often pushed through the basic education courses to maintain the reputation of the institution.

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

Collins (2008, p. 76) speaks to the same phenomenon in Canada:

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

There are also accounts from prisoners stating that the courses they took while inside are not fully accredited on the outside (Jones, 1992) and that education is something correctional administrators expect them to do

on their own time once all other requirements of the correctional plan are met (Bell and Glaremin, 1992). This approach constitutes education as an *add-on*, rather than a key component of reformation efforts. As a result, it is unsurprising that many *JPP* contributors shared concerns about the limited courses available in prison (Richards, 2004), as well as the improper placement of learners into the appropriate curriculum level.

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

Deutsch (2004, p. 102) also specifically identifies the lack of support for adult learners with special needs or learning disabilities inside the prison:

There are no classes for special education; even students with significant learning disabilities find themselves being “mainstreamed” into regular classes which may present great obstacles to their ability to absorb the lesson being taught.

Resources for prisoner education become even more difficult to access when a prisoner seeks to move on to other opportunities for higher learning.

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

The first person narratives of educational experiences in prison suggest that prison-teachers do their best to work with what they have, although many may struggle to maintain a guise of optimism given all of the hardships that come with teaching in this environment.

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

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

These narratives suggest that prison educators embody the stated goal of corrections, which is to provide the type of support that will have a lasting positive and rehabilitative impact on individuals as they re-enter the community. Due to this more compassionate approach, there is very little support for teaching staff from prison officers (Jones, 1992, p. 16; Richards, 2004, p. 65; Steffler, 2008, p. 30), and despite everyone's best efforts it still seems as though "anyone associated with higher learning in the prisons whether as a prisoner/student or faculty member has experienced the hostility and resentment of lower-level personnel" (Jones, 1992, p.16). Lynes (1992, p. 53) confirms this stating, "the relationship between educators and correctional authorities has always been contentious". This arrangement suggests a very one-sided relationship, wherein teachers make efforts to be accommodating and understanding, while correctional officers are harsh and condescending.

While this antagonistic and complicated working relationship between teachers and guards makes it difficult to facilitate positive learning opportunities in prison, *JPP* contributors attest that there are a number of important benefits of prison education.

THE BENEFITS OF PRISON EDUCATION

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

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

Despite an abundance of anecdotes across previous editions of the *JPP* that point to the prison's attempt to inhibit meaningful education, there is also plenty of evidence to show that education was an overall positive experience for individuals serving time. Davidson (1992 p. 1) was the first to highlight this in the journal: "the popularity of prison education among prisoners [is] a popularity which is unequalled when compared to other prison programs". He also described education as "a little bit of intellectual freedom in an otherwise coercive environment" (ibid, p. 2). Statements like this indicate that the classroom is considered a relatively safe space within the prison. The atmosphere in the classroom is a microcosm that is less threatening than many other spaces within the institution given the broader atmosphere of punishment and control that structures prison life. When a long-term prisoner is able to express that he is "relieved to have something positive to report to his family" (Dey, 2008, p. 36), it is clear that the classroom serves an important stabilizing function in the lives of many prisoners.

Activities that take place in the classroom have the capability of being individually tailored to each prisoner, unlike other program materials that are offered via standardized one-size fits all modules. Writing exercises are a prime example of this.

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

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

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

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

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

Indeed, for many prisoners learning in the classroom is equated with freedom.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regrettably, this feeling or experience of freedom is often short lived in prison. The door to the classroom is not strong enough to keep out the effects of punishment that find their way into every aspect of the institution. Security is still a primary concern in the prison school and disciplinary strategies are invoked should prisoners or teachers be seen as potentially threatening security in some way (Huckelbury, 2004, p. 37). Aside from the hovering nature of prison security there is also the constant reminder that the bodies inside the classroom are first and foremost prisoner-bodies, rather than student-bodies. Disruptions in classroom time for counts and lockdowns are frequent and pernicious, acting as constant reminders of the students' core identity as prisoners in this environment. As one prisoner writes: "[The guards] call us "offenders" as if this is all we are and all we ever will be" (Collins, 2008, p. 73).

EDUCATION AND REINTEGRATION

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

– Collins, 2008, p. 78

In my view, education is the key to a successful life out on the street.

– Harris, 2004, p. 59

Prisoners who participate in educational upgrading while inside do reduce their chance of re-arrest once back in the community (Richards et al., 2008). Prisoners also recognize that by participating in education they will be able to successfully complete other programs mandated by their correctional plan with greater ease, some of which will eventually help them to cope on the outside (Rafferty, 2004, p. 51). There were also several suggestions from prisoners throughout *JPP* content as to why they believe education is such a successful rehabilitation tool to include in a correctional strategy. Collins (2008, p. 78) suggests that a prisoner who engages in learning while inside will be more successful on the outside "because the "educated" person is more able to effectively look for and secure employment, and [in] general is more likely to feel socially viable and useful to others, perhaps developing

a sense of purpose”. Harris (2004, p. 58) echoes this thought by pointing out that “educated individuals are much more likely to use their minds than their fists” and we see the same justification again in Taylor’s (2004a, p. 76) article when he notes that “regardless of the date you walk out of the prison... further education will improve confidence and self-esteem, and improve how you feel about and treat others”. This sentiment is what makes education so attractive to the prisoners who are looking to escape the constant reminders of their past and who are looking for new tools they can use to ignite change in their future.

Beyond building self-confidence within the adult learner, there were many indications across the corpus of data that education actually serves to ignite transformation in and empowerment of the prisoners who participate in higher education programs while behind bars. Huckelbury (2004, p. 42) wrote that it was “because of higher education, [that he] took another giant step on the road to becoming a better person”. Once again, this helps to promote the idea that education is very important to the rehabilitation and reintegration process. The time that the prisoner spends in the classroom learning can open their minds and help them to see the effects of their previous actions in a different light. In a subtle way, education can help to instill a sense of community within the learner and this alone will influence decision-making upon release.

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

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

One of the most important arguments to emerge from these special issues of the *JPP* is the idea that there should be a stronger effort to change public opinion about offering educational opportunities to prisoners. Correctional policies and practices may be influenced by public opinions (or emotions); therefore, in order for prison education to gain momentum and popularity,

there must be a stronger campaign to secure public support for increased educational resources. Given the personal testaments supporting the transformative potential of education programs, it is clearly “in society’s best interest criminologically, economically, and socially to provide and even encourage prisoners to complete as much education as possible” (Taylor, 2008, p. 21). The general population is often quick to judge prisoners’ motives and intentions, which can make something as simple as pursuing a Grade 12 education seem like a potential waste of the tax dollars of hard working citizens. Several *JPP* contributors recognized this as a large barrier to promoting educational programming inside prison and they subsequently provided a discourse for action amongst prisoners and educators.

We must be adamant in showing to people in society the importance of mandating prisons to provide all prisoners with a decent education, tangible job opportunities, and hope for the future. (Salah-El, 1992, pp. 47-48).

Only through progressive and radical changes in educational opportunities in prison can we ever hope to live in a world free of crime and violence, where individuals love their neighbours as they love themselves. (Harris, 2004, p. 57).

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

The lack of public support to pay for prison education threatens the quality of programming that prisoners are provided with behind bars, despite the fact that “there are very few prisoners who are not capable of becoming productive members of society” (Harris, 2004, p. 59). So much effort goes into separating prisoners from the rest of society, yet what we need to realize is that “the more education prisoners acquire while inside, the safer, more stable and richer our communities will be” (Taylor, 2008,

p. 21). Education plays such an important role in “strengthening the bond between individuals in prison and society” (Beck et al., 2008, p. 91), and it is publications like the *JPP*, conversations with adult educators, and research that brings together criminological knowledge and educational philosophies that bring attention to the importance of learning behind bars, which may help to change how education is structured and implemented in the prison setting.

CONCLUSION

So, to those of you who teach us, and to my brothers and sisters in cages, keep thinking, keep learning and growing, keep the fire burning for those following. And never forget to watch your back.

– Huckelbury, 2004, p. 44

Malcolm Knowles (1984, p. 27), one of the first to theorize about the practice of adult education and the nature of adult learners, once wrote, “the adult learner has indeed been a neglected species”. Adult learners in prison are even more neglected, but are at the same time resilient as they work hard to create safe spaces for learning inside. There are educational opportunities happening inside prisons, but they typically lack in key resources. The focus on security and management continues to challenge the freedom that comes with learning, and while prisoners demonstrate the motivation to participate in educational efforts and teachers work to guide them toward the achievement of their goals, a lack of public support and political will threaten the ability for adult education to thrive in this environment.

While each of the themes presented in this article appear consistently throughout the three previous special issues of the *JPP* on prison education, comments on the lack of financial resources and institutional support for educational upgrading are more prominent within the 2004 and 2008 publications. In 1992, the publication date of the first special issue, prisoners in the United States still had access to Pell Grants.⁵ Unfortunately, “during the tough-on-crime era of the Clinton Administration... the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 withdrew Pell Grant eligibility from people in prison” (Smith, 2016, para.2). This loss of political, public, and financial support for prison education continues to impact access to post-secondary training inside American prisons (Steffler, 2008) and similar

sentiments, limit educational opportunities available to those incarcerated in Canadian prisons (Collins, 2008). A recent article in the *New Yorker* indicates a return of the prisoner Pell Grant program under the Obama Administration (Smith, 2016), and north of the border we are hopeful for significant changes to rehabilitation and reintegration supports under the new, Liberal, Government of Canada led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The three previous special issues of the *JPP* on prison education provide excellent insight into the benefits and difficulties associated with learning on the inside. That the *JPP* continues to document the educational and learning experiences of men and women in prison is notable; these first-hand ethnographic narratives provide much support for expanding prison educational efforts and illustrate the importance of chronicling how they evolve over time.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Volume 4(1) in 1992, Volume 13 in 2004 and Volume 17(1) in 2008.
- ² For example, evaluations are often conducted in order to assess the relationship between the completion of a GED program and recidivism rates (see CSC, 2009).
- ³ Performative space is a concept developed by Randall Wright and Thom Gehring (2008) to explain a space within the prison that is favourable to practices and philosophies of adult education and democracy.
- ⁴ A three stage coding process allows the researcher to engage in a process of “constant comparison” (Ezzy, 2002, p. 90) in order to extract patterns from the data. Open coding involves the creation of broad categories, axial coding allows for the development of a more comprehensive conceptual framework, and selective coding results in core categories which form the basis for discussions, conclusions, recommendations, and action (Noaks and Wincup, 2004).
- ⁵ A Pell Grant is a type of subsidy or financial aid provided by the federal government in the United States to individuals who require assistance in paying for post-secondary education (Mallory, 2015).

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Samantha McAleese is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University in Ottawa. Her current research examines the impact of criminal records on access to employment, housing, education, volunteer opportunities, and other social domains and activities.

More specifically, her work examines the impact of the elimination of Canada's pardon program on criminalized individuals and she is involved in various law reform activities in order to push for change in this area of the penal system. Samantha received her MA in Criminology from the University of Ottawa and has worked frontline in education, employment, and community reintegration programs. She volunteers with Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) and is also a member of the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project (CPEP). She can be reached at samantha.mcaleese@carleton.ca.