



Young inmates' educational motivation: Empirical and practical perspectives.

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Research in Norwegian and Nordic prisons

(*The Bergen Cognition and Learning Group, University of Bergen*)

2004: All inmates in Norway

2006: All inmates in Norway

2007: A representative sample of inmates in Norway

2006-2007: Inmates in the Nordic countries

2009: All inmates in Norway

2011: Selected groups of foreigners in Nordic prisons*

2012: All Norwegian citizens in Norwegian prisons. All inmates from Poland, Lithuania and Nigeria in Norwegian prisons

2015: All Norwegian citizens in Norwegian prisons. All inmates from Poland, Lithuania and Albania in Norwegian prisons

2015: Prison officers' perceptions of their role related to inmates who want to participate in education*

2021: All Norwegian citizens in Norwegian prisons.

*In co-operation with the research group *Power and Difference in Education*, University of Bergen



Questions

- **What are young inmates' motives for participation in education in prison?**
- **Do young inmates have internal or external educational motivation?**
- **Can high self-efficacy increase inmates' participation in education and likewise have a positive influence on their learning.**
- **Do we give young students in prison meaningful praise for their achievements?**
- **What can be done to turn young inmates' learned helplessness into mastery experiences?**

Educational motive categories for students who participated in prison education while incarcerated (N=467)



Factor 1: Preparing for life upon release

(e.g., 'To make it easier to get a job after I'm released' or 'To make it easier for me to avoid committing crime after I am released')

Factor 2: Social reasons and escapism

(e.g., 'To be part of the social environment at the school' or 'To make serving time easier')

Factor 3: Competence building

(e.g., 'To satisfy my desire to learn' or 'To learn about a subject')

Age had a significant effect on both Factor 1 and Factor 2.

What about young non-participants?

(Manger, Eikeland, Diseth, Hetland & Asbjørnsen, 2010; Roth & Manger, 2014)

Factors influencing young inmates

- Future planning
 - *Short- and longterm insecurity*
 - *System competence*
 - *School/career counseling*
- Escapism still relevant
- Competence building
 - *Find their interests*



Inmates' academic motivation, viewed from the perspective of self-determination theory

(Edward L. Deci & Richard M. Ryan)

The importance of supporting students' need for competence, autonomy and relatedness

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation



- *Intrinsic motivation* (the enjoyment a student gets from a task - e.g., 'to learn about things that interest me')
- *Extrinsic motivation*
 - external regulation (incentives, consequences - e.g., 'to have a better salary later on')
 - introjected regulation (avoid guilt, boost self-esteem - e.g., 'to show my self that I can succeed')
 - identified regulation (sense of importance - e.g., 'eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like')
- *Amotivation* (without motivation - e.g., 'I don't see why I have started an education')

(Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vallerand et al., 1989; Ratelle et al., 2007; Manger, Hetland, Eikeland, Jones, & Asbjørnsen, 2020)



Norwegian inmates under 25 years who participated in education at two time points, compared to *all inmates who participated (parentheses)*. Mean scores.

Academic Motivation Scales	2015 N=103 (529)	2021 N=53 (354)
Intrinsic motivation	5,0 (5,4)	4,3 (5,3)
External regulation	5,3 (4,7)	4,8 (4,4)
Introjected regulation	4,7 (4,3)	4,0 (4,1)
Identified regulation	5,3 (5,0)	4,9 (5,0)
Amotivation	1,6 (1,5)	1,5 (1,4)

A seven-point scale:
1 = low motivation; 7 = high motivation

(Manger, Hetland, Jones, Eikeland, & Asbjørnsen, 2020; Eikeland, Manger, Jones & Asbjørnsen, 2023, in progress)

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their influence on performance

- ❑ Intrinsic motivation matter more for *quality* than extrinsic incentives.
- ❑ Extrinsic incentives explain more of the *quantity* performance criteria than do intrinsic motivation
- ❑ Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation coexist, depending on the type of performance

(Cerasoli et al. 2014, a meta-analysis in multiple domains)

Intrinsic motivation in practice

- Typical of young students in prison:
 - *Poor/few school experiences*
 - *Unable to influence their own situation*
- Solutions
 - *Individual plans – autonomy*
 - *Self-determination*
 - *Flexibility and adaptability*

Extrinsic motivation in practice

- Typical of young students in prison:
 - *An extra tough situation*
 - *Many authority figures*
- Solutions
 - *Pull > push*
 - *Using incentives*

Self-efficacy and motivation

Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgements of personal capability (Bandura, 1997).

What is the relationship between self-efficacy and motivation?

Boosting self-efficacy: Sources of self-efficacy

- **Mastery experiences**
- Vicarious experiences (modeled by someone else that the person identifies with)
- Social persuasion
- Physiological state

(Bandura, 1997)

Self-efficacy and prison education

Higher writing self-efficacy increased the likeliness of participating in prison education.

(Jones, Manger, Eikeland, & Asbjørnsen, 2013)

Educational participation had a positive influence on self-efficacy in both mathematics and self-regulated learning.

(Roth, Asbjørnsen, & Manger, 2016)

Self-efficacy in young inmates

- Fewer mastery experiences
- Find prior knowledge and interests
- Be flexible and adaptable



Self-efficacy and the power of meaningful praise

Praise for students' ability or praise for their improvement, effort or other more process-oriented factors?

Keep away from praise that judge students' intelligence or talent

(Dweck, 2012)

Self-efficacy and praise

- Our young inmates are often underpraised
- Praising as a team
- Build relations

Learned helplessness in prison

- The inmate feels that failure has internal causes that are stable and cannot be controlled.
- The inmate feels that success is due to external causes that are unstable and cannot be controlled.

Learned helplessness: Practical implications

When inmates succeed, they may not see that there is a connection between their actions and success.

- Help the inmates to see this connection by creating specific learning situations where they can succeed!

How can we do that?

Learned helplessness in young inmates

- Past experiences
- Passivity – lack of belief in own abilities
- Strategies to avoid learning
- Feel that external factors are to blame

Changing the student's attribution (attribution training)



Most important:

- Practice realistic individual goal-setting
- Teach the student to use the right strategy
- Recognize progress and improvement
- Praise the students' own use of strategy or effort

And the more obvious things:

- Do not show well intended sympathy for the student's failure
- Do not show surprise when the student succeeds
- Do not offer excessive help
- Do not give excessive praise for succeeding at very simple tasks

(Borich & Tombari, 1997; Carr & Borkowski, 1989; Dacey, 1989; Good & Brophy, 1991)

Good practices – feedback

- Always face to face – no tests with red marks
- Feed forward, not feed back
- Talk about task/product level, **not person**



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Summary: Inmates' motivations and achievements

**Relationship
between**

internal personal factors

(e.g., abilities, knowledge, interests, self-regulation,
self-efficacy, self-esteem)

and

environmental events

(e.g., prison system, prison officers, teachers,
curricula, mastery experiences, role models,
feedback)

Future concerns

How can we make use of theoretical perspectives on students' motivation in our work as teachers in prisons

?

How can we acquire good practice in prison education, especially with young students

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Motivation, self-efficacy, mastery, and self-esteem

«...trying to talk people into feeling good about themselves without equipping them with needed competence is unlikely to help them much»
(Albert Bandura, 1997, p. 360)