Educated Inside: A Scottish approach to prisoner education

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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November 2019

UNIVERSITY *of* STIRLING

Declaration

I declare that I have composed this thesis myself and that it embodies the results of my own research. Where appropriate, I have acknowledged the nature and extent of work carried out in collaboration with others included in the thesis.

Signed,

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Abstract

This thesis explores experiences of education for young men incarcerated in a Scottish prison. This study utilised the research of Erving Goffman (1961) as a starting point for understanding the social world of people in custody. The core objectives of this study are aimed at understanding the personal biography of prisoners, exploring how prisoners interpret and give meaning to learning and education in prison, the role of the institution in providing an environment of learning, and the potential outcomes of prisoners participating in learning and education in custody. This study also examines how and why learning may be impactful to prisoner identity, self-perception, and assesses the importance of formal and informal learning for people in custody. The findings of this study suggest that the prisoner experience is influenced by individual motivation, self-awareness, support systems, and relationships. This research further reflects a strong connection between student identity and positive traits (*i.e.* resilience, hope, and optimism) as directly correlated with learning in prison and also suggests that the choice to engage in learning while in prison is representative of ongoing change and individual growth. Research related to the prisoner experience is further enhanced by understanding that identity for people in custody may be perceived differently depending on the age and/or gender of the incarcerated person. Identity development may prove to be critical to combating stigma and labelling as a result of incarceration as this research identified that prisoners tend to associate themselves with socially constructed stereotypes as a method of coping.

Keywords: *identity, Goffman, self-awareness, prisoner education, support, stigma, social environment, learning, hope, self-perception*

Acknowledgements

I want to thank the Scottish Prison Service for providing a space to carry out this research. To the young men who volunteered to share their stories for this study, getting to know each of you was incredibly impactful and enriching, so thank you.

To my dear Kirsty Mckenzie, thank you for being part of my journey.

"I found it is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay...

small acts of kindness and love."

- Gandalf (J.R.R Tolkien)

This thesis is dedicated to my partner in life, Aaron. For supporting every decision, reading every word, and never giving up on me even when I gave up on myself.

Roads go ever ever on,

Over rock and under tree,

By caves where never sun has shone,

By streams that never find the sea;

Over snow by winter sown,

And through the merry flowers of June,

Over grass and over stone,

And under mountains in the moon.

Roads go ever ever on

Under cloud and under star,

Yet feet that wandering have gone

Turn at last to home afar.

Eyes that fire and sword have seen

And horror in the halls of stone

Look at last on meadows green

And trees and hills they long have known.

J.R.R. Tolkien

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Chapter 1:   Introduction

This research seeks to explore prisoner education from an intersection of education and criminology. My research crosses disciplines and develops a clear picture of how to support vulnerable groups in a learning environment that is considered to be insufficient in its ability to provide learning over discipline and authority. This chapter begins by outlining the research questions being considered and the rationale for the study. An overview of the prison being researched as well as discussion of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and the prison population in Scotland are examined. This chapter also explores Offender Learning Programmes' role in providing provision in prisons across Scotland and defines prisoner education for this study. The chapter concludes with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

This thesis explores experiences of learning and education in custody, with a particular focus on the prisoner experience and impact of the establishment on the learner. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of learning in custody by developing an understanding of what is learning and education, how does learning impact prisoners, and what is the role of the prison in developing learning opportunities. Prisoner experiences of learning may have the potential to encourage more than just new knowledge and skills. Educational opportunities in prison, as will be evidenced by this thesis, may result in a change to prisoner self-perception or identity. Identity may further impact how prisoners view their past and indeed their prospects. The core objective of this study is to describe and develop emergent themes from participant experiences, thus creating a vibrant narrative to explore prisoner experiences of education and learning in more depth. An examination of the institution aims to support this objective as the entity who delivers and shapes provision within the prison. In setting this objective, a set of research questions have been developed to address the aims of the study. The questions examined in this research project are:
- Who are the learners at HMYOI Polmont?
- What are their experiences of learning and education in HMYOI Polmont?
- How and why do institutional and environmental factors influence experiences of learning and education at Polmont?
- How do narratives of change and growth feature in different types of data in this study?

1.1   Rationale for the research

My academic journey has not been consistent or typical. I have learned much more from education than just employability skills and general knowledge. Education has had a role in my personal development, shaping who I am and how I perceive the world around me. Education, combined with my interest in imprisonment and opportunities for people in custody, has led me to this research. I am eager to explore the relationship between learning in custody and the influence of the institution on prisoner learning outcomes. Also, the theoretical viewpoint upon which this research has been built suggests that the purpose, environment, and rationalisation for providing prisoner education may be more relevant to individual development and self-perception than the broader aims of the institution in providing employability skills as a form of rehabilitation.

The questions posed in this study aim to explore the historical life experiences of prisoners. This research incorporates narrative accounts of prisoner's life stories, such as family relationships and previous educational experiences. While this study is not seeking to understand prisoner motivation to engage in learning, it is important to establish how past negative educational experiences may impact prisoner choice to participate in purposeful activities (*see* Offender Learning Programmes). This research will provide an understanding of how prisoners interpret and give meaning to their experiences of learning in the prison environment, while also considering the institutional and environmental factors that may impact learning and learners. I believe that it is of particular importance to engage in research on prisoner education programmes, especially at a time when there are a variety of challenges the prison system is facing concerning purposeful activity. These obstacles will be considered through data collected from prison staff and administration who provide their interpretation of the prison climate with regards to education and learning.

This study also seeks to identify connections from the collected narratives that highlight themes of change and growth amongst the participants. Drawing on a qualitative data set with prisoners, teaching staff, officers, and prison administration, this study aims to explore the outcomes of prisoner education and learning provisions on prisoners, as some prisoners may experience some form of transformation (*i.e.* change or growth) by engaging in learning while in prison. The core of this thesis also requires an understanding of contemporary imprisonment in Scotland and critical learning policy for Scottish prisons. This research will show that, in some

cases, prisoner education or purposeful activities have the potential to change a prisoner in terms of their ability to cope with the 'pains of imprisonment' (Sykes 1958; Goffman 1961). This study explores how and why learning may be impactful to prisoner identity, self-perception, and the importance of formal and informal learning to the future of those in custody.

This project aims to advance knowledge in the field of prisoner education research, and this thesis will use the prisoner biography as a tool to establish common factors that may impact a large portion of the prison population in Scotland. An interpretation of the data suggests that personal relationships and previous educational experiences may have significantly impacted the participants in this research, with these experiences shaping perceptions and future life goals. The data suggest that prisoner education may be a positive factor in the lives of the participants as well as their circumstances and available opportunities. Change is affected by structure and agency. The influence of the institution on learning reveals an environment that aims to develop young men for more than just employment, but also active citizenship and lifelong learning. The institutional policy suggests that through purposeful activity, learners have the potential to change, but prisoners provide an alternate perspective. Prisoners suggest that change and growth are a natural response to incarceration, but that learning and education in custody provide them with opportunity. While the individual factors that impact the participants in this study are varied, engaging in learning and education in custody has allowed them a chance to reset, to start again.

For many of these young men, education has provided an opportunity to gain self-confidence or build self-esteem. For others, education has allowed them to learn a trade and now they can support their family upon liberation. Others, also engage in education without any set goals and are open to gaining knowledge. Basic skills are the core of education in prison, and for some that is the first step. For many young men, education or learning represent a negative time in their lives, therefore engaging in education has the potential to alter their perceptions. There have been a variety of studies which confirm that education is an essential tool for rehabilitation in prison (Wilson, Gallagher, and MacKenzie 2000; Aos, Miller, and Drake 2006; MacKenzie 2006). However, a more thorough analysis of prisoner education is needed to understand the more profound influences that learning can have on a person.

The research of Erving Goffman (1959; 1961; 1968) is used as a framework for understanding the data and answering the research questions in my thesis and will provide insight into the environment, but also offer a deeper understanding of the prisoner experience and engagement with others within the establishment. From a functionalist or problem-solving perspective, prisoner culture is thought to develop as a result of the degrading and assimilating conditions of incarceration. Goffman (1959; 1961) provides a basis for understanding how roles are constructed in society, including the broader social environment of prison. These social roles in prison necessitate an approach that allows for diversity amongst participants living in a shared community. As a qualitative study, the data is not required to be tested but collected through face to face interviews. While it is still possible that the actor participants in this study provided a scripted dialogue, the setting allows for the individuals to relinquish their actor persona and provide a substantial biography, thus exposing areas which are generally inaccessible to others. According to Goffman's (1961) own analysis, social interactionism is not entirely appropriate for researching prisoners or total institutions, nor can it genuinely assess the changes that prisoners must make to adjust to the prison regime. The use of Goffman as a framework for this study allows the flexibility to develop methods for interdisciplinary research and meet the needs of the micro-environment of participants within the total institution.

1.2   Setting the scene: HMYOI Polmont

The setting for this study is HMYOI Polmont, a facility for young offenders age 16-21 based in Scotland. The fieldwork for this study began in November 2015 and was completed in March 2016. This establishment holds, on average, 400-500 young men in custody. This number includes people on remand (awaiting trial or sentencing) and those sentenced. In describing the environment of Polmont, it is essential to understand that the administration considers an education at this institution to be critical to prisoner outcomes. Through the development of several Scottish Prison Service strategies such as, *The Vision for Young People in Custody* (2014), *SPS Strategy for Purposeful Activity* (2014), and *SPS Learning and Skills Strategy* (2016) the administration at HMYOI Polmont have developed a curriculum of activities which aim to develop, support, and rehabilitate the young men in their care (*see* Offender Learning Programmes).

The research setting of prison is complex. At HMYOI Polmont, the administration granted me as a researcher, autonomy and access to all areas of the institution to gain a well-rounded

perspective of how prisoners live and are supported. The openness of the administration suggests that they are proud of the changes and direction of the prison and are excited to learn from people in custody if the modifications being made are useful or beneficial. The interactions with staff and administration at Polmont assisted in shaping the research design of this study, but did not impact the development of data collection tools or interactions with the participants. The interviews and experiences shared with participants happened organically and were not influenced by institutional aims or agendas.

Research within a prison can be emotive and disturbing at times, but also positive and affirming (Jewkes 2012). These opposing factors illustrate the contradictory space that exists within the prison environment. As a researcher within this environment, there is a realisation of how restrictive and controlled all aspects of daily life are within the prison. In my field diary, I note, there is an initial security check, a series of secured entry doors, then I retrieve my alarm, which is affixed to my belt at all times while inside the prison. The personal alarm is a precaution, but necessary for all people who work within the prison. The alarm does not sound if you press it, but everyone else with an alarm will hear it. Once I retrieve my alarm, there is another series of locked doors that are unlocked by central command. Once through the main building, several long outdoor walkways jut off in different directions across the property. Each walkway is covered, and the sides are enclosed with colourful thick hard plastic walls. Through this walkway, the 12-foot fence with spools of barbed wire is visible as well as the buildings where the young men live. The residence halls are Iona, Blair, Monro, and Dunedin (this is the solitary confinement building). The halls are made of brick with tiny windows. From the outside, they are reminiscent of traditional Scottish flats or buildings. I visited each of these halls throughout my data collection with the majority of my time spent in the Learning Centre 1 building. I learned that there are many different areas to the prison, such as Monro 4, which is the protection unit. Young men kept in this area of the prison can include those in custody for sexual offences, young men who are at risk of self-harm or harm from others, and others who may experience mental health challenges or violent outbursts. Awareness of my surroundings provided insight into how the establishment works with prisoners and developed a framework for understanding where and how learning takes place across the institution.

Beyond the specific research setting of HMYOI Polmont, an examination of the mission and values of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) as the overarching entity overseeing prisons in

Scotland is also crucial to this thesis, as is developing a snapshot of the current prisoner population in Scotland.

1.3   Scottish Prison Service (SPS)

The Scottish Prison Service is an agency of the Scottish Government and was founded in 1993. The purpose of the Service is to maintain secure custody and good order within prisons, while caring for prisoners with humanity and delivering opportunities which give the best chance to reduce reoffending upon returning to their community (Scottish Prison Service 2015; Brangan 2019). The mission statement and primary operating task of the Scottish Prison Service are,

> Help to protect the public and reduce reoffending through the delivery of safe and secure custodial services that empower service users to take responsibility and to fulfil their potential. (SPS Annual Delivery Plan 2016-2017)

The strategic priorities of the SPS (2014-2017) during the data collection period included six areas of focus, which include: delivering effective and efficient services, developing a person-centred asset-based approach, becoming a learning organisation, developing a collaborative outcome focus, promoting public confidence in SPS, and investing in SPS people. These purposeful aims include two areas of focus that directly influence this study. This person-centred approach to working with people in custody provides a basis for understanding the influence of the institution. This approach also sets the stage for prisoners to develop a plan of action for personal and professional development. The second area of focus is the SPS's aim to become a learning organisation. Learning and education opportunities are central to this study, and HMYOI Polmont has implemented programmes across the prison, which aim to meet both of these strategic objectives.

The prison estate in Scotland consists of fifteen prisons (including YOIs, Young Offender Institutions), with thirteen managed by the SPS and two prisons privately managed. The SPS funding for 2017-2018 is estimated at £361 million, with an annual per prisoner cost of £34,399 (SPICe Briefing 2017). There has been a steady decrease in the prisoner population over the past decade, but the overall prison population remains 50% higher than the average population in Europe (HMIPS 2016). Former HM Inspectorate of Prisons Scotland Chief David Strang (2016) asserts that more needs to be done to reduce custodial sentences in Scotland, proposing that

there are alternative methods of punishment that may not be as detrimental to the individual, but still serve to carry out justice.

1.4   The prisoner population

The daily population of prisoners in Scotland for 2017-2018 averaged 7,464. This number has decreased by approximately 6% since 2012-2013. Prisoner data specific to HMYOI Polmont reflects a regular population of 486 young men for 2015-2016 (SPS 2016). According to the prisoner survey for 2015, 42% of young men at Polmont had never served a previous sentence, and 53% stated they had previously served between one and five sentences. The data also reflects that 80% of the population is serving a short sentence (1-4 years in custody), with the remaining 20% of the community serving a sentence over four years (SPS 2016).

While each young man at Polmont enters the justice system with a unique background, the prisoner data related to literacy and numeracy is incomplete, and much debate exists concerning the methods of testing literacy levels. The SPS Learning and Skills Strategy (2016) utilises the Scottish Government's definition of literacies. Literacies are described as 'complex capabilities' or skills, suggesting that defining literacy is more intricate that a test may be able to determine. The SPS prisoner survey for 2015 highlights that approximately 19% of prisoners reported difficulty with writing, 16% struggle with reading, and 15% with numeracy. This challenges data collected in England and Wales (Coates 2016), which suggests that over 40% of young men in custody are at or below the level in literacy and numeracy. Most research on literacy levels of the incarcerated have been conducted in England and Wales, thus providing a need for research specific to Scotland, allowing the SPS to better understand the learning and educational needs of prisoners. The prisoner survey also includes data related to educational programming at Polmont, 72% of prisoners participated in literacy/numeracy, 61% participated in art, and 45% attended IT. This data concludes with more than half of the population (51%) stating that they participated in an activity at the learning centre; this number is up from 38% in 2013 (Broderick and Carnie 2015).

The following section will develop an understanding of how learning and education for people in custody at Polmont may be facilitated. Offender Learning Programmes are explored as the primary source for educational delivery across HMYOI Polmont. A detailed contextual

description of prisoner education and purposeful learning are explored as well as a description of the voluntary organisations supporting learning at this institution.

1.5   HMYOI Polmont: Learning for people in custody

At the time of this study, (2015-2016) educational provision at Polmont was facilitated through Offender Learning Programmes (OLP) which focused on purposeful activities within HMYOI Polmont and are the overarching entity within the SPS providing and negotiating learning and educational provision. The OLP utilises data and looks externally to understand how to develop programs to engage those in custody at Polmont. A starting point for all young people at Polmont is the completion of *The Positive Futures Plan (Appendix 1)*. This document is an opportunity for prisoners to discuss with their personal officer goals they would like to achieve during their sentence, which can include education, work, and other informal development and skills. The ethos of the SPS is *Unlocking Potential, Transforming Lives*. The SPS states that this belief is at the core of HMYOI Polmont as they are a community where learning and education are woven into the daily routine of all prisoners. The Vision of SPS Offender Learning asserts, 'that everyone in our care has the opportunity to engage in creative and flexible learning that unlocks potential, inspires change and builds individual strengths' (Scottish Government 2015: 5). This person-centred approach aligns with social practice principles and is expected to encourage participation in education amongst prisoners.

In 2014, the prison inspectorate for Scotland and the Scottish Parliament asserted that more time is dedicated to education, as this is imperative to providing better opportunities upon liberation (SPS 2014). The Governor for HMYOI Polmont describes the institution as a 'whole-establishment learning environment where every contact with a young person should be a learning opportunity' (Horton 2014: 1). HMYOI Polmont offers a variety of courses to people in custody. The classes are designed to appeal to a diverse population, which is vital to encourage broader engagement. One strand of the OLP includes the development of a citizenship programme. The citizenship programme is focused on individual well-being, communities, and family (*see* chapter 3). The initiatives in this area include peer mentoring, coordinated talks on drug and alcohol abuse, teamwork, and personal care, and also include parenting, grief, mental health, and meditation.

The core skills education provider at HMYOI Polmont is Fife College. Fife operates on a contract with the Scottish Prison Service to provide learning and skills services for prisoners (SPS 2017). The current contract renegotiation in 2017 allows for Fife to remain the education provider for five years. They are responsible for the core skills education programmes which lead to a variety of qualifications for students. Many of the vocational programmes at Polmont are facilitated by trained SPS staff who have a professional background in a specific vocation. In addition to core skills education and vocational programming, there are a variety of organisations who engage people in custody. Barnardo's is an external non-profit organisation that offers programs in the area of youth work. It provides prisoners with an opportunity to develop fundamental skills, such as money management, event planning, and presentation skills. Paws for Progress also operates as a non-profit out with from the prison. Paws is a partnership programme with the SPCA, whereby prisoners are paired with a shelter dog in need of training. Additional initiatives include: *STIR* magazine, an innovative partnership with New College Lanarkshire; *Inspiring Change*, a year-long program which engaged people in custody in an art-based curriculum (Sams 2014); and the *Mean Business Plan* (HMIe 2008), which sought to engage learners in undertaking a business-related project that would allow them to develop the skills needed to start and run a successful small business. Sams (2014) notes that programs like *Inspiring Change* have 'demonstrated that projects can embed a range of basic literacy, numeracy, and IT skills, and provide opportunities for students to acquire skills such as time management, collaboration, and problem-solving that are needed for work and life in the community' (p. 199).

Furthermore, to the OLP, the Scottish Prison Service has worked to develop policy related to learning and educational provision for people in custody. The following section examines three distinct strategies aimed at prisoner education (purposeful activity) and development for people in custody.

1.6   Scottish Prison Service: Policy for learning and education

The three strategies analysed in this section provide the overarching framework for how the SPS aims to support prisoners learning and education needs. The policies examined include the *SPS Learning and Skills Strategy 2016-2021, Delivering a Strategy for Purposeful Activity in the Scottish Prison Service,* and *The Vision for Young People in Custody.*

The *SPS Learning and Skills Strategy 2016-2021* is guiding document developed by the Scottish Prison Service in 2014. This plan updates the learning and education provision in Scottish prisons and seeks to make better use of resources and provide educational programs that engage and motivate learners. The *Strategy* aims to improve all levels of learning and associated programs through professional development, promotion of a positive learning culture, and positive relationships. The strategic framework of the plan includes five themes: engaging learners, strengthening partnerships, ensuring high-quality learning opportunities, improving the capacity to respond, and evidencing success (SPS 2016). The *Learning and Skills Strategy* addresses the challenges of each of these themes through a plan of action. Engaging learners is expected to provide a person-centred approach to learning, encouraging engagement, with the challenge being prioritisation. A program needs to be developed to identify individuals with specific learning needs, as well as those that may require additional skills development, resulting in the creation of a system that would help to prioritise those students. The strengthening partnerships theme seeks to continue building on current education relationships and promotes engagement with partners that will continue to broaden and enrich the learning community. Another goal is ensuring that staff development remains central to carrying out new provisions and programs. Education Scotland (2016) found that teaching staff within the SPS received regular training and held appropriate qualifications.

The final two themes are implicit to the establishment. First, the capacity to respond is linked to developing spaces within and out with the prison to engage in learning activities which are imperative to the student's ability to learn (*see* chapter 3). Follis (2015) delineates that all prison spaces, regardless of their designed purpose, possess an inherent power informed by the discourse of discipline that tends to permeate the prison. Finally, evidencing success refers to data collection and tracking from an administrative perspective. The ability for prisons to develop an approach to precisely guide individual achievements may be possible, but it may be impossible to define success for each student as it may have a different meaning for each person (SPS 2015). Overall the *SPS Learning and Skills Strategy 2016-2021* aims are to reach out to learners and those not engaging in promoting the benefits of education and encourage prisoners to overcome traditional barriers to gain skills.

The second strategy that aims to inform and develop prisoner engagement is the policy entitled, *Delivering a Strategy for Purposeful Activity in the Scottish Prison Service (2014).* This

plan was developed as a system which aids in the rehabilitation of prisoners. The Justice Committee (2013) asserts that 'rehabilitation must start in prison and continue after release when offenders are released back into an environment where they committed their crimes' (p. 4). The purposeful activity framework is designed to engage people in custody in work and develop a supportive environment within the institution. The five areas of purposeful activity include well-being, citizenship, volunteering and reparation, life skills and resilience, offending behaviour, and learning and employability (*as shown in figure 1 below*).

Figure 1: SPS holistic model for purposeful activity (2013)

The SPS defines the term purposeful activity as:

Inclusion of any activity or constructive interaction which promotes citizenship; develops learning and employability skills; builds life skills and resilience; addresses well-being; and motivates personal engagement with both prison and community-based services. (p. 9)

Each of the five areas of purposeful activity has a role in individual learning and development. Therefore, each component is relevant to the outcomes of this study. Personal well-being or changing behaviours may also be important to prisoner self-perception and individual learning processes with each of these areas, encouraging reflection and change.

As the focus of this research is on learning and education experiences of prisoners, it is particularly interesting to note that a report from the Justice Committee, *Inquiry into Purposeful Activity in Prisons* (2013) reflects an on-going reluctance of individuals to participate in learning

activities of any kind (Scottish Parliament 2013). However, the revised definition of purposeful activity may result in a change to the data collected annually by the SPS as it will now include more activities and opportunities. Aside from reluctant learners, the SPS needs to assess the prison population based on more than just key performance indicators, but through an informed process of research. The SPS may require a prison specific approach, as learning and activity across the institutions vary significantly; for example, prisoners in the Highlands may have different learning needs from people in custody in Edinburgh. One challenge for the Strategy for Purposeful Activity is the diversity of learning needs as the SPS continues to broaden their offerings, but without concrete data, prisoner reluctance to participate will continue to be an obstacle. Another area which poses a challenge for the Strategy is when prisoners transfer between institutions. Prison transfer is especially relevant for the young men at Polmont, as many will age-out and be transferred to an adult establishment, which may make them choose not to engage in a course, due to the inability to reach completion upon transfer.

The SPS *Strategy for Purposeful Activity* (2014) has experienced some growing pains over the past four years since its inception. The programme has the potential to appeal to the majority of the prison population, but a distinct challenge is overcoming prior negative experiences with learning and, specifically for young men at Polmont, inexperience with employment. These challenges, combined with insufficient data related to learning and education needs in the SPS and learner retention after the transfer, will be critical issues the SPS will need to address moving forward.

The final Strategy is *The Vision for Young People in Custody* (2014). This plan is aimed at prisoners serving a sentence at an institution for young offenders in Scotland, such as HMYOI Polmont and formerly Cornton Vale. The *Vision* focuses on the development of a learning community at HMYOI Polmont and comprises a phased individual plan for learners, which will carry them through their time in custody and into resettlement in the community. Of the four strands of learning that SPS has developed, this research will focus on the 'successful learner' block, which aims to develop skills and knowledge for life, work and further learning (Scottish Prison Service 2014). The development of skills for those in custody as an aim of the *Vision* is admirable, but engagement in most purposeful activities (*as noted above*) is knowingly deficient. The *Vision* does not address how encouragement to engage in learner-based

activities is promoted throughout the establishment. The *Vision* further suggests that working with young people through this program will continue to reflect and reinforce the values of belief, respect, integrity, openness, courage, and humility towards all individuals (Scottish Prison Service 2014). These values can be key components to encouraging change, growth and developing hope for the future.

This section has examined three SPS policy documents that are aimed at learning and education within the total institution. The second Strategy analysed defines purposeful learning in the SPS. This terminology, which refers to all learning and education at HMYOI Polmont, will be explored in-depth in the section below. The policies investigated provide a broad understanding of how educational provision is organised in prison. The following section seeks to clarify how prisoner education and learning are defined throughout this thesis.

1.7 Prisoner education or purposeful activity

For this study, education and learning were given a broad scope of meaning. The definition provided by the SPS *Strategy for Purposeful Activity* (2014) was used to develop the overarching definition used in my project. The *Strategy* outlines that purposeful activity includes any activity or constructive interaction which promotes citizenship; develops learning and employability skills; builds life skills and resilience; addresses well-being; and motivates personal engagement with both prison and community-based services (2014: 8). This definition of purposeful activity allows for a more holistic model to be used when assessing the data and experiences of the participants and therefore, will be used to understand prisoner education at this institution. Also, prisoner education may include the acquisition of skills, knowledge, values, beliefs, and habits that may be a result of engaging in both formal and informal purposeful activities. The learning process that occurs in prison may be impacted by previous experiences, emotional, environmental, or cognitive influences, with each playing a role in the development of an individual's understanding and worldview. Learning, for the purpose of this study, can include all experiences and interactions throughout the institution, formal and informal, social and personal. The next chapter (2) explores and elaborates upon how education and learning are understood for the purposes of the research providing a more holistic interpretation of education for people in custody.

A final aspect of education that will be discussed in chapter (6) relates to qualifications and the Curriculum for Excellence. CfE is the education policy for Scottish Schools, where the curriculum is defined as the entirety of a pupil's experiences in an educational setting. However, two areas of the Curriculum for Excellence that are important to delineate for this study are the SCQF level and credit points. The SCQF is Scotland's qualification framework which benchmarks all levels of Scottish accreditations internationally. This framework consists of 12 levels, which include specific descriptors that indicate the level of learning. The credit points are not an indication of ability or age, but instead calculated within the subject area based on how long an average learner might take to achieve the learning outcomes. The points are represented by notional learning hours, where one SCQF credit point represents 10 hours of learning, thus, allowing a quantifiable method of deciphering how many hours of study are needed to complete a programme or qualification (SCQF 2012).

1.8   Conclusion

The chapter begins by providing a clear rationale for this research project, the aims, and questions to be researched. The aims include a need to better understand the personal biography of prisoners, exploration of how prisoners interpret and give meaning to learning and education in prison, the role of the institution in providing a place of learning, and the potential outcomes of prisoners participating in learning and education in custody. The contextual setting of HMYOI Polmont was investigated in conjunction with the Scottish Prison Service and the prison population. An understanding of OLP and SPS learning and education policy were explored, and the definition of prisoner education (and purposeful activity) was examined. The chapter concludes with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.9   Structure of the thesis

The following outline provides an overview of the structure of this thesis.

Chapter 1 has provided the rationale for the research, explored the research setting, provided an overview of the Scottish Prison Service, and the prisoner population in Scotland. The second part of this chapter includes information on OLP, a critical analysis of the current education policy in Scottish prisons and defines prisoner education (and purposeful activity).

Chapter 2 explores the literature concerning the interactive and contextual perspectives of learning and Gert Biesta's domains of education. The chapter utilises Biesta's domains to

navigate through the literature related to the social environment of prison and the impact of prisoner education and the total institution on identity.

Chapter 3 offers an analysis of the literature that supports the argument that the prisoner's biography is critical to this study, with a specific emphasis on intergenerational patterns, trauma, and social factors. The institutional impacts on the prisoner are discussed concerning space, time, and support in prison. The theoretical framework (Goffman) is also explored concerning the pains of imprisonment and the total institution.

Chapter 4 outlines the research questions, research design, site selection, including the ethics process for the SPS and ethical considerations of this study. The sample for the study is discussed, including participant consent. The methods of data collection are examined, including qualitative in-person interviews with prisoners, teaching staff, personal officers, and administration at HMYOI Polmont. An observation component of data collection related to the prison environment is also discussed. Reflexivity in fieldwork is explored before a discussion of a thematic process that was used to analyse the data. The chapter concludes with the identification of limitations which may have impacted this study.

Chapter 5 is the first of three findings chapters included in this thesis. This chapter provides data related to the learner's biography, suggesting that factors such as family structure, loss, socioeconomic status, and parenthood may influence life trajectories. The second part of the chapter provides an analysis of previous learning experiences of the participants, with an understanding that their perceptions and motivation to engage in learning and education are influenced by outside factors such as school exclusions and literacy and learning difficulties.

Chapter 6 provides an analysis of the data collected related to the participant's experiences of learning and education while at HMYOI Polmont. The prisoner learning community is investigated as are the types of learning and environments that participants can engage in throughout the institution.

Chapter 7 The final findings chapter relates to the impact of the prison and environment on learner experiences. The purposes of the institution are explored while examining the paradox of learning and punishment, the spaces where learning takes place, the social structure to

learning in prison, and the role of labelling and identity. The second part of this chapter focuses on the prisoner and self-reflection related to change and growth in prison.

Chapter 8 provides a discussion of the primary findings of this study.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by exploring areas for new research and the contribution of this study the current body of research related to prisoner education.

Chapter 2:   Identity: Learning as social and personal transformation

This chapter develops the landscape for how learning is negotiated within the total institution. An understanding of the Scottish prisoner population sets the foundation for who are the learners in my study. As my thesis aims to share experiences of learning and education for people in custody, aspects of adult learning (Jarvis 1987; Knowles 1980, 1984) are examined from a social perspective. These theories help support the argument that the social world of prison may provide a unique opportunity for learning through socialisation. Adult learning is then explored through Biesta's (2010) domains of education, which will then guide a discussion of the social environment of prison and impact on the self (socialisation and subjectification). These two domains overlap in their impact on learners, as this chapter investigates aspects of socialisation in the total institution, the relationship between identity and learning, the total institution, and stigma. The analysis of these domains concludes with a discussion of the role of self-efficacy and the importance of hope and support systems for people in custody.

2.1   People in custody

For the purpose of this research, identifying the population of people in custody in Scotland offers an opportunity to gain contextual background on who are the learners and what are their experiences of learning and education in prison. Broadly the purpose of prisoner education is highlighted, and connections with learning in custody are made utilising data from European prison educators. Many prisoners in Scotland may have a family history of incarceration, which has contributed to a cycle of imprisonment for multiple generations of families (*see* chapter 3). Others in custody may have been pushed to the margins of the education system, forgotten about, and eventually they chose to leave education behind. The myth of social mobility through educational meritocracy still exists in our society (Themelis 2008) and continues to be perpetuated by the assertion that qualifications can result in power and wealth. Patterns of disadvantage and social exclusion may further exacerbate this assertion as many people incarcerated in Scotland may come from working-class backgrounds, were excluded from school, and eventually found themselves in trouble with the criminal justice system (*see* chapter 3). For many, disengagement with education at a young age may have led to social alienation, vulnerability, and marginalisation, putting them at a much higher risk of offending (Beinart, Anderson, Lee, and Utting 2002; Farrington 2007; Stephenson 2007).

The population of a prisoner education program presents the possibility of many different learning scenarios. Some students may excel in the course material, and others may struggle. Students in custody pursue education for a variety of reasons, but for some, learning is terrifying and anxiety-ridden, and they fear failure. These intrinsic factors may then impact a person's ability or desire to learn, resulting in low self-efficacy for education. For some learners, it may only take feeling successful at a task or accomplishing an assignment they perceive to be challenging or setting personal goals to get them back on track. While most studies related to efficacy or motivation are applicable broadly to education (Ormrod 2000; Pajares 2003; Pajares and Schunk 2001; Pintrich and Schunk 2002; Schunk 1999; Zimmerman 2000) and do not reflect the distinct nuances of prisoner education, they can be useful in understanding learners in any environment. Freire (1996) argues that education must be restructured to create a problem-posing environment that exposes reality and supports learners in identifying their place in the world as well as the ability to analyse the world around them critically. Freire (1996) also notes that the social dynamics of educational systems can distort the roles of power and authority and more focus should be on working 'with' students rather than doing 'to' them (p. 60).

There is no clear consensus on the purpose of prisoner education or education in general. However, there are a variety of perspectives that exist in the literature. Foshay (1991) illustrates the importance of education while also exposing the problem with education.

> Education and learning should not be limited to the ideals of a few but should be opened to allow for freedom of thought and engagement for all. To bring people to as full realisation as possible of what it is to be a human being. (p. 277)

It may be suggested that the purpose of education for people in custody may be to provide an environment of support, choice, and growth, and if so, then it is necessary to understand if the aims of prisoner education are being met. Hall and Killacky (2008) revealed consistent themes regarding student experiences in custody. The overall focus of the study was to explore student perceptions of education with an additional aim to understand the role of education in post-release success, classifying their findings into two categories: success and regret. Many prisoners defined success as caring for oneself or loved ones post-incarceration, while others felt that success was equal to motivation, self-understanding, or contentment. The theme of regret was clear. Most of the participants in the study felt regret for previous actions,

behaviours, and decisions. They identified a historical moment that led them to this point. Many participants described feelings of anger and frustration, several more spoke of the violence that was involved in their expulsion from school. Hanging out with the wrong crowd or merely acting up one too many times, which eventually resulted in the student leaving school and the development of a negative affiliation with education. Additional research by Smyth and McCoy (2009) on early school leavers in Ireland revealed the potential consequences for adults. The study found that school leavers tended to have weaker employment prospects, poorer health, and earned a lower wage. The societal impacts included increased spending on health and welfare, and for some communities, prison. These outcomes were also reflected in a study by NRDC (2005), suggesting that poor literacy may be a significant barrier to adults in the United Kingdom, meeting their true potential.

In a survey of prison education coordinators in Europe, several institutional hurdles to engagement in education were identified. Many prisoners may have their education interrupted due to a prison transfer (Munoz 2009). Thus, they may not have the opportunity to continue a course at a new facility. Many facilities may not have sufficient teaching space or a curriculum that can adequately support the learner's needs (i.e. level and content; learning resources; staff qualifications) (Munoz 2009). The lack of teaching facilities places limitations on when and how often a person can engage in education and can be off-putting or discourage future participation. When the onus of effort is placed on the individual, procrastination is also possible. Students participating in education out with the prison have restricted access to online tools and one-on-one phone sessions with their tutors to complete a course. The complexity of this process results in an additional barrier to learning for people in custody. Specific to Scotland, *Offender Learning: Options for improvement* (2007), developed by the Scottish Government Skills Strategy, Skills for Scotland, suggests that they are in the process of researching student experiences for people in custody, but no comprehensive record of outcomes currently exist.

This section has provided an overview of people in custody. The content provided offers a broad perspective on the purpose of prisoner education and the student experience. At this point, the literature will transition from the people in custody to developing a framework for how adult learning and education complement the learning environment for people in custody.

The next section defines how learning is understood in this research project and illustrates the influence of the total institution on the learner.

2.2   Perspectives on adult learning

For the purposes of my thesis, learning is understood as a developmental, whole life process that consists of significant social dimensions, whereby people in custody utilise their social environment to learn and grow as well as shape their identity (Goffman 1959; Illeris 2013). There are two primary perspectives on how to support adult learners, both of which prove to be relevant for understanding prisoner education: individual and contextual. These perspectives differ in that the individual perspective infers that learning is an internal process, suggesting that all people can be successful learners if they are provided with the correct tools (principles and competencies) (Caffarella and Merriam 1999). The contextual perspective of learning contrasts with the individual perspective, as it considers the interactive and structural aspects to learning (Caffarella and Merriam 1999; Tennant and Pogson 1995). This section begins by exploring the contextual aspects of adult learning from the perspective of educationalists Peter Jarvis (1987) and Malcolm Knowles (1980, 1984) and expands on the context for learning in this study.

Peter Jarvis (1987: 25), while not defining learning for people in custody, defines learning as a broad conceptualisation that takes into account the whole human being. There is a trigger for this learning, which Jarvis describes as a disjuncture (1987). Jarvis's disjuncture is comparable to a disorienting dilemma that Mezirow (1990) or other transformative learning theorists use to establish a starting point for change. Jarvis's ideas of learning happen within the social world. For people in custody, learning is impacted by the institution, by barriers, low self-esteem and efficacy. In prison, every aspect of learning is convoluted and contrasts with typical social experience. Jarvis (1987) suggests that these experiences are what push learners to expand their knowledge. Learning is not just a psychological process for the individual, but is also influenced by the contextual perspective, which includes socialisation and confinement.

Malcolm Knowles (1980, 1984) proposes a model for adult learning which is coined andragogy. Knowles suggests that adult learners may be more self-directed and act under intrinsic motivation; they develop a surplus of experiences as learning tools, their social roles impact learning, and adults tend to focus on real-life problems and knowledge instead of subject-based

learning. The opportunity for adult learners to create their learning experiences is central to Knowles model of andragogy. The learning experiences of people in custody may become part of the ethos of their confinement, but the use of adult learning methods can place ownership of learning back into the adult learner's hands. Education in prison is voluntary; therefore, there has to be an intrinsic motivation for prisoners to engage. Illeris (2002) noted that there is a correlation between mood and motivation related to learning. He suggests that self-perception also has a role in learners self-directing their learning. The social environment where learning takes place may also have a significant role in shaping individual identity and altering perceptions and worldviews (Pratt 1993). Andragogy superficially considers social structures in the development of the self while maintaining that social roles aid in the creation of learning opportunities across the lifespan. Pratt (1993) contends that knowledge and cognition are situated within and related to a specific social and biographical context. They are potentially demonstrating that these contexts are reciprocal or linked in learning.

Knowles work is of particular interest in this study, as the prisoner biography has been shaped by life experiences. Therefore, the learning environment is impacted by the possible negative barriers related to prior experiences with education. These barriers have the potential to be overcome through the creation of a curriculum that engages students through real-life scenarios and problem-based learning opportunities. Mezirow (1981: 20) argues that 'conceptual categories, rules, tactics, and criteria for judging habits of perception, thought, and behaviour' are formed by social structures. Students in prisoner education may learn as much from their peers as they do in the classroom, as learning is prevalent across the total institution. However, the social classroom is an opportunity for prisoners to assume the role of learner, developing their self-perception and acknowledging their identity as a student. Social roles within the classroom may also extend to the relationship between student and facilitator, where an environment of collaboration, authenticity, and mutual respect exists, resulting in a supportive social atmosphere (Knowles 1984). In chapter three, discussion of the *Institutional impacts on the prisoner* elaborate further on the role of the facilitator.

Jarvis (1987) and Knowles (1980, 1984) provide examples of how learning within the total institution may influence the student experience. Through their work, social interaction and biography have both been shown to be important to learning; perhaps even more so in prison, as learners struggle to maintain and develop relationships or social groups while also grappling

with who they are as individuals. These educationalists suggest that for learning to occur in any environment, the learner must push past their prior experiences and begin to see new possibilities, they must be willing to reconstruct or transform as a learner. This section has defined learning for this study and has explored models for adult learning with an emphasis on the interactive and structural aspects of being a student prisoner. Jarvis and Knowles both outline processes for adult learning and the application of these processes is illustrated in the context of a prisoner learning community. The next section discusses the domains of education as defined by Gert Biesta (2010). The content outlined will provide an overview of the two prominent domains (socialisation and subjectification) explored in this study.

2.3   The language of education

In my thesis, Gert Biesta's (2010) domains of education provide context for linking intersections where learning and education take place in prison. For the purpose of this study, Biesta's domains of socialisation and subjectification offer a way to explore the purposes of education and the experiences of learners in custody. Biesta suggests that education can take place in any environment and should be directed and aimed at attaining a specific goal. Whereas learning can occur in many settings and does not need to be directed. For many prisoners, education is something that has been done to them, taken away from them, imposed, ordered and required (Freire 1996:31). Biesta's three domains suggest that education serves a broader purpose than learning to do something or gain an accredited qualification. Costelloe (2014) contends that a lack of education is not the root cause of criminality, but suggests that prisoner education is a starting point for reintroducing people in custody back into society by instilling the belief that learning is a constant throughout the lifespan.

Biesta's (2010) domains of education are qualification, socialisation, and subjectification. Often these domains will simultaneously take place in an educational setting, as education requires relationships and social engagement. Biesta (2010) asserts that the first function of education is to provide knowledge, habits, skills and understanding concerning the world outside of formal education. Qualification, is broken down to understand the purpose of education in engaging with core skills learning and informal learning, which can include social experiences and group activities such as team sports and peer mentoring, as well as obstacles that people in custody may encounter in pursuit of individual achievements. Qualification can include any learning and can take place in any environment. The qualification domain further considers the contributions

of development and growth in this process. McEhinney (1994) describes learning in prison as mechanistic and routine-oriented. It has been argued that this type of approach to teaching might serve to reproduce prisoners' identities as deviants (Warr 2016).

2.4   Socialisation & Subjectification

The second and third domains of education (socialisation and subjectification) help explore the purpose of education in the context of my study. Both domains are understood (as evidenced in the data) to have a significant impact on the participants as part of their daily routine in custody. As the three domains are always linked in play and are overlapping, this section begins with an illustration of socialisation in the context of this study. Then elaborates on the third domain of subjectification as it relates to identity (learning, imprisonment, and stigma). A notable correlation between social practices and self-concept are outlined in the following sections.

To begin, Biesta (2010: 5) asserts that socialisation is equivalent to '*ways of doing and ways of being*.' Socialisation, on any level, has the potential to reinforce social norms and biases that already exist in society, but this remains an essential component of education and learning. This domain also considers the role of the social community within the total institution, with learners engaging with peers, officers, and administration in classrooms, vocational facilities, and work crews. Socialisation may be considered a persistent factor in prison, as social roles, relationships, and activities serve to bind prisoners together in groups (Crewe 2011). Socialisation is a component of identity development as learners can align their beliefs related to cultural, political, and traditional practices to establish their place within this micro-society, as well as how they can be or exist. The social environment of prison may encourage learners to develop a new identity as students, tradespeople, or potential leaders with each of these identities, maintaining a social component (Crewe 2011).

The third of Biesta's domains (subjectification) explores the relationship between learning and a sense of self (Goffman 1959). In addition to a discussion of identity, this section examines the role of hope and support and self-efficacy for people in custody. Subjectification provides a basis for understanding one's place outside of traditional social and cultural practices that may be affected by individual initiative and responsibility. The concept of subjectification can be closely aligned with emancipatory learning as education provides an outlet for self-

empowerment (*see* Freire 1996). While Biesta does not describe the self using the term 'identity', the frame of reference and theorisation of the total institution for this study is based on the work of Erving Goffman (1959) and is understood in terms of identity formation. For this reason, it is coherent to utilise education also theorised as a process of identity formation in this study (*see* Illeris 2013). This process is discussed in terms understood by Illeris, which suggests that there is a relationship that exists between learning and identity.

2.4.1   Learning and identity

For the purposes of this study, I am assuming that education impacts the self and can be understood in terms of identity formation. This discussion will be useful for understanding the concepts outlined in chapters 5-7. Consideration of identity formation is also assistive in understanding the function of prisons as institutions, which is the focus of my research. Part of that function may be educational, and therefore it is appropriate to consider an educational theory that conceptualises impactful learning in this way. There is a range of empirical studies on the impact of education on the self for people in custody which is understood as a process of positive identity formation (Reuss 1997; Jewkes 2005; Crewe & Maruna 2006; Hughes 2013; Pike 2014; Nichols 2016). Many other studies focus on the intrinsic features of identity or the outcomes related to learning performance or results (Axelsson 2009, Crowther, Maclachlan, & Tett 2010). However, most studies fail to examine identity in non-formal educational settings and, therefore, do not adequately reflect the characteristics of identity construction within an environment such as prison (Wenger 1998).

The young men in this study will enter the learning environment of prison with their own moral and spiritual belief systems and a distinctive cultural background creating a unique identity and formulating how they perceive the world around them. The premise of transformative learning theory is that learners construct a new frame of reference through questioning current assumptions, thoughts, and beliefs. As individual learners see the world through their sphere of learning, the process of questioning allows for the reconstruction of their frame of reference in a new or different way (Cranton 2000). Jack Mezirow (1991) developed a transformative learning theory, but did not consider the broader implications on the learner's identity. Transformative learning is any process that results in a change in one's identity; who we experience ourselves being, and how we want to be experienced by others. Knud Illeris (2013) expanded the definition of transformative learning to include the emotional dimension of

learning. Illeris (2013) developed a model of learning where he identified two different processes: an internal psychological process that includes behaviourist and cognitive learning, and an external interaction process inclusive of social learning and is dependent on place and time. Furthermore, Illeris (2013) identified three different dimensions to learning: cognitive (content); emotional (motivation); and social (interaction), suggesting that these dimensions were inextricably linked.

In addition to redefining transformative learning theory, Illeris (2013) developed a personal identity structure using transformative learning as a central component for understanding identity development. Illeris' model draws on the foundational research of Erik Erikson (1968) and defines identity as a psycho-social concept. Illeris' model begins at the centre with a core identity (*i.e.* self-identity or biographical identity), developed at birth; this identity gradually develops throughout the lifespan. In my study, this is reflected in the narratives and life stories of the participants. A perceived core identity surrounded by a layer of more flexible structures aligns with Illeris's (1999) concepts of learning, as it acknowledges the social and individual sides of the mental process. The surrounding layers include personality identity, which controls the individual's relationship with the social world. Pike and Hopkins (2019) write that a student prisoner's role within a learning community appears to be relevant to the development of social identity. They note that the peer mentoring role in a 'learning' prison is an excellent example of how engagement in a learning community can impact the social world of people in custody. The outermost layer of identity described by Illeris is peripheral. Using Goffman (1959) for context, this could be perceived as the front-stage persona. The outer layer of identity protects the core and remains social while perhaps '*saving face*'. In the confines of a prison, this layer of identity may provide the protection necessary to function in an environment meant to disassemble and disorientate the self.

Illeris's definition of identity may be suitable for understanding a prisoner learning community, but it also provides a helpful starting point for understanding the impact of learning on identity. It seems to me that there may be a correlation between learning and identity, as both require an individual to question their frame of reference, knowledge, and place in the world. In a prisoner learning community, learning might take place through people sharing their experiences, thus enhancing the learner's experience. Suggesting that for my study, learning might arise from sharing knowledge, lived experience, memories and shared interpretations in

an educational situation. These aspects may influence how learners develop and grow, which can be understood in terms of identity change (Illeris 2013; Reuss 1999). One might speculate that as a result of engagement with education, the identity of the learner begins to change and the individual sheds the negative sense of self, bred within the prison environment and begins to see him or herself as a learner and student (Goffman 1959). Prison may force a prisoner's identity to be in continual flux. Reuss (1999) suggests that balancing the layers of different identities in prison are tied to the self (esteem, confidence, worth) and how people in custody choose to present themselves to others.

Reuss's empirical research with prisoners (1999) suggests that identity and personal transformation is an ongoing process that influences the reintegration process, with education pushing participants to become more reflexive about their experiences of learning. Reuss (1999) also notes that the prisoner's sense of identity 'may undergo several transformations during incarceration (some via education)' (p. 141). Her findings concluded that a new self can emerge in the prison environment and that the potential exists for personal development and possibly a change in offending behaviour' (Reuss 1999: 117). Reuss' study focused on the acquisition of knowledge in a prisoner education setting and the related social processes, including identity formation. However, she does not identify the basis for her use of the term 'identity', though it is a prominent focus of her research and she resolves to use her interpretation of this term throughout her study. She refers to a sense of self and self-awareness in describing the identity, which is common to the psychological definition but does not elaborate on the concepts of identity development or how identity transformation occurs. Reuss' study provides a foundation for understanding the role of personal change and development of the student identity in a prisoner classroom.

In summary, learning in this study is defined as a developmental, whole life process with significant social elements and contexts that may impact identity development. Biesta's domains provide a foundation that reflects education as serving a broader purpose than learning to do something or gain an accredited qualification. The language of education explores two of Biesta's domains (socialisation and subjectification) as a means of drawing out aspects of socialisation in prison and the impact of the total institution on the self. The next section examines the identity from a criminological perspective. From a research standpoint, my study aims to understand the role of the institution in forming the experiences of students,

as understood through conceptualisations of identity formation (Goffman). Therefore, I have drawn upon learning theory concerned with understanding how education impacts the self. Utilising the theoretical and empirical research of Mezirow, Illeris and Reuss provided a more defined understanding of the process of transformation and impact on identity.

2.4.2 The total institution and identity

Goffman (1968) asserts that upon entering the total institution, prisoners are stripped of their home, possessions and their identity and are assigned a number in its place. Ongoing research related to the dehumanising experiences of prison has emphasised the impact of imprisonment on individual identity (Jewkes, 2002; Liebling, 2007; Sykes, 1958). Jewkes (2002) alludes to prisoners maintaining multiple identities to protect their front and backstage personas in prison. This idea of protecting one's identity was explored by Goffman (1959) as a way for individuals to engage in face to face situations and still manage situational norms and rituals. Goffman sought to analyse this construct with a metaphor related to the theatre, called dramaturgy. Whereby our roles in society are a performance, we are in a constant state of role-playing, the script is unwritten, but the performance is still believable (Goffman 1959). Dramaturgy defined a front and back region to the performance areas, the front being the stage and the back area includes the off-stage baggage that is necessary to the performance but remains unseen by the audience. Central to Goffman's dramaturgy is the relationship between performance and life, with the situation defining the interaction or performance. In a given situation, the performers and audience maintain a mutual acceptance of the interaction, and when the situation changes, the actor is considered to be '*saving face*'. The term refers to the social face or social self, described by Goffman (1959) as the impressions and images the actor is expected to live up to and how the individual regulates these internally and externally, with the social self connecting the performer to social interaction and broader society. The social face also aligns with Illeris's (2013) model of identity, as the peripheral layer maintains daily socialisation and balances the front and backstage areas of interaction. As part of this thesis, it is helpful to consider the learners' identity as a 'front-stage' performance, but they are also providing a social face. They are presenting a public self-image that allows them to project how they want to be perceived by others in their social space. In this way, social activity in prison can be understood in terms of fluctuating identity change, perhaps where prisoners can be conceptualised as actors (prisoners, tutors, and officers), they each have a script, props, and self-perceptions. An example of this performance may include peer mentoring. A mentor is

open to sharing and teaching others, but he is still able to maintain his off-stage persona as he need only share what is necessary to the moment. In this instance, mentors go from prisoner identity to mentor or leadership role, thus altering the identity based on their social interactions.

The concept of performative spaces adopted from Goffman's (1959) work on identity as performance (dramaturgy) supports the fluidity of positions that student-prisoners occupy. The performative space is typically social and physical, and a place where learners may have the capacity to act through or reshape their identity. For students, education and learning within the total institution may be influenced by components of an emancipatory nature. This concept suggests that a student may examine and question their position, values, and potentially their power and the power of others. Within a prisoner learning community, there are many daily interactions within the social environment of the institution, pedagogy, and curriculum that can lead to identity construction. However, the prison environment also presents the effects of negative interactions. Goffman (1963) suggests that the stigmatised who are, 'lacking the salutary feedback of daily social intercourse with others, and the self-isolate can become suspicious, depressed, hostile, anxious, and bewildered' (p. 13). The outcome of these adverse situations may result in an impact to one's self-concept or identity. Many people in custody have noted a negative prior experience with education (*see* chapter 3). Therefore, participation in learning may become a more considerable obstacle as students do not want to grow further stigmatised or lose face in front of others in their peer group.

Goffman's evaluation of the physical spaces of prison are varied, but none the less restrictive (*see* Ch. 3: institutional impacts). Prisoners do not have the advantage of putting on an elaborate performance in such a confined space, nor do they rely on a backstage persona to take over in times of struggle and strife. The total institution can hinder identity development as out with the prison environment a person may have the ability to experiment with a variety of identities such as a hard worker, good neighbour, or prankster. Within the prison, prisoners are left to role model identity as performance. They wear costumes (prison-issue) and maintain ornaments of life (such as tattoos or piercing scars), all waiting to perform in a variety of settings to a diverse group of others while trying to determine the correct script for the moment.

A prominent tension for student prisoners is competing identities; their 'prisoner' identity coexists with their student identity (*see* Reuss 1999). This connection is further compounded by the social context of learning, which also presents the opportunity to examine emancipatory learning as a component of prisoner education. It may be suggested that the participants in this thesis seek to embrace opportunity and overcome the cultural restraints of prison to become learners. Patricia Cranton (1993) describes emancipatory learning as a process of 'freeing ourselves from the forces that limit our options and our control over our lives, forces that have been taken for granted or seen as beyond our control' (p. 16). Cranton (1993) and Mezirow (1991) both define emancipatory learning as transformative, but in the sense that individuals will begin to understand the dynamics of their relationship with society and start working towards social action. Emancipatory learning allows individuals to engage in change through understanding oppressive boundaries, identifying personal meaning and assumptions, and becoming action-oriented to resolve a problem or situation for social transformation. In this context, learning for prisoners can be viewed as a way for individuals to control their reality and future through education. This experience may provide an opportunity for prisoners to control their environment with knowledge generated in social learning contexts and a chance to utilise their skills as critical thinkers to evolve as students and social activists. Emancipatory education may allow prisoners to re-conceptualise their place in society rather than dictating their role in society. Prisoner education can challenge an individual to recognise their potential and can lead to a significant and lasting change to their understanding of the world through the process of perspective transformation, with these new perceptions resulting in personal change.

2.4.3   Stigma and identity

Goffman (1963) suggests that the relationship between an individual and society has set expectations, with all people playing the role of stigmatised and stigmatiser at some point in life. The stigmatised will experience discrimination and prejudice in all capacities of life (*i.e.* housing, employment), whereas the stigmatiser may aim to dehumanise others as a method of control or developing self-esteem. Goffman (1963) describes stigma as any 'attribute, behaviour, or reputation that is deeply discrediting' (1963: 13). When someone possesses an attribute that makes them different to others, the individual is considered tainted, their social identity is spoiled, and the divergent attribute results in them being stereotyped and stigmatised. Stigma aligns with Illeris' (2013) model of identity as it impacts the personality identity or the social identity changing interactions and resulting in the process of coping. There

are three types of stigma: defects of the body, defects of character, and extremist political or religious beliefs or drug addiction. The third category also includes members of socially devalued groups. Stigma can be very impactful on an individual's identity. This attribute carries a negative connotation and thus stigmatised people tend to develop coping mechanisms for dealing with others in their social world. For many individuals in prison, stigma may be a factor of everyday life, especially post-incarceration. The result for many formerly incarcerated individuals may be to withdraw from society through limited participation. Concealing stigma, Goffman (1963) suggests a hidden identity is the only way to avoid rejection from broader society.

Discussion of labelling theory is also essential to this thesis, as Goffman's (1963) research on stigma explored how people manage their spoiled identity through information control. Labelling theory explores the effects on self-identity and behaviour as a result of classification systems constructed by society (i.e. stereotypes). Goffman (1963) asserts that stigma (and therefore labelling) is a result of society's need for normalcy. People with stigma navigate life by balancing complexity and ambiguity, to adapt to the social norms of others, instead of the labels they have been assigned. When specifically speaking about people in custody, Goffman (1963) refers to the 'spoiled identity' of people identified as deviant. Many people in custody may not perceive themselves as stigmatised or labelled as criminal or deviant until they encounter others who may accept these stereotypes. In the case of prisoners, stigma is not an inherent attribute but may be perceived as an experience. A person who has been stigmatised by their experience of incarceration must now learn to function in a society that aims to control people through laws, rules, and social norms, not so dissimilar from the prison environment, but with different social expectations.

People in custody experience stigma daily as the psychological impacts of incarceration may encourage conformity and acceptance resulting in an internalised stigma (or self-stigma). Prisoners may experience low self-esteem, poor self-perception, and reduced self-efficacy as a result (Corrigan & Watson 2002). Self-stigma may impact prisoner involvement in educational opportunities as it is a direct impact on their identity. However, Corrigan, Larson and Ruesch (2009) suggest that stigma exists on a continuum that also has a positive parallel. A study by Evans et al. (2018) on the impacts of prisoner education on stigma suggests that participation in education diminishes the effects of self-stigma on prisoner self-perception. Evans et al. (2018)

also note that education in prison may allow people in custody to reorient their identity toward more social roles. The data gathered in their study also shows that prisoners place a high value on their experiences of learning, especially those concerning post-incarceration goals.

Goffman's (1963) concept of stigma has a role in this study, as people in custody may assume stigma and labelling as part of their social identity. The experience of incarceration has the potential to develop a person's perceptions of the world. My study proposes that there is a relationship between learning in prison and identity, but the impacts of stigma can significantly compromise identity. Prisoner education may have the potential to increase self-esteem and personal growth. However, the social implications related to stigma and labelling may further alienate people with spoiled identities. A further aspect of the relationship between social identities and stigma include the biography of people in custody. Many young people in prison have previously been subjected to prejudice and discrimination as a matter of circumstance (*see* chapter 3). The difficulty therein is to understand what is normal and how framing our experiences can aid in development.

The next section related to the impact on the self is related to self-efficacy for student prisoners. Self-efficacy may be defined as an individual's self-belief in their capacity to accomplish certain goals (Bandura 1990). Several studies have concluded that there is a connection between identity and efficacy for people in custody (Roth et al. 2016; Jones 2013) resulting in positive identity, increased self-efficacy, and more frequent opportunities for individual agency.

2.4.4   Self-efficacy in prisoner education

Self-efficacy is an important component of the self and can impact a person's capacity to succeed. Over the life course, a person capable of efficacy may experience higher motivation to learn or become resilient (Bandura 1990). Focusing on the self and the role of self-efficacy in our actions is predicted by prior life experiences such as accomplishments, support and feedback, as well as previous learning opportunities. There is also a component of socialisation, which is vital in this process as an interaction between the individual and their social environment may impact efficacy and agency (Bandura 2000). Pajares and Miller (1995) suggest that self-efficacy is a socially constructed attribute of an individual that is a complex and malleable social construct and not part of an individual's personality.

The European Commission (2011: 4) proposed that 'prison is (or should be) a positive environment for learning.' This proposition suggests that learning and education should be woven into all aspects of daily life for people in custody, not only as a fundamental human right but for improving their lives, developing skills and knowledge, as well as decreasing the risk of exclusion from the workforce post-incarceration. In various studies spanning education and learning levels, self-efficacy was shown to be a predictor or mediator of student motivation and learning (Pajares 2002, Roth et al. 2016, Schunk and Mullen 2012, and Zimmerman 2000) which can also be applied to learning in prison.

In a prison context, a learner's self-efficacy can be influenced by a variety of factors, including prior experiences with education. A method of enhancing efficacy is for students to see others whom they identify with performing well, resulting in a modelling effect (Roth et al. 2016). People in custody may participate in education and learning activities as a means of adapting to life in prison (*see* Goffman 1961). Studies by Roth et al. (2016) and Jones et al. (2013) found that sentence length is a factor for participation in education. They also discovered that students serving longer sentences tend to place more value on education and learning outcomes to plan for the future. A study by Allred et al. (2013) evaluated student self-efficacy at two separate points of participation in education, resulting in increased efficacy after a prolonged engagement. Whereas the findings of Roth et al. (2016) study reflected an increase in self-efficacy when students set short-term goals, used learning strategies, and were rewarded for accomplishments. These findings suggest that a level of onus should be placed on the administration and teaching staff within an institution to impart these skills and empower students to advocate for their educational goals. Self-efficacy has the potential to become an essential instigator for encouraging people in custody to take advantage of educational opportunities. This acknowledgement from Roth et al. (2016) highlights the importance of prison educators and administration in developing an environment that encourages efficacy for prisoners. The purpose of this study is not to understand the motivations for why people in custody pursue education, but rather to further understand who the learners are as a result of their efficacy to pursue prisoner education. Bandura (2000: 77) noted that 'a collective system with members plagued by self-doubts about their capabilities to perform their roles will achieve little." This sentiment echoes throughout the prison, specifically for the young men in custody who choose not to pursue education or learning in any capacity.

The final section related to the sense of self is hope and support. Hope may be described as a person's ability to confront a variety of circumstances and work through them (Snyder 1994). Numerous studies have revealed a connection between hope and persistence to achieve goals (Farrall and Calverley 2006; Harris 2011; Pike 2014; Ginneken 2015). Additionally, the body of research related to support systems for people in custody has continued to reflect the importance of maintaining relationships and ongoing contact with prisoners and family (Visher and O'Connell 2012; Duwe and Clark 2013; Wever and Nolan 2015).

2.4.5   Hope and support

Within the data of this thesis, there are themes related to hope for the future and the importance of support systems for people in custody. These themes have the potential to result in individual change, increased self-awareness, or motivation to undertake new opportunities. A study by Harris (2011) compares ideas of hope to Goffman's (1961) *turning points* or Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph's (2002) '*hooks for change*', with participants using hope to convey optimism for the future. Additionally, a study by Farrall and Calverley (2006) of individuals who successfully abstained from reoffending suggests that the feeling of hope was evident early on. As many participants in the study aspired to have a 'normal life', feelings of hope were expressed as a belief that they could avoid future offending. As with any goal or situation, the aims must appear to be attainable. Farrall and Calverley (2006) also assert that hope is bi-directional, in that it encourages action, but also reinforces and reproduces action. Burnett and Maruna (2004) further suggest that the impact of hope begins to falter as new obstacles emerge. The power of support systems then becomes essential. The role of individual agency may be necessary, but having family and support mechanisms in place enables individuals to overcome a variety of social problems or difficulties they may not have the capacity to handle independently.

A study by Pike (2014) researched how prison-based higher-level distance learning is transformative, and the post-release roles of education. The study concluded that students with social support systems were more likely to have a positive student identity and develop a capacity for resilience and hope upon release. Pike (2014) noted that students felt that education was transformative, but still struggled to overcome overwhelming obstacles post-

incarceration. The study provided further evidence that social systems, stability, and a commitment to continuing education are factors in reducing reoffending.

Cullen's (1994) social support theory is important to discuss in the context of this study and concerning hope and support systems. Cullen (194) proposes that deviant behaviour is reduced when support systems are present. This theory includes a vast network of actors who strive to discourage criminal behaviour through pro-social structures and favourable environmental conditions. There are two types of support: instrumental (i.e. tangible resources) and expressive (i.e. encouragement and acceptance). Both types of support are important, although perhaps at different times in the desistance process. A study by Panuccio, Christian, Martinez, and Sullivan (2012) propose that motivation is critical to desistance, as many participants in their research would not accept social support until they were ready to transform. While social support alone is not a sufficient mechanism for desistance, it does provide purpose, stability and hope.

Furthermore, studies by Visher and O'Connell (2012) and Duwe and Clark (2013) suggest that maintaining and nurturing family ties are vital to continue social support upon liberation. Family visits to prison were also shown to contribute to individual optimism and increased self-esteem upon release (Visher and O'Connell 2012). This thesis will further expand on the role of social support as a means of motivating participants to engage in prisoner education and encourage personal change. An additional component of this research will explore the role of the establishment in influencing the educational experiences of prisoners, through developing an individual's capacity to alter their attitudes, behaviours, and potential for growth.

2.5   Conclusion

This chapter began by developing an understanding of who are the learners in custody in Scotland, highlighting a common background for many incarcerated people. Understanding the purpose of education for prisoners is also examined, as are obstacles which may impact engagement in learning opportunities. A definition of learning for the purposes of this study is outlined, suggesting that learning is a lifelong process embedded in the social world and the self. The chapter then develops a framework for viewing prisoner education as adult learning. Educationalists Jarvis and Knowles are used to examine the contextual perspective of learning which evaluates the learner's social process. This perspective consists of an interactive

component that explores the role of environment or space, suggesting that the learner's environment cannot be separated from their experience and remains an influencing component of the student experience.

In prisoner education, community learning takes place in a restrictive classroom, monitored continuously by officers, and the social environment is made up of students from a variety of backgrounds and learning abilities. Jarvis contends that personal experience and opportunities for disjuncture are precursors to adult learning. Whereas, Knowles explores adult development and learning from a biographical perspective, suggesting that adults learn from their personal experiences and overcoming obstacles. These perspectives of learning are relevant to this study as people in custody who have pursued education are experiencing a disjuncture, a triggering event that is pushing them to learn in all capacities of their daily lives. The learners in this study are also using their prior experiences of life and education to guide the learning process and relate to formal and informal opportunities to grow and mature. Jarvis and Knowles propose that for learning to occur, students must be willing to reconstruct or transform to allow for new opportunities.

The next section of this chapter explores Biesta's domains of education, qualification, socialisation, and subjectification. Biesta's ideals of education are expanded on throughout the chapter via discussion of the domains. Two of the domains, socialisation and subjectification, are the primary domains relevant to this study. The socialisation domain may often have a significant overlap with subjectification and is therefore examined as part of the third domain as well. The aspects of subjectification (sense of self) explored in this chapter develop an understanding of identity (formation) or the self as it relates to education, the total institution, and stigma. The role of self in this study is pertinent to the experiences of the participants as well as the impact of the institution on identity formation. Subjectification expands my analysis and understands the self from an educational theoretical perspective (Illeris 2013; Reuss 1999) as it has the potential to conceptualise impactful learning. This section on subjectification concludes with two additional sections, self-efficacy and hope and support. Self-efficacy serves a potential role in this study, as studies have concluded that there is a positive correlation between identity and efficacy. Also, positivity and persistence via support systems and relationships have been linked through various studies as aiding in overcoming obstacles and increased motivation. Many of the connections in this chapter between identity and learning,

prison, and stigma are established using the research of Erving Goffman. Goffman's analysis is used as the theoretical framework for this study and further highlights the impact of the total institution on the individual and for this study, specifically prisoner education.

The literature in this chapter reflects a need for additional research in the area of prisoner education, with a focus on understanding what the learning experiences of people in custody are and how and why institutional and environmental factors influence experiences of learning and education within the total institution. Prior studies by Reuss (1999), Pike (2014), and Carrigan and Mansell (2014) have begun to unravel the impact of the institution on individual learning and identity development, but more research is needed to understand these experiences from the prisoner's perspective. My study aims to share the learner perspective and highlight the biography of people in custody in Scotland.

The next chapter (3) continues the literature review, by transitioning from content specific to education, to literature that explores the learner's biography (RQ #1). The prisoners' presentation of self investigates the connection between intergenerational trends, trauma, and social factors of people in custody in Scotland. The second part of the chapter presents literature that depicts the environment of prison concerning time, space, and power within the total institution (RC #3). The institutional and environmental influences of prison on learners are further supported by the theoretical framework that analyses Erving Goffman's research concerning the aims of this study.

Chapter 3:   The Social Ecology of Prison

The literature examined in this chapter offers contextual information for understanding who are the incarcerated, and therefore the learners in this study. The first section (3.1) in this chapter is the prisoners' presentation of self. This section proposes that the background of people in custody may have a significant role in guiding their perceptions of the world and for the purposes of this study, their choice to pursue learning and educational provision in prison. The literature provides a contextual starting point for exploring how personal background and experiences shape motivation and choice. The second part of this chapter develops an awareness of the institutional and environmental impacts of prison on the individual. Goffman's perspective on the total institution is presented. Then the literature examines prison as a place of power, where time and space are restrictive, and an authority guides movement. The chapter concludes with a discussion related to citizenship in prison. The literature and empirical evidence presented in this chapter support a need for further investigation in the field of prisoner education research, resulting in an awareness of the gaps of knowledge in current research related to people in custody in Scotland and resulting in the formation of the research questions for my study.

3.1   The prisoners' presentation of self

For the purposes of this thesis, this section will explore the biography of people in custody. The life history approach to data collection has provided the opportunity to reflect on the past life experiences of the participants and better understand motivation and challenges for the young men participating in this study. A challenge of prisoner research is developing an understanding of the complex relationships which shape the life and interactions of the incarcerated. There is a vast diversity in the values, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions of individuals within the criminal justice system and many studies have sought to homogenise the prisoner perspective (*see* Clemmer 1940; Sykes 1958), when in fact, the experiences of people in custody have the potential to enrich our knowledge across various disciplines. As previously discussed, (*see* chapter 2), the theoretical framework of my research utilises the social approach of Erving Goffman (1959; 1961; 1963). Goffman's observations of human behaviour illustrate various connections between intersubjective meaning, environment or structural conditions (of prison life), and the capacity for individuals to act independently or of their own free will (within the total institution) (Goffman 1961). Goffman's (1959) approach to social research requires the

ability to engage with participants and understand their personas. Otherwise, we are merely seeing the performance of an individual and never genuinely engaging with them.

Goffman (1959) describes the process of social interaction as having a front stage where individuals are performers in front of an audience and a backstage area where the role can be put aside (*see* chapter 2). The presentation of self explored in this chapter relates to the baggage or props present in the backstage area of a person's life. The literature discussed in this section considers the common biographical factors of people in custody. Many of these factors have been shown to contribute to offending behaviours. The first section discusses intergenerational patterns. This topic relates to experiences of incarceration across families and the possible implications for children with parents in custody. The next topic examines trauma caused by bereavement as a factor for prisoners across Scotland. The final section related to prisoner biography explores social factors, such as poverty, social exclusion, learning and mental health challenges, and low educational attainment as a result of exclusion from school.

3.1.1   Intergenerational patterns

There is a growing body of research which seeks to understand the intergenerational patterns of offending (Farrington 2002; Glueck and Glueck 1950). The personal biography for prisoners is complicated as many may have experienced significant social exclusion and deprivation. Farrington (1996) discovered that 63% of males in the *Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development* had a parent, typically a father, who had been convicted of a crime. Additional studies have concluded that children with parents in prison are five to six times more likely to offend, compared to other children of the same age (Johnston 1995). Farrington (1995) further reports a correlation of 59% between parental arrest and future arrest of their children, specifically for males under the age of 32. The correlation of a father figure being incarcerated or involved in crime proved to be a risk factor in offending rates of their male children (Farrington 2002). Families Outside (2009) states that each year in Scotland, 16,500 children experience the trauma of having a parent in prison. Many studies have shown that this trauma may increase the risk of adverse outcomes for children of the incarcerated (Robertson 2007; Dallaire 2007; Thompson and Harm 2000). Ziebert (2006) further adds that the stigma of being a child of a prisoner may cause increased anger and hate and possible future deviance.

An intergenerational pattern which has not been well established is that of parental educational attainment. Research related to parental education indicates that it may be an important and significant factor in a child's achievement. A study by Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (1997) concluded that parental education could influence a child's IQ, alter negative behaviours, and may encourage more significant academic achievement. These findings are also supported in a study by Goodman and Gregg (2010), which made connections between poverty, poor educational attainment, and patterns of disadvantage. The Goodman and Gregg (2010) study found that educational values become an important factor in future success, both academically and occupationally, especially in situations where there has been a consistent history of poverty across multiple generations. Their findings do not assume that if a parent has a low-educational level that they do not value education, but do provide insight into the importance of supporting educational development for children across the lifespan. The impact of parental educational levels has not been directly correlated to incarceration rates, but it is an interesting consideration in understanding the high exclusion rates and poor literacy levels of prisoners.

The social aspect to the creation of our biography is unique, with family or social units being constructed differently for all individuals. The primary social environment typically includes parents or guardians who influence behaviours, actions, and self-belief of those in their care. Parental behaviour, as Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, and Conger (1991) assert, is modelled. Negative attitudes tend to be reinforced with negative actions. Barnes, Hoffman, and Welte (2006) suggest that the most influential behaviour demonstrated by parents is support. The more a child feels valued or supported, the less likely they are to become deviant, as self-control tends to deter these actions. Many young men in the criminal justice system have experienced divorce or separation in their family unit. This experience of loss may impact children, as they tend to blame themselves for the turmoil, stress, and ultimate departure of one of their parents (Amato and Cheadle 2008). These findings may result in the weakening of bonds between the child and parent, poor parenting, or loss of relationship entirely.

3.1.2 Trauma through loss

A study conducted in 2014 by the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice, University of Strathclyde took place at HMYOI Polmont, where it was affirmed that of the 167 participants, 91% had experienced a loss. Moreover, the study showed that over 75% were considered

traumatic bereavements, such as murder, suicide, or overdose. While a further two-thirds of the participants experienced a significant loss of four or more people from their lives (Vaswani, Paul, and Papadodimitraki 2016). The rates of loss and bereavement for young people in custody tend to be considerably higher than the average population (Finlay and Jones 2000; Vaswani 2014). Compounding these experiences of loss, the prison regime by its very nature imposes rules, restrictions, and structure to a person's life, resulting in a disruption of an individual's grief or coping process (Vaswani 2015; Hendry 2009; Masterton 2014), in an environment where vulnerability and displays of emotion are not advantageous. Mooney, Oliver, and Smith (2009) suggest that loss concerning death is not the only type of bereavement young people experience. Incarceration of a family member, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health challenges, and being remanded to care or a secure facility are also influencing factors. Western (2006) notes that incarcerated fathers or incarcerated men, in general, tend to be highly disadvantaged before entering prison, with low levels of education, high rates of drug use, mental health issues, and impulsivity. In addition to family history and trauma, many social factors impact marginalised groups.

3.1.3 Social factors

The previous sections on intergenerational patterns and trauma provide data that correlates with a broader socio-economic problem that exists in Scotland. The common thread of factors begins with poverty. Poverty and inequality are the overarching themes that impact every layer of life for young people, from mortality, mental and physical health, to education and work (Taylor, Earle, and Hester 2010; Whyte 2004). Being materially poor is an element of poverty, but the impacts of poverty are far-reaching, across populations and communities, resulting in class-based forms of discrimination and social exclusion (Killeen 2008). In the United Kingdom, specifically Scotland, the prison population may be reflective of the social deprivation of many communities. Houchin (2005) found that most people incarcerated in Scotland disproportionately come from the most deprived communities. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) includes income, employment, health, education, and geographic location. There are a significant number of people incarcerated in Scotland who fall into these categories, but as Houchin (2005) suggests, deprivation does not necessarily mean that a person will end up in prison.

Young people who grow up in poverty are more likely to suffer from debilitating health problems and higher rates of mortality than their better-off counterparts (Yates 2010; Eckersley 2009). Griggs and Walker (2008) note that the relationship between poverty and poor health is 'bidirectional in that poverty contributes to ill-health, and ill-health contributes to poverty' (p. 4). A study by the Youth Justice Trust (2003) in England surveyed the case files of 1,027 young people under supervision and identified that more than 90% experienced a loss, rejection, bereavement, or had experiences with the mental and physical illness of a parent (Yates 2010). This study also reflected that many more young people suffer from psychological and physical abuse or violence in the home. In addition to the experiences of death, fractured families, and abandonment, young people from high poverty backgrounds may live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, lack interest and engagement in education, experience high levels of unemployment, and may suffer from physical, emotional, and mental illness related to drug and alcohol abuse (Goldson 2001).

The Youth Justice Trust (2003) identified low achievement in school as a key predictor for young people being arrested for a criminal offence. Riddell and McCluskey (2012) explain that young men from more deprived backgrounds may exhibit behavioural difficulties in secondary schools and are over-represented in groups of low attainers and early school leavers. An OECD report (Scottish Executive Education Department 2007) on Scottish education argued that the achievement gap is due in part to a highly academic curriculum, making it difficult for young people, especially boys, from socially and culturally deprived backgrounds to be successful. The OECD report (2007) also discusses the emergence of boys with SEBDs. There is an apparent over-representation globally of young males exhibiting these disorders, leading researchers to suggest that social, cultural and economic inequalities are primary factors contributing to the over-representation of socially disadvantaged boys amongst those identified with SEBDs (Riddell and McCluskey 2012). Also, Lupton (2005) and Hills, Brewer, Jenkins, Lister, Lupton, Machin, Mills, Modood, Rees, and Riddell (2010), suggest that young people from socially deprived areas may experience additional difficulties linked to poorer literacy and numeracy skills and delayed emotional development.

Learning difficulties and mental health is, therefore, important to learning in the prisoner education classroom. Van Woensel (2006) as cited in Boeren, Nicaise, and Baert (2010) notes that the statistics related to vulnerable groups, such as learners with a disability, show a decline

in participation of education in any capacity. The presence of learning disabilities has also been linked to higher rates of crime amongst young adults (Goldstein and Glick 1987). A ten-year study in the United States of young people with disabilities in special education programs found that 20% had been arrested two or fewer years after leaving school and 31% were arrested three to five years after leaving school. Additionally, students who identified as having a learning disability and dropped out of school before completion of a degree had an arrest rate of 56.4% within three to five years of leaving school (SRI International 1993).

A report by the British Institute for Brain Injured Children (2005) found that a very high number of young people in the UK issued with restrictive civil orders, or anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) by local authorities are known to have social, emotional, and behavioural disorders (SEBDs), learning disabilities, and diagnosable mental health problems. Fyson and Yates (2011) also note that a disproportionately high number of young people with these maladies end up in the justice system. Young people with additional support needs are more likely to be regarded as a threat to school discipline and therefore are at risk of exclusion. *The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime* (McAra and McVie 2010) demonstrated a strong relationship between exclusion from school and early involvement in the youth justice system. Riddell and McCluskey (2012) state that students with SEBDs and learning challenges are five times more likely to be excluded than other young people. Annually, approximately 3% of Scottish students are excluded from school, with over 80% being male.

Hayes (2007) states that learning difficulties and mental health are typically categorised together in the prison system, and prisoners are left to brief reception procedures to identify a possible learning need. Individuals with learning disabilities may present with one or more of the following: difficulty with listening, speaking, reading, writing, computation, thinking, memory, sequencing and organisational skills. Young people may also exhibit characteristics such as impulsivity, poor social skills, and difficulty with attention (Taymans and Corley 2001). Hayes (2007) also notes that young people with learning disabilities commonly have a variety of other challenges such as physical health problems, poverty, poor living conditions, lack of social support, vulnerability to mental illness, and communication difficulties (Deb and Weston 2000; Department of Human Services Victoria 2003; Lewis and Hayes 1997; Thomas, Dolan, Johnston, Middleton, Marty and Carlisle, 2004). In a prison setting, depression was noted as the most

prevalent mental health issue (Myers 2004), which could lead some young people to a decreased desire to learn or participate in educational opportunities.

Unemployment and low educational attainment may result in further marginalisation for young men, especially those in working-class communities that have suffered from joblessness and downsizing in the manufacturing industry (Yates 2010). The school to work transition for young people living in impoverished communities becomes an unjust and challenging process of exclusion by family biography, education, job choices, geographical location, racial and ethnic segregation, stigmatised individuals and community reputations (White and Cuneen 2006; McAra and McVie 2005). With few options for employment, crime may become an expression of self and an outlet for frustration. Identifying the characteristics of the typical young person in custody is not a catch-all, or one size fits all approach, but rather is reaffirming that life in poverty does not offer opportunities, but obstacles.

Additionally, several studies (Hetland, Eikeland, Manger, Diseth, and Asbjørnsen 2007; Morgan and Kett 2003) confirm that low educational attainment may be a key factor that dominates a person's history. Research by Morgan and Kett (2003) and Samuelsson, Gustavsson, Herkner and Lundberg (2000) note that younger adults historically have low attainment levels in reading, writing, and numeracy. In turn, this may lead to an explicit rejection of education forming a deeply rooted and recurring component of some individuals' sense of themselves and their place in the world (Crossan, Field, Gallacher, and Merrill 2003). This rejection may be an indicator of the importance that parents place on education but may also be a result of the cycle of disadvantage. Adult learners with low skill levels tend to shape their beliefs concerning education based on past experiences and may lack the necessary skills to navigate an academic environment that is significantly different from what they have experienced in the past (O'Neill and Thomson 2013; Martin and Marsh 2009; Barbatis 2010; Schreiner, Noel, Anderson and Cantwell 2011; Cho and Karp 2013).

Costelloe and Langelid (2011) and Hurry, Rogers, Simonot, and Wilson (2012) acknowledge that these characteristics make up the profile for many people incarcerated in the United Kingdom. Bracken (2011) has noted that prisoners in the UK are thirteen times more likely to have been in care and/or unemployed. They are ten times as likely to have been truant and two and a half times as likely to have a family member with a criminal record. These characteristics have the

potential to influence the social constructs of prisoners and their interactions within an institution. However, many prisoners may begin to see prisoner education as a pathway of change, a source of learning, or occupational gateway.

The prisoners' presentation of self has provided evidence which proposes that children with a parent in prison are at a substantially higher risk of offending behaviour and may also experience a more distressing home life. Grief is considered to be a primary psychological challenge for people in custody, as many prisoners in Scotland have experienced a significant loss in their lives. Family support systems are shown to be of importance as modelling positive behaviours, including educational values, which have been shown to decrease criminality. The overarching social factor impacting people in custody is poverty. Poverty influences health, employment, and educational attainment. A consistent theme in the literature proposes that negative experiences with learning are common amongst people in custody, with many prisoners being repeatedly excluded from school or suffering from undiagnosed learning difficulties. This section has provided a considerable representation of the factors which influence, and impact people involved in the criminal justice system — the next section transitions from the prisoners' biography to their present environment within the total institution.

3.2   Institutional impacts on the prisoner

In Asylums, Goffman (1961) defines the total institution as,

> A place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut-off from the wider society for an appropriate period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life. (p. 11)

For my research, developing a foundation of the institutional impacts on people in custody provides a starting point for examining the role of the institution in prisoner education. My study explores Goffman's (1961) total institution as a basis for understanding how and why institutional and environmental factors influence student prisoner experiences. The student perspective is central to this study, but the institutional impacts are a factor in student success. This section begins with an overview of Goffman's perspective of the total institution. The literature then examines the institutional and environmental impacts of prison on people in custody with an understanding that a prison is a place of power, where time and space are restrictive, and an authority guides movement.

3.2.1 Goffman's Total Institution

For the purposes of this study, Goffman's (1961) *Asylums* is a critical contribution that examines the social life of people in custody, while also considering the social effects on the individual before their incarceration. Goffman's research has aided in the development of the research questions for this study as well as analysis of the collected data. Further to the work of Erving Goffman (1961) Irwin and Cressey (1962) and Cohen and Taylor (1972) have also published significant theoretical studies related to the social environments of prison. Irwin and Cressey (1962) considered social roles and their influence on prison culture, resulting in the proposition that prisoner communities are aligned with societal trends and that potentially these groups operated with fewer rules and more disorder than initially believed. Cohen and Taylor (1972) studied the experiences of long term prisoners and exposed the personal and psychological struggles of individuals coping with significant sentences. They captured the prisoner perspective through a teaching-based relationship, which added to the authenticity of the data and depth of the prisoner's experiences. More recently, Carrigan and Maunsell (2014) carried out a study in Ireland, which sought to understand the student prisoner experience using a life history approach. Carrigan and Maunsell's (2014) study emphasised the importance of understanding the life experiences of students, as this impacted their choice to pursue prisoner education.

In Asylums, Goffman (1961) alludes to the differences and similarities of institutions as providing a world for its members, identifying each as 'encompassing' and a 'barrier to social intercourse with the outside and departure that is built into the physical environment, such as locked doors, high walls, barbed wire, cliffs, water, forests, or moors' (p. 15-16). Goffman (1961) considers the experience of prison on the individual, suggesting that the total institution has four primary characteristics: *batch living, binary management, the inmate role, and the institutional perspective*. Batch living suggests that all daily activity is carried out in the presence of others. Everyone is expected to do the same thing, and the opportunity for personal choice is void. Within a batch living community, movement and social groups are controlled, and twenty-four-hour surveillance is mandated. Goffman (1961) declares that there are two groups of people within the total institution: the managers and the managed, or in the case of prison, the prisoners and the officers. These two groups operate through binary management, a power relationship, whereby two different social and cultural worlds develop side by side guided by instances of official contact directing their interactions. The inmate's role, Goffman (1961)

asserts, is one of 'disculturation', a process of degradation, humiliation, and profanations resulting in the mortification of the self. To become an inmate, one must completely break with their past. The prison admission process initiates this by assigning the prisoner a number. This process also includes photographing, fingerprinting, stripping of possessions, undressing, disinfecting and assuming institutional attire. Each component of this process is meant to be part of the humiliating process of assimilating to institutional norms. This process also aids in the disruption of identity, allowing a new institutional identity to emerge. Goffman (1961) found that this struggle to maintain the 'self' was a primary challenge for prisoners within the total institution (*see* chapter 2). The last characteristic is the institutional perspective, which is aimed at denying the prisoner perspective and validating the institution's existence and power.

The characteristics of the institution can result in what Goffman (1961) describes as 'secondary adjustment'. There are four types of adjustments (p. 61-63): situational withdrawal (cutting off contact), intransigent line (challenges the institution), colonisation (acceptance of life inside), and conversion (agreement with the institutional view of self). Each of these adjustments impacts the prisoner, with withdrawal leading to a depersonalisation process or type of regression for the incarcerated. The intransigent adjustment may lead to high morals in some instances, but it tends to be a reactionary phase and temporary. Colonisation is described as the creation of a tolerable world within the confines of managed time and space that becomes an accepted way of life. The final adjustment, conversion, presents the ideal prisoner, or an individual who aims to align themselves with the staff. These secondary adjustments have the potential to instigate positive and negative characteristics within the total institution. However, Goffman (1961) suggests that social agency may be a result of 'secondary adjustment', resulting in the prisoner's ability to adapt to a restrictive environment by challenging the social norms of the institution and maintaining autonomy.

Goffman (1961) speaks about the sources (or perhaps resources) at the disposal of prisoners as part of their secondary adjustment. The idea of 'making-do' is an essential aspect of life inside a total institution. One particular component of this relates to space, as Goffman (1961) refers to the non-total nature of institutional life. He described this as places where certain domains or areas were normalised to an extent. Goffman outlined the existence of 'free places' or areas that are 'ruled by less than usual staff authority' (1961: 205). My thesis examines these spaces as part of the learning community. Multiple learning spaces within the institution can be

explored as a place where prisoners can go to escape the presence of others. Goffman (1961) further notes that 'the more unpalatable the environment in which the individual must live, the more easily places qualify as free ones' (p. 212). *Asylums* (1961) offers insight into the total institution, informing awareness related to identity, the pains of imprisonment, and the process of assimilation and adjustment for people in custody. Goffman (1961) also provides evidence to support the argument that learning in custody may provide prisoners with a 'free place' to escape the harshness of life inside.

The next part of this chapter examines power, time, and space within the total institution. Goffman's preceding description of the total institution sets the scene for further exploration of the institutional impacts in this chapter. Power is seen as an overarching theme concerning imprisonment and time and space may have a different meaning to people in custody.

3.2.2 Power, time, and space

Imprisonment aims to enact punishment by restricting freedom. When a person is given a custodial sentence, it is essentially a revocation of that person's ability to act independently, and they are remanded to a confined space. Mincke and Lemonne (2014) describe prison 'as a place isolated from the rest of the world and used solely to serve liberty depriving sentences' (p. 531). The process of becoming a prisoner may have a drastic impact on a person. The prisoner is stripped of rights, belongings, and choice (Goffman 1961). They are incapacitated as a means of restricting their interactions with society. The prisoner must now assimilate to the new norms of prison society, and this means abiding by the rules and understanding the power dynamics of prison.

There are a variety of social systems which exist in prison. There may be specific living areas for prisoners on remand (individuals not yet tried or sentenced), a space for young people under the age of 18, a separate area for prisoners with sex offences, and areas for keeping prisoners in isolation. There are many reasons why a prison may divide their population into subgroups, but at most establishments, it is for personal protection. As in many prisons, there is always a high-risk of fighting or bullying. Restricting a particular group's movement to maintain a degree of safety is the norm (Goffman 1961). For each group, there is a system, a rhythm to the day. Prisoners spend time in their room, time in education or work, time at a physical activity or in counselling, time to eat, time to sleep. It is all about time. While still a social construct, time is

the currency of our lives. Time spent away from our loved ones, our goals and dreams for the future, time away from the world. Prison is a space where life continues to move forward, but time takes on new meaning.

The literature related to the sociology of imprisonment suggests that time is central to the prisoner's experience. Matthews (2009) explains that institutional confinement transforms how time is experienced, with time in prison being wasted and not spent. Matthews further suggests that the present is placed in suspension, therefore impairing one's ability to connect with the future. This effect can be disorienting for prisoners, but also potentially beneficial as learning offers a productive opportunity for prisoners to voluntarily engage in activities, adhere to a daily schedule, and retain some degree of control when it comes to time management.

Space can also mean something different. As Hillier (2007) explains, the configuration and use of space in built form mediate the relationship between architecture and social behaviour. This explanation of how the space within the walls of a prison dictate the behaviours of the incarcerated is a fair assessment. Mincke and Lemonne (2014) speak of the spatial temporality of prison, and it's parallel to morphology or the function and structure of space. They describe space in prison as 'defined by its boundaries in the interlocking partitions, and a time cadenced by alternating periods of stasis and rupture' (p. 533). In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) notes that visible boundaries, such as walls or enclosures, infer separation between spaces, when, in fact, a vague continuity exists. Lefebvre (1991) affirms that space is social morphology:

It is to lived experience what form itself is to the living organism, and just as intimately bound
> up with function and structure. To picture space as a 'frame' or container into which
> nothing can be put unless it is smaller than the recipient, and to imagine that this
> container has no other purpose than to preserve what has been put in it. (p. 94)

The spaces that are created within a prison may be designed with a specific purpose. These spaces may immobilise, socialise, or rehabilitate. Once peeled back, those in power still control the layers of these spaces. Movement is limited and controlled, interaction is determined by action, and rehabilitation is structured by time (Goffman 1961). The spaces within prison may not be conducive to the development of the person, but possibly the creation of social angst and disillusion. The personal space of a prisoner in his room or cell, within this space, the

prisoner owns nothing, has nothing, but space. A complicated relationship exists between space and time. Lefebvre (1991) believes this to be,

> The essential part of lived experience, this greatest good of all goods, is no longer visible to us, no longer intelligible. It cannot be constructed. It is consumed, exhausted, and that is all. It leaves no traces. It is concealed in space, hidden under a pile of debris to be disposed of as soon as possible. (p. 95-96)

Beyond the function and meaning of these spaces, an entire community exists amongst the prisoners, officers, teachers, and administrators. Daily work will be done, and food must be cooked, clothes laundered, spaces tidy. The society that operates inside the prison creates social spaces. These spaces may be filled with experiences, emotions, and opportunities. The prisoner classroom is one such space (Goffman 1961). Students come and go from education, and the composition of the class has the potential to be a mixture of learning levels and personalities. Lefebvre (1991) views social space as interwoven or as a merger of one space to another. In the prisoner learning community, social space can be a fusion of everyone who enters the space, and after they are gone, space retains their residual lived experiences. This alludes to the fact that identity is also tied to space as much as it is connected to a person's beliefs about their self (*see* chapter 2).

The institutional and environmental factors covered to this point allude to a central theme of power. Time and space cannot explicitly be controlled, but in the context of prison, they are monitored with authority. Foucault (1977) believed that power is above all, relational. Power can be positive and negative. It can be imposed and resisted; power is all around us; in all aspects of our lives.

Foucault (1977) suggests that prisons aim 'to produce a modern political subject that is individualised, orderly, and self-disciplined' and that 'prisons use disciplinary power to transform and rehabilitate offenders' (p. 135). Foucault (1977) notes that 'the purpose of discipline is to create 'docile bodies' through precise norms about the spatial organisation, the timetable, and activity, combined with processes of surveillance and assessment that record and rank each person' (p. 135). However, this process of 'normalisation' may do more to label and stigmatise prisoners that it does to help them transform (Foucault 1977). The assigned identity of 'prisoner' is, in fact, an act of power as it is forced upon an individual (Goffman

1961). Prisoners are complex. Ugelvik (2014) suggests that people in custody may be more likely to have had an unstable life with little schooling, inconsistent housing, typically no job experience, poor role models and health, and have for the most part been excluded from society because of these extenuating factors.

Power is apparent everywhere in prison. It is intertwined in the environment from daily tasks such as prison counts, personal searches, room checks, movements throughout the prison, and through the direct or indirect subjectification of prisoners. While bodies are not barcoded or scanned for biometric data, they are still repeatedly counted, and the right person must be in the right place at the right time. Many of these powerful actions can go unnoticed on a day to day basis, but still, exist to maintain control and dissuade resistance. This simple process of movement reflects the innate power of the prison as prisoners are trained to align with these protocols. They know that resisting the process may lead to disciplinary action, which most prisoners try to avoid (Goffman 1961).

Ugelvik (2014) states that 'resistance does not have to be actualised all the time. Locking a cell door is a form of power in practice, even if the person on the inside could not imagine opening the door right at that moment' (p. 43). The locked door stifles a person's ability for action; therefore, the act of locking a door signifies power. Relationships are an essential component of power dynamics. A relationship allows for opportunity and negotiation. If no relationship exists, then a person's ability to resist power may be futile. The relationship between an officer and a prisoner can have many dimensions. The officer's role is an authority. Sennett (1980) describes authority as the 'bond between people who are unequal' (p. 10) or 'an interpretative process that is sought, interrupted, disrupted, and sought again' (p. 19). This suggests that perhaps this bond is essential, but it is 'ambiguous and constantly shifting' and yet, still serves as a relationship (Sennett 1980: 11). The statement, 'prison work is all about the use of power and authority, deployed through human relationships' (Liebling 2011a: 485) is essential and distinctive as it requires reflection on what is the role of a corrections officer. This role requires a balance between welfare and discipline, care and power, and the delicate navigation of power structures. 'Prison officers negotiate their authority on a day-to-day basis with a skeptical and complex audience, through interaction and in a context in which enforcing all the rules 'by the book' would be impossible' (Liebling 2011a: 485). The construction of interpersonal relationships between officers and prisoners are central to life in prison (Liebling 2011b). These

relationships are crafted through positive interactions and may result in mutual respect and trust (Sparks, Hay, and Bottoms 1996).

3.2.3 Power and relationships

The role of power in relationship development is important to the educational environment as prison officers carry a responsibility to support education (Braggins and Talbot 2005) and motivate those in their care to learn and grow on many different levels. In a UK study of prisoner education programs by the Prison Reform Trust (2003), many prisoners expressed frustration that prison officers were not more supportive of education. Students felt that officers were more interested in law and order of the prison and less interested in their personal development. Overall, only 20% of participants noted that officers were supportive of their learning. Regarding teaching staff, the survey indicated that perceptions of educators were highly positive, with almost 70% of participants indicating a supportive environment.

The classroom environment is continually influenced by the prison routine, security constraints, and the relationships amongst the prison and education provider (Rogers, Hurry, Simonot, and Wilson 2012). From an institutional perspective, prison educators interviewed as part of Rogers et al. (2012) study noted that, in addition to achievement, it is important to develop learning skills, self-image, and for learners to gain self-confidence, to secure employment and develop networks post-incarceration (p. 188). The learning community is different at each prison. However, as Hurry et al. (2012) found, prisoner education staff across many prisons have needed to be creative and embed literacy and numeracy into vocational and non-traditional courses to maintain student interest. They found that learning became more effective when basic skills were adapted to show application to real-life situations (Sams 2014). There is a disconnect between the need for basic skills for many student prisoners as they are unable to see the need for literacy and numeracy in most vocations. Furthermore, the effectiveness of learning these basic skills heavily depends on the relationships between the educators, prison staff, and students. Hurry et al. (2012) noted that teacher perception was especially crucial for younger learners, as they felt a need to identify with tutors as role models.

This chapter concludes with an examination of the role of citizenship in prison. Citizenship combines the core features of adult education, which include a flexible and collaborative learning environment with a potentially transformative experience. Citizenship provides

prisoners with the opportunity to become active learners while also identifying their role within the prison community.

3.2.4   Citizenship within a micro-society

The role of citizenship in prison is a developing area of research. For my study citizenship may be considered a component of learning and is analysed from the perspective that learning within the total institution is part of a social ecosystem and the actors within the system take on citizenship roles in their community. As there is a discussion within the findings (*see* chapter 7), this section aims to provide a context for how citizenship is understood in my thesis.

Prisoners may come from socially excluded backgrounds, placed in an institution which further marginalises them from society. In the UK, prisoners no longer have citizenship rights as they are considered non-citizens in breach of a 'social contract'. The government justifies this revocation of rights as necessary to discourage crime (Easton 2009). It can also be argued that this revocation is arbitrary and does more to disenfranchise people in custody with retributive consequences. Citizenship is more than just voting rights. A purpose of developing citizenship within our communities is to establish a social, moral, and legal responsibility for all. Citizenship in prison is aimed at developing communication or social skills to assist prisoners in resettlement. This supports the previous argument made for the importance of developing informal skills in addition to formal education. Informal skills have a role in increasing employability opportunities, but also engaging the individual in their communities through engagement in topics related to economic and social issues. Citizenship may allow the formerly incarcerated to develop a sense of community, consider the impacts of their actions, and has the potential to aid in reducing reoffending.

Prison Reform Trust defines active citizenship as 'prisoners are active citizens when they exercise responsibility by making positive contributions to prison life or the wider community' (Edgar, Jacobson, and Biggar 2011: 10). The Prison Reform Trust report *Time Well Spent* outlines the five areas of citizenship, which are gathering momentum in prisons across England and Wales. The active citizenship schemes include *peer support, community work, restorative justice, democratic participation in the institution, as well as art and media projects*. These areas include mostly voluntary work, and the programmes vary across institutions. This report further suggests that when prisoners engage in citizenship schemes, the outcomes can be

transformative and may have a role in desistance. The 'decay of time' is a common feeling amongst people in custody (Goffman 1961). The role of citizenship in prison has the potential to provide purpose for prisoners while making positive use of their time in custody. For prisoners, they may feel as if they are part of a community within the institution while acquiring skills, being responsible and trusted, and by giving back and becoming a contributor to society (Edgar et al. 2011).

3.3   Conclusion

The institutional impacts on the prisoner began with an overview of Goffman's total institution. The degrading experience of incarceration, including the mortification of self and overall disculturation with society, is examined. A primary discussion in this section explored time in prison as wasted, with time being a concept that is suspended for a time, until liberation. Space is examined as an artificial concept, suggesting that space as a social construct dictates interactions and behaviours. Space and power also have a relationship as much of the power that exists in prison come from invisible methods of control. Power and relationships are also discussed as having a reciprocal connection as the environment of prison acts as a social community and relationships with teachers, officers, and administrations become critical to the prisoner's adjustment process. The next section explored the learning environment in prison, implying that learning spaces may be considered a place where the mortifications of prison are not as evident, and individual agency exists. This chapter concludes with an overview of the roles that may exist within that micro-society of prison for individuals to take an active role in their community.

The next chapter (4) discusses the methodology for my qualitative study, which is underpinned by a social constructivist epistemology. As the theoretical framework for my thesis, Goffman's research has provided a practical foundation upon which the research design, tools, and analysis are grounded. The use of Erving Goffman (1959; 1961; 1963) for this study provides flexibility (interdisciplinary) and allows for broad interpretation in the data analysis stage.

Chapter 4:   Methodology

The literature review chapters (2-3) have established the need for research in Scottish prisons related to the impacts of the institution on identity and the role of education for people in custody. The literature provides a foundation for exploring this study through the use of learning theory (Jarvis and Knowles) to contextualise the learning environment, while also utilising Biesta's domains to examine the impact of learning from a social perspective. The literature further builds on theory by examining learning in custody from a conceptual framework based on the research of Erving Goffman. The methodology chapter begins by setting out the philosophical and epistemological position of the study, in conjunction with the theoretical framework and literature presented (*see* chapters 2-3) justifies the research questions being investigated. This chapter outlines the research design, including the site selection process, how access to the prison was negotiated, and ethical considerations for the study, the participants, and informed consent. Data collection methods are then examined, including the fieldwork process and research reflexivity. The data analysis process is then summarised. To conclude, the chapter explores the limitations of the study.

As a research study situated within a social setting, the outcomes are influenced by context. The research is underpinned by the values of the researcher, as well as by formal, descriptive knowledge, some of which is implicit and often unconsciously held. This study positions the student learners' experiences as underpinned by social constructivist epistemologies whereby knowledge is socially created, and the world is experienced and understood differently by different people and recognises that one person's truth is not necessarily another person's truth even in the same experience (Griffiths 2003). A constructivist view of knowledge is that it is not externally imposed but constructed over time by the individual as they make sense of the social world in which they operate. This research seeks to explore consensus and differences where they exist. A known characteristic of the constructivist paradigm is that reality is reached through a group's agreement of 'what is real, what is useful, and what has meaning' (Guba and Lincoln 2008: 264). Thus, experience and knowledge are reciprocal and continuously influencing our social conceptions.

This study assumes that knowledge is created through an intersubjective process that

emphasises the need for shared cognition and consensus to shape ideas and relationships. Freire (1996) suggests that,

> To deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naive and simplistic. It is to admit the impossible: a world without people. This objectivistic position is as ingenious as that of subjectivism, which postulates people without a world. World and human beings do not exist apart from each other they exist in constant interaction. (p. 32)

Goffman's research focuses on the struggles and hardships of different groups that must endure a hostile environment to maintain their sense of self, emphasising the importance of social interaction and the joint creation of knowledge and awareness. This research does not seek to test a theory, uncover an objective truth, or explain student learning experiences as a cause and effect relationship as a positivistic approach would do. This study intends to explore a prison learning community to develop a holistic understanding of prisoner education and underpinning knowledge. This outcome may be achieved by looking at the participant experiences from the individual's perspective, rather than the researchers. This research is located within the naturalistic, interpretivism paradigm where a researcher begins with individuals and seeks to understand the intersubjective world of human experience and phenomena from the individual's point of view (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). The use of Goffman as a theoretical framework has, therefore, influenced the research design allowing the opportunity to capture the rich and detailed experiences of the participants facilitating a deeper understanding of social interaction and spaces.

4.1   Research design

As a qualitative study, many approaches would provide depth for understanding the experiences of student learners in prisoner education. Most of Goffman's (1961) research was undertaken from an ethnographic or observational perspective, allowing for a more micro-level experience within the social world of his participants. An ethnographic approach was initially considered for this study as this approach would allow for a rich holistic understanding of the participant's views and actions and provide insight into how they see the world. From an anthropological perspective, ethnography focuses on producing a detailed account of the lives of people or groups and seeks to highlight the importance of understanding events or actions from the participants' point of view (Denscombe 2007). Goffman might suggest that participant

observation is the only way to see behind the front-stage persona of participants and genuinely understand their feelings and experiences. However, a key element of ethnographic research is extensive observation and immersion in the field. As this research was within a prison community, the ability to access the participants for extended periods and become immersed in the community was difficult. Therefore, ethnography was not considered an appropriate approach to data collection.

The case study approach was also considered. According to Silverman (2010), a case study must have identified boundaries, precisely who and what is included and excluded. In this study, the student's pre-incarceration and current perceptions and experiences with education varied broadly, not allowing for the possibility of clearly defined cases to be developed. Stake (1995) notes that a case study is defined by individual cases' (p. 235). Therefore, it is possible that an intrinsic case study would fit well with the aims of this study (Stake 1995). The initial design drew on elements of the intrinsic case study (Stake 1995) in which several cases are used to explore the progression and experiences of learners in the study, but was found not to provide enough unique data to work well for all participants in the study.

While neither ethnography nor case study approaches were determined to be entirely suitable for this study, components of both methods were used in creating a qualitative research design that could address the research questions. The observational data collected during my fieldwork in prisoner education classes provided a snapshot of the student experience within the prisoner learning community. However, the observation was not meant to provide a primary means of data collection, as it was merely an opportunity to witness student learning and develop an understanding of the institutional and environmental factors which may impact learning in prison and the context in which student narratives are situated. The primary source of data collection were semi-structured interviews with student-prisoners, teaching staff, officers and administrators at the prison. Understanding that participants may provide a performance, instead of shedding their on-stage persona, the purpose of the interviews was to encourage conversation, reflection, and exploration of experiences with an understanding that the participants can influence their outcomes and micro-world within the prison community.

4.1.1 Site selection

HMYOI Polmont is currently the only male young offender's prison in operation in Scotland. This prison was chosen as the prison service identified it as a location that could be developed into a learning community (*see* chapter 1) which would allow the young men in custody to have access to more opportunities prior to release or transfer, with the intent of aiding in individual rehabilitation (Scottish Prison Service 2016). The learning environment within Polmont provides an opportunity to address each of the aims of this research with the study participants, including an understanding of *who are the learners*, *the student-prisoner experience*, *the institutional and environmental factors that may influence learning*, and *if the capacity for change is possible within a prisoner learning community*. The primary space allocated for learning and educational provisions are the Learning Centre 1 (LC1) and 2 (LC2) buildings, with the additional provision and activities taking place throughout the establishment. This learning environment has the potential to encourage and discourage participation in activities. Therefore, understanding the context and influences of the institution is an essential aspect of exploring prisoner experiences with learning and education within this prison.

Throughout my fieldwork at Polmont, I was supported through the onsite administration team. During the first week of fieldwork, the administrator I was assigned facilitated all aspects of my visit. He helped in coordinating movement throughout the prison, introduced me to officers and staff, explained processes, such as the coordinated movement of prisoners, and assisted in securing additional volunteers for the study. Overall, this was an expected and organised process of carrying out fieldwork within the prison. I was allowed unescorted movement of the prison, requiring navigation of central command, but otherwise, I was free to move about the facility as needed.

4.1.2 SPS Research Access and Ethics Committee

This research project began while I was a student at the University of Edinburgh in the Moray House School of Education. The institutional ethics committee reviewed my proposal for work within the prisons and approved my application to proceeding with my fieldwork. It was advised by my doctoral supervisors that there was a second ethics process for the entry into the prison that was reviewed and approved directly by the Scottish Prison Service Research Access and Ethics Committee.

As part of the process for engaging in research with the Prison Service, a formal proposal and application was completed and reviewed by the SPS research committee before research commencing (*SPS RAEC application*, *appendix 2*). The proposal criteria include items such as literature review, knowledge of the substantive area of enquiry, methodology, objectives, ethical propriety, the utility of the proposed work for SPS, experience and ability of the researcher, sensitivity to the prison environment, the extent of access required, timescales and dissemination plans. The request for research access was granted in August 2015 and coordination of the fieldwork began with HMYOI Polmont in October 2015. After careful discussion with my supervisors and with the approval of the SPS, I chose to name the institution in this study as there is currently only one male young offender's facility in Scotland. Therefore, regardless of providing a pseudonym, a review of this study would readily identify the YOI being researched.

After approval of the research study, there was a requirement that I attend a two-day workshop for all new employees of the prison service which included a review of policy and procedure for working with prisoners and a course on personal protection. This training was required to allow me to have unescorted access throughout the facility during my fieldwork process. However, I was not hired as an employee of the SPS.

The next stage was meeting with several key members of staff in administration and education to coordinate my visits and discuss how we would go about identifying volunteers to participate in the study. After this point, we set the first dates for interviews in November 2015, and I was encouraged to observe classes, engage with students in the education centre and meet with prisoners in the inclusion unit, which consisted of individuals who recently arrived into custody. The future interview dates were coordinated via email with a contact in administration at the prison.

4.1.3   Ethical considerations

When considering the ethical implications of this study, the priority is to the participants. This research has already alluded to the fact that the participants are part of a vulnerable population, which is stigmatised within society and is at high risk of being socially marginalised or excluded. The choice of a qualitative approach to this study allowed the voices of these individuals to be heard, but I realised early on that even though the participants are young

men, they are not impervious to the repercussions of reliving their history. Many still suffer from feelings of grief and anger, but the opportunity to share their life experiences could have a variety of outcomes, which may include an empowering or therapeutic effect (Hess 2006; Rickard 2003) Also, discussions of the participant's experiences must not aid in further stigmatizing or labelling them as offenders or deviants to broader society.

The relationship of power also requires ethical discussion. In this scenario, the prisoner participants experience the effects of power within the prison daily (*see* chapter 3). Prisoners are under constant control within the establishment. They are expected to adhere to policy and rules, with limited capacity to make personal choices or operate outside the purview of the established authority. This can result in the participant feeling as though they lack control of their ability to make decisions, such as their participation in this study. Power is also a factor in the relationship between the researcher and the participants. Foucault (1977) defines what power is: it is not a thing, but a relation; it is not repressive, but it is productive; power is not the property of the state; instead power is exercised throughout our social world; power is omnipresent at all levels of society, and power is strategic. Foucault (1977) suggests that mechanisms of power produce different types of knowledge, one type being the assembly of information related to people's activities and existence. Knowledge gathered in this way further reinforces uses of power. In an interview, the researcher and the participants are part of the creation of power and knowledge. This dynamic has the potential to define what can and cannot be said based on the time and place of the interview. It delineates what can be excluded, silenced, or displaced from the conversation. Foucault believed that power should be understood in terms of its operations, techniques, and tools rather than just what is power (Foucault 1977). Under these circumstances, the potential for relational power and power difference were a concern for the participants of this study. Awareness of the elements of power was of critical concern to the researcher. All interactions and interviews with the participants, provide an opportunity for them to: ask questions of the researcher, provide their insight on any topic they consider essential and allows as much time as they require to discuss the topics outlined in the interview questions.

Another ethical consideration related to power is non-traceability and confidentiality. The participants in my study were assigned pseudonyms, but they may still be identifiable from their academic record to teachers or prison staff. Participants could have been provided a

number instead of a pseudonym. For the purposes of this study, the best option may have been to redact participant names upon publication as a means of mitigating any possible impact related to identification of the participants and to remove sensitive data with the potential to harm participants from the final thesis. However, in this case, the nature of the data meant that this was unnecessary.

The recruitment of participants (*see* sample) identifies another ethical challenge. All student participants were asked to participate in this study from an array of different actors within the prison regime. This indicates that power also has a role in the recruitment process. The internal recruiting agents were in administration or work as personal officers and tutors. These roles carry a certain level of authority within the prison and thus have considerable influence over the participants. It is possible that the volunteers sincerely wanted to participate in the research, but it is also likely that a person of power asking them to participate influenced their decision. The teaching staff and officers may also feel as if they were influenced to participate in the study as the administration advised many of them that the research was important to prison outcomes and encouraged to volunteer.

An additional consideration is a clear understanding of informed consent. Consent was a critical responsibility for the researcher, as there was concern around literacy and understanding of complex ideas related to the research. When meeting each participant for the first time, I provided them with a consent form to read, disclosure, and an information sheet to review on their own, before asking them for questions. All the participants stated that they felt comfortable with the outline of the research and understood the type of questions I would ask them over six months. Agreement to participate, from the researcher perspective, felt free from coercion, but with individuals from vulnerable backgrounds, it is possible they did not understand what was meant by consent. Participants were advised they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point and for any reason, in the end, only one participant withdrew from the study before the final interview.

A final ethical consideration involved a request for data from the Scottish Prison Service administration at Polmont. The data requested included details of the participant's details, including age, residence, convictions, sentence length, and education level. The SPS was open to providing this data but requested that I have the participants sign a secondary disclosure

which explicitly detailed the information I was requesting, therefore allowing each prisoner to grant access. This specific data was not requested until after all interviews were completed. At no point in the interview process were the participants required or asked to disclose their crimes. Only after the fact, did I receive this data to compile a complete profile for each participant in the study. Per the request of the SPS, secondary consent was created by the researcher, which included a request for data from the prison administration. The participants agreed to and were informed that a request for their convictions and other associated demographic data would be provided for use in this study.

4.1.4   Sample

The sample population for this study includes the teaching staff, prison officers, members of the prison administration, as well as the student-prisoners. The tutors were selected to participate in this study based on their knowledge and level of engagement with participants. It is essential to understand their teaching methods and the impact of well-established relationships with the participants as their role may impact student outcomes (*see* chapter 3). The prison officers and administration provided the breadth of information related to policy and prisoner outcomes, with an aim for understanding the impacts of the institution and environment on the participants (*see* chapter 3).

Table (1) HMYOI Polmont tutors, officers, and administrators

Alias	Role/Title
INCL2	SPS Inclusion Officer
Tutor4	Fife College instructor
Tutor3	Fife College instructor
Tutor2	Fife College instructor
Tutor1	Fife College instructor
LC1	Fife College Manager
JT1	SPS Joinery instructor/Officer
Admin1	HMYOI Polmont Administration
Admin2	HMYOI Polmont Administration
PMP1	SPS Peer Mentor Coordinator
Barn1	Barnardo's Youth Work
PO1	SPS Personal Officer
PO2	SPS Personal Officer
INST1	Paws for Progress instructor

The student-prisoner sample for this research was opportunistic, and the participants' background (ethnicity, age, education level, etc.) did not play a role in selection. Opportunistic

sampling allowed me to be able to select participants who met my criteria (outlined below) but were also available at the time of my visits to the prison. The volunteers for this study lacked any substantial ethnic diversity, as they were all white males from Scotland. Data from the Prison Population Statistics Briefing Paper (4 July 2016) indicates that the prison population in Scotland was approximately 96% white, with prisoners from Asian or Black ethnicities accounting for just over 3% of the population and around 0.5% of prisoners are from mixed or other ethnicities. The Scottish Census 2011 implies that the population of white prisoners coincides with similar proportions found in the general population. Whereas the proportion of Asian and Black ethnicities varied from the general population, with Asians representing 2.5% of the general population, but account for 1.7% of the prison population and black ethnicities account for 0.6% of the general population, but in prison they represent 1.4% of the population (Scotland's Census 2011).

Additionally, the participants were required to be open to sharing their experience and personal biography and ideally serving a sentence long enough to complete the interview process. As expected, each participant's experience varied from their previous personal experiences with education to their family backgrounds, and current learning experiences at Polmont. The external factors, backgrounds, and individual diversity of each participant impacted the conversations between the researcher and the participant. The prison staff at HMYOI Polmont supported the research by identifying prisoners who met the criteria of sentence length, which was a minimum of six months to ensure that the individual would be in custody for the duration of the interviews, which took place on November 2015, January 2016, and March 2016. The sampling aimed to recruit a manageable number of participants, with the expectation that there may be individuals who choose to withdraw from the study. There were no criteria which required a person to be engaging in education, but the sample resulted in ten participants who actively engage in education and six additional young people who do not actively engage or who have not yet pursued a specific learning experience while at HMYOI Polmont.

The initial recruitment of participants for the study also requires discussion. The first ten participants were recruited by one of the tutors for Fife College. The tutor provided a list of potential participants before my first visit in November 2015. Upon arrival, I met each person on the list and discussed the consent, disclosure, and explained the purpose of the research and

their role if they chose to participate. The remaining participants were volunteers who offered to participate upon meeting me in class or were asked to participate in the study through their personal officer. These recruitment methods are a bit scattered, but they all have a constant theme, choice. They may have chosen to participate because they felt they did not have a choice, felt uncomfortable saying no, or perhaps felt that participation could result in a positive benefit to them in some way. In hindsight, I may have used a different approach to selecting participants, but this snowball type approach did provide a good sample of people with varied experiences which provided an abundance of rich data.

According to Mathew, Miles, and Huberman (1994), opportunity sampling and voluntary sampling are often considered to be similar to be viewed as the same. However, Mathew et al. (1994) consider that there may be a crucial difference between the two types of participants, suggesting that a participant who volunteers to be in a research study is not necessarily the same as one who volunteers because they have been asked. The participants in the study were only identified by the prison administration as possible interviewees and did not agree to the study or provide consent until meeting the researcher in person, learning the purpose of the study, and their role in the research process.

At the beginning of the research process, there were a total of eighteen volunteers (ten in education and eight non-education), but over the six months one person was withdrawn from the sample by the researcher due to their early release, and in March 2016 another participant requested to withdraw from the study altogether. After interviews, there was a total of 47 prisoner interviews and ten staff interviews to analyse. In the table below, each of the participants was provided with an alias, selected by each person. The alias helps disguise the prisoners so that they would be untraceable from any data revealed in our interviews or through any conversations or activities within the prison. The table provides additional details of the participants, including age, education status, sentence length, an indication of repeat offences. As of April 2012, 48% of prisoners at HMYOI Polmont were serving a sentence of 1-4 years, with only 23% of the population serving a sentence over four years (McDowall 2012). The table below reflects that the sentence length for the sample population may not be representative of the current average sentence length at HMYOI Polmont. The sample for this study (as previously stated) was recruited by tutors and administration, with the researcher engaging with individuals who visited the learning centre. This method of sampling may have

encouraged prisoners who are serving a longer sentence to volunteer for this study. The participants' conviction, nor sentence length (beyond six months) were a consideration for recruitment of participants.

Table (2) Study Participants

Name	Age	Education status	Prison Sentence Length	First Prison Sentence
Sean	19	Non-education	Remand	Yes
Dennis	21	Education	4.3 years	Yes
Chris	21	Education	4 years	Yes
Innes	21	Education	11 years	Yes
Kyle	18	Education	4.8 years	Yes
Chuck	20	Education	4.6 years	Yes
Fred	19	1 to 1 education	4.8 years	No
Steve	19	Education	1.9 years	No
Ryan	22	Education	10 years	Yes
Alex	20	Non-education	24 years	No
Kevin	20	Education	8 years	No
Gary	22	1 to 1 education	6.9 years	No
Danny	19	Education	1.4 years	Yes
Scott	21	Education	13 years	Yes
Gavin	22	Education	3.11 years	Yes
Clyde	19	Non-education	12 years	No

The table above reflects that most participants were engaged in education or learning at Polmont at the time of recruitment. Two participants are eligible for one to one education, which means that they have the opportunity to have class sessions alone with a tutor. This is common in instances where the individual may have learning difficulties or trouble concentrating in a classroom environment. Individuals not participating in education of any kind, are still engaged in other purposeful activities such as, using the gym or attending counselling, but are not explicitly involved in an education course. In addition to education status, many participants are serving a sentence in prison for the first time. This data does not include experiences with the children's hearing system or probation service.

4.1.5   Participant consent

A primary component of conducting a qualitative study is full participation from all groups involved in the data collection process. Informed consent is a voluntary agreement between the researcher and participants that explains the purpose of the research, the rights of the individual, describe the research process, and outlines the potential risks and benefits of the research. Roberts and Indermaur (2003) argue that signed consent forms may pose a threat to YOI or an individual's future as there was a possibility that our interviews could reveal undisclosed crimes (*consent forms, appendix 2*). In addition to the consent forms, a thorough and easy to understand information sheet was provided to participants to ensure that they comprehended the purpose of the study (*information sheet, appendix 4*). As the interviews were crafted to focus on experiences of education, the risk of disclosure related to crimes was quite limited. The potential did exist for participants to disclose harm to others within or out with the prison. In this case, a necessary breach of confidentiality would be required from a moral and ethical standpoint in order to protect others. In addition, the possibility of disclosure related to self-harm was not included in the original consent form that participants signed for this thesis. It is of importance to include discussion of harm in this study as social isolation is considered a key trigger for risk of self-harming and mental health challenges at Polmont (HMIPS 2019). In this case, if a participant were to disclose their intentions of self-harm or suicide, I would have a responsibility to report this information to personal officers. Furthermore, participants were informed at each interview of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without cause.

All participants in this study were 18 or older at the time of data collection, each person was advised of their right to confidentiality and informed of how the data would be used to understand further the phenomenon taking place because of their educational experiences within the context of prison. As the participants are considered a vulnerable group, they needed to understand the purpose of the research was to benefit them directly (Flaskerud and Winslow 1998).

4.2   Methods of data collection

The choice of methods used in this study was informed by the theoretical framework and qualitative research design. The semi-structured interview allowed for the collection of rich

data on the individuals' perspectives and experiences and are most suitable when sensitive or complex issues are being explored, whereas the observation component aided in understanding the social interactions and relationships between the participants and prison and teaching staff in their usual context. The data collection (interviews and observation) took place at HMYOI Polmont on the dates outlined in the table below.

Table (3) Summary of interview dates with participants at HMYOI Polmont

Name	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3
Sean	24/11/2015	27/01/2016	28/03/2016
Dennis	27/11/2015	26/01/2016	29/03/2016
Chris	27/11/2015	25/01/2016	29/03/2016
Innes	27/11/2015	25/01/2016	01/04/2016
Kyle	25/11/2015	25/01/2016	01/04/2016
Chuck	27/11/2015	26/01/2016	01/04/2016
Fred	24/11/2015	27/01/2016	28/03/2016
Steve	26/11/2015	26/01/2016	30/03/2016
Ryan	25/11/2015	25/01/2016	30/03/2016
Alex	30/11/2015	27/01/2016	29/04/2016
Kevin	26/11/2015	26/01/2016	01/04/2016
Gary	24/11/2015	27/01/2016	28/03/2016
Danny	26/11/2015	25/01/2016	30/03/2016
Scott	25/11/2015	25/01/2016	29/04/2016
Gavin	26/01/2016	26/01/2016	29/03/2016
Clyde	30/11/2015	27/01/2016	28/03/2016

4.2.1   Conducting the fieldwork

A total of three weeks was dedicated to the data collection process over the course of six months (November 2015, January 2016, and March 2016) at HMYOI Polmont engaging in face to face interviews with students and staff as well as making observations on the learning environment, culture, and community that exists at Polmont. This 'prolonged engagement and lengthy and intensive contact with the participants' strengthens credibility (Lincoln and Guba 2007: 18). The interviews provided an opportunity to speak one to one with all participants in a safe setting, which allowed all individuals the ability to speak freely, resulting in a rich and deep conversation. The participants all agreed to be recorded as part of the disclosure process for future reflection on our conversations via transcription. The prison required formal authorisation for the use of a small digital recorder during each visit. After each week of interviews, the conversations were transcribed. While transcription was time-consuming, it

provided the most accurate data for analysis (Merriam 2009). Interview recordings and a field journal strengthened the trustworthiness of the data. Both were useful to aid in the recall of specific experiences and visual elements of the facility. The data collected was then used to inform our follow-up interviews and craft specific interview questions for each participant in the study (Merriam 2009).

In addition to interviews, data was collected via the prison administration and through a collection of observations by the researcher in a fieldwork journal. The researcher requested data provided by the prison service after completion of interviews with the head of offender outcomes and the Governor of the prison. Offender outcomes have the role of coordinating all purposeful activity for prisoners at Polmont as well as developing the curriculum for all educational provisions. The data provided necessary demographic data about the student-prisoners involved in the study as well as comprehensive data on individuals participating in educational opportunities across the establishment, the average age of all individuals currently incarcerated at Polmont and the complete record of locale for those in custody. Also, staff from Fife College provided a record of education for the participants in the study both pre-and-post incarceration.

4.2.2   The interviews

The theoretical framework has informed the use of this method of data collection as Goffman (1959; 1961) is concerned with the face to face situations that make up our daily lives and the social production which ensues as a result of social interaction. While Goffman was less interested in the institution, his insights from within the total institution provide a foundation for developing a narrative as to the social, environmental, and institutional impacts on participants. The choice of a semi-structured interview format was selected for data collection, as this method allows for an open and non-prescribed approach. The interview is an instrument in the data collection process, allowing for prompts and movement in the dialogue to deepen an understanding of the participants' experiences. I, as the researcher am an instrument as my role, is to listen and act as a facilitator who helps the participants share experiences and stories. The beliefs and experiences of the researcher can influence the structure of the interview questions, but the role of the researcher is to be an active listener allowing the participants to describe their experiences in their own words. As part of the analysis process, the data were studied to determine what is important, what is ethical, and that the information is complete

and accurate. The semi-structured interview can provide rich and in-depth data which is not easily attainable by other methods of collection (Rubin and Rubin 2005). This approach provides an opportunity for the researcher to be empathic and sensitive to the experiences of the individual while probing deeper to gain a more reflective and subjective understanding of the person's experience.

The work of Goffman (1959) also suggests that self-process is bound to our interactions with others. Therefore, who we are is inextricably tied to the social world. Goffman believed that intersubjective development is a necessary part of social life, concerning himself with the thoughts, feelings, and actions of his participants. He is an observer, watching the process of social interaction. In exploring the subjective world of the participants, interviews were designed to discover the personal details of the participants and to understand their shared world of the prison community.

The interviews with prisoners were structured as a series of central questions, follow up questions, and prompts, which sought to further the conversation and answer the research questions (Rubin and Rubin 2005). The questions for each interview were divided into three groups.

1. Perceptions of education: *to gain the trust of participants the first interview was focused on the current educational experiences of the individual and allow them an opportunity to think about the purpose of education, before moving on to discussing more personal topics.*

Example: What are your thoughts on the different types of education offered at Polmont?

2. Background of the individual: *these interviews delved deeper into the experiences, past, and thought processes of the participants and allow them an opportunity to share their story. Discussion of education is still the focus but understanding how a variety of influences has shaped their experiences is vital to create a full picture of who they are and how they see the world.*

Example: What was your experience with school before coming to Polmont? What one word would you use to describe your experience with school?

3. Reflection on educational experiences and self: *the purpose of this interview is to allow participants to reflect on their experiences while in custody and share their thoughts on education, the learning community, and discuss changes in themselves.*
Example: How would you describe yourself to someone who did not know you?

The semi-structured format of the interviews also allowed for the possibility of more spontaneous questions that might arise as part of the interview process. Three different interview schedules were developed for the prisoner interviews (as noted above), and separate questions were developed for learning community staff and prison staff interviews (*interview schedules, appendix 5*). The interview schedules were crafted by designing interview questions informed by the literature, which ultimately sought to answer the research questions. The semi-structured interviews incorporated the concept of funnelling, whereby general questions gradually become more specific and probing, encouraging the participant to open up and feel more relaxed (Minichiello 1998; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2007). The funnelling process also enabled the focus to remain on the primary aims of the research.

The purpose of interviews with offender learning staff and tutors was to better understand their perception of educational offerings, programming, and student participation challenges within the institution. These interviews were also meant to explore the role of staff within the prison. As a total institution, there is an assumption of roles for officers and tutors. Goffman's (1961) analysis of the staff world suggests that their *people-work* has an implicit function to sever a person's connection to society, inflict mortifications, and enforce assimilation and re-socialisation resulting in the erosion of an individual's capacity to think for themselves. That being said, the staff also experience a complex social world where they must navigate constant interaction and balance multiple roles. The use of interviews for collecting data from staff provided an opportunity to explore their hidden identities and gather information related to teaching methods, relationship with participants, prisoner policy, penal outcomes of the institution, and institutional challenges. The interviews were divided into three primary areas: *educational offerings and programming, student support,* and *impact of education*.

4.2.3   Observation
The act of writing something down or capturing an observation is a recurring process for the researcher. The process of writing solidifies the memory making it last for the observer

(Kalthoff 2013). The observation component of data collection within the prison community was quite a useful approach as it allows the researcher as an outsider to view the participants and environment from a different perspective, gives voice to the atmosphere and provides insight into the journeys of everyone in the community and their interaction, not just the participants in the study. Observation provided a chance to understand further the learning setting and how tutors interact with all students, which provided a much broader view of the learning community at HMYOI Polmont. Undertaking observation in prison can be difficult, as these facilities are typically closed to access. Hornsby-Smith (1993) make the distinction that prisons as restricted access sites, have to apply additional controls or barriers to ensure that research does not disrupt the environment. In the case of this study, I was allowed considerable access to the prison, student-prisoners and staff. While observation was not the primary source of data collection in this study, it was still an important component of data which helped to contextualise the data and shape the experiences of the researcher. All the observations recorded were kept in a journal which helped to encourage reflection after each day of fieldwork.

The fieldwork journal was useful to reflect on interviews, course observations, the overall environment and my personal experiences as the researcher while present in the prison community. I wrote in the diary recording each interaction, conversations which were not part of my official interviews or observations, and to note when something out of the ordinary occurred. The diary was a handy tool for recording the visual details of each part of the facility, which included the main administration building, four residence halls, fitness facilities, and two education or learning community buildings. The diary was also useful for reflexivity on the part of the researcher, as it allowed the opportunity to reflect on participant perceptions which did not fit into the ordinary or usual assumptions of the researcher. Contents of the diary were transferred into a digital document at the end of each week of fieldwork.

In addition to the journal, an electronic file for each participant was created to track data. There were also comprehensive excel spreadsheets kept organising the transcribed interviews, codes, and themes which arose from each person's successive interviews (*see an example, appendix 6*). These comprehensive files allowed the researcher to develop a clearer picture of each participant over time and were useful for keeping all the data organised throughout the data collection process through to analysis. Also, the secondary data provided by the SPS (*see*

Sample and Conducting the Fieldwork) included statistical information on prisoners at Polmont including *age, locality, length of sentence,* and *data on prisoner engagement in purposeful activities*. The education provider, Fife College, also provided details of the participant's education before incarceration and courses completed or in progress while in custody. This secondary data was used to document participant background and develop conclusions as to who are the learners in this study. The table below (3) provides an overview of the data sources, collection methods, analysis, and research questions being answered by the data.

Data collected within the prison was recorded on an approved digital device. All notes related to interviews were verbally recorded at the conclusion of each meeting. Handwritten notes in my field journal are related to the environment and was used to capture the visual elements of the prison. Commentary related to participants was never recorded in the journal to avoid a breach of confidentiality. The field journal as well as any notes recorded after the data collection are protected in a lockbox in the researcher's residence, with no access by anyone other than the researcher. External data from the SPS was transcribed into a spreadsheet with the written/printed copies shredded. Furthermore, all data collected from the participants and the SPS were recorded in a document stored on the researcher's laptop. This data is password-protected, with no one else having access to the laptop and once the project and subsequent thesis are complete, the data collected from the participants as well as the prison will be permanently deleted.

Table (4) Summary of data, methods, analysis and research questions

Data collection source	Methods	Analysis	Research questions*
Student prisoners	Interviews	Thematic analysis	1,2,3, 4
Prison administration	Interviews	Thematic analysis	2, 3
Teaching staff	Interviews	Thematic analysis	1,2,3
Personal officers	Interviews	Thematic analysis	2, 3
SPS data on prisoners	Secondary data	Supporting document	1
Observational data	Observation	Thematic analysis	2
Education documents	Secondary data	Supporting document	1

*Research Questions: *(1) Who are the learners at HMYOI Polmont? (2) What are their experiences of learning and education in HMYOI Polmont? (3) How and why do institutional and environmental factors influence experiences of learning and education at Polmont? (4) How do narratives of change and growth feature in different types of data in this study?*

4.2.4   Reflexivity

The individual experiences of the researcher may impact the research process positively or negatively as personal prejudices, beliefs, thoughts, and experiences challenge our frames of reference and perception of the world around us. My role as a researcher was to open myself up to the experiences of the participants and listen, not to judge or place opinions upon them. It was valuable for me to keep a reflexive diary, where thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions were kept regarding the research experience. This diary was used as a tool in identifying potential researcher prejudice to achieve a more accurate representation and interpretation of the data collected. Bolton and Gillie (2014) describe the journal as a place for the researcher's perspective on issues, discussions, details of the environment, and individual challenges which are open to further interpretation. Harris (2003) asserts that researchers should engage in a reflexive process, which allows the individual to look behind the whole process. This thesis holds to the view of reflexivity being an opportunity for me as the researcher to be liberated from routine thought and subjective processes (Lipp 2007). The reflexive diary is a means of supporting an open and enlightened reflexive process, which promotes transparency in the qualitative research conducted as part of my thesis.

When researching within the prison environment, any number of possible scenarios can exist. As a researcher, it is possible to become too ingrained and comfortable with the process and neglect the subtleties that may impact reflexivity. When considering the cause and effect relationships which existed within the prison, I begin to reflect on my experiences with officers first. Prison officers are present throughout the prison, managing staff, prisoners, departments, etc. For the most part, the officers I encountered were helpful and kind. However, there were a couple of occasions where I was approached by officers who felt the need to be aggressive and rude. Indeed, these couple of experiences allowed me to reflect on the relationship dynamics they must maintain with the prisoners they work with and the staff they supervise. These negative experiences were indeed not the norm as most interactions with officers were overwhelmingly positive.

The reflexive process requires a researcher to reassess their beliefs and preconceived ideas concerning all aspects of the research. At the time that I received approval to research the prison, I had already received ethics approval from the University. The risk of personal harm as a researcher entering the prison was not a consideration, and while this may seem to be a significant oversight, it was due to a lack of personal knowledge. Considering that many of my

interviews took place in small spaces, alone with the participant, I may have been at minimal risk, but I always had access to my alarm and officers were typically within range. There were many times when my alarm sounded, because of an incident somewhere in prison, each time I felt scared and relieved; scared as I did not know if the incident would impact my movement in prison and relieved as I was fortunate to only witness one fight in my time at Polmont. I was told by a student, that in the past, Polmont was notorious for fights amongst prisoners. This information in retrospect would have been useful in planning my fieldwork, or at least providing context to what I could expect from this experience.

To be wholly reflexive and transparent in this study it is also important to acknowledge that, I, as a researcher, encompass a variety of personal and professional factors which influence the research process and data analysis. Being a female social scientist is not uncommon, but researching within a young adult male prison has implications for my gender. As a female entering a total institution that is occupied by men, consideration needs to be given to interactions between the researcher and the researched. A point of interest for most of the participants was also the fact that I am American. This provided an opportunity to discuss my personal experiences of living in a foreign country with the prisoners, but also allowed them to ask questions about the United States. I found this to be an advantageous way to build trust with the participants and encourage them to share their personal experiences. From a professional perspective, working with students has been an essential part of my career. I am an educationalist and my previous career for over a decade was in student affairs. My role in higher education provided opportunities to engage with students in a traditional setting, making this research more interesting to undertake.

In many ways, I feel that I have situated myself in a place of education which resonates with me very deeply as I was a young person who left school at the age of 14, it took many years for me to realise the importance of learning in my life. My personal experience with education has been incredibly impactful and influences my views on education and learners.

4.3   Data analysis

The method of analysis is dependent on multiple factors, including the nature of the data gathered, the research questions, the theoretical framework, and the underpinning epistemology. Holloway and Todres (2003) state that thematic analysis should be a

foundational method in qualitative approaches as this area of research is diverse, complex, and nuanced. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as having theoretical freedom as it works well with most epistemological positions. Thematic analysis was chosen for this study as it is used to identify, analyse, and report patterns or themes within the data as well as organising and describing data in rich detail, allowing for ease of dissemination to a variety of audiences (Boyatzis, 1998). The primary aim of thematic analysis is to provide a data set that offers a detailed description of all the data so that the researcher can establish the dominant themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). An inductive approach was used to develop links between the research aims and analysis of the data, which included student and teacher perceptions as well as institutional data and environmental observations. The inductive themes are linked to the data and are not affixed to a preconceived code, category, or theory (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To assume that this is a genuinely inductive approach is a bit naïve. My role as a researcher would infer that I have gained knowledge from the literature and invested in this study as I have an interest in the topic. I cannot separate myself from my knowledge, but I can be mindful of my experiences, biases, and preconceived ideas allowing for a more critical approach to the data analysis.

The theoretical framework of this study influenced the choice of analysis as Goffman developed a method of inquiry called frame analysis. This process of analysis involves organising experiences and structuring individual perceptions of experiential events. Goffman suggests that analysing data in this way allows the opportunity to build frames and basic cognitive structures as a guide to perceiving reality. Frame analysis requires that discourse be framed in a specific way, and consequences or outcomes be provided. As a result, I am thus rendering this method of analysis as not suitable for this study. However, a strength of Goffman as a framework is his ability to move between practices (systematic v. unsystematic), providing an interpretive understanding and analysis of his research. The use of thematic analysis in this study provided the flexibility to organise these cognitive, social experiences through the identification of themes and patterns, without losing the depth of detail provided by the participants.

Goffman's research sets the scene for understanding the *pains of imprisonment* and the impact this may have on people in custody. The questions and resulting data were analysed through the lens of Goffman's work related to performance, the institution, stigma, and the self. These

themes were then grouped into different categories (step 3-5 below) *societal impacts; education is a choice, the total institution, and individual agency,* each representing a research question. The societal impacts and education are a choice themes represent who are the learners and what are their experiences and learning and education in prison. Data from the third theme, the total institution represents the institutional influence on prisoners and education. The final theme, individual agency, examines narratives of change and growth in the participants. Each of these themes can be connected to Goffman as the theoretical framework (*see* chapter 2 and 3), as his research sets the tone for understanding impact on the self (identity) and the institutional impacts for the young men in my thesis.

The data set for this study consisted of a total of 57 transcribed interviews. In determining the proper approach to analysing the data, reference is made to Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps for thematic analysis. The six steps are:

1. Familiarisation with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing the themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

The thematic analysis involves developing ideas from reading and re-reading the transcripts, generating and replacing initial codes, sorting the codes into themes and sub-themes, before defining the final themes and producing the findings. The following steps provide details as to how the data analysis process was carried out for this study.

Table (5) Overview of Thematic Analysis, *Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006)*

Step 1: Familiarisation with the data

The interviews for the study took place at three separate times throughout fieldwork. Each visit to the prison was for approximately one week, during which time the interviews and observation took place. After each week at the prison, interviews were transcribed, read and re-read to determine if there were any terms or comments which stood out or ideas that emerged from transcripts. For example, when asked about their current educational experiences at HMYOI Polmont, responses included "You feel part of the course, it doesn't feel like a prison, it is relaxed, and people are so helpful," "you can ask them anything, they do whatever they can to help you and support you, they are easy to talk to," and "I learn better here than I did in regular school." The following is an excerpt from the transcripts.

> **MW**: What types of educational opportunities have you pursued?
>
> **Innes**: Higher communications, Open University, Fitness and coaching certificates/qualifications, gym assistant level 1.

Flowchart of thematic analysis steps:

- **familiarising self with the data**
  - narrative preparation (transcription, re-reading data, notation of initial ideas)
- **Creation of initial codes**
  - coding interesting features of the ata in a systematic fashion across the data set
  - collate data relevant to each code
- **Searching for themes**
  - collate codes into potential themes
  - gather all data relevant to each potential theme
- **Reviewing themes**
  - check themes against coded extracts
  - check themes across entire data set
  - review data to search for additional themes
  - generate map of thematic analysis
- **Defining and naming themes**
  - ongoing analysis to refine each theme
  - generate definitions and names for each theme
- **Producing the report**
  - selection of compellling extract examples
  - final analysis of extracts
  - relating the analysis back to the research questions, objectives, and literature reviewed

Comment: Enjoys engaging in learning activities, enjoys education, perceives himself as average, but is very intelligent.

MW: Initially, when you started education you were finishing your high school, what pushed you to go further?

Innes: The members of staff that I worked within the secure unit had drilled it in my head that to do well in my sentence, keep on the straight and narrow, get parole, and have a half-decent life when I get out and give yourself half a chance it is the right decision. I was injected with that confidence. I received a lot of support from the staff. I would say why I am doing this. I have all this time, but I was shown what this could do for me. I keep on building and building and persevering. Because of what I am doing with education, I use this as a framework for how I act, speak, and behave. I refuse to be part of the prison culture and let them control me. This education is part of me, rebelling against that. I try to be different. I want to be different.

Comment: Received positive motivation from officers and tutors to pursue and persist in education. Wants to rebel against the power and culture of prison, wants to be more than a prisoner.

MW: Do you think that as one person you can change the culture of prison?

Innes: I am trying!

MW: Do you feel that your tutor adapts to the way the students learn?

Innes: I would say so. The classes are not forced, so if they want to be there, they will engage.

Comment: Sees opportunity in learning, education is about personal choice.

The secondary data provided by the Scottish Prison Service included statistics on the prison population as of March 2016. The data requested included the average age of the prison population, sentence length, and geographic data. This data correlates with the information outlined in the literature review, which supports the argument that Scotland has a wider socio-economic problem related to poverty (*see* chapter 3). A large portion of the population at Polmont is from the same locality, which highlights areas of concern and degradation across Scotland. Also, the participant educational records provided by Fife College offer insight into pre-incarceration and current educational achievement of the participants. This data supports

information gathered through interviews and provides a framework for understanding who the learners are and what are their experiences with education at Polmont.

Step 2: Generating initial codes

The second stage involves the initial coding of the transcripts, whereby all data is reviewed for repeating patterns. The data collected from each week were systematically reviewed and re-reviewed after completion of the interviews. This resulted in many codes for each person interviewed and across all the participant's profiles, which consisted of three separate transcript records for prisoners and a single record for each administrator or staff member. Instead of using a single word to describe the passage, I chose to use short phrases. An example of the codes used in the analysis is provided in the appendices (4).

After coding each component of the data, similar codes were collated together to keep the data organised in preparation of identifying the themes within the data set. The final stage of this step required a condensing or collapsing of the codes. This entailed reviewing the codes and identifying similar ideas or meanings; at this stage, it was helpful to define each of the codes so that I could determine if the meanings were comparable. This resulted in a more definitive list of codes from which I could recognise the themes which may be developing from the data.

Step 3-5: Themes

The condensed list of codes resulted in 4 defined sets of codes each with an overarching sub-theme. The four primary categories are *societal impacts; education is a choice, the total institution, and individual agency.* Under each of these sub-themes are the codes that relate to each area. By developing these categories or sub-themes, it became clear how these subcategories were related to the research questions. The graphic below shows an example of each of the sub-theme categories with their corresponding codes.

(4) Sub-themes used in the data analysis process

While these sub-themes are distinctive, they each have a relational and emotional aspect which shows a common link amongst the codes and sub-themes. The codes under *societal impacts* relate to the social impacts on the participants, but also their educational experiences and achievements. *Education is a choice* that is reflective of their current educational experiences while in prison and expresses a more positive and forward-thinking approach to learning. *The Total Institution* sub-theme *represents the power and constraints of prison and prison as a learning community.* The final sub-theme, the *individual agency* looks at the connections between the learners, learning spaces, relationships, and represents the individual perceptions and personal narratives of the participants. The overarching themes were established by making connections   between the sub-themes and research

Societal Impacts
learning difficulty
exclusion
low literacy
anger mgmt.
mental illness
family history
loss/grief
parent

Education is a choice
self-motivated
expectations
reflective
realistic
mature
college-bound
mentor
vocation driven
rebellion of culture

Total Institution
access
authority
course availability
time/space/power
learning
community
social experiment
work v. education

Individual Agency
personal
change/identity
critical reflection
relationships
socialisation
maturity

questions. They are organised as *the learners, the learners' experience, institutional and environmental factors, and capacity for change*.

All the data was re-read, and codes reviewed again to ensure that the assigned theme made sense. Consideration was given to the relationship between codes and the assigned sub-theme before determining which overarching theme would reflect the overall meaning of the data. The graphic above shows a circular pattern to the overarching themes; this conveys the interconnectedness of the themes. This final step of defining and naming the themes allows the data to become a narrative. The final thematic map is in the appendix (*7*).

4.4   Limitations to the study

This research seeks to understand who the student prisoners are at HMYOI Polmont, learn from their experiences with educational provision within a prison in Scotland, and determine how external factors may impact the learning community as well as the student-prisoners individual capacity for personal growth and change in the future. The possibility that this study could provide comprehensive knowledge of the experiences of the students was probable, but understanding if education allowed for critical reflection as a component of the theoretical framework would be more difficult. To better understand this phenomenon, it would have been prudent to establish a longitudinal study to gather data over a significantly more extended period. However, given the constraints of the prison environment and availability of administration to monitor the study, this was not a feasible design. Time would have provided a more detailed understanding of the teaching methods used and added knowledge of student academic abilities.

Many young men are engaging in education at Polmont, but many prisoners are not engaged in any purposeful activity, which includes education. Another limitation of this study would be the sample size. As there are currently over 400+ young men incarcerated at Polmont, a more robust sample would have allowed for a more comprehensive collection of data, thus allowing for more generalizable findings. Additionally, as this facility (at the time) only housed young men, upon reflection it would have been sensible to also request access to the young women's facility HMYOI Cornton Vale to look at the differences in educational experiences based on gender and environment, with the distinguishing factor being that Polmont is designated as a potential prison college.

4.5   Conclusion

The goal of qualitative research is discovery (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Discovery should be a transparent explanation that reaches from the beginning to the end of the research process (Mason, 2002). This research aims to explore the experiences of the participants and analyse the data to answer the research questions. The literature presented (*see* chapter 2-3) provides a compelling argument for the questions being researched, as the learner's background, experience with education, and the institutional influence on learning are areas of study which require new inquiry. This chapter provides an outline for this study, which maintains a constructivist stance and is influenced by the theoretical framework (*see* chapter 2-3). Goffman's research as a framework aided in the development of the research design, which

includes a discussion of the site selection, ethical considerations, sample, and consent. The research design section concludes with a discussion of the methods of data collection (semi-structured interviews, observation, field diary, and secondary data) and reflexivity in research. The methodology chapter concludes with an explanation of thematic analysis and limitations of the research.

The methodology chapter has provided the actions, intentions, and interpretation process for conducting this study. The literature (*see* chapters 2-3) has provided a foundational perspective related to prisoner education, the prisoner narrative, and the role of the institution. While providing evidence that new research is needed in this area of study. The theoretical framework (*see* chapter 2-3) is also examined as part of the literature in this study and provides a unique perspective from which to view the social interactions and environment of prison, while also examining the individual subjective experiences of the participants. The next chapters (5-7) present the findings for this study, with the research of Erving Goffman guiding the analysis of the data. The three findings chapters are *the learners*, *learning in custody*, and *the total institution*. The learners (*see* chapter 5) explores the background of the participants and their prior experiences with learning and education. Learning in custody (*see* chapter 6) examines the participants' experiences of learning and education at HMYOI Polmont. The last findings chapter, The Total Institution (*see* chapter 7) develops a theoretical understanding of the influences of the institution and environment on learners and learning at Polmont, while also exploring participant narratives for themes of change and growth.

Chapter 5:   The Learners

The primary research questions guiding this study focus on the student's biography, past and current experiences with education, and the role of the institution in providing a learning community. This chapter begins to investigate the data by examining the first research question, which identifies who the learners in this study are. It is vital to illustrate that the cultural and situational context of learning within the total institution is intertwined and cannot be separated (Jarvis 2006). Therefore, using Goffman's (1961) research is useful in developing an understanding of the prison and how student-prisoners in this study respond to their experiences of incarceration. The literature in this thesis has defined learning and education for this research, while also examining social roles and the impact of prison on the self (*see* chapter 2). Also, the literature examined intergenerational and social factors that influence prisoner engagement and the effect of the institution on people in custody (*see* chapter 3).

This chapter provides an analysis of the data collected from in-person interviews with prisoners. The analysis of the data related to the learners resulted in two overarching themes: *the learner's biography* and *a history of learning*. These themes include several sub-themes which help to organise the data into logical sections within this chapter. The use of thematic analysis allowed me to explore patterns across the data sets resulting in an understanding of who the learners are. *The learner's biography* begins with four sub-themes: *family structure, grief and loss, influencing factors*, and *parenthood*. These themes emerged from the data as necessary to developing a biographical profile of the participants. The second overarching theme, *a history of learning*, has three sub-themes: *perceptions of education, exclusion, and knowledge and learning.* These themes provide context for understanding the past educational experiences of the participants, while also identifying some systemic reasons that many of the participants had a negative perception of education before undertaking educational provision in prison. It is important to note that the narratives presented in this chapter are subject to interpretation as they may not always produce consistent links between the participants' experiences and eventual outcomes.

5.1   The learner's biography

The following sections document a biographical understanding of who are the learners in this study and lead to an understanding of what are the experiences of learners with education in

prison (*see* chapter 6). A development in current criminology is the resurgence of collecting individual biographies from people who offend and developing an analysis of their personal experiences. Collecting data related to prisoner biographies has the potential to inform practice related to family relationships, addiction, social exclusion and poverty, and can be utilised as a resource for understanding desistance or reducing reoffending (Williams, Papadopoulou, and Booth 2012; Gadd and Farrall 2004). The following sections outline the participant's personal and academic experiences. The data explored in this chapter is from the student perspective, with a consensus that the narratives and themes described have impacted the lives of the participants in this study.

5.1.1 Family structure

The analysis of data related to family structure provides insight into the role of relationships in developing individual capacity and behaviour modelling. Family is a term that has a significant variation in the way it can be applied. For some, a family may mean the traditional concept of parents and children, but for many, a family is the composition of a social unit that does not necessarily conform to a specific definition. Grandparents, siblings, or friends raised many of the young men in this study. Others became the primary carer for siblings or parents who were unwell. The family history of each participant is unique and has significantly impacted the way each person views the world. As the primary social environment, family, specifically parents or guardians, influence behaviours, actions, and self-belief of their children. Parental modelling shows us that when parents are held in high esteem and are recognised as a reinforcer, children are more likely to model this behaviour. Parents are responsible for shaping normative practices. This includes developing self-control through parental support and bonding, while also considering that negative actions may likewise be modelled (Simons et al. 1991). The familial relationships of some of the participants provide insight into the role of social bonding and support, resulting in a potential link between parental responsibility and risk of deviant behaviours (Simons et al. 1991). Fred and Alex both describe a complex, if not dysfunctional relationships with their parents. In both cases, the participants reflect on the loss of a relationship with their mothers.

> My relationship with my dad is somewhat volatile. I was not sure if my dad was going to stand by me when I first came in. He came to visit, and it was good. I have no contact with my mum or sister. My dad is the only person I have contacted since I have been

here. However, maybe in the future, my mum and I can make up. One night of madness caused it, I am going to leave that for the future, but I think I might work things out with her. (Fred)

The result of this breakdown in family structure for Alex led to his involvement with a gang.

My mum left when I was 16. I am not sure what happened to her or where she went. I just got on with my life and supported myself with crime. (Alex)

The process of divorce is typically not harmonious for anyone involved, but may be particularly difficult for children who do not understand the complexities of adult relationships. In this study, fourteen of the sixteen participants have experienced divorce and were raised in a single-parent home. That is not to say that a single-parent family is not adequate to raise a child, but the participants suggested that this split in family structure impacted many of them, as most spoke about the desire to spend time separately with their parents. Fred was considerably affected by divorce as his parent's separation led him to attempt suicide.

My parents got divorced when I was seven, and that caused a rift with us. I chose to live with my dad, and my mum would not speak to me. My sister stayed with my mum. I was so upset over it all that I took about fifty pills. I tried to kill myself. My parents were so mad at me. I have some permanent memory damage, and I can't remember anything about what happened after that for a while. (Fred)

The experience of divorce may be traumatic and lead to feelings of loss, especially when young people are forced to make adult decisions such as where to live. In Fred's case, he admits that this was a cry for help, but at seven years old he was not prepared to handle the choices presented to him by his parents, and he has since suffered from a very strained relationship with his mother because of the decision he made to live with his father. Adverse childhood experiences have been linked to a possible increase in criminality or antisocial behaviours (Farrington 2007; Dallaire 2007). The life experiences of participants in this study included a variety of losses with bereavements specifically considered to be significant to the trajectory of a young person's life.

5.1.2 Grief and loss

The experience of trauma, specifically related to family loss, was identified as a dominant theme in this study. The data reveals that experiences of loss for the participants in this study are widespread, with many of the participants suggesting that the emotional and psychological effects of grief have influenced their life course. Some participants have lost loved ones before incarceration and during their sentence. There was a consensus amongst the participants that loss that occurred since their imprisonment has been the most difficult to work through as they value family relationships more now than ever before. As this study was undertaken at HMYOI Polmont, it is essential to note that a previous study of experiences of bereavement was completed in 2014 at HMYOI Polmont (*see* chapter 3). This study affirmed previous studies (Finlay and Jones 2000; Vaswani 2014) which concluded that young people incarcerated in Scotland are more likely to have experienced significant trauma and loss. The Vaswani et al. (2016) study further elaborates on the role of the institution as 'not a place to pick up the pieces,' suggesting that by the time a young man reaches prison considerable harm has already been done to the person and potentially society (2016: 45). The study makes several recommendations for improvement which include staff training, altering the environment to translate knowledge into practice, reducing the trauma of custody, ensuring that needs capacity is available, and ongoing evidence development (Vaswani et al. 2016: 47-49). The recommendation to continue reducing trauma is notable as prison is about power and control, and the loss of liberty can also be perceived as a traumatic event (Jewkes 2011; Goffman 1961). Upon entering the total institution, prisoners may begin to have an identity crisis, resulting in the loss of the pre-institutional self, being replaced by an identity shaped by the institutional regime (Goffman 1961).

As mentioned, trauma and grief are shared amongst the participants in this study, with several young men experiencing multiple losses. Chris was raised by his grandparents, never knowing anything about his biological parents. He also suffered the traumatic loss of three of his best friends.

> My parents died, and I lived with my granny and my granddad, but I just grew up calling them mum and dad because we were so young, my brothers and me. When I was in high school, they broke up [my grandparents]. I don't know anything about my real mum and dad. I also have three pals that died, one, I was with at primary and secondary, and he took his life. Another pal, he was with his girlfriend, and they had an

argument, and she left. There was a bridge up the road, he walked down there and jumped. Another pal just died because he took too many drugs. (Chris)

The trauma of these losses has impacted Chris significantly as he described feelings of helplessness regarding the loss of his friends and is still dealing with reconciling these events in his life. When he spoke about his values, family is now a priority as is improving relationships and having the opportunity to spend time with his loved ones. Chris has lived his life surrounded by death; the suicides of his three best friends are a constant reminder to him of the fragility of life. These experiences of loss can have numerous outcomes; some of the participants in this study used drugs to overcome their feelings of loss, thus leading them down a path to crime. Others may use their tragedies to become more resilient and overcome obstacles, from incarceration to employment, and even education. Within the institution, there is a developing grief and loss program to help a large number of young men dealing with grief and the process of working through loss. This program is aimed at meeting the emotional needs of prisoners by providing support systems from a variety of sources such as practitioners, personal officers, and the administration. The impact of the institution still has the potential to exacerbate the healing process as power and control are not favourable allies in supporting the overall health of prisoners.

This table outlines the participants in this study and the losses that they have experienced. Table (6) only includes losses disclosed by the participants as close family members. Through our conversations, it is evident that most of the participants have experienced a significant trauma in addition to loss, with several young men living in care, and others suffering from parental abandonment.

Table (6) Participant family loss/incarceration

Participant	Family member loss/incarceration
Sean	father
Dennis	father
Chris	mother and father
Innes	father and grandfather
Kyle	father
Alex	father
Kevin	father
Clyde	father

5.1.3 Influencing factors

This section outlines several factors which the participants indicate may have contributed to their criminality or offending behaviours. These factors include a family history of incarceration, antisocial behaviour, addiction, poverty, and poor health. Research shows that the intergenerational impacts of parental incarceration may encourage deviant behaviours in children and increase family victimisation and conflict (*see* chapter 3). A study by Aaron et al (2010) found that the age of the child may be a significant predictor of risk, noting that adolescents with a recently incarcerated parent may experience more familial conflict. The Cambridge Study acknowledge*s this argument in Delinquent Development* (Murray and Farrington 2005) which suggests that sons with incarcerated fathers during childhood are more likely to display antisocial behaviour or become incarcerated as an adult. While a family history of criminality may not be the only contributor to deviant behaviour, it may be viewed as a significant risk factor for future offending.

In addition to parental incarceration, antisocial behaviour has been shown to influence deviance. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) assert that low self-control fosters antisocial behaviour very early in life, resulting in low-self-control in adulthood. There are a variety of influences which also contribute to risk for young people, such as a family history of addiction, poverty, and poor mental, emotional, and physical health (Murray and Farrington 2005). Many young men in this study have experienced a variety of these factors. Dennis is an admitted addict, *'waiting to get high,'* he acknowledged that both of his parents were also drug addicts and he had since become estranged from his mother and brother when his father became incarcerated. Innes was remanded to a secure unit at the age of 11. He admits that alcohol abuse exacerbated his behaviours and contributed to his incarceration. Gary was raised by a parent with a mental illness and had a diagnosed mental disorder. He was placed in care at the age of 8 and was eventually moved to a secure unit for fighting and drug use. Ryan was placed in care at age 14, due to fits of rage. He also admits that he was addicted to drugs and alcohol.

> I was on speed, cocaine. I started smoking weed when I was 8. I also took LSD and Valium. I was also an alcoholic. I never used to do anything when I first got here. The drugs consumed me, and I only used to get a bit from them here. Now I am clean and sober. I feel really good about myself and the way things are going. (Ryan)

I was doing steroids before I came in; there are no drugs in here; there is drug testing regularly. When I first came here every weekend, I felt like I needed something to get me high, but now that doesn't bother me anymore. (Clyde)

I used to drink, but I have stopped drinking now because my dad used to drink a lot and I would see him drink and I would be like, I do not want to be like that. (Kyle)

Gavin is an outlier as he was addicted to a variety of hard drugs (i.e. ecstasy, cocaine, heroin), but also spoke about gambling addiction.

I have a gambling addiction, and I spent thousands and thousands of pounds on gambling. I started selling drugs to fund my gambling addiction, maybe not the best way to do it, but. They don't have anything for gambling addiction here, but before I came in, I had already started to attend gamblers anonymous. I attended up until I was sentenced.

In my field diary, I recorded my first impression of Gavin as we did not meet until my second visit to Polmont,

Gavin comes across as very likeable, if not a bit arrogant and cocky. He doesn't seem to dwell on the fact that he has committed a crime as his offences were selling drugs. It is as if Gavin does not see these particular crimes as wrong. Being arrested for drug crimes and sentenced to time in prison is not a great reason to be sent to jail, but when he has completed his sentence, he will be free to move on with his life.

Gavin's confidence and belief that selling drugs should not be a crime is notable as he became addicted to the same drugs he was selling. This may be indicative of the fact that he does not truly recognise the consequences of his actions. It could also be described by Goffman (1963) as Gavin's hidden identity, whereby Gavin shares what he wants others to know about him for fear of being labelled as a drug dealer or addict. Additionally, Gavin may be using this opportunity to share his experience through negating or diminishing the impact of his actions in a bid to normalise his behaviours and reduce stigmatisation (Crocker 1989).

The participants shared that drugs and alcohol were contributing factors that led to their offending behaviour. Convictions for many of the participants entailed an element of violence

while they were under the influence of substances. The following table (7) outlines participant data related to drug and alcohol use. This table provides data collected through interviews with the participants, which reflects that 13 of the 16 young men in this study had a substance abuse problem before their incarceration. The remaining three participants did not disclose drug or alcohol abuse during our interviews, but there were no direct questions related to this topic.

Table (7) Substance use by participants

Participant	Substance
Dennis	drugs and alcohol
Chris	drugs
Innes	drugs and alcohol
Kyle	alcohol
Chuck	alcohol
Fred	drugs and alcohol
Steve	alcohol
Ryan	drugs and alcohol
Alex	drugs and alcohol
Gary	drugs and alcohol
Scott	drugs
Gavin	drugs and alcohol
Clyde	drugs and alcohol

The influencing factors outlined in this section have provided contextual information related to the biography of the participants. The factors discussed are meant to provide insight into the common factors that may impact young men in custody, as many of the participants in this study have experienced comparable life events and it is these incidents that may have shaped their trajectories. While these are not necessarily factors that can be tied directly to the participant's current incarceration beyond their acknowledgements, there is still evidence to suggest that factors such as those related to family history may impact individual agency or choice in the future.

5.1.4   Parenthood

The role of father is meaningful for several of the participants in this study. Five young men disclosed that they are a parent. Each of these young men has a child under five years of age. Four of the five fathers in this study have a custodial sentence over four years, making it

challenging to maintain a strong relationship with their child, especially during the early formative years. Just as the impacts of parental incarceration may have influenced some of these young men, their imprisonment may also impact their children. This section provides an analysis of the data collected from in-person interviews with the participants which suggest that the role of parent has had a substantial impact on the participant's motivation and future hopes to desist from crime. The data elaborates on the importance of family and support systems in the lives of the incarcerated but also develops a more noteworthy profile to understand who the learners in this study are and what their inspiration for engaging in prisoner education is.

Data from the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (2015) suggests that the percentage of prisoners with children is approximately sixty-three percent. With high numbers of parents in prison, it is difficult to quantify the impact of being separated from their children, but it can be argued that the effects of parental imprisonment on children 'may be the least understood and most consequential implication of the high reliance on incarceration' (Hagan and Dinovitzer 1999: 122). The participants in this study note that the role of father has impacted them immensely. However, their children may now be at a much higher risk of future deviant behaviour. It can be argued that while there are some factors which may increase risk in children of the imprisoned, it is also possible that parental incarceration may not impact resilience or behaviour (Murray and Farrington 2005). This may be due in part to individual socio-economic and social factors, or as Murray et al. suggest, related to a genetic predisposition. The parents in this study all have very young children, who may not be impacted by the loss of time with their fathers. However, as only two of the four participants have maintained a relationship with their partners, the children in question may still experience a variety of losses due to a lack of parental attachment or social bonding.

Dennis, Alex, Gary, Kevin, and Gavin all credit their children with being the driving force to desist from crime. Dennis states that his fiancé and little boy is his motivation to never return to prison. Whereas Gary is not in a relationship with his daughter's mother, and he stated that his ex-girlfriend has concerns about him developing a relationship with his child.

> I don't know. She just said that seeing my daughter needs to wait until I see how I
> behave when I get out of here because she said I'm behaving in here but what will

happen when I get out of jail if I start drugs again? (Gary)

Alex is also not in a relationship with his child's mother. She has severed all ties with him, and he is not even sure where his daughter is living. Alex feels it was a mutual decision but still cares deeply about his daughter and her future. Kevin is no longer with his son's mom but is adamant that he will be in his child's life. When Gavin was asked how he has changed since becoming a dad, he stated,

> I am the same person, but I have changed a lot because I am a dad now. I feel like the first time I saw her face; I changed completely. As soon as you realise that you have brought someone into this world who depends on you, you have to change. (Gavin)

Interestingly, Hirschi (1983) suggests that criminologists only become interested in family interactions once a person is involved in the criminal justice system, therefore ignoring the likelihood that a person's upbringing may have influenced deviant behaviours. The participants in this study have all presented a very diverse representation of what is family and how it may impact future actions. The role of trauma, grief, and loss has provided insight into the personal obstacles the participants have encountered in their short lives. The influence of parental incarceration, addiction, and poor health was evident in the data, but this data may be influenced more so by social factors. Parental roles have proven to be necessary for the young men in this study as their desire to be responsible providers and carers for their children is a primary motivator to desist from crime.

Within the learner's biography, the data has provided a framework for understanding who are the learners in this study but has also shown that that combination of factors such as family dynamics, trauma, addictions, and parenthood can provide a diverse and unique sample of young people from which to examine. The analysis of this data highlights who these young men are and where they come from, the next section of this chapter provides the context of their learning experiences before incarceration and elaborates on the factors which have forced many of the participants to become disenfranchised with public education.

5.2   A history of learning

The participants in this study have had a mixed history of educational experiences. This part of the chapter will explore the data to understand the participant's perception of education

before their incarceration. Understanding the barriers that the participants have experienced before their imprisonment will provide context for chapter 6, which explores learning in custody. The historical learning experiences of the participants are divided into sub-themes that further develop the profile of the participants' experiences with learning and who are the learners in this study. The sub-themes are *perceptions of education, exclusion*, and *knowledge and learning*. *Perceptions of education* explore the participant's past experiences with education, negative or positive the participants share their insights. The participants identify exclusion from school as a primary reason that most did not complete or continue in their education. *Knowledge and learning* examine data collected from the participants that challenge the notion that young people in prison are low literacy.

5.2.1   Perceptions of education

The student's understanding of learning is vital to this study as previous negative experiences may influence their choice to participate in prisoner education. The participants in this study shared stories of their experiences with education. This data provides insight into the participant's experience and emphasises that their interpretations have shaped how they perceive learning and has aided in developing who they are as learners. Foucault (1977) highlights that there is a trajectory of negative educational experiences, to involvement in criminal activity and eventually incarceration, connecting negative experiences with many of the intergenerational disadvantages of a vulnerable population. Many of the participants indicated that their negative correlation with education could be attributed to difficulty learning in large classes, boredom, or a lack of motivation to do better. For example, Scott described his experience in school as *'chaotic,'* stating that *'classes were much bigger, it was too much. The large classes were just too difficult for me to handle. I couldn't learn.'* For other students, they stopped attending for a myriad of different reasons,

> Just the way the teachers are and the whole set-up of it. It was too hard for some people. I got through my exams, they were all right for slacking in school, but I didn't go to school as much as I should have, but I still did well. I think many teachers expected me to fail, but I got my grades. (Chris)
>
> It started to get boring all of a sudden because I popped in a lot and didn't get on with some teachers. (Gavin)

I never used to like it; I used to like some subjects. I got eight standard grades. I could have done better. If you look back on it now and I could go back, I would try more. (Kevin)

Conversely, there are a few participants that did appreciate school. Sean and Danny noted that they liked school, perhaps even enjoyed it whereas three participants (Chuck, Fred, and Steve) spoke about enjoying learning once they began attending an alternative school which caters to students who have been excluded or resisted mainstream education. However, one participant who stands out amongst the others is Innes. His background with schooling was within the confines of a secure unit where he lived from the age of eleven. Innes spoke about the ongoing encouragement he was offered by officers to persist in his education.

The members of staff that I worked with in the secure unit had drilled it in my head that to do well in my sentence, keep on the straight and narrow, get parole, and have a half-decent life when I get out and give yourself half a chance it's the right decision. I was injected with that confidence. I received a lot of support from the staff. I would say why am I doing this. I have all this time, but I was shown what this could do for me. I keep on building and building and persevering. Because of what I am doing with education, I use this as a framework for how I act, speak, and behave. (Innes)

Within this sample of participants, two young men disclosed that they are diagnosed with learning difficulties. Existing research on this topic suggests that prisoners are more likely to have a learning disability (*see* chapter 3). This research highlights the importance of listening to marginalised students and prioritising their needs as there is a potential disinclination to listen to these student groups, which may result in inequality in education and an intensified dissatisfaction with their learning environment (*see* chapter 3). Ryan shares that he has dyslexia and was never correctly diagnosed in school.

They just kept telling me that I was stupid, and nothing was wrong with me. I was good at math, but I didn't understand things because I was so behind, because I couldn't read stuff.

Fred was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) at a young age:

To be honest, I was just bad at school. I used to set the toilets on fire. I'd smash things up all the time. I smash things up in my room, my TV. I have always been angry, and I don't know why.

In the prison system learning difficulties and mental health challenges tend to be categorised together (*see* chapter 3). This relationship is two-fold as many prisoners may experience mental health challenges in addition to their diagnosed learning difficulties. For example, Ryan shared that after his incarceration, he became depressed and was being treated by the NHS counsellors on-site at the prison. It is important to note that depression is the most abundant mental health issue amongst prisoners (Carnie et al. 2017). Another participant, Gary, was the only participant who self-identified as dealing with mental health challenges before entering the prison. He admits that *'school was all right,'* he attended a residential school where the classes were one-to-one. Gary acknowledged that he has a bad temper, and this substantially impacted his education at the residential school.

I was in a group of about five boys, the groups were good, and they were fun. The teacher made it enjoyable, and it was a good school. I wish I'd never cocked it up. (Gary)

His medical diagnosis was unclear from our interview, but Gary noted that he has a history of *'ripping up things and smashing my room, I've got a vile temper.'* The experiences of Ryan, Fred, and Gary are not unique in the criminal justice system. Commonly, young people suffering these same challenges may be more prone to leave school behind, resulting in low levels of educational attainment, further marginalisation, and high levels of unemployment (*see* chapter 3).

The perception of education for participants in this study was quite mixed overall. For some participants, learning in large classrooms was a challenge, or perhaps the method of teaching was not a good fit. As this data comes from the learner, it has been interpreted, and the experience may have become distorted over time, leading them to a reinforced belief that education is negative. Further analysis of prior negative experiences with education is made more difficult by time, as they have rejected education for so long, perpetuating the fear and anxiety which come along with a new learning experience. The learners who already had a positive perception of learning will perhaps continue to enjoy education and influence others to

engage. The learners who may experience ongoing challenges with educational provision are those with learning difficulties, as they require a learning environment that can support their specific needs for learning. A problem that most participants discussed in our interviews is that of exclusion. These experiences of exclusion, in the participant's view, profoundly swayed their perceptions of education.

5.2.2   Exclusion

There is an abundance of existing research which suggests that prisoners are more likely to have been excluded from school (*see* chapter 3). This section aims to examine the effect of exclusions on the participant's perceptions and persistence with education. Discussion of exclusion and expulsion resulted in 14 of 16 participants acknowledging that they had been excluded or expelled from school before entering the criminal justice system. A common theme amongst the participants is violence which was typically the primary reason for their exclusion or expulsion. In sharing their experiences, many of the students felt they needed to maintain their '*face*' to manage or control the impression or perceptions of others, often leading to feelings of regret and rash decisions (Goffman 1959). Alex, who also described his previous experience with education as '*shite*,' noted that he was kicked out of school for fighting and just never returned. Clyde, Fred, and Steve were also excluded for violent behaviour.

> It was all right. When I first started, I was always getting suspended for fighting and then I started trying to get exams and to get a job and that. (Clyde)

> I was always suspended at school, so I didn't do much work. I left high school and went to a behavioural school. I managed to screw it up though and got kicked out eventually. (Fred)

> I was fighting a Polish guy and got excluded and charged with a hate crime. I wasn't fighting him because he was Polish. He kept annoying me and staring at me. He started it and was trying to get a rise out of me. It wasn't a hate crime. Nothing happened to him. That is when I left school. (Steve)

School exclusions for the participants in this study were a turning point. They may have already had a dislike or negative perception of education but being excluded pushed several of them to

move away from school. While some students found alternatives, several continue to reject school and struggle to embrace learning in prison. The experience of being excluded seem to be impactful for the participants as several confess that they wish they could start their education over. A few participants suggested that fighting and antisocial behaviours were just the beginning of their descent into criminality and being excluded provided more opportunities for them to cause trouble. This data proposes that there may be a link between exclusion and future behaviours and actions. The data reflects that a significant number of the participants were excluded for fighting or verbal abuse towards an authority figure in school. As will be evidenced in chapter 6, the introduction of power and control in prison has led to a shift in self-perception as well as that of the learning environment.

5.2.3   Knowledge and learning

Knowledge can be expressed as skills, facts, and information acquired through experience or education. The ability to improve knowledge and learn from experiences is essential to the profile of the learners in this study. This section examines the data as it relates to learner achievement and The Scottish Prison Service provides minimal data on the literacy levels of the incarcerated, thus compounding efforts to identify literacy levels in Scottish prisons better (*see* chapter 1-2). UNESCO defines literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute information using a variety of materials in differing contexts. Literacy is more than reading and numeracy, but challenges with literacy for the participants in this study have had a role in shaping their perceptions of education.

Two participants disclosed significant difficulty with literacy. Gary admitted before our first interview that he did not know how to read or write. He did note that he is good at math and problem-solving, as well as a champion chess player, this implies that he has literacy in two of the five core skill areas as outlined by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. Kyle also disclosed that he struggles with reading and comprehension. He became quite agitated in our final interview when I began asking him reflective questions. When asking him how he would describe himself, he stated, *'I don't know. I don't like this kind of questions. I really don't like to talk about myself. I really don't know'* and his whole demeanour changed for the remainder of the interview.

The following table (8) provides data collected from the educational provider at HMYOI Polmont, which outlines the educational attainment of the participants as it relates to English and math. The table reflects that five participants achieved an N3 in English and maths, whereas three participants earned an N4. The bottom of the table shows four participants who passed both subject areas with an N3/N4. The final participant listed is Kyle, the data reinforces that his strength is math, as he has yet to complete his English qualification. There are three further participants not listed on this table (Steve, Gary, and Scott); they have yet to achieve a qualification in either subject area.

Table (8) Participant English and math literacy levels (SCQF)

Participant	N3	N4
Chuck	English and Maths	
Alex	English and Maths	
Fred	English and Maths	
Clyde	English and Maths	
Sean	English and Maths	
Gavin		English and Maths
Ryan		English and Maths
Kevin		English and Maths
Dennis	English	Math
Innes	Math	English
Chris	Math	English
Danny	Math	English
Kyle	Math	

An interesting contradiction to existing research related to prisoner education levels is revealed in our interviews. Most young men in this study have attended or want to attend college. Many of them did have negative, or at the very least, neutral experiences with education before their incarceration, but the fact that many of the participants were already thinking about further education was a positive sign that does not necessarily align with the literature. It is reasonable to suggest that the positive experiences of learning and the constructive relationships students have built with their tutors have encouraged them to progress further in education. An additional possibility is the creation of positive student identity, a fortunate side-effect of the favourable student experience. A benefit of prisoner education is social inclusion and promotion of positive social roles, allowing students an opportunity to shed antisocial behaviours (Vacca 2004). The data related to social identity may indicate that participation in

education could encourage growth, while also contributing to impact on the self (*see* Biesta 2010; Dewey 2004) and potentially transformative learning (*see* Mezirow 1990; Illeris 2013). Western et al. (2001) also asserts that a positive student identity may also combat the stigma of prison. Many student-prisoners understand the harsh reality of the job market. Their ability to obtain work will be dependent on additional skills and qualifications, as their prospects may be significantly reduced due to a criminal record (Karpowitz, Kenner, and Initiative 1995; Western et al. 2001).

Liam, Chris, Ryan, Innes, and Clyde all noted that they were enrolled in or completed a college-level program before their incarceration. Whereas, Dennis, Steve, Kevin, Chuck, and Scott are ready to begin a program while in prison or upon release.

> I gave up on education for a while. I didn't like school, but I didn't feel confident in myself. I was out in the streets at a young age. I took a Highers math test and did really well, and that really helped me feel confident about pursuing education. (Chuck)

> When you are doing education, you think about the future. What you want to do. If you are not thinking about education, you feel like you are doing something, moving forward. It's going to benefit me in the future. I think I knew that I wasn't going to get in trouble and act better in education. I know the difference between right and wrong. I can think clearer now. (Scott)

In general, the experiences of the participants with education before their incarceration was complicated. Several of the participants enjoyed school but felt lost, which impacted their behaviour and resulted in exclusion or expulsion. The overall perception of education by the participants eludes to the importance of learning new skills and the role of this new knowledge in their future. While many of the participants had a self-professed negative experience with school, they still appreciate learning, which may have aided their motivation to engage in prisoner education. The importance of discussing literacy in prisons is essential to research related to prisoner education. As only two of the sixteen participants may be considered as having low literacy, the data shows that a much larger majority of young men in custody are below level in primary subjects. The sample selected for this study were identified in part by the

teaching staff (*see* chapter 4), resulting in a potentially skewed sample concerning literacy, as many young men with low literacy may not choose to engage in voluntary education.

5.3   Conclusion

This chapter has provided data that begins to develop a narrative for the participants in this study with the intent of exploring how individual biography has impacted their choice to participate in prisoner education. The learner's biography began by exploring the background of participants including analysis of their familial relationships, the impact of bereavement and trauma, patterns of disadvantage, and the role of parenthood in the lives of the participants. The second theme, a history of learning, explored the participant's path through public education and examined their perceptions of learning. The second theme also considered the role of knowledge and learning difficulties as well as exclusion in creating a negative association with learning. The combination of past biography and negative learning experiences has resulted in a variety of outcomes for participants in this study, with the majority choosing to pursue education within the institution perhaps as a means of self-improvement, or as will be discussed in chapter 7, individual maturity. The next chapter begins to explore *learning in custody* by presenting data from student and staff interviews to explore the learning environment as a means of understanding what the experiences of learning at HMYOI Polmont are.

Chapter 6:   Learning in custody

Prisoner education research has shown that engagement with education while in prison can impact individual development and may have the potential to transform a person (*see* chapter 2). This chapter explores the data related to learning within the total institution to understand what the participants' experiences and perceptions of learning and education at HMYOI Polmont are. This research question will be answered from the data collected through in-person interviews with prisoners and staff, observation, and educational documents provided by the administration were used as part of thematic analysis. An exploration of the data resulted in one overarching theme, *the prisoner learning community*. This data was further organised into sub-themes related to the learner's environment and experience. The sub-themes include *qualifications, core skills learning, vocational education, peer mentoring, beyond the classroom, and purposeful activity.* These themes emerged from the data as essential to understanding the prisoners experience with education (both formal and informal) while in custody. In addition to providing an overview of the different types of provision on offer for prisoners at Polmont. These themes offer context for understanding if engaging in prisoner education has altered the student's perception of learning, develops an awareness for why prisoners engage in education and examine the breadth of opportunities available across the institution.

6.1   The prisoner learning community

This chapter provides a framework for understanding participant experiences with education, ambitions for the future, and evaluation of the learning opportunities and an environment open to all learners within the institution. The prisoner learning community provides an abstract of the mental constructs of space and time within the institution (*see* chapter 3) from the researcher perspective, while the sub-themes within this chapter explore individual narratives of learning in custody. Many student prisoners describe prisoner education as an '*escape*' or a place to act '*normal'* (Goffman 1959; Illeris 2013; Knowles 1980, 1984). A prisoner learning space is an environment which may encourage meeting others and perhaps allows the student to forget their situation for a time and be themselves (Goffman 1959). However, the suggestion that prisoner education is somehow an escape from prison *is* meaningful, as the learning centre is centrally located within the prison and run by prison officers. There is no

separation. While there is no altered space, perhaps the learning community itself offers an altered reality to students.

As the central hub for learning at the prison, the Learning Centre buildings adhere to a strict prisoner movement regime. I was asked to attend my visits in the morning as prisoners are moved from their halls at a set time. There is a daily schedule for each person, and they are moved at specific times each day. For the young men in education, they arrive in Learning Centre 1 in the morning, depart for lunch at around midday, and return from lunch at in the early afternoon until classes end. Their classes are scheduled into established time slots as well as any other activities in which they engage. Once prisoners are being moved, only officers are allowed out on the walkways until the movement is complete. Learning Centre classes are small, for safety they are restricted to a maximum of 10 students per class. Courses regularly on offer include: ICT, core skills (literacy, communications, working with others, numeracy, problem-solving), higher communications, acting, guitar, art, modern studies, media studies, geography, ESOL, budgeting, driving theory, and a variety of e-learning or distance courses (Open University). On the ground level of the building is where the work sheds or vocational classes are held, some of the courses on offer are painting, joinery, plumbing, hairdressing, forklift training, bricklaying, and the Paws for Progress program.

Additionally, there is a bike shed, IT skills course, and a prison radio station. My first memory of the learning centre buildings at Polmont is the environment, more so the visual component to learning in this community,

> The Learning Centre is bright, cheerful and relaxed. The walls are white with coloured wall prints of the hills of Scotland at one end. The colours are subdued and reflect the scenery in a body of water. It is reminiscent of any morning view of the hills of Scotland. At the opposite end of the room, there's a wall print of wheat in a field, it is still green so not yet matured, but growing (my analogy, but I think that this helps to describe maybe the status of the young people engaging in education). The room has high ceilings, with half being windows which are covered by grated metal and alarms. They let in the light while still showing that they can stop a person from exiting via this route. The furniture in the central area is bright blue, grey, and green there are big comfortable sectional couches at one end and short tables with cushioned chairs at the other.

In the classrooms, there are wood tables large enough for groups to sit around, the chairs are bright orange and comfortable. Each classroom has windows which span the length of the room. There is one computer in a couple of classes and a wall of computers in the ICT room. There is no access to the internet for young men in this course or anywhere in prison. The rest of the floor is a series of glass-walled rooms which function as offices, group classes, and meeting spaces. The exception is the youth workspace which has a pool table, table tennis and several Xbox's for young men to play. There is also an identified faith space that is used for a variety of purposes by young people able to engage in insightful conversation around all types of religious and nonreligious topics. (Field notes, 2016)

The environment and feel of the learning centre seem to be important for encouraging prisoners to engage in learning. However, the staff from the contracted learning partner Fife College, as well as Barnardo's, who offer youth work projects, attempt to engage all the young men at Polmont in promoting learning. The youth work program has increased visibility into the halls where the prisoners live and seek to recruit young men through meeting them where they are at, instead of waiting on them to visit the learning centre. During my fieldwork, Fife College increased the number of courses offered out with the learning centre, (i.e. in the residential halls), increasing student numbers. With this increase in participation, there is still a significant proportion of the population that is not involved in any educational provision, which is an ongoing challenge for the staff and administration of the prison (*see* chapter 1).

6.1.1 Qualifications

Secondary data compiled by the educational provider at Polmont provides the educational qualifications of the participants in this study. A logical outcome of engaging in educational provision within the institution is the attainment of skills. Analysing the participant's qualifications before and during their tenure in custody provides insight into their overall experience of education and learning within the total institution as the data provides a baseline for understanding if the participants are progressing academically. The Scottish Curriculum for Excellence guides the educational provision at HMYOI Polmont. The data in the table (9) below reflects the participant's qualifications earned before custody, and qualifications gained in custody at Polmont, as well as any college or vocational qualifications they have earned. The

table concludes with future aims. This data was compiled from in-person interviews with the participants. The table is broken down by the SCQF level, and the number of qualifications of each type is indicated for each participant. The table also identifies the participants who have completed their basic literacy courses (English and Maths). The data related to earned qualifications are created from secondary data provided by the educational provider and may reflect some gaps in education or qualifications obtained by the participants.

Table (9) reflects that most of the participants have earned a significant number of SCQF level 4 qualifications. This indicates a general or standard grade awarded with most also achieving an SCQF level 4 in English and math. National 4 courses are designed to develop skills and knowledge in a specific subject area as well as skills for learning, life, and work. A national 4 course is allocated 24 SCQF credit points, with each unit allocated 6 SCQF points. SCQF credit is guided by notional learning hours, with 1 credit equalling 10 hours. The majority of participants have achieved between 9-12 credits, which articulates to 90-120 hours. Achieving a National 4 shows that a learner has demonstrated specific knowledge and skills for a subject. Several participants show a progression to Highers or university-level coursework.

An example is Innes. He earned 41 credits at SCQF level 4 and 18 credits at SCQF level 5 before entering Polmont. These qualifications were obtained while he was held in a secure unit, since arriving at Polmont, Innes has gained entry to Open University and is pursuing a first degree. Dennis is working on a course in mechanical engineering at the City of Glasgow College, this course is at an intermediate level 1 and 2 and will result in a Scottish Vocational Qualification which will be earned before his release from Polmont. Conversely, Clyde has earned 6 credits at SCQF level 3 and 1 credit at Level 4, but he has obtained a vocational qualification in mechanics. Also, Alex states that he would like to begin a course with the Open University, as he currently has mostly level 3 qualifications, there will be a long path to reach this goal.

The educational pathways for participants in this study are diverse, with many interested in pursuing college or University while in prison or upon release and others are interested in pursuing apprenticeships or self-employment. Based on the data outlined in the table, there are a few participants who are progressing in their educational journey. However, others seem to be sampling courses without a specific end goal in mind. The future aims section of this table is included not as documented qualifications, but as the individual goals of the participants. It is

important to include this type of data as it reflects the ambitions and interests of those engaging in educational provision and perhaps eludes to their motivation for pursuing specific courses. Many participants are aiming for a vocational pathway such as an apprenticeship, making the diversity of vocational courses on offer within the institution of importance. The breakdown of available hours related to all educational provision is discussed in more depth in the purposeful activity section of this chapter.

Table (9) Participant qualifications, academic attainment, in-progress courses, future aims

Name	Education	SCQF 2	SCQF 3/ N3	SCQF 4/ N4	SCQF 5/ N5	SCQF 6/ N6	In Progress courses
Sean	Pre-Polmont	0	8	3	1	0	
	Polmont	0	0	0	0	0	ICT
Dennis	Pre-Polmont	0	3	17	5	0	
	Polmont	0	0	3	1	0	Enrolled at Glasgow City College in Mechanical Engineering
Chris	Pre-Polmont	0	4	22	11	0	
	Polmont	0	0	1	0	0	Life Skills
Innes	Pre-Polmont	0	12	41	18	0	
	Polmont	0	0	2	2	0	Module E112 Open University First degree in Fitness Training
Kyle	Pre-Polmont	0	4	18	2	0	
	Polmont	0	5	3	0	0	National Four Maths
Chuck	Pre-Polmont	0	11	3	0	0	
	Polmont	0	0	3	0	0	National Four Maths
Fred	Pre-Polmont	1	6	2	0	0	
	Polmont	0	0	0	0	0	ICT
Steve	Pre-Polmont	0	1	7	0	0	
	Polmont	0	0	1	0	0	
Ryan	Pre-Polmont	0	1	14	4	0	
	Polmont	0	0	1	2	0	Media/Radio Station programming
Alex	Pre-Polmont	0	5	1	0	0	
	Polmont	0	0	0	0	0	
Kevin	Pre-Polmont	0	2	9	2	0	
	Polmont	0	0	2	0	0	Higher Communications

Gary	Pre-Polmont	0	3	0	0	0	
	Polmont	0	0	0	0	0	Numeracy 1
Danny	Pre-Polmont	0	5	28	2	0	
	Polmont	0	1	2	0	0	National Four Maths
Scott	Pre-Polmont	0	2	4	2	0	
	Polmont	0	1	3	0	0	
Gavin	Pre-Polmont	0	0	7	16	0	
	Polmont	0	0	1	0	0	
Clyde	Pre-Polmont	0	6	1	0	0	
	Polmont	0	0	0	0	0	ICT

6.1.2   Core skills learning

Tutors from Fife College facilitate the core subject courses at Polmont. Most participants in this study have engaged in at least one core skills or subject area while in custody. Core skills are embedded components within national courses, whereas core subjects such as English and mathematics are courses within the national SCQF framework. The SQA defines core skills as 'skills most needed in the workplace' (sqa.org.uk). This section provides an analysis of data collected from tutors to investigate their approach to student support, engagement, and perceptions of qualifications within the total institution (*see* chapter 3). Whereas data collected from prisoners explores perceptions of the learning environment within the institution.

Three tutors from Fife College agreed to participate in this study. Tutor3 spoke about her approach to student engagement in classroom activities. She explains that students are very timid and need encouragement, '*we just sit and have a very general chat just to engage them and just to let them get to see what I'm about and just to make them feel comfortable*.' Tutor3 further suggests that developing a rapport with students increases engagement, which in turn builds self-confidence and motivation to keep pursuing learning opportunities,

> For many boys, just being in a classroom is quite traumatic, and very few of them have anything positive to say about school. I get to know them on their level, and then I chat to them about math, 'How's your math?' and just easing into it and just starting. Building their confidence, because that is the main thing with a lot of them. 'Where are you from?' and the next time I see them, 'Oh did your brother come up for that visit?'

and if you can get them through their first significant piece of work or qualification, they become more self-motivated and they want to do the next thing. (Tutor3)

The quote below from Tutor1 encompasses many of the sentiments that the student participants have shared about their experiences with education. The participants indicate that they have been inspired by learning and feel that it has made a positive impact on their lives. An aim for this study is to understand the experiences of students within the total institution and the effect of the establishment on their learning. This quote establishes that education or knowledge, in general, is vital to the future of student-prisoners.

> When some of them learn for the first time, their minds are blown. Young people here love the work parties, and they don't want to go to college, they have no money and want a job. 100% of the boys I tutor wish they had stayed in school. They all say, I wished I hadn't messed up at school and I wouldn't be here. The fact that they are here (participating in education) inspires them; they know they are on the right track again. In an intellectual or social sense, this is how rehabilitation works well in prisoner education. (Tutor1)

The student perception of prior learning was previously established as reasonably unfavourable. When asking students if they now have a renewed sense of learning, most reacted positively. Asserting that prisoner education was a turning point for them personally.

> You get a lot better education in Polmont than in most schools. There are fewer people in the classes. You can get work done without folk getting in the way; it's easier to finish and move on to other courses too. (Dennis)

> Aye, 100%. They make it easy to understand and learn. They make it enjoyable, and it applies to real-life situations. They have so many different courses and offerings. They have a forklift license course, and I plan to do that before I get out. You ask them anything, and they do whatever they can to help you and support you. (Chris)

> I refuse to be part of the prison culture and let them control me. This education is part of me, rebelling against that. I try to be different. I want to be different. (Innes)

I am more interested in maths and art, but there is a lot to help you get inspired and get qualifications. I learn and don't worry about the result. I know that it is going to make me a better person. The tutor's here make you feel like you are part of the course; it doesn't feel like a prison. It is relaxed, and people are so helpful. (Chuck)

Another point of consensus was the student-prisoner opinion of their tutors. At the time, this question was asked 12 of the 16 participants were participating in some core skills-based course at Polmont. All 12 students stated that they have a great relationship with their tutor. They felt that they were supported in the classroom, and education was not forced on them, but instead pursuing learning was a personal choice. The results of these conversations highlight the importance of students developing self-confidence and defining accomplishments as potentially crucial to post-incarceration success (*see* chapter 2).

Additionally, these findings suggest that the relationship that has developed between the prisoners and their tutors may have a role in shaping their identity as students. Research related to prisoner education and identity suggests the importance of activities in developing an identity within the total institution. Therefore, an activity such as education may allow for the development of alternative identities (*see* chapter 2). These are interesting revelations as Goffman (1959) emphasises that the process of becoming imprisoned, the removal of rights, belongings, and choice are incredibly impactful on a person. These interviews may reflect the views of a sample who were already feeling confined by life or by past decisions.

I have a great relationship with my tutor. She knows how to challenge me, my strengths and weaknesses, and when I am lazy. (Innes)

I have had most of them. They are all great and helpful. They adapt the class to the ways we all learn. (Ryan)

My reflection on these conversations was recorded in my field diary (November 2015),

This week, I met with a variety of young men both engaging in education and a few who are on the fence about it. For the most part, those people in education are doing it not out of boredom, but to genuinely learn and improve themselves. They are excited to take as many classes as they can and seem to have only positive things to say about

their tutors. Most of the young men I have interviewed this week did have a somewhat negative experience with school before coming to prison. However, several students rather enjoyed it, but life made it difficult for them to be successful. Many of the young people stated that they were excluded from school; some indicated that they were eventually expelled or didn't return. I think many of them now see the educational environment here at Polmont as a second chance to learn and start over, perhaps in some small way. The learning environment was consistently described as welcoming and supportive. Each learner seems to share the notion that they can learn at their own pace and that the tutors are there to support their growth and knowledge development.

Core skills learning is just one pathway for learners at Polmont, but all areas of education require a level of literacy in English and mathematics. Therefore, core subjects are an essential aspect of prisoner education at this institution. The assertion by participants that tutors make learning enjoyable, they teach to the learner, not the test, are important as these students are affirming that education in prison is a more positive learning experience than their previous learning communities.

6.1.3   Vocational education

Education focused on career-related outcomes is central to prisoner education at HMYOI Polmont. Many of the participants in this study advised that they would be interested in working in the trades industry upon release. This section on vocational education aims to further consider the participants' experience of learning and education through understanding the range of possible vocations that prisoners can earn qualifications while at Polmont. The data explores vocational training within the institution and includes interviews with SPS staff. These interviews provide context and details of the occupational skills that prisoners may develop through the completion of a vocational qualification or course at Polmont. A goal of the Learning, Skills, and Employability scheme for Scottish prisons (2016) is to provide prisoners with the skills and qualifications needed to make a positive contribution to society through providing labour market-relevant, high-quality learning, skills and employability education and training in prisons (p. 1). In addition to joinery and painting, there are also different opportunities to engage in vocational jobs throughout the prison or join a work crew. Each of these roles is an opportunity to gain skills and informal learning experience.

Table (9) presented above reflects the importance and interest levels of prisoners in pursuing a vocation. One of the most popular vocational programs at Polmont is joinery. Many of the participants in this study suggested that they would like to pursue an apprenticeship upon release and believe that gaining qualifications for vocational courses such as joinery and painting will help them to earn a placement. The joinery programme, for example, is part of an employability scheme. The course is set up for fourteen weeks, and the students work in teams to build a project within the institution alongside tutors from Fife College who support the English and mathematics skills development aspect of the course. Fife College work to help contextualise learning around the building site, helping the students to put their skills to work in a practical sense. An interview and subsequent classroom observation with the joinery instructor/officer (JT1) provides a framework for the program. JT1 discusses the importance of prisoners being in the workshop, which replicates a building site. This is highlighted as a primary difference to core skills learning as many prisoners may feel uncomfortable in a classroom environment. JT1 further discusses the need for self-evaluation and communication skills as imperative to be a capable employee in any vocation.

> For a lot of them, they have never gotten family support where someone at home would reaffirm their education, many have never had that. It doesn't make them feel silly. They are at a bench in here, so we get at their learning in other ways, but it doesn't feel like it. The communication stuff is a big focus for us and getting them to self-evaluate, see their weaknesses. (JT1)

JT1's contribution to this study offers insight into the relationships and dynamics of the learning environment for prisoners in vocational education. The purpose of vocational education is two-fold, to develop vocation related skills, but more importantly, to promote informal skills development in the young men they train. The administration at Polmont suggests that that institution is in a good position when it comes to their vocational offerings,

> Polmont is in an excellent position to tend to labour market facing qualifications based issues, like joinery and in many respects, we are better placed than the school system to respond to new strategic approaches like developing the young workforce and the apprenticeship drive. (Admin2)

As the administration helms a variety of vocational initiatives, several programmes may be considered alternative education. These programmes include *Paws for Progress* and youth work coordinated by Barnardo's. These programs provide a different type of learning environment and expect learners to develop a different skill set. The purpose of the *Paws* program is to provide a purposeful animal-assisted intervention for prisoners, which may help in developing skills such as teamwork, behaviour, and employability skills. The outcomes are leading to the adoption of a well-trained dog and improved social skills for participants. The qualifications for this course are Level 3 communications and numeracy, Level 4 ICT and personal development; the session lasts 8-weeks. I was invited to attend the *Paws* class to see what is expected of the participants on this program,

> I am told by the Paws trainers that there are typically 7 new handlers every 8 weeks. They have begun to work with many new animal organisations across the UK, not just the RSPCA. Today they are not working with the dogs (unfortunately) but are designing marketing materials for their dogs to be adopted. I observe the class back upstairs in Activities 1. There are just four young men in the class today, and this part of the course is facilitated by Tutor2, one of the instructors with Fife. Tutor2 helps young men to create and design their promotional materials. The first obstacle is everyone remembering their login details for the computers. (Field Diary, March 2016)

Also considered to be an alternative to education, the youth work program in place at HMYOI Polmont provides prisoners with a variety of projects in which they can engage and learn formal and informal skills. The vision for youth work is to offer a wide range of activities and provision that appeal to the populous at Polmont. Barnardo's works with volunteers within the prison on project-based initiatives to encourage the development of a variety of professional and social skills. The youth work initiatives may be considered relevant to learning for the participants in this study as Barn1 describes that they begin to grow confidence, develop a work ethic, and they can discover their strengths and weaknesses to foster their skill set. Barn1 provides context to the ethos of the programming options at Polmont,

> The central ethos in youth work is working where the young person is. We try to have an equal relationship and involve them as partners in the learning process. The main factor in youth work is the relationship we develop with the young men. Social skills are essential, there is no expectation on the young person, so they can just be themselves in this environment. We get a lot of criticism for that from other areas because people

don't see that as learning, they say it's not educational because it's not in the formal sense of the word. Our focus is on building relationships with the men and then engaging them in learning to find out their interests. The difference between youth work and other learning is that the men are in control of their knowledge. (Barn1)

The youth work program speaks to the human component of learning within the institution. Provisions like Barnardo's and *Paws for Progress* provide an opportunity for engagement and learning that is not recognised as core skills per se but is still necessary for life skills and employability. The skills and traits that may be learned through these types of programmes can aid in life post-incarceration and may further challenge individuals not engaging in activities within the institution to participate and become active citizens in their community. It also provides an opportunity for young men who may have had a negative experience with education to participate in an activity that has the potential to change their opinion of learning. There has been considerable research on alternative education programmes in prison, with researchers suggesting that traditional approaches to education may not be effective in engaging prisoners. The Barnardo's youth work program and *Paws for Progress* (to some extent) employ a tactic that may encourage young men to engage in projects or training by crafting the projects to meet their specific needs.

6.1.4   Peer mentoring (PMP)

The sample of participants selected for this study includes ten young men who are qualified peer mentors. The PMP is designed to develop communication and leadership skills in participants, to become a more trusted and reliable source for peers within the institution. The program also strives to enhance partnerships between prisoners and staff (Scottish Prison Service 2014). The PMP program is designed as part of the educational provision and therefore is an aspect of the learning and educational experience for participants in this study. This section aims to explore the role of a peer mentor and establish what impacts, if any, this role may have on participants. Research on peer mentoring type programs has shown that prisoners may benefit from the opportunity to work with others within the facility, developing self-confidence, positive self-image, and a sense of accomplishment. Furthermore, peer support or mentoring programs may be a valuable resource for encouraging citizenship roles within the prison. A more in-depth discussion of the role of citizenship is presented in chapter 7*, The Total Institution.*

A report by Fletcher and Batty (2012) notes that there has been very little research on programs related to peer support, but the possible benefits of programs such as this include, cost-effectiveness, identity role-models, peers trust peers over authority, and it builds social capital within the institution. The peer mentoring programme at Polmont is a 12-week course, with typically one class session per week. The participants learn a variety of different skills such as communication and empathy, with an emphasis on the expectations of the role of a peer mentor and the pertinent qualities needed for the role. At the end of the course, peer mentors are placed in a variety of positions around the institution to determine where they will be most successful based on their skill set and interests. PMP1 stated that the peer mentoring program is based on an ethos that '*boys learn better from other boys.*'

There seems to be an indication that the role of a mentor may be impactful for some participants. For instance, Kevin states that he now leads communication talks about all kinds of topics such as domestic abuse, he also helped to develop a human rights group within the prison.

> Before I dunnae any of these things, I was not very confident in my speaking skills, but now I feel very comfortable speaking to others, I want to keep learning and doing more. (Kevin)

> I want them to see that I am somebody they can talk to. I can tell people I was a wee guy and didn't know what I was doing. I wasn't experienced in the world. I didn't know right from wrong at the time. I have learned more now. (Scott)

As part of the data collection process, observation of the peer mentoring class provided an opportunity to witness the peer mentor's ability to organise and facilitate group activities.

> The purpose of the activity was to show the planning and teamwork aspect of creating an activity, rather than focusing on the activity itself. They worked in groups of 2 or 3 to coordinate the activity and facilitate the activity by providing clear instructions and leadership. (Field Diary, November 2015)

This activity included ten study participants and provided insight into the learning experiences of the participants. The class was facilitated entirely by the peer mentors thus allowing them

not only to practise the skills expected (teamwork, planning, leadership, communication) but also gave the mentors a chance to build rapport with the students they were leading, while also learning from them. The peer mentors facilitating the activity learned what did and did not work with the activity they designed and allowed the feedback of the group participants to inform the progression of the activity, potentially resulting in a refined outcome. Skills learned from this type of role may have implications for how participants work with others in the future. This peer mentoring class is an example of self-directed learning, whereby students develop a toolkit of skills and experiences from social interactions (*see* Knowles 1980, 1984).

The prison suggests that the peer mentoring programme is aimed at promoting positivity and support to the young men at Polmont. While this is educational provision, there is a degree of power involved with this programme as the participants are placed in leadership roles and provide mentorship to others within the institution. This could be perceived by Goffman (1961) as a form of indoctrination as the mentors have accepted their fate and are rewarded with '*power*' over others, suggesting acceptance of institutional identity. Peer mentoring may also be symbolic as the institution aims to create a community of people out with the rest of the world. These types of activities or programmes may be referred to by Goffman (1961) as removal activities. The total institution, '*can be described as a kind of dead sea in which little islands of vivid, encapturing activity appear. They are voluntary, unserious pursuits, designed to kill time mercifully*.' (Goffman 1961: 66) These activities may further contribute to the front-stage persona of the individual, enhancing characteristics, but may also be used by the institution to highlight prisoner management or rehabilitation goals. There may be a risk of further stigmatisation of prisoners in a peer mentoring role as they are assuming an identity of the institution, thus potentially encouraging discrimination (in the form of positive stigmatisation) from prisoners within the institution who may not choose to engage in institutionally focused voluntary activities (*see* chapter 1-2; Illeris 2013).

6.1.5   Beyond the classroom

The total institution controls all aspects of the prisoner's life. Therefore, learning is present throughout the prison, not just within the walls of a classroom or workshop. This section provides data which explores the meaning of learning for the participants, leading to a deeper understanding of their experiences with learning and education at Polmont. This process of exploration allowed the participants to define terms in their own words and share their

personal experiences of learning while incarcerated. This data provides context for understanding how the participants perceive their learning environment of the prison more broadly. The term '*learning*' was defined by some participants as something new that you didn't know; doing something new; experience; learning from your mistakes; opportunities; to practice at something and get better; to spread your knowledge; something I never knew before. Two additional definitions of learning stood out amongst the participants as they align with Jarvis (1987) and Knowles (1980, 1984) perspectives on learning (*see* chapter 2).

> Taking in everything, advancing, getting better, teaching yourself. (Scott)

> To find out something that you never knew or the true meaning of something that you thought you knew. People know things, but they don't know. (Innes)

Defining learning led them to be at the point of being able to discuss what they have learned from their experience in the criminal justice system. This was one area where every participant had a consensus. They all felt the system was unfair, not because they were convicted, but because they often saw others being sentenced differently for the same crimes. Some of the participants spoke about learning about understanding their crimes and the implications of punishment.

> It's a bit odd. Some people get long sentences for petty crimes and others who get short sentences for terrible crimes. My conviction is 19 years; one of my friends who was also involved only got a year. I think it is unfair. I changed my lawyer like three or four times, and I had to pay for a lawyer because I wanted to have a better defence. (Clyde)

They always win. You cannae beat the system. The system is not out to get you. If you play along, it is here to help you. The opportunities you get here are unreal. It is a joke [the children's hearing system]. They don't do anything to you. The whole time I was there, I was on a panel at least 15 times in a year in a half and only once they put me in a secure unit. If you look at the charges, it was severe, and they just never did anything. They just kept putting me back on a community sentence and never did anything, never sentenced me. Probably my last sentence, I was being bounced back and forth between the children's system and courts because of my age, I was 14 almost 15 at the time. I

was 16 by the time I got sentenced. I had to go to court like 4 and 5 times a week. (Ryan)

While the personal experiences of individuals in the criminal justice system will vary, it is essential to acknowledge that as a young person, Innes felt overwhelmed, confused, and unsure how his charges would work out.

I learned about my conviction. I didn't understand the repercussions of my crimes; I was completely new to this. My experience in the courts was horrible. I didn't know what was going on or what was happening. I was just so uneducated. Even now, it is so confusing. I didn't know what all these words meant or what the deal was. All I was saying is that I just wanted to go home. It all happens so fast, there are all these people talking about you, and then you are in jail. (Innes)

Learning is not just a process of following rules, but rather a collection of meanings and understandings constructed through social interaction. Goffman's (1974) frame analysis is a process of organising our experiences and structuring our perception of experiential events. Learning in this way can develop skills and knowledge about the most unlikely of topics. As this section is exploring data related to the prisoner experience of learning and education within the institution, this includes analysis of all aspects of the prisoner experience. A few participants shared the memory of their first day of incarceration. This question was asked to the participants as several young men expressed how impactful this experience was for them. The participants were reflective and shared their state of mind, personal feelings, observations of the institution, and most importantly, what they learned from this experience. Most described feelings of shame, terror, frustration, anger, being nervous and scared, or numbness in response to prison.

The memory below is indicative of Goffman's (1961) mortification process (*see* chapter 3). Ryan was stripped of his personal belongings, issued his prison garb, and a number. This process further tears away at the self-esteem and identity of the prisoner, resulting in obedience. Ryan is also reflective of this experience, understanding that this process is the result of his actions; he speaks of the incredible loneliness that was precipitated by this moment. Sykes (1958) affirms that psychological *'pains of imprisonment'* are just as profound as physical

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maltreatment, with the 'destruction of the psyche no less fearful than bodily affliction' (p. 64). Power is also a component of this memory for Ryan. Crewe (2011) uses the term 'tightness' to describe the sense of power that prisoners experience as '*both firm and soft, oppressive yet also somehow light*' (p. 522). This term emphasises that the use of power operates near prisoners, but also anonymously. Power is all-encompassing in prison requiring full compliance of the body and mind (*see* chapter 3).

> I remember everything about it. I was terrified. To me, Polmont was always a scary story you heard from your mum and dad. My dad was here when it was Borstal; he would tell me about how people were getting stabbed and dying in their beds. He said the staff would persecute them as well, so I came in expecting the worst. Also, I was here all of five minutes and saw two guys fighting, and that took me back. I began to start thinking about my sentence, and I just sat and looked at myself. I had three pairs of boxers, three pairs of socks in my room and a pair of trainers and the jail clothes. I had nothing that belonged to me. I had no personal effects. I just sat there thinking I have fucked up haven't I. I just felt dead lonely. (Ryan)

Ryan presents a memory that seems to reflect his backstage area, sharing private details of his personal experience which would generally emerge from behind a metaphorical curtain, as a method of impression management (Goffman 1959). This personal narrative emphasises a depth of self-awareness, without concern for my impression of him. Ryan's memory suggests that to a point, he may feel that the stigma of prison is now a reflection of whom he has become, while also recognising that the experience of imprisonment has been a learning experience.

Innes' memory is quite descriptive. It is as if he is assessing the institution through each of these experiences as he determines the staff are kind, the food and facilities need improvement, but that he also has an opportunity. As a young person growing up in a secure unit, Innes would have experienced this environment of power and authority. His exposure to this type of environment has, to some extent, institutionalised his behaviours and perception of the prison. As a long-term prisoner, Innes will continue to experience the physical and psychological impairments of the prison system, but as Crewe (2011) states, '*while the pains of confinement can be reduced, pain is intrinsic to imprisonment, and it is much easier to alter its form than to*

eliminate it from the prison experience' (p. 524).

> I remember it like it was yesterday. I remember coming in, and I was talking with reception, they were nice to me and that. You hear stories about how you're just spoken to like you are nothing really, but it was nothing like that. I can remember what I brought with me. I brought stuff from the secure unit that I couldn't have in here, like crisps, crackers, and stuff. I can even remember that it was a Thursday. I was put in Iona 2; it is where people go to pass through. It isn't anything special. I went to my room. The room was dirty and smelled. The TV, when I turned it on the picture was horrendous, and I thought this isn't going to be good. Then there was a guy out cutting the grass, and the guys were all yelling at him out the windows, they were abusive to him. I can remember opening my lunch, and they were sausages, but they were just pink, I didn't even eat it. I had some soup, and that was it. I was asked if I wanted to go to the gym, it was good, and I spoke with some of the gym staff, whom I knew from the secure unit, they would take on extra shifts there for extra money, anyway I was talking away to them then they took me back and I was locked up for the rest of the day. I remember waiting two hours for a toilet roll. I buzzed and asked for a toilet roll, and they said they would bring it, but then 2 hours later. I also remember working out my chest and arms. (Innes)

Conversely, Dennis and Alex both admitted that they have no recollection of their first day or even week in prison as they were heavily intoxicated at admission. A couple of participants described the experience as okay, several new people who were already incarcerated at Polmont, and others just wanted to get on with their sentences. However, Gary loosely recalled his feelings,

> I was frustrated that I was back in jail again. I was in four times before. I felt comfortable being here. I'm more comfortable being here than at home. I'm used to this way of life. This is my second home. It has structure and routine. If I have nothing, I have chaos. (Gary)

Developing an understanding of what learning means to the participants in this study and the context of experiences which lead up to their incarceration are important to establishing the

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impact engaging in prisoner education may have on them. This section has shown that all spaces and all experiences within the prison are opportunities for learning.

6.1.6   Purposeful activity

In aligning with the Curriculum for Excellence, the curriculum at HMYOI Polmont is designed to promote a learner-centred and social practice approach for all educational opportunities (SPS Learning and Skills Strategy 2016). Table (10) below provides data which reflects the number of spaces on offer at Polmont for all purposeful activity, including all educational provision as of January 2016. The information indicates an increase of 69 spaces or additional 2068 activity hours from 2014. The activities which are more work-oriented such as catering, cleaners, and laundry are still expected to be carried out with specific learning outcomes. The prison has recently ended its tea packing programme as it was found not to merit any educational value for prisoners working in this area. Also, programs such as *Inclusion* are open only to select prisoners as this type of program is meant for young men who present as at risk (such as suicide, bullying, or social exclusion).

Table (10) Annual Activity Space at HMYOI Polmont

Activity	Spaces Annually	Total Hours
Bike Shed	2540	12935
Catering	5475	27882
Chaplaincy	1752	8922
Community Safety	1752	8922
Education (Fife College)	10950	5764
Employ and Enter	2032	8922
Forklift Training	876	4461
Gardens/Waste Management	5080	25870
Inclusion	438	2231
Induction (Links)	2540	12935
IT Skills	2190	11153
Laundry	2540	12935
Library	2190	11153
Life Skills	2190	11153
Media Centre	1752	8922
P.E. Department	6132	80503

Parenting	1752	8922
Paws for Progress	2032	10348
Peer Mentoring	1752	8922
Performing Arts	3504	17844
Programme Delivery	6096	19756
VT Bricklaying	2190	11153
VT Cleaners	4064	20696
VT Engineers	2540	12935
VT Hairdressing	2540	12935
VT Joiners	5080	25870
VT Painters	5080	25870
VT Plumbers	5080	25870
Youth work (Barnardo's)	9855	50188
Total spaces/hours per annum	101994	505972

An area included in the above table (10) which needs further exploration is inclusion. The purpose of the inclusion unit is to provide a space for all prisoners to feel safe and included. Many of the participants in this program have been identified by staff as at-risk or needing support. The inclusion unit aims to recruit these individuals and allow them equal opportunities to engage with others who may also feel socially excluded within the institution. Many of the young men in this program are new to the institution, suffer from literacy or mental health challenges, or are at risk of self-harming. Inclusion generally means to be included as part of a group or structure, which this Unit aims to provide through one to one engagement with staff and peers. The individuals recruited are free to attend weekly sessions and are encouraged to become involved in other purposeful activities as part of their daily routine.

> My first visit to Polmont, I spent most of the week with the Inclusion officer, participating in group sessions and speaking to the young men involved in this program. I note much of this experience in my field diary (November 2015).

The INCL2 officer has a unique role in that he is assigned to work with young men who seem to be struggling to adapt to their new life in prison. He works with young people with a variety of mental and social disorders as well as those who are unengaged. It does not matter if the young men he works with have been sentenced or are on remand, INCL2 works to help them integrate

and adapt. He provides them with resources and is a kind of voice for them to share their fears and concerns.

I was also part of the weekly inclusion class that INCL2 uses to discuss relevant topics with the young men in his group. Being part of this class as an outsider at the prison, I saw it as an opportunity for these young men to be themselves, to not place judgement, and to genuinely think about the topics being discussed. For some of these young men, this may be the first time they have been in an environment where they are the focus of learning. The students in the inclusion unit have used their 'backstage' area to construct personal impressions or illusions of themselves to present to their audience (*see* chapter 2) but are encouraged to share this persona to create a sense of community. Goffman (1959) does warn that in some cases, the actor(s) can become convinced by their performance, distorting their reality to become truth. This may be especially true for students in Inclusion as they are already socially excluded and are seeking ways to fit into the prison structure. For some of these young men, they are part of this unit because they may have behavioural difficulties (i.e. ADHD) or mental health challenges, which do not allow them equal opportunity to engage with others in their community. It could be suggested that these factors, which also include unpredictability and threat of harm, may be cause for other prisoners to stigmatise these young men and deem them incapable of being involved socially (Goffman 1963). From this perspective, the opportunity for social inclusion may be an opportunity to learn. Learning could include peer learning or constructing meaning from experiences. Learning in this environment may incorporate the development of social skills or enhance one's capacity for communication. The inclusion program can be a step process to helping prisoners, by encouraging engagement in all activities across the institution when the participant is ready. The following is from my field journal, where I recorded observation from the inclusion group.

> When I enter the room, the inclusion officer is attempting to discuss a topic with the young men, although most are not particularly interested. When I arrive, they want to hear all about America. We draw a map of the USA and see who can name different states. We also draw a UK map, but most of the young men did not know where places outside of Edinburgh and Glasgow were located. Very interesting that this is their home country, most from the Lanarkshire area, and yet they are still unsure of geography. Most admitted that they had never really left their hometowns. The class continued

with the guys playing Xbox and individuals going in to make personal calls to solicitors, family, and social workers in the privacy of the inclusion office. Many of the young men in the class admitted that they have anger issues, and some stated that they have ADHD. When the officer asked what they missed the most, the consensus was family, food, freedom. (Field Diary, November 2015)

6.2   Conclusion

This chapter has explored the experiences of the participants with learning in custody. The data provides a framework for understanding the experiences of learning and education at HMYOI Polmont, with the learners declaring a more positive perception of education after engaging in prisoner education. The participants continue to earn qualifications through a variety of courses and skills development opportunities. The students have engaged with formal, vocational, and informal learning opportunities which aim to meet the outcomes for the Curriculum for Excellence. Learning in prison goes beyond the traditional classroom or workspace, learning as shared by the participants is part of their daily lives in adapting to living within a total institution. The range of purposeful activities on offer may continue to increase so that more prisoners may engage in activities out with their daily routine, while also providing a space for the most vulnerable to belong. The next chapter, *the total institution*, provides context to understand the theoretical implications of the institution on the learning environment and analysis of the institution as a place of hope and transformation for prisoners.

Chapter 7:   The Total Institution

The focus of this chapter is on the role of the prison in administering educational provision. This data builds on the previous two chapters which established the importance of understanding the biography of prisoners (*see* chapter 5) and in the preceding chapter, students and staff provided data that explores the experiences of learning within the total institution (*see* chapter 6). The role of the institution is presented in the literature (*see* chapter 3) and examines concepts such as institutional power (Goffman 1963; Foucault 1977; Ugelvik 2014; Liebling 2011) and time-space (Crewe 2011; Jewkes 2013; Mincke and Lemonne 2014), with the understanding that the decay of time is a common theme amongst prisoners. This chapter interrogates the data to provide analysis for the remaining research questions related to institutional and environmental influences on learning, which also includes recognising opportunities for change, transformation, and growth present in the data. To answer these research questions, data collected through in-person interviews with prison administration, students and teaching staff were used as part of a thematic analysis which allowed the researcher to explore patterns across the data sets resulting in an understanding of how the institution and environment of prison may impact learning and considers the role of self-reflection in individual development.

An exploration of the interview data resulted in two overarching themes: *The purposes of the institution* and *Stories of self-reflection*. The data was further structured into sub-themes which organise the data into logical sections. *The purpose of the institution* has four sub-themes: *The education paradox, learning spaces, social structures and the prison learning environment, and labels and identity.* These themes emerged from the data as important to explore how the role of institutional power juxtaposes with institutional aims to provide a learning community. In defining a total institution, Goffman (1961) speaks to the mortifications endured by prisoners as the impact of these experiences on an individual are meant to be degrading and powerful (*see* chapter 3). However, the data eludes to an environment that seems to create community, engaging spaces, and supports identity development. The second overarching theme, *Stories of self-reflection*, has two sub-themes: *change, and growth.* These themes provide context for understanding how the participants perceive the impacts of the institution on the self, while also examining the data for broader connections and narratives related to individual change and growth.

7.1 The purpose of the institution

In examining the institutional and environmental factors that impact learning within the establishment, it is important to understand the role of this prison as a place of punishment <u>and</u> a place of learning. This section explores the data as it relates to institutional power and the administration's role in establishing an environment that promotes individual growth and still inflicts the pains of imprisonment. The purpose of personal officers (uniformed staff) in supporting prisoner development is examined as the depth and breadth of this role is critical to the institutional agenda. Next, observation of the learning spaces provides an opportunity to reflect on the relationships between students and tutors as well as consider the educational opportunities for meaning-making. Then, the social structure of the prison environment is analysed concerning its role in influencing prisoner capacity or agency and developing citizenship aims that align with Scottish education policy (*see* Priestley et al. 2015). The final topic examined in this section relates to labelling and identity. This analysis is aimed at understanding the administration's viewpoint of working with young men in custody and allows the participants to share their perceptions of the stigma associated with incarceration. The data in this section comes from interviews with the senior prison administration, personal officers, and student participants. Interviews with senior administration consisted of two high ranking individuals within the institution, thus narrowing the perspectives presented. The analysis of the data in this section aims to explore the institutional and environmental factors which impact learning at HMYOI Polmont, while also acknowledging that the influence of the institution has the potential to promote change and growth for individuals in custody.

7.1.1 The education paradox

The paradox which this section explores is that of the educated prisoner. This paradox suggests that education as it is understood in this thesis (Knowles 1980, 1984; Jarvis 1987; Mezirow 1990; Illeris 2013), is about potentially desirable identity transformation, while the understanding of prison (Goffman 1961) conceptualises the institution as a place where identity is under attack, mortified. Sykes (1958) and Goffman (1961) both speak of the impacts of incarceration, such as loss of liberty and autonomy and the decline of individual ego and self-worth. These are inherent to the nature of the total institution. Crewe (2011) discusses the unpredictable nature of power in prisons, causing prisoners significant insecurity and uncertainty. Prisons, Crewe suggests, are obstructing individual progress through a variety of barriers orchestrated by the institution (2011: 514). This correlates with Foucault's (1977) analysis that a prison is a place where power

is diffuse, decentralised, anonymous, and demanding without appearing coercive. In exploring this paradox, this section builds on data presented in *Learning in Custody* (*see* chapter 6) that highlights the learning experiences of the young men in this study. The data examined in this section explores the institutional and environmental factors that influence student experiences of learning by exploring how the institution structures time and meaning-making through the integration of purposeful activities. This research question is further studied by developing and understanding the role of the personal officer at Polmont, with an emphasis on examining how their role can alter prisoner's perceptions of learning. Additionally, the data provided by students in this section offers insight into their view of the institution as a place of education and punishment. The student's perceptions are significant as they also foreshadow a narrative of change and growth that supports the second research question in this chapter. The data examined comes from interviews with the administration, staff, and students and aims to unravel the paradox of education and power and discover the impact of the institution on the learning community, while also developing an understanding of the breadth of possibilities that may stimulate change and growth for prisoners.

An element of this paradox is understanding how prisoners experience time inside, in relation to meaningful or purposeful activity. It is understood in the literature related to the sociology of imprisonment that time is central to the prisoner's experience. Institutional confinement can transform how time is experienced, with prisoners feeling that time is wasted and not spent. Time can become suspended, impairing one's ability to connect time with the future (*see* chapter 3). This effect can be disorienting for prisoners, but also potentially beneficial as learning offers a productive opportunity for prisoners to voluntarily engage in activities, adhere to a daily schedule, and retain some degree of control when it comes to time management. The administration suggests that a '*change of culture'* is an aspiration for all prisoners and staff (Admin1). This reference to culture, Admin1 surmises is from a historical belief that prisoners are just existing and not developing. Admin1's role is focused on developing outcomes for the prison and assessing the needs of prisoners, but his role is only peripheral as he is using prescribed data (SPS key performance indicators) to measure outcomes and maybe excluding to some extent the human element. The institutional agenda that Admin1 describes below is aimed at supporting the educational goals of the establishment but seems to focus more broadly on keeping prisoners engaged in activities or potentially creating a routine.

My role allows me to look more externally to understand how we can develop our programs to engage young people. I take my cue from the *Vision for Young People in Custody*, which focuses on engagement, motivation, and encouragement. My role is to be sure that we have a range of activities broad enough for all the young men we must look after and suitable enough for them to go back into their community. We are trying to create an environment that is conducive to learning. We aim to get the men to go there, and when they arrive, it is our staff and the product which keeps them there. I have all sorts of roles which are attached to jobs around Polmont which are filled by young men. The vocational roles are all learning activities. It could just be that some of them are getting into a routine and going to a job. The life skills piece is vital as many young people are second or third generation kids from unemployed parents. They don't know any different; many have also grown up in care and have not had the discipline to look after themselves. (Admin1)

Separate from broader goals for education set forth by the Scottish Qualifications Framework and Curriculum for Excellence, it is important to understand if the establishment influences the educational experiences of prisoners through developing individual capacity and delivering opportunities for growth. It can be argued that people in custody enter the criminal justice system with a unique understanding of life. Providing an outlet for sharing their life experiences can be impactful and potentially transformative for individuals who have suffered severe deprivation. Traditionally, the role of the total institution is to scrape away the prisoner's sense of self through the effects of disciplinary processes, constant surveillance, categorisation, and normalisation which then begins to construct individuals as subjects and reproduces social order through regulating conduct and movement (*see* chapter 3).

Conversely, Admin1 notes that HMYOI Polmont is seeking opportunities to engage prisoners with an understanding that developing the capacity for thought is shaped by human interaction. These interactions can result in improved communication skills and increased socialisation amongst a population of young men that have been excluded from broader society. The impacts of reconstructing a personal backstory for people in prison may seem radical, but the impetus seems to come from a place of genuine care for individual development.

It is quite interesting what I find with our young men is when they are given a chance to be heard, they will tell you their story and give you their view of the world. For me, one of the biggest things we can do is listen to them. Because for probably all the points up to their imprisonment they have never been listened to and the relationships our staff can develop with them is formed primarily from listening to them, hearing what they have to say and acknowledging what they've got to say. (Admin1)

Admin2 discusses Polmont's approach to increasing engagement in purposeful activity. This approach, which aims to attract new learners into the educational fold, can be considered invasive, specifically for prisoners disinterested in the educational aims of the institution. This plan to engage prisoners where they sleep, play, eat, work, and socialise may be perceived as forced, discouraging involvement. Placing learning into the living environment of prisoners further demonstrates that every moment of the day will be structured. As is shown in chapter 5 and suggested by Admin2, most prisoners at Polmont have been excluded from school. This exclusion has resulted in many young men developing a negative association with traditional learning environments. Thus, disengagement is an expected outcome of pushing a learning agenda in prison. Admin2 further suggests that Polmont is about inclusion. This is a noteworthy statement as many prisoners have been socially excluded from school, work, and their community and they are further excluded from society via their incarceration. The efforts to provide a space of inclusion are dependent on all parties within the institution investing and supporting prisoners to contribute to success upon liberation.

Almost all the young men here have been excluded from school at some point. Polmont to some extent is like, if you were to have a high school you would have an inclusion unit of some sort, where kids may be bordering on being excluded would go for a bit of extra support. Polmont is like a huge inclusion unit. But even within the 500 young men, I have here, you have probably got around 50 who are at that acute disengaged, marginalised, group. We have done several things to try and bring them into activity. One thing is we have shortened the education times in the morning so that the teachers at half ten can go down to the halls and do one to one work. We put in an inclusion area, for members of staff to do one to one work, we have bulked that up for two members of staff. We will now have two inclusion areas, and we have increased youth work as it has been put into the halls. That is our equivalent of street work, where you are going out to recruit them

instead of waiting for them to come to you. Some boys will never volunteer for anything, and you must have a much more targeted approach, and that applies to education as well. (Admin2)

The administration broadly encourages engagement in all purposeful activities (*see* chapter 1), but a primary resource for prisoners is their personal officer. The role of the personal officer at Polmont is critical for many young men initiating interest in education and learning programs. The paradoxical roles of a personal officer can include role model, mentor, motivator, and enforcer or punisher. This role varies from officer to inmate across the prison, but the administration views the personal officer role as crucial to all learning and education aims. It may be suggested that a personal officer is an accepted role, whereby actors construct an understanding of their responsibilities by framing it around expectations derived from the subjective experiences of others (*see* Goffman 1974). Admin1 suggests that personal officers should reinforce learning for prisoners. This statement emphasises the importance of communication within the establishment as well as that of personal officers in supporting institutional aims.

I see this as an area we can improve. It is a matter of staff understanding what we are doing and why. Everyone should feel that they play an important role in the organisation. I don't think a lot of staff understand the impact that they can have on a young man's decisions and engage in activities. Say they go to wake a young person up and they say you are scheduled for education today. The person states they are not going, instead of leaving them alone. Challenge them. Tell them you will be back in 5 minutes and you will discuss why they are choosing not to attend education today. Officers need to see the bigger picture. They don't understand that if that young man does not attend education, perhaps it will stop other things from happening. They play a part in everything that happens here. (Admin1)

The role of the personal officer seems to be relevant to the power dynamic of prison life for inmates, but how do officers understand their role? How does engaging with the young men in their custody alter their perception of prison as a place of punishment? The personal officers interviewed in this study suggest that they aim to help individuals who have experienced significant social trauma, are excluded by society, and who now need to recreate meaning and

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purpose for themselves while enduring the pains of imprisonment (*see* chapter 3). The personal officers noted that developing relationships with the young men in their care is central to their jobs.

> We just kind of build like a professional relationship with the people we care for. You speak to them if they have any problems, they come to yourself, if they have any problems with like a father figure, they may not have any family to talk to, so the only people they have to speak to is yourself. Usually, you have a good bond with the person you are responsible for, it could be problems, issues, ICM stuff, stuff for parole, meetings, we have daily meetings, and you find that you have built a professional relationship with them. (PO1)

The data collected suggests that some personal officers are on board with the changes that have been incorporated at Polmont over the past three years (2013-2016), which has led to a complete restructuring of the learning environment. When asked if education and punishment can co-exist in this establishment, PO1 and PO2 state that, *'their punishment is them losing their freedom.'* The role of personal officer significantly affects the decisions and actions of a prisoner's daily life. Specific to education, Braggins and Talbot (2003) assert in their study that many prisoners felt that prison staff had negative attitudes towards education and that some may have deliberately sabotaged educational opportunities by being late or slow to escort students to class. PO1 and PO2 discuss their role in supporting prisoners and also encouraging them to engage in activities. They acknowledge that many of the young men in their care learn just from being in prison. PO1 and PO2 stated that more times than not the young men in their hall *'want to learn'* and they challenge prisoners to *'go to education and get something out of jail.'* They do not observe these interactions as paradoxical, but rather necessary to individual development. The officers suggest that there is much to be learned from opening a dialogue with the young men in their units.

> We sit and talk to them. We get from them their life experiences, what his work ethic is, what he does with his children, so many of these guys have children. And they are learning how to be a dad. Maybe they never had a father figure or someone to look up to, a lot is learned here. You have to remember that they are here serving a sentence, and that is their punishment. It's not for us to punish them more; we are here to help them so that

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they don't come back and can go and integrate into the community. If we can help them as much as possible while they are here, it makes it better for when they get out.

While all the participants in this study seem to agree that officers are generally supportive, the sentiment from Innes (below) concerning the officers he has encountered while at Polmont who don't necessarily agree with the educational agenda provides some context to the changes occurring since the implementation of their learning agenda. This statement reflects that this change in approach to working with prisoners is still difficult for some officers.

> Those are officers from the old school. They believe that you should be locked up, you shouldn't be allowed to do anything so that they will think like that. But there is kind of a new breed or new generation with a modern way of thinking. I mean you have staff in here that would do anything to help you learn. They would go the extra mile to help you. Those old-fashioned people are starting to go away, and many of them are coming around. For example, my mate was upset a few weeks ago because we have this new regime and we are locked up more than we used to be, he came out of his room at lunchtime and was really upset, he said we are the top end prisoners, we have earned the extra bit of freedom, it's a joke. One of the staff members said to him, '*back in the day I would have sent you right back into your room, but now I need to be reasonable, they make me reasonable*.' I said to myself, you are being forced to be reasonable about things, then he realised what he said and backtracked a bit and said, but I like to be reasonable I prefer to talk about things now. (Innes)

Foucault (1977) described penal punishment as a rationalised, instrumental institution that depends on knowledge, bureaucracy, and calculated control to impose order. There is an interesting theme that emerged from the participant interviews. The participants infer that the carefully structured norms of society should be followed, and that crime equals punishment. They also believe that prison offers possibility and promise, which will support them in overcoming this obstacle and allow them to become '*better*' men in the future. They each refer to the opportunities that prison has afforded them, and it can be suggested that the aims of the prison administration may have influenced the opinions of the participants. These young men now see prison and specifically education in prison as a route to rehabilitation. One of the most interesting suggestions is that some of the participants do not feel as if they are being punished.

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These statements are representative of secondary adjustment and the creation of a tolerable world within the confines of managed time and space that becomes an accepted way of life (*see* chapter 3). It is difficult to contextualise the different experiences of these prisoners, but their life experiences (*see* chapter 5) have shaped their worldview. The notion that prison is expected to reform or rehabilitate is complicated, as Garland notes, '*no method of punishment has ever achieved high rates of reform or crime control*' (1991: 158). Thus, altering behaviours is best achieved through social processes whereby conformity, mutual expectations and interdependence are achieved (Durkheim 1973; Garland 1991). The hardships, deprivation, and individual suffering of prison life are indisputable, but the institution can still be examined as a means of providing penal, social, and support functions. The participants share their perceptions of the paradoxical relationship between learning and punishment at Polmont.

> I wouldn't say there is a contradiction at all. Because we are here, we are away from our families and friends, our communities, thrown into a testosterone-filled atmosphere full of boisterous people. You've got people from 16-23 in here, and that's a lot of young men to have in one place at one time. If you behave, a reward should be given in the form of opportunities. Whereas, if you don't behave in here, the opportunities are taken away from you. So, I think that the fact that you've got work parties and education which are an opportunity to better yourself before you go outside that's probably the best thing to do. (Ryan)

> Well if you do something wrong, you've got to be punished. At the end of the day, there must be a learning environment in prison, or people are just going to come back again. If people fight or are smashing stuff up, they have to be punished for it, or they are just going to keep doing it. (Fred)

> I don't know. I don't feel like I'm getting punished. I feel like I'm respected here. It is not just an education that can change a person here. It is addressing offending behaviour and all the different programs that are here to help. (Dennis)

> I don't know. Its prison and they should be helping people. I know people say that we are in prison we shouldn't be getting an education. They expect us to be just sitting in a dark room all day not doing anything. You would think that they would want someone who

has been educated and has learned things to come out of prison. I think at Polmont it works well. I never really encountered any negativity from anyone at Polmont. (Scott)

The analysis of data in this section reflects, to some extent the institution's role in influencing learning outcomes for participants and suggests the importance of engagement, communication, and relationships to narratives of change and growth. In this environment, prisoners are engaging in activities that seem to affirm positive identities, while also acknowledging that the controls of the institution are always present. The paradoxical assertion of the educated prisoner has been explored concerning institutional time and participation, the role of personal officers in supporting learning, and prisoner perceptions of this paradox within the institution. Goffman's research applied to the milieu of a prison draws attention to the human experience of incarceration by developing a discussion around the patterns which have led to dehumanisation. The data reveals that participants acknowledge a positive self-perception as a result of affirming interactions within the institution. In some ways this contradicts Goffman's analysis of the total institution as an environment socially constructed to deprive, degrade, and humiliate and rather suggests that this prison may offer educational provision as a form of regulated self-empowerment. Critical criminologists would argue that in general prison fails to retributively deter, punish, or rehabilitate those who commit a crime (Armstrong and McNeill 2009). If the purpose of prison is to reduce reoffending, then the narrative of change and growth within this thesis becomes a critical and necessary piece of the puzzle.

7.1.2 Learning Spaces

Places of learning exist throughout the prison environment. This section utilises in-person interviews with teaching staff and observational data of the learning spaces at Polmont to demonstrate how and why the role of a tutor may influence interactions and impact the learning environment of students engaging in education. The data establishes that the teaching techniques presented in the observational data may encourage students to use life experiences as a reference point for learning. The data explores the institutional and environmental factors related to learning within the total institution, specifically related to student-tutor interactions. This data was gathered across six months of prison visits as part of my fieldwork for this study. I observed several different classes by prison officer/instructors as well as Fife College teaching staff. The observations below were recorded in my field diary (Nov 2015-March 2016). I was invited to attend two separate Modern Studies classes during my first week of fieldwork. The

tutors from Fife College stated that they aim to develop course content to be relevant to students by incorporating topics that might be meaningful for learners. Content needs to apply to real-life as many students may become disengaged with learning if they feel that it is irrelevant or complex (Sams 2014). Keeping in mind that many of these students may have had a previous negative perception of education, the activities presented in these two classes provide students with a variety of skills, such as public speaking, creative writing, and critical thinking. They may also further develop students as active citizens, offering an awareness of their roles in society by using simple concepts that also develop formal and informal skills.

The first class was on Monday, and the tutor used current events to develop the examples for the class. On this occasion, we discussed Prisoner Awareness Week, which coincided with the class. The students in the class were all from the protection unit of the prison, which has limited offerings in the learning centre. The class was productive, and the tutor could engage all the members around the table with the conversation. The tutor has been teaching most of the men in the class for a while and knows their personalities and comfort levels with speaking in class, literacy levels, etc.

The second Modern Studies class covered Acts of Compassion. We did an activity were the tutor showed pictures of '*acts of compassion or kindness'*, and the class had to determine how they felt about it. This activity resulted in the class writing a paper on how they felt about the activity and what they thought of certain pictures related to the activity. Once again, all students were engaged and seemed to enjoy the activity as they all took part in the conversation.

The overarching curriculum of core learning skills is set by the Curriculum for Excellence and includes the totality of the student experience, not just a course or content. Tutors must design courses to meet student needs and abilities, using a variety of teaching techniques to engage students. As an example, the approach for solving basic maths problems (below) provides an opportunity for the students to consider the future and plan for life post-incarceration. The activity requires teamwork, which may promote creativity, interpersonal skills, trust, and conflict resolution skills. Also, students may learn to be more open-minded and resolve problems using a variety of perspectives. These skills may be invaluable to job seekers and may also contribute to enhancing communication skills.

Four study participants are in the class plus a couple more guys that I have not met before. Tutor3 has the guys look through catalogues to find products to fill a home. This is a numeracy class, and this is a unique way of getting the guys to do math, without making it seem like math. The one young man at the end of the table is trying to come up with everything he needs to buy when he moves into a new flat. We all start helping him make a list of items so that he can find them in the catalogue and add up the cost of moving. Everyone seemed engaged in helping him, looking through their catalogues and findings costs and giving him ideas. It was evident that the real-life application of math helped everyone to understand why you need to learn these skills.

It was interesting to watch how the tutors carry out a lesson in this environment and reflect on how and what each student was taking away from the content of the class. The tutors involved students, not by being pushy or aggressive, but by encouraging them to have a voice. They seemed to provide a respectful environment which also carried over to the way that students interact with each other. They may joke with one another, but they were always polite. As this thesis was not meant to be an ethnographic study, I was open to engaging in the classes as well, working alongside students and discussing the problems presented by the tutors. The classroom itself has quotes posted all around the room, but one stood out to me by Ben Franklin, *'Tell me and I forget, teach me, and I remember, involve me, and I learn*.' The practice of involving learners became a continuous theme in classroom observations.

We begin the class in Joinery 1 room, and the young men start to move their windows and doors that were previously assembled in the last few weeks to the Joinery 2 room via an outside route. There is a module set up in this room for each two-person team. The goal at the end is to have a fully assembled 'hut'. The guys are responsible for ordering supplies, so if they forget, they don't get to work, just like real life. The guys work in their teams to remove framing with hammers, saws so that their windows will fit the frame. As usual, a few of the guys are distracted by my presence in the room. Fortunately, Tutor4 with Fife arrived to speak to the guys about math. Each learner is on a different level, and so Tutor4 takes time to work with each one on their problems. One young man is working on Pythagoras' theorem, and another is completing basic word problems.

Meanwhile, JT2 and JT1 are moving about the room supporting and engaging with each team and asking them questions about their project. They are addressing any issues as they arise, for example, how a board is cut or held while cutting for safety. I see the young people diligently measuring and re-measuring their boards before assembling. The whole area looks like a lumber yard, except with high fencing with barbed wire. The standing hut structures are covering most of the floor space in the room, and the young people are working inside and around the outside of the units. (March 2016)

To consider more deeply if there is a critical component to the teaching environment at Polmont, the depth of course content may not necessarily elicit critical thinking, but as Freire (1996) asserts, *'to teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge'* (p. 10). How learners construct knowledge is essential to how they process and analyse information to create informed opinions or conclusions, resulting in critical thinking. From my observations, the learning taking place at Polmont may provide a venue for students to reflect on personal experiences and their ability to make meaning from them. The process of meaning-making (*see* Mezirow 1990) is how a person may perceive, comprehend, and make sense of the world around them, including life events and the self. At Polmont, the teaching environment encourages learners to draw from real-life experiences to problem solve, such as in the above example related to maths class. The students are using their knowledge to establish what is needed, such as money and furniture, to move into a new flat. This may provide an opportunity for the learner to apply their math skills to life situations, showing them that math has a broader application than just in the classroom.

The separation of learning and living spaces at HMYOI Polmont have recently collided as there is now much more learning taking place within the halls at the prison. The learning spaces are an important component of how the prison views education and learning within the establishment. Space within a prison is usually designed with a specific purpose. A typical prison offers spaces of restraint, controlled by the total institution. Movement and time become a measured daily practice, and individual development is replaced with aspirations of rehabilitation. Crewe, Warr, Bennett, and Smith (2014) discuss how space can shape the prisoner experience. In creating spaces of incarceration, 'the power of space is not just physical or architectural, but resides in the ways that places carry meanings, harbour and cultivate practices and sentiments, are devised for specific activities, and are populated by certain personnel' (Crewe et al. 2014:71). New prisons

are being designed with the intent of offering open, flexible spaces that encourage social interaction, Jewkes (2002) explains that personal in-room televisions, for example, have added to the domestication of the prisoner's private space and replace many social and educational activities generally undertaken in the presence of others.

The environmental and institutional differences at Polmont may be nominally different from other young offender facilities as the learning agenda has a well-defined role in the outcomes of the institution. There is still control and regimentation to daily life. However, Goffman (1961) spoke of the non-total nature of institutional life outlining certain domains or areas that were normalised to an extent (*see* chapter 3). At Polmont, the teaching staff led the learning spaces. For students, these spaces may be non-total as the teaching staff aim to normalise the environment for learners. The interesting point that Tutor3 makes is about overcoming obstacles. If these young men can learn to persevere in prison and learn new things, they may be able to overcome the more difficult obstacles that they will encounter in life after prison. Tutor3 suggests that '*education helps them with that, they're learning things, but then there are obstacles like they have to take their exams and they have to pass that, it's a challenge for them*.' The student-prisoners in this study are all pursuing voluntary education, which will hopefully prepare them to overcome the more difficult barriers that life will impose on them after release.

> That's the thing I've noticed. And probably more than any other establishment, it's very much that learning is at the heart of everything, every opportunity to learn more, because it gives a lot of these young men options, that perhaps before they've had no qualifications and it's a vicious cycle, so if they learn, it's a big thing. Just having their own strategies in place mentally to be able to have the capacity to learn, they do that, and then when they go out, and the world does have more options, because suddenly, they can leave here with enough behind them to get a job or get into college or something to go to their bed for so they're not just out and about all night. (Tutor3)

The learning spaces within a prison are complicated and may not always encourage active learning, such as those within the living spaces of the institution. The importance of observing the learning spaces is not to determine if critical thought or knowledge growth is present, but to understand if the restrictive measures of prison undermine the prescribed learning outcomes of this institution. The result of these observations suggests that the learning environment and

possibly the tutors are critical to student learning. The tutors approach learning in this environment from the perspective that learners are hesitant, nervous, and many have a negative association with education (*see* chapter 3). This knowledge allows the tutors to offer an open and inclusive learning community, whereby all learners are welcome.

7.1.3   Social structure and the prison learning environment

The social environment of prison is inescapable for prisoners. They must engage with personal officers, other prisoners, administration, tutors, family and friends, and possibly organisations out with the institution. This section explores data gathered from in-person interviews with the administration and student participants to develop an understanding of how the social environment of prison may impact learning. Engagement in learning activities (*see* chapter 5) is voluntary across the institution. Therefore, if a prisoner chooses to participate in an activity, they must seek out information through social interaction. The data establishes that different social environments may have a significant impact on the learner's experience, with most participants indicating that participation in education has afforded them opportunities in the future and several alluded to personal change and growth as a result of engaging in learning activities. This section also explores the concept of active citizenship within the institution to determine how these types of roles may influence the prison community.

The social aspects of learning in prison should also be considered as the prison is trying to engage a broad spectrum of learners, placing multiple people with a variety of needs into the same social environment (classroom) and expecting learning to take place. The interactions between learners assume the social face, with the social self connecting the actor to social interaction and the wider society (*see* chapter 3). These social interactions may cause distress, as a degree of responsibility is placed on the prisoner to act. The opportunity to have a choice can provoke feelings of anxiety and powerlessness. Personal responsibility is now a violation of the prisoner's subjectification, shadowing the powerful and requiring the individual to self-govern. Individual responsibility or agency is necessary for people to think and act for themselves and to shape their life experiences and trajectories. This is often at odds with structure, which comprises social forces, relationships, institutions, and the social structures that aim to shape our social norms such as thoughts and behaviours (Giddens 1991; O'Donnell, 2010). There is a degree of social agency present within the total institution as a result of the prisoner's ability to adapt to a restrictive environment by challenging the social norms of the institution and maintaining

autonomy (*see* chapter 3). At Polmont, this process of adjustment is evident as many prisoner's rebel against education, asserting that they will not engage as they feel it will benefit institutional aims.

Admin2 speaks to Polmont's tactic of engaging learners outside of the standard classroom environment. Noting that the young men at Polmont '*do not want to sit in a classroom*' and they need more '*practically focused learning which helps with their attention span*.' This integrated model of learning and the whole establishment approach has been incorporated into programs across the establishment, including an ongoing project to develop creative learning spaces in the halls. Interestingly, rehabilitation was not mentioned by the administration as an aim for young men in education. This was a surprising omission, as most literature exploring prisoner education makes an explicit connection to the rehabilitative benefits of learning in prison. It is also plausible that this is an implicit outcome of educational provision in prison. The educational agenda for Polmont as outlined in the SPS Vision for young people in custody (*see* chapter 1) is at its core about creating a learning environment where both formal and informal skills are developed with the intent of preparing prisoners for life after release. Reducing reoffending via a rehabilitation route would be a preferred outcome by the administration, but they understand that individual circumstances vary and if a person is released back into society under the same conditions, there is a high risk of reoffending.

The aims and objectives for this prison suggest this is an environment that is trying to develop citizens. A significant shift has occurred in the education debate across Europe, which emphasises democratic and civic responsibility for prisoners (Hoskins, Villalba, Van Nijlen, and Barber 2008). This new direction for prisoner education is prioritising the teaching of democracy as a mechanism for active citizenship (*see* chapter 3) (Council of Europe, 2010; 2009; 2008). Polmont has begun the process of incorporating and promoting active citizenship for prisoners through its integrated model (*see* chapter 1). They aim to foster the principles of civic responsibility, collective interdependence, diversity, and concepts of freedom and human rights through a variety of platforms, including prisoner run forums. Admin1 elaborates on the importance of citizenship by suggesting that creating a community where learners feel invested will lead them to active citizenship or at the very least individual investment in opportunity.

The demonstration of investment, we hope, means a lot to the young men. And I think the redesign shows that we respect the men. We went from hard, cold furniture to something warm and comfortable. The young people look after it and take care of their space. They accept the area as theirs, and they clean up after themselves and encourage others to do so as well. I think all of this is important as we talk a lot about citizenship here at Polmont. For me, a big part of being a citizen is having an investment in the society we are part of. We have recently been talking about the Scottish Parliament elections coming up, and I don't think it is fair that these young men, especially since the age has dropped to 16, are not allowed to vote. How can we encourage citizenship and not let them have a say in who runs their society? These young men are service users, and they would have a lot to say about how services are provided here in Scotland. (Admin1)

The choice to become a responsible person or '*citizen*' in prison is problematic as incarceration is meant to deny liberty and deprive people of the opportunity to take responsibility for themselves and others (*see* chapter 3). The act of imprisonment restricts a person's rights and roles within society and poses the challenge of further social exclusion from their community once they have been liberated. While prison is meant to exclude people from the wider society, the majority of prisoners will rejoin society in some capacity or function. The role of citizenship within the institution, while ironic, serves a purpose. Citizenship can be a method of social rehabilitation as it suggests that developing relationships may be necessary to resettlement and encouraging individual responsibility (McNeil 2012). In Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974), he uses conceptual framing as a method for understanding the organisation of human experience versus the organisation of society. This framework encompasses concepts and theoretical perspectives which organise experiences and guide the actions of the individual and their social world. An individual experience within the framework may seem otherwise meaningless, but is transformed into something meaningful after being placed in perspective. The role of citizenship within an environment that disables individual rights and excludes active participation in society is just such a model for framing experiences. The active involvement of prisoners in their '*community*' may allow for experiences worth '*framing*' and deeper reflection resulting in a more concrete understanding of an individual's role within society.

The data from students related to the social structures of prison is important to this discussion. The social structure or social network, in this case, is the prisoner learning environment and is

determined by an individual's capacity to act independently. As independence is not a given right in prison, the participant must utilise agency to engage in learning, thus conforming to the social structure, but also acting on their behalf. The participants in this study were asked if engaging in learning activities has, in some way, changed them, and if education or learning in prison has, in any way, influenced their future goals. These questions are aimed at understanding if the learning environment offers the capacity for learners to become more analytical and reflective of their experiences resulting in possible change and growth. For some participants, like Chris, the community that exists within Polmont has provided him with accolades and promise for the future. He has been recognised as a positive role model, and upstanding citizen in his learning community and his qualifications will provide him with a starting point for further education or employment upon release. Chris may have developed the realisation that offending is no longer compatible with his increased need and desire to achieve the goals he has set forth for himself (Barry 2010). The literature would imply that this change of thought process has most likely been the result of personal transformation and growth.

> Aye, definitely, I don't know how to explain it. I listen more. I am more focused on my work than ever before. I feel like I may be more ambitious. I cannae wait to try and start my own business. It gives you purpose. Maybe I am more mature, maybe. (Chris)

As for his future, Chris affirms,

> I didn't have goals before, but aye, I have them now. Before it was all about drugs and money. I feel like I have worked very hard to improve myself through education and as a person, I hope to be more disciplined. I do attribute this to education. I received the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award, Peer mentor award, Dynamic Youth, and there is something else, I cannae remember now. They are all on my CV. These are all proper qualifications.

The social environment of a prison is complex and changing, but inherent in any society are elements of structure, social control, and culture. Ryan speaks to his role in this community and is beginning to link his awareness of how the environment and social structures of prison have impacted him and his possibilities for the future. The process of personal development and growth in prison can be affected by many different factors. However, as Reuss (1997) concludes 'one cannot always assume that either the prison itself or any activities which prisoners undertake will act directly as deterrents' (p. 221).

In some respects, I have learned a lot through traditional education, but more from just being here. I have learned how to act and good communication skills. Education has changed the way I think and act because they have shown me mutual respect and made learning easy. Before I never knew what I wanted to do when I grow up. But when I get out now, I know exactly what I want to do, I know what I want to be and how I am going to go about it. I have researched companies, and I was never one to plan ahead, but education got me interested in different stuff. (Ryan)

More important than his experience with education, Scott speaks about understanding the difference between '*right and wrong*'. This statement shows that Scott has acknowledged that his earlier behaviours did not align with socially constructed norms, and he opted to alter his actions to become an active member of society when released. He notes that he seeks a '*normal*' future, but what does this mean for someone who has spent their life in prison? How can Scott know or understand what is accepted in a society outside of prison? Scott sees education as beneficial and essential for his future, but perhaps the most important skill he has learned is cognitive and social competence.

When you are doing education, you think about the future, what you want to do. If you are thinking about education, you feel like you are doing something, moving forward. It's going to benefit me in the future. I guess I knew that I wasn't going to get in trouble and act better in education. I know the difference between right and wrong. I can think clearer now. In the future, I want to do Open University. I want to be a normal person, work and things. I have a direction now.

The conclusion of this section emphasises the perceptions of the students in this study. There is a strong narrative of change and growth that emerged from the students related to their experiences with learning and education. Many students noted that their overall experience of the prison had been a learning experience, and they have learned more from the social relationships and interactions of others than perhaps specifically an education course. There is further evidence to support these narratives of change and growth in the second part of this chapter, *Stories of self-reflection*.

It can be suggested that the environment of a prison is confining, controlling, and may provoke psychological or social changes in the incarcerated as the total institution is created based on artificial rules and boundaries which only exist to people inside (*see* chapter 3). Goffman's research illustrates the oppressive aspects of the prison. However, the participants in this study have discovered that there is a divergent path available to them through learning and education. It is not that the oppressiveness of prison does not exist, but rather that the participants have found a way to convince themselves that there is more to be learned from prison than it has to take away. Discussion of the social structures and environment of prison suggests that the institution aims to assimilate prisoners into learning situations across the prison, but also to engage them in social roles that may not be replicated in broader society.

7.1.4 Labels and identity

The role of labelling and identity are important to this research as some prisoners, whether consciously or unconsciously, adopt a certain identity out of a need to fit into the prison culture. In the case of the participants in this study, many have adopted a student identity or label. This label can be considered meaningful, as it can dictate the prisoner's daily schedule and time management while also legitimising their new identity and pathway. Some students may also use their student identity as a way to distance themselves from the perceived culture of prison, instead choosing to engage with like-minded individuals within the institution as a possible coping mechanism (Pike and Adams 2012; Watt 2010). Thus, our identities are not created in solitude. Who we are, our sense of self is developed through social interactions (*see* chapter 2). While learning is an opportunity for the prisoner to reflect on their identity, the chance to be successful in education has proven to be far more useful as a source of reinvented identity, personal awareness, purpose, and transformation (MacGuiness 2000; Wilson and Reuss 2000). The labelling process of many institutions has done more to develop a prisoner's self-narrative, by suggesting that they are delinquent, criminal, or offender, treating them as objects instead of subjects (Reuss 2000). The data analysed in this section provides the administrative perspective regarding changing attitudes of labelling and identity for those in custody, while also exploring the student-prisoner assessment of the impacts of prison on the self. It is evident from the data that prisoners assume labels as a possible consequence of imprisonment. This could mean that labelling stems more so from the acute environmental response to incarceration and not necessarily the personal interactions of prison.

As a young offender's facility, Polmont aims to reframe conversations by changing the language used to identify young people in custody. This may be considered a unique approach to working with people in custody across Scotland and contributes to meeting broader aims of social justice. The administration suggests that they do not strive to hinder the progress of these young men further, but rather to raise them up and allow them equal opportunities for success upon release.

> We don't use labels here. We don't refer to them as cons, offenders, or prisoners. They are young people. If pushed, we talk about young people who have offended or young people in custody. The biggest term we try not to use is offender as it will push these young men away in the housing, employment, and education sectors. We don't want to reinforce stereotypes. There are many staff who use the term offender, but we discourage it. There are still those who are institutionalised and eventually they will work their way out of Polmont. (Admin1)

Discussion of prisoner identity would typically be presented with data about the individual, but as education and the institution are central to the prisoner development of identity in this study, it is essential to highlight how the students perceive themselves and how they want to be viewed by others. This discussion provides the context for understanding if the institution has a role in labelling young people or if this is perhaps an innate characteristic of incarceration. The most interesting revelation is how many of these young men want a normal life. They may not even understand what normal is. They may have never known 'normal' before. For most, normal is having a stable environment to live, friends and family to support you, and hopefully, a job to follow. When specifically asked about the label of '*criminal*' or '*offender*', many of the participants admit that it is part of them, part of their life experience, not necessarily part of their identity. This implies that there is a risk of these young men becoming excluded socially as a result of their incarceration. This can result in the creation of a hidden identity, which would allow them to avoid the negative consequences and rejection that many formerly incarcerated individuals experience (*see* chapter 2).

> People will say they don't care, but I as someone who has been here as an offender, it is part of you, but I don't feel that it is a part of me. I don't identify with that at all. I am fine if someone wants to label me as someone who has done time and changed. (Chuck)

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Yes definitely. But I think I can change it. Some people will always see that. People tend to think that jail is a big bad place and you need to be a bad person to get put in here and so some people will never believe you can change. This was a learning experience for me, but it is difficult to convince others of that. (Steve)

Chuck, Steve, and Ryan each suggest that people will always judge someone for being in prison, but they realise that there is not a way to change people's perception of them. Once a person has been labelled by society as abnormal, they are branded as socially different. Therefore, they no longer abide by socially constructed norms. The stigma these young men will live with is concealable, but the embodiment of their experiences exists in their anxiety and loss of time. Many of the participants in this study believe that their choice to pursue prisoner education will provide them with opportunities during resettlement, but they will still need to overcome their stigma or spoiled identity (*see* chapter 2). This, at least, will provide the participants with social information which they can use to create their own social identity by resurrecting the role of student.

Stigma is an attribute that is deeply discrediting (*see* chapter 2). When someone possesses an attribute that makes them different to others, the individual is considered tainted, their social identity is spoiled, and the divergent characteristic results in them being stigmatised. A fascinating outcome from this data is that most of these young men do not perceive themselves from a negative standpoint. They seem to be optimistic for the future, grateful, in fact, for having opportunities to improve their lives. These revelations are perhaps more telling of the individual participants than the institution. There is not any considerable data gathered in this study that demonstrates that the institution is providing a community that rejects stigmatisation of prisoners outside of the administration's statements opposed to labelling. When interviewing the young men in this study, they seemed to feel very uncomfortable talking about themselves. They struggled to describe *who they are* but appeared to understand the concept of labelling and its application to their current situation. The questions posed were, *how would you describe yourself to others*, and *how would you like others to perceive you?* These questions are aimed at understanding the participant's self-perception. The data reflects that some of the participants have a positive sense of self and express this in terms of how they want others to perceive them. A couple of keywords from the participants developed from this question, normalcy and optimism.

I'm a mature young adult, a good leader, proud. I've taken the bad stuff and turned it into a positive. I'm a proud partner to my Mrs I've made mistakes, we all do. (Gavin)

I'm a 21-year-old boy from Glasgow, I have had a rough couple of years, but I am looking forward to changing my past, staying away from drugs, I have changed my views on people in general. I listen to people more now. I care about people more now, obviously. I am educated. I am more open. (Chris)

OHHHH. This is hard. I would say that I'm fair, honest, thoughtful, assertive (most of the time), organised, passionate, sensitive, deep, generous, I will share nice things with people, but sometimes I like to keep things to myself. Sometimes I am selfish, but the good kind. I'm helpful, I can be quiet, how do I put this, I can be having a good week, and then I will think about what is happening next week, and sometimes I think too far ahead, I can't just be in the moment. [Can you change that?] I don't know is that something you can change? I'm also quite easily stressed. I have a visit tomorrow and the people that are coming never answer the phone, so I'm just left wondering are they coming up, what am I going to do, do I go anyway? My friends here would describe me different from my friends outside. The people here would say I never want to do anything. I am always trying to do my best, always helpful and share with them. They would say I'm generous and hopefully they would say funny. My family would describe me just like, mostly the same, determined, motivated, and happy. I always want everyone to be happy. I want others to perceive me as somebody that's honest and consistent. I treat people the same, a nice person, funny, kind and that, just an all right person, good morals and that, never nasty to anyone. (Innes)

Strange. I'm just a bit weird. I stand out from the crowd. I don't like to do the same thing as everyone else. I am very open-minded and opinionated, and I'm not scared to share my opinion, but I am always willing to listen to someone else. I'm loyal to a fault. I'm honest. This is hard. My friends and family would say that I am careless, opinionated, stubborn, pig-headed, but also funny, caring, loyal, and honest. I want to be treated like a normal person. I'm sick of being a statistic and number. Always classed as a prisoner or offender. I want a normal house, car. I don't want anything spectacular. I want everyone

to see me as normal. I don't want anybody to look at me and go there's Ryan he's off his nut. I don't want people to be scared of me or being around me. I want to be accepted. (Ryan)

Ryan has thought about his future a lot, and I wondered if he considered his critics, how will he be successful and perhaps change people's minds about him and does he need to?

It's always going to happen. With people in the jail and outside it's going to happen, you must accept it. I've seen it especially here, with me being gay, I've had all the prejudice you could ever imagine. Some people are going to say oh he has been to jail, your scum, that's whatever. There is also someone willing to give you a chance and then you can help to change their mind about you. This label of offender or criminal, it's always going to be part of me, I grew up in here. I'm grateful for the opportunities I have had, but when I walk out of those gates, I will no longer be a prisoner, and I will just be me, a normal person again. Everything I have done here has been amazing. I am never looking back and am ready to move on.

Scott has learned a lot about life and matured since his incarceration,

Ha-ha. Quiet, kind, thoughtful. I don't know. This is a hard question. It is hard to talk about myself. My family would probably say different things. My dad would say I'm a dick. My mum would probably say I was quiet and kind. My ex-girlfriend would say that I was a bit mad, maybe. [How would you like others to perceive you?] Non-judgmental. I want them to see that I am somebody they can talk to. I can tell people I was a wee guy and didn't know what I was doing. I wasn't experienced in the world. I didn't know right from wrong at the time. I have learned more now. I think my qualifications will be helpful for me once I get out.

Admin1 shares a final insight about how the institution aims to continue to support the young people at Polmont,

I don't know if you have heard the phrase, '*good for nothing, you'll come to nothing*' it's one of these reinforcing phrases that say to them you are no good and you'll never be good. I suppose what we are trying to do for a lot of young people is say you are good at something, and you can become something. They don't recognise it in themselves.

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This statement from Admin1 reinforces the administrations perspective, but it does not change the fact that the experience of prison may do more to damage a prisoner's sense of self, than any action by the administration to support prisoners (*see* chapter 2). There are critics of Goffman who assert that his work is a one-sided story, which only explores the negative effects of the institution (Killian and Bloomberg 1975). However, the implications of imprisonment are predominantly negative, resulting in a change to identity, not by choice, but perhaps for survival. The contention of this administration that they are promoting a community sans stigma and labelling is not entirely accurate as the social world of prison remains separate from the reality that these young men will re-enter. Developing a supportive community is a positive step towards improving the lives of young people at Polmont, but it does little to reduce the lifelong stigma of having been incarcerated.

Analysis of the data related to labelling and stigma is presented from the administrative and prisoner perspective. The administration is aiming to promote a community where positive discourse and identity development are central to supporting prisoners. Prisoners, by default, assume the label of '*offender or criminal'* as a result of the mortifications they have endured as part of their incarceration, but remain optimistic that they are capable of a normal life during resettlement. This suggests that for many young men in this study, a hidden identity may be the only way to avoid rejection from wider society (*see* chapter 2). Reality dictates that for any of these young men, disclosure of their convictions will be necessary for employment, education, housing or any number of life events, thus, exposing their stigma to a society that labels and rejects those perceived to be abnormal.

7.2   Stories of self-reflection

This section shares the experiences of the participants and how the institution has impacted their stories. The data analysis seeks to explore the relationship between educational interactions, relationships, and an individual's capacity for change, growth, and hope for the future. All the data in this section has been sourced from interviews with the students in this study. The themes presented in the data are *change and growth.* Discussion of change provided an opportunity for the participants to be reflective of their time in custody, affirming the importance of family and support systems. The theme of growth resulted in the unanimous claim by the participants that maturity is a result of incarceration. The analysis of data in this section seeks to construct a

narrative that emphasises experiences of change and growth that may be a consequence of the institutional and environmental factors that influence the learning community at Polmont.

7.2.1 Change

A consistent theme present throughout the analysis was the ability for the participants to be reflective and discuss how they view themselves at the time of their incarceration, and now. The data on change reflects the individual thoughts and effects of prison on the participants. As well as an opportunity for the participants to share their stories and discuss identity and how they may present themselves to others (*see* chapter 2). The self can be viewed as a collective set of perceptions for how we view ourselves, others, and our social world, therefore, understanding participant perceptions of personal change has a role in determining the impacts of the institution on the individual. Goffman's (1959) research on social interaction explores the social world as a stage. Goffman asserts that '*all the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify*' (p. 72). This passage illustrates the importance of understanding how the illusions and impressions of our '*backstage*' area influence the construction of our '*frontstage*' persona and how it is presented to others (*see* chapter 2-3).

This section develops a narrative for how the young men in this study may define change, but also explores how the participants felt about themselves upon their imprisonment. As part of this research, I discovered the importance of encouraging prisoners to recount their life story, as there is a clear link to discussions of identity and how a person presents themselves (*see* chapter 2), but personal narratives also provided an opportunity for the participants to contemplate past experiences and future choices. The young men in this study were unexpectedly open with their feelings (backstage), as the environment of prison is not particularly conducive to vulnerability.

> I've grown up and matured and accepted a lot of things about myself. In fact, I have finally accepted that fact that I have gained so much by being here and I have built up my relationship with my parents, and I have accepted that the world doesn't have it in for me. I have become a different person from what I was like when I first come in, in a big way. (Ryan)

I was numb. It was all a blur. Everything went so fast. I don't know if I was scared, I don't think I was, I was nervous. I was kind of in a way glad that I was finally in, I was sentenced, and it was over. I felt stuck. (Scott)

Questions about personal change continued with a discussion of now, upon reflection, *what would you do differently?* Developing a better relationship with family was a typical response.

My family. I will always put my family first. I always used to put myself first, but not anymore. I've got very few people I would class as friends, and I've learned that in here, you learn who your true pals are, the ones who stand by you and support you. In here you meet some truly amazing people, they are just in for a circumstance, and you start speaking to people and see how they were brought up and what their life has been life, and you see how they have coped with life and look at them and say if they can do it I can do it. There are some truly special people here. (Ryan)

I've learned that I should appreciate my family time. I didn't spend that much time with my family, and I stopped speaking to my Mum. For the first, she's going to come up and visit. It will be the first time I have seen her in four years. You don't think about it when you are out there. You neglect the things you think you have time for later, then you end up in here and realise you don't. (Chris)

Lots of things. Like the way I speak. I try to be more respectful of others. I am always watching who is around and the words I use. I never really speak about what I did, I know guys that brag about what they have done, but I don't do that. I feel like this is a copout, but everything really. (Innes)

Regarding personal change, a final question that was asked of the participants pertained to values. *What do you value in life?* Dennis, Kyle, Chuck, Fred, Steve, Alex, Kevin, Gary, Danny, Scott, Gavin, Clyde, and Sean all had one response, family.

I don't know I wish I was with them. I put them through so much. This is all so new to them. They have never been to jail, and they don't know what to do. I want to make sure they are okay. They are really stressed out. (Sean)

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Chris, Innes, and Ryan all previously spoke about their relationships with family, but they also spoke about different values that they now embrace since their incarceration,

> Time. Phone calls. Sometimes you forget that when you call someone, they may not answer. Then you have missed them and your opportunity to speak with them. I miss just being able to pick up the phone and call someone. (Chris)

> I value myself. My health and fitness, eh, my friends and family. I let people down and do you know what I mean? I value my work, keeping myself in a positive routine and keeping my room clean. (Innes)

> Honesty. I think you meet a lot of people in here who lie about the silliest things, so honesty is valued above anything else. (Ryan)

This section on personal change may be more appropriately entitled *family*, but the importance of reflection on the part of the participants is the change that was identified. The fact that most of the participants never really considered the role of their family and the impact that their actions would have on their support networks is a critical component to personal change. Change can begin with altering one's outlook and developing a broader understanding of actions, feelings, and behaviours. Personal change has been closely linked to hope for the future (*see* chapter 2), which proposes that prisoners with a positive outlook may be less likely to re-offend and the ideals of hope are further reinforced when prisoners have a support system in place.

7.2.2 Growth

The theme of growth or maturity reflects the view of the participants that they have developed mentally or emotionally in a positive way. The complex question upon which all interviews concluded was, *how have you changed and how have you stayed the same since being incarcerated?* Maturity was a common response by the participants, suggesting that it is a result of incarceration. There are many ways in which these young men showed their maturity; some have developed a work ethic and no longer see crime as a responsible way to live. A change to attitude was also acknowledged as part of the maturing process. Several participants spoke about change as part of this development process, suggesting that they now have a better grasp on their life goals, relationships, and the consequences of criminality. Part of maturity is also defining

behaviours that negatively affect choice. The social context has a significant role in this developmental process, as levels of maturity will vary based on the situation. Additionally, Prior et al. (2011) found that maturity and individual agency are essential factors in overcoming structural obstacles post-incarceration.

> The way I think has changed. What I do has changed. I never saw the value of working. I just used to get stoned all the time. I didn't see the point in working. I really didn't care about my behaviour before either. Now, I think about things more now, like what I'm going to do with my life, what work means to me and education. I never thought I needed education, but now I have more qualifications. (Steve)

> When I was outside, I used to rob, steal, and beat up people. I used to take drugs. I was basically blind and running in the streets. I used to have weapons, now I would think twice. I was a bit cold-hearted. People can see how much I have changed; my pals don't really recognise me. I still always smile a lot. I like to get a laugh. I think that's it. I have changed so much. (Scott)

> I have changed in every possible way. When I came in, I was a very daft angry naïve young man, 16, I just used to follow along behind everyone else, and now I am my own person. I don't like to follow others. I like to stand out. Because I have been in for so long, that it's not something I had ever done, so I purposely sought out the opportunity. I am still stubborn. I still have my moments when I get angry, but I handle it differently. I am more likely to apologise after if I get upset with someone. (Ryan)

The participants speak of a change to personal values, attitude, and behaviour, but more importantly, how others have witnessed this change in them. This is an interesting reflection of what Goffman (1959) describes as role expectations, which can be applied to many different scenarios, but in this situation, the participants are assuming that maturity is a response to prison, but also an expected response to ageing. Becoming an adult or more mature is an important milestone for these young men. They are hopeful that this is a positive response to imprisonment. I am left to wonder if the participants are attempting to manage my impression of them, by asserting that this experience has progressed their development as a way to convince themselves and me that change has occurred. Goffman (1963) suggests that '*behaviour may change from place to place, but how it changes as well as the situations for which it changes, are*

usually constant' (p. 68). Due to different rules that govern social interaction within the institution, individual behaviour may change when the structure of the situation changes, resulting in a prisoner's self-perception being modified by their experience within the institution. This further suggests that perhaps maturity is a consequence of an involuntary identity change due to the mortification process.

7.3   Conclusion

The narratives woven throughout this data show that there is a diverse population of young men at HMYOI Polmont. Their stories focus on the learning community, but the personal biographies of each person are unique and shape the world in which they live. Allowing the participants an opportunity to share their life experiences led to self-reflection and provided a basis for discussion of identity, adding to the richness of data related to change and growth. The data reflects a consistent theme of family and support systems as motivating factors to improve and change individual attitudes and behaviours. Most participants agreed that personal growth or maturity was the most significant change they had undergone while in prison. The data also reflects that the prospect of hope for the future is present, though not delineated from the interviews with the student-prisoners. It is important to note that hope is present in their goals for the future, their optimism for success after release, and their faith in humanity lest they are judged for their convictions.

Chapter 8:   Discussion

This chapter explores the significance of the research findings by bringing together the outcomes of the data analysis with relevant literature and theory, as discussed earlier in this thesis (*see* chapters 2-3). Chapters five, six, and seven have set out the findings of this research by thematically analysing data collected from prisoners, personal officers, tutors, prison administration, and observation of the institution. This chapter will discuss more broadly the implications of these findings when set in the context of the whole prison experience. The discussion in this chapter will be presented as answers to the initial research questions and will also identify the primary themes present in the data revealing the core challenges emerging from this study to advance knowledge of prisoner education and learning within a total institution. The key themes are *personal biography* (who are the learners), *learning in prison* (what are their experiences of learning in prison), *the learning environment of prison* (impacts of the institution on learning), and *self-reflection* (narratives of change and growth).

8.1   Personal biography

As discussed in chapter three, the life history of prisoners can significantly impact an individual's self-perception, confidence, and motivation. Studies by the Prison Reform Trust (2003) and Carrigan and Maunsell (2014) both explored prisoner narratives, including their biographies and discussion of prisoner learning and education. This research provides a broader analysis of prisoner experiences and reinforces the fact that prisoner life histories are complex, and prisoners have an important narrative to share. As the core of this research examines experiences with learning and education, it is essential to note that for many of the participants their perception of school before prison was linked to a variety of social factors including family, trauma, poverty, exclusion, and for a few, learning difficulties.

The role of the family in the prisoner narratives suggest that the participants in this study had a very diverse upbringing. Many of the participants indicated that their family was their support system and reason for wanting to change. For participants in this study, weak bonds are related to experiences of trauma and loss. Half of the sample has experienced significant loss, meaning the loss of four or more family members. This can also be applied to the loss of a parent or sibling to imprisonment, or the participants own loss of freedom as a result of their incarceration (Jewkes 2011). These themes are prevalent throughout the data related to the personal life

history of the participants, suggesting that there are some consistent social experiences that most prisoners experience before their incarceration.

One of the most common themes amongst the participants was that of social inequality. The underlying symptoms are all associated with poverty. This includes a history of habitual criminality and addiction. Just over half of the participants in this study were serving a first sentence in custody and thirteen participants self-identified as having a substance abuse problem. Also, five of the participants have young children being raised by a partner or ex-partner. The combination of these factors, including low levels of education, may set prisoners up to become disadvantaged members of society upon release (Western 2006). The data in this study suggests that while the participants may expect to be socially excluded or marginalised outside of the prison community, individual persistence, motivation, and support systems may help in overcoming obstacles. However, once a prisoner is liberated, they re-enter an environment of temptation, and this was a common concern amongst the participants. Risk and choice may be present in their social world outside of the prison, and while that data shows that these prisoners do not want to offend, it may not be an easy decision to make when confronted with possible social exclusion.

The prior educational experiences of the participants are a starting point for understanding why many of the young men in this study chose to engage in prisoner education programs. Many of the participants had both positive and negative experiences on their learning journey, and there were a variety of reasons why most of the participants strayed from their educational pathway, the most common factor being exclusion from school. The *Edinburgh Study on Youth Transitions and Crime* (McAra and McVie 2010) established a relationship between exclusion from school and involvement in the justice system. The consensus amongst the participants was that the causality of being repeatedly suspended from school led to engagement in deviant or anti-social behaviour, ultimately resulting in them not returning, seeing no benefit to completing their education. Some participants also noted a lack of connection or engagement by the school and teachers, and others still noted struggling with undiagnosed learning difficulties or mental health challenges, with a lack of understanding and resources furthering their negative perceptions of education. As discussed in the literature, the presence of learning difficulties has also been linked to higher rates of crime amongst young adults (Goldstein and Glick 1987). The importance of listening to marginalised students and prioritising their needs was emphasised by Downes and

Gilligan (2007) and Spring (2007) who asserted that there is a disinclination to listen to these student groups, resulting in inequality in education and further social exclusion.

Each of the themes related to the prisoner biography has shaped the experiences of the participants in this study and will continue to influence their choices in life. While there are multiple factors which are shared amongst the participants in this study, there is not a definitive method of identifying if these characteristics or social influences can be generalised across broader populations. Research (McAra and McVie 2010) has shown that many young people in Scotland may experience similar family and social environments and never enter the criminal justice system. Many economically disadvantaged young people in Scotland may experience similar family and social environments and never enter the criminal justice system and may be unfairly labelled due to their socio-economic status. The data does speak to who are the learners in this study and reflects a diverse and complex group of young men who will, at some point, rejoin society. Therefore, we must understand how their biography has impacted and will continue to affect their path in life. Understanding who the learners at HMYOI Polmont are has provided new knowledge related to the personal life experiences of prisoners in Scotland and specifically young men incarcerated at a young offender's institution.

8.2   Learning in prison

This thesis establishes in chapter two, the importance of learning and education in prison and the overarching effects learning in prison can have on a person, their identity, and individual choice or hope for the future. While the indirect impact of education on an individual is not quantifiable, prisoner education and learning have, for some time, been recognised as a factor that can lead to change. Knowledge has the potential to change a person, their circumstances, and the way they see the world around them. The process of engagement and self-actualisation can push the learner to discover more about themselves (Illeris 2013; Mezirow 1991). Furthermore, the learning environment of prison may provide prisoners with the ability to identify as a learner instead of an object (Goffman 1961). The data collected from the learning community at HMYOI Polmont reflects a connection between student identity, learning for change, community and support.

The criminal justice system can create a uniform environment which restricts a person's individuality in addition to their freedom. Therefore, the identity of a person in custody is at risk

of becoming lost or distorted, but as Bayliss notes, 'an identity that avoids turning inmates into objects is that of student' (2003: 154). The young men in this study have embraced the student identity, and as Innes notes, '*I want to rebel against the culture of prison*'. This suggests that prisoners recognise the hierarchy of prison as punishment first. Goffman (1961) asserts that the mortifications of prison are meant to alter a person's identity and Reuss (1999) proposes that a prisoners' identity is always changing and evolving to meet the needs of the prison environment. Identity is a complicated topic to understand but is particularly difficult in the distorted reality of prison. People in custody are no longer part of broader society, but they have their micro-society within the institution where they assume similar roles such as workers and students. In this study, the student identity was prominent amongst the participants. As an example, most of the participants are peer mentors. This role can be used as a method of reinforcing and encouraging a positive student identity, but also adds to the normalcy of the learning environment (*see* Biesta 2010). The majority of prisoners represented in this study believe that learning and education are a means to overcoming criminality and offers them hope for the future (*see* chapter 2). This is a positive finding as it is evident that participation in education has led many of these young men to either develop a new identity or perhaps reaffirm the positive identity that they once held. This study affirms Maruna (2001) and Burnett and Maruna's (2004) findings that positive self-perception and identity may be critically important to the resettlement process.

As noted in chapter one, the definition of purposeful activity has been applied broadly across this study to include all aspects of learning, both formal and informal. The consensus amongst the participants suggests that engagement in learning and education are not merely to pass the time, but to improve personally and professionally. Also, the participants indicate that partaking in citizenship activities has increased their self-confidence and they are more willing to engage in activities that may not be within their comfort zone such as public speaking or tutoring other prisoners. The prisoner's perception of self is telling. In their own words, they want others to see them as good people, capable adults, and they have a belief that the skills and education they have acquired in prison will help them in resettlement. Challenges with identity-related to stigma and labelling (Goffman 1963) are still present, but the participants suggest that their accomplishments in prison may in some way, help with changing societies perception of them. This study explored the data as a means of understanding the experiences of student-prisoners at HMYOI Polmont and discovered that people in custody who engage in learning activities might experience personal change. Reuss (1999), Carrigan and Maunsell (2014), and Pike (2014) have

all made contributions to prisoner education research by making connections between engagement in learning and personal change or transformation (*see* Illeris 2013; Mezirow 1991).

Furthermore, a study by Hall and Killacky (2008) explored the student-prisoner experience and perceptions of learning in prison, identifying themes of success and regret. There are significant parallels between this thesis and the Hall and Killacky study as many of the participants expressed immense regret at their incarceration, prior actions, and failing to complete their education. The participants were able to critically reflect on their past and identify how or what led them to this moment in time, further highlighting the importance of the prisoner biography and the significance of self-reflection as a means to alter actions, behaviours, and attitudes. This thesis has added to the body of knowledge on prisoner education as the data suggests that the creation of positive student identity and self-perception, building relationships within the prison community, and critical self-reflection may provide prisoners with a more optimistic or hopeful outlook for life post-incarceration (Farrall and Calverley 2006).

The process of learning from our experiences is omnipresent, operating at all levels from the individual to society as a whole (Knowles 1980, 1984). In this case, the society represented is the prisoner learning community. The participants in this study stated that they believe they have received a better education in prison than in their community. To substantiate this assertion, the learners reflected on their tutors and the learning environment provided in prison. They noted that they enjoy learning now and could see the real-life application of what they were being taught. They also like the small class size and stated that they receive more individual attention and feel more comfortable with speaking to their tutors. A surprising revelation from the participants was that they thought that the learning spaces within the institution provided an escape, a place to be normal (Goffman 1963). This is reflected in the variety of learning spaces at HMYOI Polmont, which includes classrooms, workshops, collaborative workspaces, and living spaces.

Foucault (1977) believed that knowledge is power and that prison and education are forms of social control whereby forced discipline and indoctrination is encouraged, and power dynamics can result in mental and physical control over an individual. But prisoner education is about more than social control; it may be considered a method of distraction, a voluntary act, or an opportunity to improve oneself personally and professionally. A study by Braggins and Talbot

(2005) and Prison Reform Trust (2003) explored the power dynamic of prison officers in supporting prisoner education. The data from these studies concluded that the power relationship between punishment and support could be improved. This study has shown from the prisoner, officer, and administration perspective that supporting prisoners in purposeful activity is critical and necessary to accomplishing the administrations learning outcomes. The prisoners in this study acknowledge that not all officers at all times are supportive, but for a few of the longer serving prisoners, they state they have witnessed significant change within the prison. This sentiment was echoed by the administration, which recognises that change takes time. While Foucault (1977) may be correct that education is a form of social control, the learners in this study are already socially excluded from their communities and placed into an environment meant to suspend time (Matthews 2009). Education is a choice and may be considered an opportunity to exercise free will or self-efficacy (Bandura 1994).

This thesis was undertaken on a micro-level as the unique experiences of the sixteen young men participating in this study are not meant to prove that education can instigate desistance or even reduce reoffending, but rather to understand how and why engaging in education may be impactful to the lives of people in custody. However, there is research which reflects that learning and education in prison may be a possible factor in reducing reoffending. Studies across the United Kingdom and the United States continue to research the connection between these factors (Ministry of Justice 2014; Duwe and Clark 2014; Hall 2015; Pike 2014; Farrall and Maruna 2004; Steurer, Smith, and Tracy 2001; Graffam and Hardcastle 2007; Sedgley, Scott, Williams, and Derrick 2010; Esperian 2010). The Department of Justice commissioned a meta-analysis of prisoner education studies entitled *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education* (Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, and Miles 2013). The study identified a correlation between prisoner education and the participant's desire to desist from crime. The meta-analysis provided a broad scope across education levels and encompassed all program types from vocational to post-secondary. The recommendations of this study encourage the development of curriculum, instruction, and quality of programs to create an effective strategy across the prisons in America. Comparably, in the United Kingdom, a study of 3,085 prisoners in England and Wales showed a decrease in reoffending in two-fifths of prisoners who engaged in a variety of distance learning courses (Ministry of Justice 2014).

This research has revisited some key themes of existing studies including student identity, the impacts of personal change and reflection as a result of education, the learning community, and the role of prison staff and administration in supporting learning within the institution. These themes remain integral to prisoner education research, and this study further expands on these themes by establishing the importance of a positive learning community which promotes self-reflection and personal development.

8.3   The learning environment of prison

The data in this section is related to the impacts of the institution on learning and education and is explored through a theoretical lens which aids in understanding how the institution may influence the experiences of the actors in this study. This section also examines the relationships and challenges of a learning community within a total institution. These two threads are woven throughout the findings related to the institution and allow for concrete points to be asserted concerning the responsibility of the institution in catering to the needs of a learning community and the impacts of a carceral environment. Across the total institution, learning is ubiquitous in all capacities of daily life. How and why people in custody choose to engage in purposeful activity varies broadly, but it may merely be a matter of social engagement versus knowledge or skills development, each offering the prospect of personal growth. As discussed in chapter 2 and 3, Erving Goffman's research is an exploration of our social world. Goffman was fascinated by social interaction, and thus, this study employed his research as a conceptual method of understanding the lives of people in custody. The data in chapter eight has eluded to a balance between power and learning at HMYOI Polmont, with learners suggesting that they have gained more from their incarceration than it has taken away from them. However, the mental, physical, and social pains of imprisonment remain evident in the lives of the participants in this study (Sykes 1958; Goffman 1961).

Goffman (1961) speaks to the power of the institution as a regulating body that controls time, space, and movement of all within its walls. The institution is regulated with a precise schedule and coordinated movement of prisoners daily. However, once the regime completes its process, the non-total space where learning takes place can become normalised (Goffman 1961). The prison environment as a place of learning and normality seems paradoxical when, in reality, the participants in this study have embraced the idea of purposeful activities as a means of personal development. The participants in this study may have accepted their way of life on the inside

(colonisation), but perhaps, they are open to the opportunities presented (Goffman 1961).

Consideration should also be given to social agency in prison as the participants have each acted independently and made the decision to engage in learning opportunities. Goffman (1963) asserts that agency gives people within a total institution the ability to challenge the social norms of the environment while also maintaining a degree of autonomy. Though many of the participants in this study have acted on their behalf, many other prisoners need encouragement. This comes in the form of personal officers. The personal officers offer guidance and support to prisoners in their care and thus add a layer to the social environment of prison. Mentors can be personal officers, tutors, and for those participants who are qualified, peer mentors offering mentoring to other prisoners. Across each of these mentor-mentee relationships, trust and respect are present. These mutual feelings or beliefs represent informal learning, which is an essential competency for the participants to learn and are critical to identity development as our sense of self is further developed through social interaction and relationships (Goffman 1959; 1961; 1963). The social world of prison is complicated, but this is one area where the participants in this study felt most comfortable. Many of the young men admit that they must present their social face to others as a means of protecting their identity, whereas some participants spoke of how they use comedy as a prop to interact with others. This suggests that the young men in this study are very aware of who they are and how they want others to perceive them, but also proposes that role modelled behaviours are important to identity and maturity in prison (Goffman 1959). This data adds to the body of knowledge related to the prisoner's social experience within a total institution and builds on research related to the institution's role in developing relationships as essential to individual growth and self-awareness.

Discovering how the institution impacts learning is crucial to understanding that as a prison, Polmont is still a barrier to the outside world, representing social exclusion. This is a potential outcome of placing people in a micro-society away from their family and far from the reality of the rest of the world (Goffman 1961). The prison in my research attempts to place prisoners in social roles which may not be replicated in broader society, creating a unique system of resocialization (Goffman 1961). This may be perceived as an advantage or disadvantage as prisoners may not truly understand the expectations and reality of life outside of prison. The pressures of participating as citizens, students, and employees in prison are minimised as they are not required for life to keep moving forward, time has stopped. An argument can be made

that making use of time inside is important to the prisoner's self-esteem, confidence, and may allow them to feel they have fulfilled a useful role in their community, while also providing an opportunity to earn qualifications and skills.

Polmont has five hundred young men (give or take) entering adulthood, requiring counselling, support, and skills development. Many disclosed that they come from poverty, were involved in gangs, and out of control emotionally during the years leading up to their incarceration. To answer the research question, how and why do institutional and environmental factors influence learning and education at Polmont, all of the preceding factors must be considered (including personal background and prior learning experiences). The administration at Polmont acknowledges that these factors have contributed to the environment and institutional structure at Polmont and is what enables them to continue developing programming which seeks to address trauma, literacy, parenthood, addictions, mental health challenges, and employability. The restrictiveness and oppressiveness of prison are always present, and at Polmont, there is no difference, people are separated from their lives, suspended between their past and the future. The time in prison may be affirming and allow people to have the opportunity, but it must also prepare them to re-enter society and offer the capacity to overcome the life-long stigma of imprisonment.

This brings the discussion to a significant point, which is how can the institution change the stigma and labelling, which may occur in resettlement. The prison has stated that they aim not to brand prisoners as *'offenders or criminals*' and instead refer to the young men as *'people in custody*'. However, the data in this study suggests that stigma may be inherent for a person in custody. Many prisoners feel ashamed or remorseful of their actions and therefore, self-impose stigma upon themselves. Furthermore, the mortifications that prisoners endure as part of their incarceration may add to self-loathing and identity confusion (Goffman 1963). To challenge this social characteristic, people in custody must be able to recognise that thoughts, actions, and behaviours do not have to align with this label, nor does their social identity. The opportunity for participants to engage in learning and education in prison may create a positive student identity for many of the young men while building confidence and self-esteem. These are traits which are very important to overcoming obstacles, especially those associated with discrimination related to criminal convictions. It is also conceivable that academic success may lead to a positive student identity encouraging resilience, persistence, and optimism in student prisoners.

This discussion related to the institution has added to the body of research related to the institution's influence on prisoner identity and the curse of stigma and labelling as a result of incarceration. This research has shown that prisoners may do more to punish themselves and therefore accept negative stereotypes as a means of working through the emotional turmoil of imprisonment. Identity neutralising and the dehumanising process is still present at Polmont, but these processes may just further exacerbate the internal struggle prisoners are already experiencing.

8.4   Self-reflection

The final research question to be discussed relates to the individual, but also requires further consideration as the data for this study has offered consistent threads of how change and growth are evident in educational interactions and relationships with members of the institution. The data for this research question resulted in two themes: change and growth. The prisoner narratives related to these two themes were consistent throughout the data collection and led to a more in-depth exploration of the participant's biography and current experiences as an incarcerated individual.

The participants in this study state that maturity is an automatic result of being in prison. They believe that personal growth is part of life in prison, and for some participants, they have learned more from daily interactions with peers, officers, and tutors than from specific educational provision (*see* Biesta 2010). This finding is important as the participants suggest that the entire experience of prison is a learning opportunity and it is plausible that the combination of learning and experience has the potential to create new knowledge, personal growth, and a deeper awareness of the world. Much of the participant's experience is in the form of communication and relationships. There was a consensus that personal officers and tutors are a lifeline for prisoners as these daily interactions push the participants to engage and develop personally, not just academically. The relationships that are formed between prisoners and officers could be perceived as a mentoring role and for others, a role model. These are essential roles to model in a YOI as many of the young men at Polmont may not have had the opportunity to experience a positive role model or a constructive relationship with another adult.

While these young men have been sentenced to a young offender's institution, they are adults. They are at an age where they need to see positive adult behaviours modelled to learn and develop as men. The personal officers who contributed to this study sought to engage the young men in their care in any activity which can facilitate personal growth. They encourage participation in activities which the prisoner has shown interest, but also push them to partake in activities which may challenge them in overcoming obstacles and changing perceptions. Both have been shown to support individual change and encourage a more hopeful outlook for resettlement. The young men engaged in core skills learning and vocational programming also noted a positive experience and a supportive environment within their learning spaces. The tutors and teaching officers spoke about encouraging and supporting learners with all aspects of the curriculum. An example is collaborative teamwork that is required in carpentry or the trust relationships that prisoners develop with their dogs as part of the *Paws for Progress* program. The informal skills learned as part of these courses may be as important to individual growth as formal math, or English skills are to qualifications.

The young men who participated in this research spoke at length about the challenges of being separated from family and friends, but also how this distance has helped to strengthen their relationships. For some of these young men who have strained parental relations, they have chosen to begin mending these connections. The experience of prison has allowed them time for self-reflection, and in hindsight, many of the prisoners have started to understand why their relationships became difficult and resulted in a loss. *Fred* spoke about his struggle with ADHD and the role of his outbursts after his parents divorced. He never understood that the strained relationship with his mother was a result of his actions and behaviours. Throughout our interviews, he came to see the importance of having his mother in his life. This is one particular case, but it suggests that with time away from family, *Fred* was able to reflect on his actions and realise what the relationship with his mother meant to him. This shows personal growth and maturity as to how *Fred* thinks about the role of others in his life and provides a critical finding that reinforces the significance of support systems in contributing to optimism and self-esteem (Visher and O'Connell 2012) for people in custody (*see* chapter 2).

The literature in chapter two explores hope and support as a means of developing individual agency, and as Farrall and Calverley (2006) assert hope is bi-directional, it encourages action and also reinforces and reproduces action. Most of the participants in this study did state that they

were hopeful. They indicated this through a variety of responses related to challenges they may encounter after prison, discussion of future goals, and how they would like others to perceive them. Their responses suggest that to some extent, they may see the world through *'rose coloured glasses'*, but this is not necessarily a negative, as having too much optimism can allow for setbacks while still maintaining a positive outlook. The fact that these young men are willing and able to consider life after their experience in prison shows that prison may not have a permanent or lasting effect on all prisoners, perhaps resilience and hope are attributes that can be developed in prison resulting in personal change and growth.

A fundamental question asked of the prisoners is *'how have you changed and how have you stayed the same since your incarceration*?' This question more than any other provides a concrete indication that the participants have experienced personal change due to their imprisonment. Prison is composed of a diverse group of people residing within a micro-society, vulnerable and marginalised from broader society. Goffman (1961) asserts that prison is meant to break the individual, forcing the prisoner to become separated from their culture while attempting to maintain an identity that no longer fits with their reality. Most participants in this study noted that they had changed in every way possible, suggesting that personal actions and behaviours were assessed and required a change. The young men in this study asserted that altering their perception of others was critical to assimilating to life in prison. Most participants also stated that they would never change their personality. They felt as though it was possible to change behaviours and choices while staying true to who you are. This statement can be examined more critically, but the fact remains that who we are is not always evident by our actions, and therefore we can change, while also staying the same.

Analysing the data from a life history perspective provides an opportunity to interpret the narrative of each individual while also organising it in a way that offers a coherent account which speaks to the diverse ways in which people can or want to change as a result of their experiences in prison. This discussion of change and growth requires further exploration of the personal biography of the participants as they have spent time examining their lives, experiences, and choices while in custody. This would indicate that these young men may be using their time in prison to assess their biography in order to understand who they are and determine how and why they may need to change, instead of asserting that they must change. The findings in this study related to change and growth in prison contribute to the body of research pertaining to

prisoner experiences as the participants in this study have made active choices to be reflective and engage in their community whilst in custody, in lieu of accepting prison as a tolerable world where time and space are managed (Goffman 1961). They have chosen to lead their daily lives by becoming citizens in their microenvironment, and while they may not be able to manage their space, they may still be able to manipulate it by choosing how they interact with it.

Discussion of education as a reflective project for prisoners is a further component of change and growth evident in the data. The prisoners in this study suggest that they use education and learning experiences at Polmont as a means of challenging themselves, asserting their knowledge, and overcoming the perils of prison life. The choice to participate shows growth on the part of the participants, as most prisoners have a complicated history with education. However, choice led to self-confidence, which then led to developing goals for the future. Many of these young men felt lost in life before prison, and now they think that they have accomplished something that will help them to be more successful in life. Based on the data related to qualifications (*see* chapter 6), several of the participants are slowly progressing academically, but in hindsight, any step towards self-improvement is essential and should be acknowledged. Engaging in learning and education in prison does not necessarily mean that the student will earn a first degree or even continue their education beyond prison, but it is an opportunity for them to make a choice. This is significant to prisoner education research, as many studies focus on the result of qualifications or completion of education programmes, when perhaps the choice to engage in the first place is an indication that change and growth are inevitable.

The final discussion in this section explores how change and growth are impacted by stigma and labelling. The assigned 'spoiled identity' of people in custody can significantly impact a person's ability to change once liberated (Goffman 1963). For many people, their experiences of prison become a secret stigma that can be hidden from the world, until they need employment or external support. Once disclosed, formerly incarcerated individuals are at risk of being labelled by a society that has a structured classification system for what is normal and what is not (Goffman 1963). Balancing the expectations of society has the potential to cause chaos and anxiety further exacerbating the re-entry process and discouraging change and growth. Many of the participants in this study have asserted that they are aware of society's expectations and expect challenges; this is where the importance of family support and hope become most critical. Individual motivation also seems to have a role in shedding the prisoner identity, but perhaps the

age of the participants in this study is vital to understanding how they perceive social identity. This data contributes to research related to prisoner identity and social experiences by considering that identity is perceived differently by the current generation of young men at Polmont with an understanding that identity is fluid and changes based on our life experiences.

This discussion chapter has synthesised the data and findings to show how the data corresponds to the research questions, how the aims of the study have been met and how the findings have added to the body of research on prisoner education and prisoner experiences, as well as the institution's role in facilitating a learning community. The final chapter of this thesis (9) concludes the study with the affirmation of the contributions of knowledge made to the body of research on prisoner education and recommendations for new areas of research related to education and criminology.

Chapter 9:   Conclusion

The core objectives of this study aimed to understand the personal biography of prisoners better, explore how prisoners interpret and give meaning to learning and education in prison, the role of the institution in providing an environment of learning, and the potential outcomes of prisoners participating in learning and education in custody. This study further endeavoured to examine how and why learning may be impactful to prisoner identity, self-perception, and assessed the importance of formal and informal learning for people in custody. These aims, along with the defined research questions, evaluated the data through the use of thematic analysis. This process of analysis identified emergent themes from the participant (prisoners, administration, officers, and tutors) interviews and researcher observation leading to the creation of a vibrant narrative which explored the prisoner's world. This study has provided data which reflects a complex group of young men remanded to custody in Scotland. These young men proved to have dynamic personalities, each offering their perspective of their experience in prison. The participants provided data that has added to the body of research related to the micro-society of prisoner life. The interdisciplinary nature of this data will inform future research on prisoner experience, education, and the social environment of prison.

This study affirms that the prisoner experience is influenced by individual motivation, self-awareness, support systems, and relationships. In an environment which is strictly controlled, the participants were able to develop agency, and for many of these young men, this was triggered by their impetus to learn. Self-awareness became an essential aspect of discovering how the participants perceive themselves and how they plan to interact with the world once liberated. Many of the young men in this study assert that they now have a positive student identity as a result of pursuing an education at Polmont. The prisoner's ability to identify as students is vital as it may reflect that certain positive traits (*i.e.* resilience, hope, optimism) are directly correlated with learning in prison and further suggests that the choice to engage in learning while in prison is representative of ongoing change and individual growth (*see* chapter 2). Research related to the prisoner experience is further enhanced by understanding that identity for people in custody may be perceived differently depending on the age and/or gender of the incarcerated person. Identity development may prove to be critical to combating stigma and labelling as a result of incarceration as this research identified that prisoners tend to associate themselves with socially constructed stereotypes as a method of coping (*see* chapter

2-3). Research related to prisoner identity is a developing field. However, there is already noteworthy research which has identified education and change as potential indicators of positive identity development (Reuss 1999; Crewe 2012; Liebling 2013; Pike 2014; Carrigan and Maunsell 2014).

Research continues to reflect the importance of support systems and relationships in reducing reoffending. This study has shown that a stable support system is significant in the process of change as many participants in this study indicated that family is a primary driver for personal change (*see* chapter 2). The participants also spoke to the need for relationships while in custody. This is evidenced as part of this study as the relationships that the participants developed with teaching staff, personal officers, and other young men in custody helped to guide and model behaviours and actions while also encouraging citizenship within the prison community. Citizenship has become an essential aspect of learning in prison as people in custody are provided with opportunities that inspire participation and responsibility to live as contributing members of society (*see* chapter 3). Citizenship roles within the prison community aim to encourage autonomy, self-respect and helps prisoners learn how to work through social problems in a collaborative environment. HMYOI Polmont has incorporated aspects of citizenship throughout the living and learning community of their institution. They have provided opportunities for the young men in their care to learn about themselves through citizenship schemes while also developing informal skills necessary to reintegration into broader society. Research related to citizenship in prison has become an emerging field of study as it challenges the reality that the institution is dehumanising and degrading for people in custody. Continued research in this area may provide a broader understanding of how and why the social community of prison can help people to learn compromise, teamwork, and acceptance.

Further to exploring the social world of people in custody, the personal biography of the prisoners provided a framework for understanding how and why the young men in this study chose to pursue education, but also reaffirmed that people in custody in Scotland come from backgrounds where social exclusion and poverty are at the core of their experiences. The intergenerational trends of addiction, incarceration, and exclusion from education indicate that the current approach to supporting people in Scotland may be problematic. The citizen's advice service has reported that getting people into work is the only remedy to poverty (Citizens Advice Scotland 2018). However, many of the young men incarcerated at Polmont come from areas of Scotland

where employment prospects have eroded over time due to economic instability and vanishing industry. The state of employment and locale of the prisoner are important factors to consider as most people released from custody are being returned to their home environment. While a support system may be present, if extreme deprivation and unemployment are prevalent in their community, then people are being set up to fail in resettlement. This is an area which requires additional research as people in custody at HMYOI Polmont are offered the opportunity to gain employability and academic skills, but the locality they return to will determine if they can be successful or at a higher risk of reoffending.

The total institution, as described by Goffman (1961), is a basic social environment where people eat, sleep, play, and work. An overarching authority monitors all activities and in the presence of all others remanded to the same fate. There is a strict routine to daily life, and all occurrences are aimed at meeting institutional outcomes. The social aims of the institution are to distort identity and use the strategic management of men as a means of leveraging life beyond the institution. This vivid description of a total institution represents Goffman's (1961) perceptions and observations of an environment ruled by fear and authority. The relevance of Goffman's work is still a critical starting point for exploring the impacts of the institution on people in custody and their individual experiences. Beyond *Asylums* Goffman's research has provided context for understanding the micro-environment of prison and the importance of social interaction in managing identity and self-perception as Goffman (1959) created a metaphorical approach to exploring the 'interaction order' and its role in shaping the organisation of the self.

Also, Goffman (1963) provides significant research on the role of stigma and labelling for people with '*spoiled identities*' as a means of understanding the challenges a person re-entering society may experience as a result of their incarceration. Goffman notes that by definition, a person with a stigma is seen by society as not quite human, thus allowing society to discriminate against them and limit their life chances. People who re-join society are expected to conform to social norms, suggesting that broader society is not so different from the social environment of prison. Goffman's research remains pertinent to research related to prisons and prisoner experiences, but the carceral outcomes of the institution have evolved over the decades since Erving Goffman studied the experiences of people in a mental asylum, resulting in a change to institutional perceptions and impacts on people in custody. This research does not negate Goffman's work related to the institution; instead, it builds upon his conceptual framework as a method of

evaluating the factors associated with imprisonment. While the negative attributes of incarceration are still present at HMYOI Polmont, there are aspects of the institution which aim to reduce the *'pains of imprisonment'* by providing access to purposeful activities and social engagement. This final sentiment from *Chuck* suggests that some of the young men at Polmont may continue to see their imprisonment as a positive obstacle for which they can overcome.

> I want people to know that Polmont is not a bad place; it is for everybody. I am the same as people outside; maybe they just didn't get caught. I am glad I came here. We help people, and we give back to the community. Everybody can change if they want. There are so many programs here that can help you. People wonder how boys can change so much, and it's because we have so much while we are here to support us.

This research has explored the lives of sixteen young men imprisoned at HMYOI Polmont, giving them a voice and opportunity to share their narrative with a broader audience. The area of research related to prisoner education and experiences is continuously growing with new studies attempting to understand long-serving prisoner experiences (Crewe et al. 2017), the impact of carceral places on the prisoner (Jewkes 2005, 2013) and repeat offender's self-perceptions (Schinkel 2015). After this study, there are several areas of research which would be beneficial to enhance the findings of this study and enriching multidisciplinary research related to prisoner education. The first recommendation would be to conduct a longitudinal study of prisoners released from HMYOI Polmont to determine the availability of opportunities provided by engagement in education in prison. The concern is that people gaining qualifications in custody may experience difficulty with entering a more traditional learning environment, such as a further learning college or university. Also, an analysis of the type of educational provision that is pursued by those people leaving custody would be used for understanding if the provision on offer is relevant to people re-entering the job market. Second, research related to career or employability counselling for people in custody could offer prisoners an opportunity to explore career pathways through understanding their personality traits, strengths, and the potential to view employment as a career versus just a job, as well as how to navigate potential stigma and discrimination because of disclosure of their criminal convictions. Throughout my career in education, I have come to discover that most young people entering the job market do not fully understand the breadth of opportunities available to them or what is needed to achieve their employment goals. Providing resources or advising while they are in prison may allow prisoners

the capacity to plan for the future and develop a more holistic academic plan. Therefore, research related to how young people undertake career exploration or the development of a model for assessing traits and professional prospects for people in custody could be beneficial to structuring academic goals, developing employment materials whilst in custody (*i.e.* curriculum vitae, cover letters), and researching potential employers that may align with their skills and are open to hiring people who have been in custody.

From an educational perspective, this study has identified that a diverse learning environment and opportunity in custody can provide people with hope for the future. Learning in prison assumes a variety of forms and has the potential to lead to individual change. From a criminological perspective, prison remains a place of deprivation, restricting personal freedom, and one's conception of time and space. The aims of research within these disciplines may be contradictory at times, but the outcomes of this study have shown that prisoner education is an area of research that requires a critical multidisciplinary approach to examine the complex environment of a prisoner learning community.

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Appendices

1) Consent form example

2) Information sheet example

3) Interview schedules

4) Transcribed interview codes and themes

5) Thematic Map

6) The Scottish Prison Service Research Access and Ethics Committee Application

7) SPS Positive Futures Plan

Research Information & Consent for SPS Staff & Tutors

Transformative Learning:

The young person's perception of prisoner education

PhD Researcher: Michelle Waldron, email:

s1400365@sms.ed.ac.uk

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to better understand the motivation, participation, and perceptions of education by young people during incarceration. This study also seeks to identify if education can impact the frame of reference or individual identity of the learner resulting in a transformative learning experience. The results of this study aim to make a small contribution to the on-going improvement of offender learning programmes at Polmont.

Research Methods

Individuals within the SPS and teaching professionals are asked to participate in one interview session, with the possibility of an additional meeting in 2016. The initial interview will take place in November 2015 and will cover the educational programming at Polmont as well as classroom support and working with students in a prison environment.

Confidentiality and Right to Withdraw

- All interviews will be recorded for use by the researcher during the transcription of interviews and all participants will be coded with a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality.
- All recordings/documents will be secured on an encrypted laptop, and the researcher will destroy all recordings within five years from the completion of the doctoral thesis.
- All participants have the right to withdraw from the research process at any time without reason.
- All participants have the right to ask questions and clarify their role in the research throughout the process.
- As this is a qualitative study, individual experiences and perspectives are essential to the outcome of this research. Please know that opinions, conversations, and experiences of all participants contributing to this research will be kept anonymous and confidential.

- This research is guided by the British Educational Research Association's ethical code (http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/Ethical%20Guidelines).

By signing this document, you are stating that you understand the points below:

- I am willing to participate as an interviewee in this research study
- I understand that my name and personal details will not be used in the research and that care will be taken to ensure that my views remain anonymous.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason.
- I also accept that selected quotes from the interview may be used in the presentations and publications that arise from this research.
- Audiotapes and transcriptions of interviews will be destroyed at the end of this research.

Name (Printed): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Young Offender Consent and Information Sheet

Information & Consent for Doctoral Research

Transformative Learning:

The young person's perception of prisoner education

PhD Researcher: Michelle Waldron, email: s1400365@sms.ed.ac.uk

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to better understand the meaning of educational experiences for young people in prison. Your story is essential to determining the impact education may have on an individual.

What is required of you?

- Three separate one-hour interviews, over one year (Nov, Jan, & March).
- Interviews will focus on your experience at Polmont and education.

Do I qualify for participation?

It is important that you:

- Are currently serving a sentence at Polmont November 2015-March 2016.
- Are prepared to discuss your personal experiences and are willing to share your thoughts on education.

Potential Risks & Benefits

- The risks to you as a participant in this study are minimal, but there is a possibility of emotional duress, as you will be asked to discuss your personal experiences and history with education.
- This study aims to better understand your motivation/participation and experiences with education while in prison and to provide an outlet for you to share these experiences.

Confidentiality & Right to Withdraw

- You will be asked for permission to record our conversations, and they will only be used to record your responses.
- Our meetings will be confidential, and your real name will not be used.

- If this study is used publicly, you will not be personally identified, but parts of our conversation may be directly quoted.

- All data and recordings will be destroyed within five years from completion of the research.

- You have the right to withdraw from this study and request that all previous information be destroyed at any time.

- When complete, you will be given a copy of your final case study.

- You can ask questions and request an explanation of your role throughout this study.

- This research is guided by the British Educational Research Association's ethical code (http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/Ethical%20Guidelines).

By signing this document, you are stating that you understand the points below:

- I am willing to participate as an interviewee in this research study

- I understand that you will not use my name or personal information at any time.

- I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason, including withdrawing all data submitted for the study.

- I agree to allow the use of direct quotes from our conversations with the understanding that my personal information will not be used.

- All record of our conversations will be destroyed within five years.

Name (Printed): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix (3) Interview Schedule for student participants

Session 1: Perceptions of education

To gain the trust of participants, the first interview will be focused on the current educational experiences of the individual and allow them an opportunity to think about the purpose of education, before moving on to discussing more personal topics in the second interview.

Session 2: Background of individual

These interviews will delve deeper into the experiences, past, and thought processes of the participants and allow them an opportunity to share their story from the beginning. Discussion of education is still the focus but understanding how a variety of influences has shaped their experiences is important to create a full picture of who they are and how they see the world.

Session 3: Reflection on educational experiences and self

The third interview will allow the participants to reflect on their experience over the past year and share their thoughts on the education process as well as discuss changes in themselves and contemplate what the future holds.

Interview Session 1, November 2015

1. What types of educational opportunities have you pursued at Polmont?
2. What other types of purposeful activities do you pursue (reading, TV, etc.)?
3. Why did you pursue this course(s)?
4. What do you hope to gain from your participation in this course?
5. Has participation in this course allowed you to reflect on your view of education?
6. What are your thoughts on the different types of education offered at Polmont?
7. What is your relationship with your tutor like?
8. Why did you want to participate in this research?

Interview Session 2, January 2016

1. Did you live at home with your parents or another relative, in care?
2. Do you have siblings?
3. What was your experience with school before coming to Polmont?
    a. What one word would you use to describe your experience with school?
    b. What was your biggest achievement in school?

     c.   How many schools did you attend?

4. What is the last course you completed before coming to Polmont?

5. What kind of student were you (how did you get on as a student)?

6. What was your favourite subject at school? Why?

7. What was your least liked subject? Why?

8. What did you get excluded from school for?

     a.   What did you do with your day while you were excluded?

9. If you could return to school now, would you? Why?

10. Did you have close friends in school?

     a.   Did your friends complete their schooling?

     b.   Did your parents and/or siblings complete their schooling?

11. Do your parents/guardian work?

     a.   What do your siblings do for work/education?

12. What do you see yourself doing as a career or job once you are released? Why?

     a.   How will you qualify for this type of position?

13. Do you have your own family or partner?

14. What role will your family have in your resettlement?

15. What is your role in your resettlement?

Interview Session 3, March 2016

1. Would you say that grew up in a working-class family?

2. Do you feel that you lived in poverty?

3. Have you ever been diagnosed with a mental, emotional, or social disorder?

4. Did your conviction and/or incarceration lead to any specific feelings about yourself?

5. What type of feelings do you recall experiencing after your first day in prison?

6. Are there things in your life that you now think differently about?

7. What do you value?

8. Define the word "learn", what does this mean to you?

9. Have you learned anything from your experience in the criminal justice system?

10. Do you feel that your participation education/incarceration has resulted in a change in the way you think or act?

11. Have your experiences with education at Polmont influenced your future goals?

12. How would you define the word "transformation"?

13. Would you consider prison to be transformative?

14. Is there is a contradiction between learning & punishment in this environment?

15. What do you consider to be "rehabilitation" in a prison setting?

16. Do you feel that the idea of law and order and rehabilitation can coexist?

17. How would you describe yourself to someone who did not know you?

18. How would your friends or family describe you?

19. How would you like "others" to perceive you?

20. How would you have described yourself upon arrival at Polmont? And now?

21. In what ways have you changed and stayed the same?

22. Is there anything else that you feel would be useful for my research (which seeks to better understand the experiences of YP with education during incarceration) that you would like to share?

Appendix (4)   Transcribed interview codes and themes

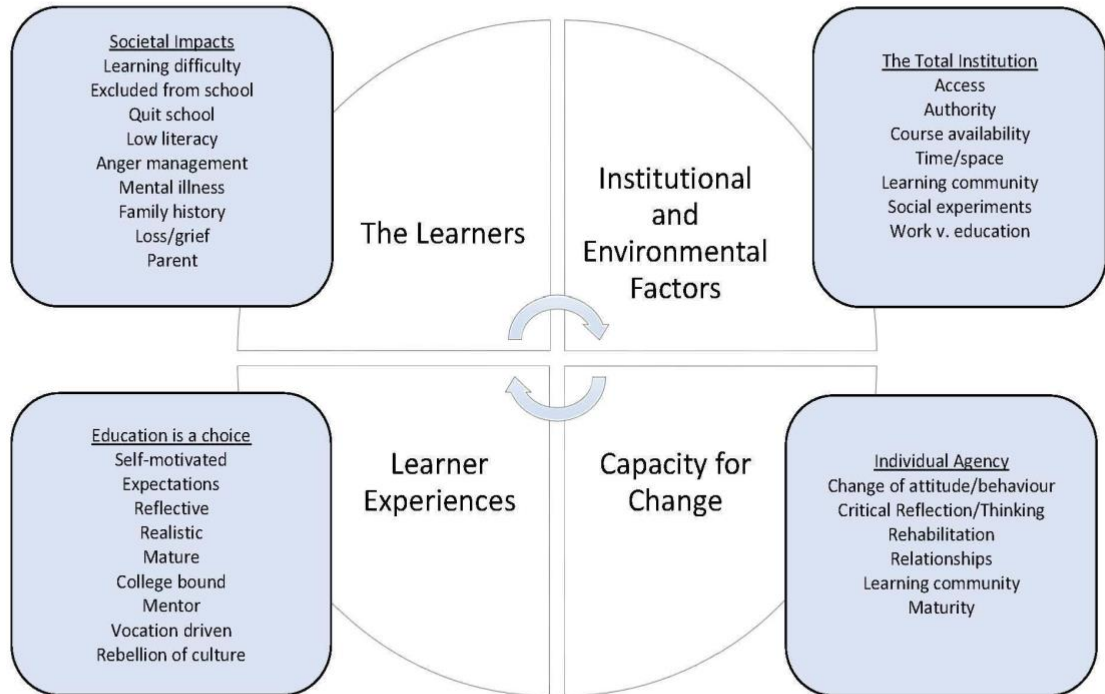| Overarching Themes	Codes	Definitions	Themes
Who are the Learners	Learning difficulty	the individual has experienced a physical, emotional, or behavioural malady which has impacted learning	Societal Impacts of poverty
	Excluded from school	an individual who was removed from school on various occasions due to a variety of reasons	
	Quit school	the individual chose to leave school permanently	
	Low Literacy	the individual has not mastered the ability to read or write	
	Anger management	an emotional response to life situations	
	Mental Illness (depression, self-harm, addiction)	a condition that affects the normal function of the mind/body	
	Family history of incarceration, violence, outbursts	the individual has a family history of crime or violence for a variety of reasons	
	Parent	the individual has a child that is in their care	
	Grief/Loss	the feelings associated with death	
	Protection Unit	the need to be protected from others within a prison community due	

		to bullying, fighting, etc.	
	Unengaged/Close-minded	a person who is not willing to seek new opportunities	
	Immature	An individual who may need additional time to develop (mentally, emotionally, etc.)	
	On remand	an individual who has not been officially sentenced for their crimes	
	Joker, comedian persona	the individual describes himself as a joker, funny, or enjoys cracking jokes	
Learner Experiences	Self-motivated/ Expectations set	finds a reason for engaging in learning activities	Education is a choice, expectations, maturity, critical reflection is necessary for rehabilitation
	Creative	the artist uses imagination to create something unique	
	Reflective	capable of thoughtful and reflective practice	
	Realistic, optimistic, overcoming obstacles	the individual has an outlook which is positive or open-minded about their future	
	Learner	engages in experiences of learning	
	Mature	the individual has grown to develop a personal sense of self	
	Change of attitude	the individual is considering education and their future	
	Changed behaviour	a personal observation as to how an individual has developed or altered their behaviour	

	Rebellion of culture	an individual who opposes a certain component of their culture and seeks to overcome an oppressive environment	
	College Bound/Student	an individual who seeks to or identifies as a student	
	Mentor	an individual that seeks to advise others as part of their rehabilitation	
	vocation driven	an individual with interest in vocational learning and seeking employment	
Institutional and Environmental Factors	Courses/SQA/Qualifications	an offering of courses and qualifications taught by Fife College	Power, Authority, educational opportunities, learning community, time/space, social experiments, work v. education
	Supportive Environment	the role of the student is central in the learning community	
	Adapting to the learner/ teaching style	the tutor adapts their teaching style to support the learning ability of all students in the class	
	Education as rehabilitation	the perception of tutors teaching within the prison community	
Capacity for Change	Change of attitude	the individual is considering education and their future	Transformative opportunities, personal change, self-reflection, rehabilitation, relationships,
	Changed behaviour	a personal observation as to how an individual has developed or altered their behaviour	
	Rehabilitation	prisoner experiences result in a change to attitude and behaviours	

	Critical Reflection/ thinking	ability to think deeply about the past and future	learning community
	Relationships	the perceived relationship between student/teacher and prisoner/officer	
	Learning Community	the environment in which learners engage and learn from each other	
	Maturity	personal growth resulting in self-reflection	

Appendix (5) Thematic Map

Overarching Themes from Data Collection

Societal Impacts
Learning difficulty
Excluded from school
Quit school
Low literacy
Anger management
Mental illness
Family history
Loss/grief
Parent

The Learners

Institutional
and
Environmental
Factors

The Total Institution
Access
Authority
Course availability
Time/space
Learning community
Social experiments
Work v. education

Education is a choice
Self-motivated
Expectations
Reflective
Realistic
Mature
College bound
Mentor
Vocation driven
Rebellion of culture

Learner
Experiences

Capacity for
Change

Individual Agency
Change of attitude/behaviour
Critical Reflection/Thinking
Rehabilitation
Relationships
Learning community
Maturity

Appendix (6) Scottish Prison Service Research Access and Ethics Committee Application

RESEARCH ACCESS

GUIDANCE

SPS RESEARCH

STRATEGY UNIT

OCTOBER 2011

Introduction

The purpose of this information pack is to furnish guidance to researchers, and in particular research students who are undertaking a recognised post-graduate qualification, on the procedures for applying for access to the Scottish Prison Service to conduct empirical research. Although this guidance is intended primarily for MSc or PhD students, the advice contained herein is of general relevance to all those who may be contemplating research work within a prison environment.

Opportunities to undertake research within SPS are limited by the nature and operating environment of the organisation, but SPS is always open to collaborating with qualified individuals and research students who can demonstrate clarity of purpose and evidence quality proposals pertaining to prisons research.

In order to ensure that all research is methodologically sound, complies with ethical codes of conduct and is of relevance to the work of the Service, all researchers must submit in writing a full outline proposal to SPS. Proposals must have the formal approval of the relevant university supervisor or course leader where appropriate.

Proposals should be submitted to:

Dr Jim Carnie

Research Services

SPS Headquarters

Calton House

Redheughs Rigg

Edinburgh

EH12 9HW

james.carnie@sps.pnn.gov.uk

Role of Research in SPS

Research needs to be an integral part of any organisation's activities. If an organisation (and the business or service it delivers) is to advance and keep pace with a rapidly changing world, then it must innovate and adapt its *modus operandi* to suit the environment in which it functions.

Research's role within SPS is to inform the decision-making process and to furnish sound evidence upon which policy and practice can be founded. It has been, and remains, founded on five principle functions:

- *provide reliable and valid research and evaluation evidence and performance measurement information to underpin rational, strategic decision making within the Service;*

- *provide relevant data analyses, performance information, evaluations and research-based evidence to a broad range of public, organisational and parliamentary interests (from grassroots to Partner Agencies to Ministers);*
- *scan the domestic and international horizons and disseminate innovative thinking on, inter alia, organisational performance, multi-agency collaborative working, penological practice, and criminal justice reform;*
- *encourage appropriate skills, knowledge and information transfer across the organisation and between associate partner agencies; and*
- *contribute to the improved efficiency and effectiveness of the Service by delivering an approved agenda of performance measurement, benchmarking activities and programme of research and evaluation projects to time, quality and budget.*

The Research Access and Ethics Committee

All external and internal requests to conduct empirical research within the Scottish Prison Service are considered by the SPS Research Access and Ethics Committee. The Committee meets every two months to assess research proposals, which have been submitted for consideration. Meetings take place in the second week of February, April, June, August, October and December. Papers are required to be submitted seven days in advance of the meeting.

Requests are received from a diverse range of researchers and proposals can vary dramatically in quality and content, but all are assessed against standard criteria which include items such as **literature review, knowledge of the substantive area of enquiry, methodology, objectives, ethical propriety, utility of the proposed work for SPS, experience and ability of the researcher, sensitivity to the prison environment, extent of access required, timescales and dissemination plans.**

Membership of the Committee is drawn from research, psychology, statistics and health care. The Committee acts as a quality assurance mechanism to ensure that only relevant, valid and methodologically sound research is conducted in SPS. It is always mindful of 'research fatigue' within the Service (where a particular topic or location is potentially being over researched) and is careful to protect both prisoners and staff against unwarranted intrusion. Periodically, prison

matters become highly topical and the Committee regulates the volume of research at any given time.

As a general rule, access is normally granted only to work which has a relevance to the Service and which is compatible with the existing programme of research priorities. **Undergraduate students are not permitted access to conduct empirical research for the completion of first degrees in order to safeguard the system from overload**.

All researchers allowed access to establishments are required to sign an undertaking binding them to ensure anonymity and confidentiality to all persons involved in the study and to abide by the appropriate ethical guidelines of their profession or discipline. The Committee upholds the highest ethical standards to protect the welfare and dignity of prisoners. Where health related research is involved, concomitant clearance is also required from the relevant NHS Research Ethics Committee.

Adherence to the research access process allows accurate records to be kept regarding research demand, prevents possible repetition or duplication of effort, permits priority to be given to SPS-sponsored work, monitors levels of research activity in Scottish prisons, imposes a standard set of regulations on all researchers entering prisons, ensures ethical propriety and provides an official channel for keeping Ministers and the Scottish Parliament informed about research in SPS.

Contacts and Further Information

Jim Carnie   Head of Research

Roisin Broderick   Researcher (Offender Outcomes)

Bryan Clark   Research Support

Write to: Research Services, Scottish Prison Service, Headquarters, Calton House, Redheughs Rigg, Edinburgh EH12 9HW
Telephone: 0131 244 8771 or 0131 244 8770
E-mail: james.carnie@sps.pnn.gov.uk
                      roisin.broderick@sps.pnn.gov.uk
                      bryan.clark@sps.pnn.gov.uk

SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE - RESEARCH ACCESS APPLICATION

<u>Applicant:</u> Michelle Waldron, M.Ed.

<u>Supervisor:</u> Professor Sheila Riddell Professor Carolin Kreber

<u>University:</u> The University of Edinburgh, Moray House School of Education

<u>Title of research:</u> Transformative Learning: The young offender's perception of prisoner education

<u>Literature review and substantive content</u> As of July 2015, there are currently 272 young men serving time in Scottish prisons. However, the population of young people incarcerated is on the decline in Scotland as are reoffending rates. My research on the Scottish Prison Service illustrates aspirations to continue decreasing the population within the prison service by providing opportunities for rehabilitation, education, and transformation. The focus of my research with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) aims to understand the motivation and participation of educational experiences for young men at HMYOI Polmont. Polmont is a teaching community that encourages young people to pursue a variety of educational, vocational, and training experiences during incarceration. HMYOI Polmont has developed an ambitious programme that seeks to transform the lives of young offenders and to improve their prospects for successful resettlement on release. In 2013, The Chief Executive of the SPS stated, "the SPS's intention is to establish HMYOI Polmont as a secure college and referred to the establishment of a national guidance panel, made up of representatives from Education Scotland, health authorities, third sector and local communities, to consider how this can be achieved"(Scottish Parliament, 2013, p. 28). The forward-thinking changes at Polmont

combined with goals of the Chief Executive of the SPS, *Vision for Young Offenders*, and the Curriculum for Excellence, create a supportive and thriving environment where young people can learn and grow.

The vision of SPS Offender Learning outlines, "that everyone in our care has the opportunity to engage in creative and flexible learning that unlocks potential, inspires change and builds individual strengths" (Standing Literacy Commission, 2015, p. 5). This person-centred approach aligns with social practice principles and hopes to expand and encourage participation in education within the prison service. The Scottish Prison Service has established a range of activities that support learning from the development of a learning disabilities/difficulties programme, which will help identify individuals in the prison population to innovative partnerships such as STIR magazine. Alternative programmes such as *Inspiring Change,* a yearlong program, which engaged offenders in an arts-based curriculum (Sams, 2014), to *Paws for Progress*. A partnership with the SPCA to motivate offenders to train dogs for adoption (Paws for Progress, 2014), and the *Mean Business Plan* (HMIe, 2008), which sought to engage learners in undertaking a business-related project that would allow them to develop the skills and approaches required to start and run a successful small business. Sams (2014) notes that programs like *Inspiring Change* have "demonstrated that projects can embed a range of basic literacy, numeracy, and IT skills, and provide opportunities for students to acquire skills such as time management, collaboration, and problem-solving that are needed for work and life in the community" (p. 199). These programmes have allowed individuals to take advantage of flexible and informal approaches to education while emphasising experiential and creative learning environments.

There are many diverse opportunities for young people to participate in learning experiences in prison, but learning requires motivation, and for many young people, education is something that has been done to them, taken away from them, imposed, ordered and required. To think of learning as something more, young offenders need to see the impact of education. In the words of Freire (1996),

For the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. This perception is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for liberation; it must become the motivating force for liberating action (p. 31).

Education can become the liberating achievement for young people at Polmont if they choose to see the value and relevance of the educational opportunities presented to them. Young people need to understand the role of skills development in their rehabilitation and transformation process.

The role of *The Vision for Young Offenders* (2014) is also important to education and the future goals of the Scottish Prison Service. The *Vision* was developed with the aim:

To use the time the young person spends in custody to enable them to prepare for a positive future by providing, in a safe and secure learning environment, experiences which will build their knowledge, skills and employability and promote their successful reintegration to their communities and desistance from offending. The vision comes from a belief that young people who have offended have the potential to contribute positively to their communities and that it is the responsibility of Scottish Prison Service and partners to do all they can to help them to achieve this (Scottish Prison Service, 2014, p. 2-3).

The *Vision for Young Offenders* as well as the vision and mission of the Scottish Prison Service aim to support offenders through a holistic approach. This approach includes learning as a central component and thus has the potential to promote transformative learning experiences for offenders. The *Vision for Young Offenders* outlines the development of a learning community at HMYOI Polmont and comprises a phased individual plan for learners, which will carry them through their time in custody and into resettlement in the community. Of the four strands of learning that SPS has developed, this research will focus on the "successful learner" block, which aims to develop skills and knowledge for life, work and further learning (Scottish Prison Service, 2014). This vision goes further to supplement the values and principles of the SPS and includes provision for working with young offenders to reflect and reinforce the values of belief, respect, integrity, openness, courage, and humility towards all individuals (Scottish Prison Service, 2014). These values can be key components to motivation and ultimately transformative learning experiences for young people.

The role of motivation as described by learning theorists Smith and Spurling (2001) is "a personal experience of keenness for pursuing an intended action or goal, with the experience known only to the individual who is motivated" (p.2). The "keenness" is described as the product of a private mental process, during which individuals weigh up the pros and cons of potential action or goal, and assess the likely personal benefits and costs. The human motivation for an action or goal forms as a person develops an intention to act. Motivation

encompasses a variety of stages resulting in different levels of motive depending on the action or decision. Individuals who state that they are motivated to a particular goal tend to act in predictable ways. They may have a strong preference for their intended action and oppose alternatives; they show persistence, focus, and resilience, and make strong efforts to complete the action (Smith & Spurling, 2001).

Motivation in the context of a prison classroom may stimulate persistence and encourage students to change their views of learning. Pelissier (2004) conducted a study that focused on offender motivation to change. It concluded that internal motivation is initiated by the offender and serves as a driving force for participation in educational programs. Pelissier (2004) notes that since most prison education programs are voluntary, internal or intrinsic motivations are crucial to success. Intrinsic motivation can be described as a desire to seek out new things, and challenges and motives are internally based. The prison environment may influence some motives for pursuing an education. In the case of external or extrinsic motivation, the motive is determined by outside influences such as the need to escape from the boredom of prison life or to prepare for life post-incarceration (Costelloe, 2003; Parson & Lagerback, 1993). Education is not always the primary motivation, but merely an alternative to the routine or mundane. The literature on prisoner motivation for learning (Chappell, 2004; Gunn, 1999; Newman & Beverstock, 1990) outlines background characteristics, which determine the motivation and academic ability of offenders. The young person's background includes all prior experiences, both educational and employment, family, socio-economic, physical and mental health. Students bring these characteristics with them into the educational environment. These traits are what make each learner unique and shape his or her motivation to learn, resulting in a variety of outcomes. Chappell (2004) and Feinstein (2002) suggest that the greater the educational gain during incarceration, the more likely the young person is to leave prison and successfully reintegrate into society, thus reducing recidivism. The individual may also eventually identify as a student and not just a prisoner. The student identity has positive connotations in the prison community. Prisoner education, aligns with the values of adult education, and thus encourages negotiation and choice, tries to build self-confidence and self-worth and develops critical thinking. Prison education could be described as having a liberating and possibly rehabilitative effect on students (Bayliss, 2003).

Learning and opportunities for change within the context of prison may seem like an obvious route to overcoming criminality, but it may not be the route for all offenders. In several studies

(Foley, 2001; Hetland, Eikeland, Manger, Diseth, & Asbjørnsen, 2007; Morgan & Kett, 2003) offenders' low educational attainment may be a factor, which dominates their history. Research by Morgan and Kett (2003) and Samuelsson, Gustavsson, Herkner and Lundberg (2000) indicates that offenders historically have low attainment levels in reading, writing, and numeracy. In turn, this may lead to an explicit rejection of education forming a deeply rooted and recurring component of some individuals' sense of themselves and their place in the world (Crossan, Field, Gallacher, and Merrill, 2003). Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara and Pastorelli (2001), note that an individual's beliefs may be influenced by a variety of factors that may function as motivators, but they are all connected to the core belief that one has the power to impact change through one's actions. Bandura (1997) notes that learners can only begin to develop confidence in themselves through overcoming difficult situations where effort and persistence are required. This may mean that the learning environment of prison does more than provide education, but also a supportive learning community where young people can overcome adversity and improve literacy skills. Freire and Macedo (1987) and Morrell (2008) describe critical literacy as necessary for the navigation of discourse, but also essential to the redefining of the self and the transformation of social structures and relations of production.

Theoretical Framework of Research

The theoretical framework of the research will utilise Transformative Learning theory and concepts of identity to better understand the participation and motivation of young men at HMYOI Polmont as it relates to educational experiences. Much of the literature on prisoner experience suggests that reflection of self is common during incarceration as individuals begin to reflect on their life, with questions such as: who am I, where am I going, what's the point of my existence, what do I need to change? Through the lens of transformative learning, these questions may lead to profound changes in an individual, changes that come about through a major paradigm shift, the process of perspective transformation. Perspective transformation can lead to a shift in the understanding of self, changes in worldview, and possibly changes in behaviour. While education alone is not necessarily transformative, providing opportunities for individuals to change their frame of reference through learning may lead learners to a transformative experience. The literature shows that learning may be a turning point for young people during incarceration, especially for individuals with low literacy skills and previous negative experiences with education. Transformative learning is, "often initiated when learners

come up against their limitation, go beyond the habitual, experience the unaccustomed, meet, split or break down, face dilemmas, feel insecure, or must take incalculable decisions. Many examples indicate that irregular courses with obstacles, breaks, problems and challenges encourage emotional intensity and innovation, and in this way also promote transformative learning" (Illeris, 2013, p. 11). It seems logical that transformative learning theory could be applied broadly as a critical part of this research, as participants are experiencing these obstacles daily during incarceration.

Mezirow (1991) believed that the focus of transformative learning theory is on how we learn to negotiate and act on our purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others to gain greater control over our lives as socially responsible, clear-thinking decision-makers.

There is relatively little research concerning transformative learning in prison or as part of prisoner education. However, there is an obvious need to better understand the transformative implications of prison and specifically the experiences of offenders as students. Research relating to recidivism has frequently shown that education is a factor in reducing reoffending (Chappell, 2004; Wells, 2000; Batchelder & Pippert, 2002; Nuttall, Hollmen, & Staley, 2003; Adams et al., 1994).

Understanding the motivations behind student participation in education enhances the potential for transformation and change within the prison. The use of transformative learning theory as a framework for research has resulted in studies that aim to understand offender motivation for learning (Costelloe, 2003; O'Donnell, 2013), additional studies have focused on motivation for offender participation in education as a way to develop a new sense of self and identity (Hughes, 2009; Reuss, 1999). This research aims to focus on young people and examine if there is a process of change through learning and critical reflection that results in rehabilitation, and if educational opportunities attained during incarceration can be transformative. This theory provides a well-documented framework to conduct this research and provides a valid process for discovering if an experience was transformative.

This proposal for research access outlines the focus of my research as well as a summary of some of the current literature that relates to the area of inquiry. As a researcher, I have also gathered data on the social characteristics of young people in the justice system, youth justice policy in Scotland, sociological perspectives on identity, additional data on HMYOI Polmont,

restorative justice practices, emerging adulthood, and additional research on transformative learning. I have a background in student affairs and hold a Master's degree in higher education and a Bachelor's degree in criminology.

Research Questions

It is widely believed that educational programmes are undertaken while in prison may be transformative. This research focuses on how the potential for change occurs, the nature of change, and how this process is perceived. Therefore the research seeks clarification of:

- How do young offenders' experiences in voluntary education during incarceration contribute to their perceived capacity of dealing with the challenges they will confront upon being released?
- What are the experiences of young offenders in education programs?
- Why do young offenders opt not to participate in education?
- What motivates a young person to pursue education during incarceration?
- How have young offenders' perceptions of education shifted as a result of participation in learning opportunities?
- Does participation in education result in a change to the frame of reference or a perspective transformation of the offender?
- Does education during incarceration result in an evaluation of identity for young offenders?

These questions have grown from the need to understand better if education is an element of rehabilitation for young offenders during incarceration and if education can positively impact an individual leading to an increase in self-efficacy, change of identity, and possibly transformative experience. The research questions were developed based on the theoretical framework of Mezirow's (1991) Transformative Learning theory and understanding of identity development as detailed by Erikson (1968). These frameworks provide a strong foundation for conducting research that aims to identify if participation in education can encourage critical thinking and reflection, resulting in a transformative experience.

Outline of research proposal including proposed methods:

Research Design

This research is a basic qualitative study (Merriam, 2009), which will utilise exploratory multiple case studies as its unit of analysis to determine how young people perceive prisoner education and this study purposes to better understand the participation and motivation of young people in offender learning programmes. This research also seeks to answer if the educational experiences of young people in the prison service can result in transformative learning. A central model of qualitative research is the constructivist or interpretative paradigm whereby individuals generate knowledge and meaning from their experiences, which are socially constructed. This research requires an approach that seeks to understand more about the phenomenon being researched by drawing upon the subjective qualities of the human experience (Mertens, 2005). As part of the case study process, multidimensional data are collected from site visits, observations, interviews, and self-reports to provide a detailed picture of the individual or group being studied. Incorporating non-traditional forms of data collection into the research process such as art and reflective drawing projects and goal setting activities will be a creative way to glean deeper understanding from research participants. The epistemology or way in which knowledge is produced is subjective and open to interpretation based on personal experiences of learners, and shaped by their opinions, values, culture, or gender (Goodrick, 2011). In support of subjectivity in understanding the human experience, Freire (1996) states that,

To deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naive and simplistic. It is to admit the impossible: a world without people. This objectivistic position is as ingenious as that of subjectivism, which postulates people without a world. World and human beings do not exist apart from each other they exist in constant interaction. (p. 32)

Stance of the Researcher

This research will be guided by a constructivist paradigm, which infers that individuals construct their reality and therefore, a variety of interpretations exist. In a constructivist worldview, the meaning is subjective and negotiated socially through interaction with others (Creswell, 2009). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2008) believe that "An individual's behaviour can only be understood by the researcher sharing their frame of reference, understanding of an individuals' interpretation of the world around them has to come from inside" (p. 19).

The research questions aim to understand perceptions, attitudes, and personal understandings, which arise from relativist ontology. To answer the research questions, it is important to recognise that knowledge is personal, subjective, and unique to each individual. The research

sets out to study a group of individuals and is underpinned by a constructivist belief that the world is experienced and understood differently by different people and that one person's truth is not necessarily another person's truth even in the same experience (Griffiths, 2003). In answering the research questions, there is a need to give voice to the individual stories and experiences of young offenders and their interpretations of prisoner education and the impact that educational experiences have on their frame of reference. Recognising that multiple realities will exist amongst the participants, this research also seeks to uncover consensus where it exists. This is another characteristic of the constructivist paradigm, that reality is reached through a group's consensus of "what is real, what is useful, and what has meaning" (Guba & Lincoln, 2008, p. 264). Constructivist based research does more than tell the story of these individuals. Change and social action are often outcomes of this type of research (Green, 1998); therefore involvement can lead to new understanding and significant transformation in YOIperceptions, attitudes, behaviours, and awareness of self for the participant.

Data Collection

Data collection will be within the setting of HMYOI Polmont, where semi-formal interviews will be conducted with offender learning staff, student tutors, and young offenders currently serving a sentence. The interviews will take place over one year, occurring on three separate occasions. Each interview will last approximately one hour with each interviewee. In addition to interview questions, the researcher will also ask participants to engage in activities to enhance the conversation and allow the individual to think critically and self reflect.

Sample

The sample for this research will be opportunistic, and the participants' background (ethnicity, age, education level, etc.) will not play a role in selection. In a prison environment is it expected that the pool of potential participants for this research will vary broadly. As this research will utilise a multi-case study process, no two studies will likely be the same. External factors, previous backgrounds, and individual diversity will vastly impact the conversations between the researcher and young offender/student. The goal would be to select up to ten individuals to participate in the case studies, accounting for individuals that may complete their sentence during the process of research. A primary consideration of the sample is not the number of participants, but the potential for each person to contribute to the development and understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009, p. 105).

Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis is to make sense out of the data (Merriam, 2009, p. 175). The goal of data analysis is really to answer the research questions. Therefore, the first step in the process is identifying what are data and creating a coding system that will help to identify specific themes, patterns, etc. in the data. Participants will be identified by pseudonym and age. Suter (2012) explains, "the data are allowed to "speak for themselves" by the emergence of conceptual categories and descriptive themes. These themes are usually embedded in a framework of interconnected ideas that "make sense" (p. 346-347). Analysis of the interview data sets will follow an inductive approach in the sense that specific theories are not imposed on the data in a test of a particular hypothesis. Instead, the researcher will interpret the data in an attempt to explain, with a theory, the phenomenon being studied.

The use of multiple case studies in this research will involve a two-stage process of analysis: (1) within-case analysis and (2) cross-case analysis (Merriam, 2009). For the within-case process, the data will be organised into a database or record where it can be categorised from notes, logs, interviews, and documents to create a holistic descriptive narrative of the individual interviewed, creating a comprehensive case study. The cross-case analysis will then begin to connect the themes and concepts across the cases, revealing explanations for variances and connecting data to the phenomenon. It is anticipated that the interview results will vary broadly across the sample and that themes will emerge through cross-case analysis, which will allow the researcher to interpret the data using a reflexive approach. Reflexivity being the process of reflecting critically on the self and of questioning one's approach and methods, whereby the researcher comes to know the self as both researcher and respondent and can recognise how this knowledge can impact the research (Guba & Lincoln, 2008). It is anticipated that multiple interviews with each participant will take place over twelve months. However, it will be essential to consider the impact of timing and setting for the interviews as some participants may have recently entered prison and others may be on their way to re-entry into society. These and other instances of life within a prison could impact the participation and outcomes of the interview data.

Anticipated Challenges

As the population of young offenders at HMYOI Polmont are male, this could pose a challenge, as the researcher is female. The young men detained at Polmont do interact with female staff members regularly, but gaining the trust and understanding of these individuals, as well as cooperation, could be a possible barrier. The researcher has worked as an instructor for over

four years in a college classroom and feels confident that she has the skills to overcome any complications with participants at Polmont. To gain the trust of participants the researcher will be empathic and respectful of all individuals and their personal experiences.

Timetable:

This section outlines the timeframe for completion of fieldwork and the doctoral thesis.

August-September 2015

Submission of research proposal to the SPS Research Access and Ethics Committee

Receive approval, work with SPS to participants, and provide informed consent

October 2015

Arrange interview schedules with SPS

Begin data collection via in-person interviews at Polmont

Transcribe interviews

November 2015

Analyse initial interview for themes

Schedule second interviews with SPS at Polmont for January

January-February 2016

Conduct second in-person interviews at Polmont

Transcribe interviews

May-June 2016

Perform a comprehensive analysis of data collected

Schedule third and final interviews with SPS at Polmont

Write analysis and discussion on findings

July-August 2016

Conduct final interviews at Polmont

Transcribe interviews

Review data to determine if any additional changes have occurred

January 2017

Submit thesis

March 2017

Viva Voca

Resource demands and access required (e.g. establishments requested; number of respondents; length of interviews, etc.:

Access to HMYOI Polmont will be imperative to this research. The researcher would like access to learning staff, tutors, etc. at Polmont as well as up to 10 young offenders that are currently participating in voluntary education during incarceration and up to 5 additional young men who are not involved in education. The research outline includes three separate interview dates, and during each visit, the researcher would like to conduct a one on one interview with the young offenders and meet with staff and tutors. It is anticipated that each interview will be approximately 1 hour with each participant on each of the three separate occasions. Any access to curriculum documents and background or education experiences for young offenders would also be useful for further understanding the educational offerings at Polmont as well as historical data on participation in courses. Additional data, such as demographics of the population, would also be useful for a more in-depth understanding of the community at Polmont.

Ethical considerations and clearances:

This research will be conducted within the ethical framework of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) 2011 framework and the Moray House School of Education framework. Ethics approval from the Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh has already been granted.

A primary component of conducting a qualitative case study is full participation from all groups involved in the data collection process. Informed consent is a voluntary agreement between the researcher and participants that explains the purpose of the research, the rights of the individual, describe the research process, and outlines the potential risks and benefits of the research. As the population of HMYOI Polmont includes offenders age 16-21, there may be study participants under 18 involved in this study. All participants, regardless of age will be advised of their right to confidentiality and informed of how the data will be used to understand further the phenomenon taking place as a result of their educational experiences within the context of prison.

(I am in the process of seeking a disclosure to enter Polmont prison).

The utility of research to SPS

This research will help to identify the benefits and rehabilitative impacts of education for young offenders in Scotland. It will also help to identify motivation and participation in educational programming within the SPS. Education is core to rehabilitation and can result in transformation for young offenders. Understanding the young person's experience with education can also inform the outcomes for the offender-learning program and future curriculum development. This study can continue to build on best practices for prison educators and presents the experiences of young people during incarceration to a wider audience. Additionally, the research will contribute to the body of knowledge on transformative learning and create new knowledge on the impact of educational experiences for young offenders. There is currently limited research concerning unique learning environments and diverse participant groups, such as the prison classroom, and the application and understanding of experiences through the lens of transformative learning theory. The results of this study will provide prisoners, educational practitioners, and policymakers with insight into learning practices during imprisonment, why education is important, and how offenders perceive changes within themselves as a result of education.
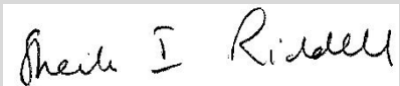
Dissemination plans:

This research will be used for my doctoral thesis at the University of Edinburgh. It is possible that the findings, in addition to the thesis, will be used in publications and during conference proceedings. The details of the thesis and findings will be provided to the SPS Research Access Committee and any SPS staff that request the information. As this research will be completed as a case study qualitative research, each of the young people who participate will have their study within the larger thesis. I plan to provide the completed individual case studies to the participants if SPS allows this. All details and data collection will be available for the SPS to review if needed. The researcher will destroy all data collected within one year of completion of the thesis.

Supervisor's approval and supporting comments:

Michelle Waldron wishes to conduct research with young offenders in HMYOI Polmont to assess their experiences of the education service, in particular, the participation and motivation of young people with education and their beliefs about its future impact. Interviews will be conducted with young offenders and staff involved in the delivery of education within HMYOI

Polmont. The research will be conducted mainly via semi-structured interviews, which will be used to complete individual case studies. All data, including the identity of the institution, will be anonymised. Michelle is committed to working with the Scottish Prison Service to improve the long-term outcomes of young offenders and is committed to this investigation of how education can contribute to this goal. She is reliable, conscientious and understands the need to adhere to the highest possible ethical standards, including taking all necessary actions to safeguard the anonymity of respondents. Her findings will not only contribute to the academic literature but will also be written up in a format, which will be readily accessible to staff at Polmont. She will also provide a research summary for young offenders who participate in the study to provide them with a sense of the purpose of their contribution.

Sheila I Riddell

Additional information (if any)

Date submitted:

29 July 2015

REGULATIONS CONCERNING RESEARCH ACCESS TO PRISON ESTABLISHMENTS FOR THE PURPOSES OF CONDUCTING RESEARCH

All access to prison establishments for the purposes of conducting research is conditional on the researcher(s) agreeing to abide by the under noted requirements.

1. All subjects to be included in the study must be informed that their participation in the study is voluntary and of their entitlement to withdraw consent at any time.

2. All subjects involved in the study must be informed of the purpose of the study; anticipated uses of data; identity of funder(s) (if applicable); and the identity of the interviewer.

3. All subjects must be assured of anonymity and all material arising out of the study must be dealt with on a confidential basis. Researchers must comply with the Data Protection Act (1998).

4. All research data and material of whatever kind (i.e. interview notes, questionnaires, tapes, transcripts, reports, documents, specifications, instructions, plans, drawings, patents, models, designs, whether in writing or on electronic or other media) obtained from the Scottish Prison Service shall remain the property of the Crown. Information collected during the course of a research project must not be supplied to another party or used for any other purpose other than that agreed to and contained in the original research proposal. All confidential research data obtained from SPS must be destroyed within 12 months of completion of the research project.

5. All researchers must abide by the ethical guidelines of their profession or discipline and must nominate below the guidelines to which they will adhere. (e.g. Social Research Association, British Sociological Association etc.)

6. Where appropriate, research proposals may require to be submitted to the Ethics Committee of the local Area Health Board and to receive their approval before access is granted.

7. The Chair of the SPS Research Access and Ethics Committee (RAEC) must be informed in writing and agree to any changes to the project which involve alterations to the essential nature of the agreed work.

8. The Scottish Prison Service reserves the right to terminate access to SPS establishments at any time for any Operational reason that may arise or for any breach by the researcher of the Access Regulations or for any failure on the part of the researcher to conduct the study as agreed with the RAEC. In the event of access being terminated for any reason whatsoever, all data obtained from SPS during the course of the research shall be returned to the Scottish Prison Service.

9. The Scottish Prison Service will not have liability in respect of any loss or damage to the researcher's property or of any personal injury to the researcher which occur within SPS premises. The researcher (or, if applicable, the researcher's institution or organisation) will

be responsible for arranging all relevant personal indemnity to cover the conduct of research within SPS premises.

10. In principle, the Scottish Prison Service supports the publication and dissemination of research findings arising from approved work. However, all material resulting from such access and which is intended to be presented publicly, must be submitted to the Chair of the Research Access and Ethics Committee, Research Services, SPS Headquarters, Room 312, Calton House, Redheughs Rigg, Edinburgh EH12 9HW. The Scottish Prison Service reserves the right to amend factual inaccuracies and to make modifications to the text and material intended for publication in order to preserve the confidentiality of the information and the identity of individuals or, where appropriate, of any institution.

Ethical guidelines nominated: Michelle Waldron

I have read the above regulations and agree to be bound by them.

<u>Michelle Waldron</u> (Signature)   <u>29 July 2015</u> (Date)

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING RESEARCH ACCESS REQUESTS TO SPS

Applicant Project Title

Proposals which seek research access to the Scottish Prison Service should be assessed against the following criteria where information allows. Where possible each item should be scored out of 10. Marks should then be summated to give an overall score.

Quality of research proposal ● knowledge of literature ● general awareness of substantive area ● proposed research methodology ● overall feasibility of proposal/methodology ● ethical propriety and compliance to ERSC REF standards or equivalent

Operational considerations

- timescale of project and potential demands placed upon SPS staff

- experience/suitability of researcher

- sensitivity of proposal to prison environment/context

- compatibility of proposal with existing/planned programme of SPS research priorities

- utility of proposed research and policy relevance to SPS

Comments
Score

Approved
Conditional approval (revisions sought)
Not Approved
Signature of assessor
Date

Appendix (7) SPS Positive Futures Plan

Name:
Personal Officer (PO):

Planning how to use my time in custody to prepare me for a positive future in my community

Surname:	Establishment:	
Forename(s):	Prison number:	EDL:
Date of birth:	Sentence:	
Admission Date:	HDC Qualifying Date:	

Name of Personal Officer:

Is there a community worker or a social worker?   YES   NO

Name:	Phone:
Name:	Phone:

Is there a care plan or a single plan?   YES   NO

Has a WSA case conference taken place?   YES   NO

Please provide details -

Section 1

My Story and My Future

This section is about information gathering, enabling the young person to tell the story of their life and to encourage the young person to build their aspirations for the future

Map 1.1 – Relationships map

Guidance - Map 1.1 – Relationships map

Work with the young person to draw a 'map' that includes all the different people in his life and how close they are to the young person. You both can also revisit the map later in the plan and discuss what types of relationships they are – strong; caring; loving; stressful; unpredictable; etc.

Research tells us that this is an effective way of opening up lines of communication that allows the young person to feel at ease with their personal officer and allows the chance to begin to speak about their own lives and the people in them.

Map 1.2 – My Story – How I got here

Guidance - Map 1.2 – My Story – How I got here

This Map's purpose is to facilitate a focus on what was going on prior to custody, early adolescence and primary school years. Ensure exploration of whether the young person has been Looked After at any point *(ask who was looking after him at the different stages – include any residential care setting).* Try to identify key stages which will then be mapped onto map 1.3.

Note - If this document has been completed before and the young person is a return to custody focus on what was going on for him between being released and re-admitted to ascertain what went well and what went not so well. On the factors that went well try to build on this and use this as a focus when completing Map 2.1 and 2.2. Similarly if the young person has identified the things that did not go so well work through this and encourage him to identify strategies for the future.

Map 1.3 – How I Got Here Road Map

Guidance – Maps 1.3 – How I Got Here Road Map

This map should be used in conjunction with Map 1.2 in order to allow the young person to visually represent their life journey. It is a platform for discussion and should assist personal officers to gain an insight into how and why the individual narrates their life as they do. It aims to provide scope for reflection and review.

Each junction represents a life stage or period. It is for the individual to decide how they would divide up their lives. Sometimes people need some help to think about this but it is a useful reflective exercise to undertake as a precursor to thinking about change. Undertaking this work helps people visualise the positives and negative factors in each stage and how different factors interact to produce the events and outcomes. The individual should be invited to name their stage inside each junction; sometimes it helps to ask people to think of their life as if it were a book or a series of mini-documentaries and to ask them to name chapters or key episodes and the years or age ranges within which this episode/stage/ chapter represents.

Essentially, the personal officer should ask questions to understand the significance of each stage, the negative and positive influences and relationships on the person's life at that stage, what key events make that stage memorable. How do these stages have a bearing on how a person sees themselves today? While it is important to allow the individual to discuss the events, experiences and people that have had both a positive and negative impact on their life, the

personal officer should also use solution focussed techniques to assist the individual to identify their own coping skills, strengths, and resources in overcoming any negatives or challenges. Examples might be 'How did you manage to overcome that challenge?'; 'How did you manage to keep that problem from becoming a bigger problem?' In this sense, this can be a powerful and motivating discussion.

Map 1.4: Where I'm at

Guidance - Map 1.4: Where I'm at

This map should be used to encourage the individual to describe what was going well for them when they were out of custody/prior to coming to prison as well as what is continuing to go well and what could be improved. The idea is to understand not only what was good and less good about life before custody, but what has remained positive (and therefore can be built on), what has changed (for better for worse) and areas for improvement. Understanding the individual's recent circumstances and perspectives on and feelings about them can help the personal officer to start from where the person sees themselves. The idea is to start helping the person think about the possibility of and targets for change to create a sense of both motivation and hope. The communication style of the personal officer will be central to this who should try to empathise with the individual's views and feeling without judging or criticising them. If we accept the person for who they are (or where they are at) it makes it easier for the young person to think about change and to accept support to change. The desire for change has to come from the individual but, critically, the motivation to change can be encouraged by the personal officer. It is not the role of the personal officer to push for change in any one area; the idea is that the personal officer elicits, identifies and responds to any motivational statements that the individual makes. After all, it is their change process and they are more likely to be motivated to make and sustain changes that they have identified and that are important to them. The personal officer should encourage the individual to come up with their own thoughts on this. If they appear to be struggling, the personal officer could probe or give prompts i.e. In terms of positives - support mechanisms and key relationships, activities enjoyed, achievements, work i.e. in terms of areas for improvement drug taking, alcohol use, friends, bad relationships, poor choices. Rather than asking too many questions, personal officers should also reflect back or summarise what the person has said, and, perhaps, build on that with re-cognitive statements such as 'I appreciate

that that things have been hard for you'; and questions such as 'Have you felt like this before?' What did you learn from that experience? How could this help you think about …? That way, both the personal officer and the young person are thinking and speaking reflectively.

Map 1.5: My Strengths

Guidance - Map 1.5: My Strengths

This map encourages young people to reflect on their existing skills and strengths. Personal officers should engage the young person in not only identifying what their skills and strengths are but help them to recognise the internal resources they have at their disposal which they can use to counteract challenges. Enhancing an individual's awareness and understanding of their own strengths and capabilities has been shown to engender hope, increase self-esteem and promote an increased sense of well-being (Park and Peterson, 2009).

Map 1.6: My Offence

Guidance - Map 1.6: My Offence

This map should build on the areas for improvement that the individual identifies. *My Offence* should be a core area for discussion, but the map can easily be adapted to include 'My Drug/Alcohol Use' for example. The idea is to support the appraisal of the impact that the individual's offending / drug / alcohol use has as a means of building motivation for change. As with the other maps, the offender must 'own' their assessments and they should, where possible, be encouraged to record them on the map in their own words. Remember, the map is a basis for discussion; it is not an end in itself. Continue to use summary / reflective statements and seek clarification or elaboration about any statement the individual makes that you think is important. This will help to focus the individual on that issue.

Map 1.7: Thinking About Change

Guidance - Map 1.7: Thinking About Change

This builds on Map 1.6. It is designed to encourage an openness or motivation to change by thinking through the issues associated with their lifestyle and to consider where they 'are at' with it i.e. how motivated or confident they are that change can and will happen. This process will build on the personal officer's understanding of the individual and their offending behaviour, the

obstacles to change and what support the individual feels they might need to help change happen. Again, this can easily be adapted to address drug and/or alcohol use and more than one thematic map can be completed.

1.8 Eco Map - Peer group map Note – work with the young person for them to identify relationships with peers and identify how they are going to manage them.

Guidance - 1.8 Peer group map

With young people, peers tend to be more influential and important to them than their adult counterparts and are also more closely linked to offending. This Map is designed to allow the Young Person to identify, with his personal officer, peers that he has had in the past and how he may manage those relationships in the future by asking them to name the individual(s) and consider if they have a supportive relationship with them or a risky one. This has two purposes; in the supportive relationship the young person is asked to think about how they could build on this, increasing social capital. The risky relationships part is about beginning to work through strategies for managing these relationships.

As the plan is being built in Map 2.1 personal officers may want to consider the outcomes a young person may want to achieve and what services can be identified to enable them to achieve the outcome.

Map 1.9a – Building for the future – What I would like my life to look like?

Guidance - Map 1.9 – Building for the future

This map is following on from Maps 1.4, 1.5, and 1.7 where it builds on the aspirational theme that is beginning to emerge in the PFP. In order to maximise the impact of the map personal officers should ask the individual to imagine their lives in a years' time and then 5 years' time, etc. This should allow the young person to begin to imagine themselves as something other than an offender or ex-offender, etc. It will also allow the PO to build towards activities within Polmont to begin to realise this ambition e.g. a young person wants to go into the catering industry plans should mention gaining qualifications in the catering department and so on.

Map 1.10: New Directions

Guidance - Map 1.10 New Directions

Map 1.10 is designed to build on Map 1.5, 1.7, and 1.9. The idea is to consider how the young person might build on their existing skills and strengths. One map should be completed for each strength/skill previously identified by the young person to assess how the individual might use and develop their skills in the direction of an activity that the he is motivated to engage in. This might be, for example, in education, arts or employment. While this should help the personal officer in the support planning process, it also encourages the young person to think about how they might use their time in Polmont to realise their identified aspiration. It also models strategic thinking.

Map 1.11: Thinking About My Family

Guidance - Map 1.11 Thinking About My Family.

This map is designed to encourage young people to consider their role and relationship with their family and the supports they need from their family and the supports their family might benefit from. Personal Officers should encourage young people to think about how they might build or work on their relationships while in prison and consider what supports they / family require on release. This will also help the personal officer to consider how the young person's family might be supported, what the prison can do that might be helpful how through care support / external or services available in the community might also be mobilised. In the last node/box on this map, the young person is encouraged to think about any important conversations they would like / need to have; this can be rehearsed with the personal officer if required.

This Map can be directly linked to both 1.12 and in the pre-release phase of Making real plans for the future.

Map 1.12: A Significant Relationship – Family, mentor, etc.

Guidance - Map 1.12: A Significant Relationship – family, mentor, etc.

This map builds on Map 1.11. Who the significant person is should be apparent from this Map but the young person should select this individual without prompts from the personal officer. As with other maps, this tool is both a form of intervention while providing the kinds of information personal officers require to complete a holistic assessment and support plan with the individual. Only by engaging the individual in thinking through these issues will they be able to contribute to the support plan in the next section. If they 'own' the support plan, it is more likely that they will continue to engage with it post release.

Significant relationships, whether familial or otherwise, are a key source of support (or otherwise) in the process of change. Understanding who is significant, and how and why, to the individual is key both for the purposes of assessment and for the individual.

Map 1.13 Identifying Existing Supports

Guidance - Map 1.13 Identifying Existing Supports

This map is designed to engage the young person in the process of assessing who in their existing support network can support them on release and in what way. In so doing, Map 1.13 builds on Maps 1.1, 1.2, 1.9 and 1.12. The personal officers should use these maps to refresh themselves with the challenges the person faces, what changes they want/need to make and the supports and challenges that exist in their social network. This process should assist the personal officer's to consider the gaps in the individual's supports in relation to their identified issues and challenges, all of which should inform the resultant support plan in terms of identifying additional areas of support required. Personal officers should take more than one copy of this map to ensure all the important issues are addressed and that there is space available to do so.

Map 1.14: Offence and lifestyle – Triggers and Impacts

Guidance - Map 1.14: Offence and lifestyle – Triggers and Impacts

This map encourages young people to reflect on their offences they have been involved in. In so doing, it should provide the personal officer with insights into the triggers and impacts of the individual's offending behaviour. Understanding the reasons underpinning an individual's offending is quite obviously critical in developing relapse prevention/change focussed strategies. At the same time, thinking about the impacts that offending exerts has potential to encourage cognitive dissonance and motivation to change.

Map 1.15: When things are different: findings exceptions 2 maps

Guidance Map - 1.15 When things are different: findings exceptions

This map is intended to support the personal officer and young person to co-assess who and what contributes to the young person's offending and the impact it has. However, the map are also designed to explore what is happening when the young person is not offending, what is different about them/their life and to identify what supports they need for abstinence to become more frequent and where they feel they are at in the process of change. In this regard, where appropriate, personal officers can adapt these maps and supplement this section to also address substance use and recovery.

Additionally, the map accommodates a situational analysis of the individual's offending behaviour before looking for exceptions to the pattern identified. The process of desistance has been likened to a zig-zag path (Glaser 1964) and to a drifting in and out of offending (Matza 1964); this means periods of lapse and relapses are to be expected. At this stage, the personal officer should try and help the person identify a time in which they weren't offending – or weren't offending as much. The idea is to help the prisoner maximise the frequency of these occurrences or periods.

As the Map suggests, the kinds of questions that enable this are exception finding, solution-focused questions such as: *What happened that was different? What did you do that was different?* The idea behind this is to help the individual to repeat what has worked in the past, and give the individual confidence and hope that they can moved towards an offence-free life. What this map also does is help both the personal officer and young person identify (and therefore address) the necessary supports to be put in place and the obstacles to be addressed.

Much of the map is self-explanatory.

Map 1.16: Planning profile

Note – refer back to the maps completed and use this profile to help identify changes he wants to make and where he is on the scale. Use an exploration type style to do this. When the young person scores this section work with him to generate improvement ideas which will begin to feed into his intended outcomes and action planning. Take note of the scores and the 4 capacities.

Map 1.17: What Change Looks Like – refer to planning profile Map 1.16 for prompts

Guidance - Map 1.16 Planning profile and 1.17 What Change Looks Like

These maps are a straight lift from the SHANARRI indicators to assess well-being and are cross referenced with the 4 capacities of Confident Individual, Successful Learner, Responsible Citizen and Effective Contributor. In the SHANARRI boxes there are improvement ideas which the Personal Officer should use with the young person to prompt them to begin to generate solutions. The Personal Officer should direct the young person to the text under the capacity headings in order to focus their minds.

It is important that personal officers assess with young people where they see themselves in these indicators. The maps work by asking the young person to give themselves a score in Map 1.16 and use Map 1.17 to explore this score. The personal officer should use all the information gathered up to now to challenge the young person on the self-score if they feel it is not a true reflection of their circumstances. Additionally, it is useful here to have the young person to think of a year in the future (use Maps 1.4 and 1.9 as a guiding point) and assess where they would like to see themselves again using this information when the time comes to review their action plan or at the pre-release stage.

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Section 2

My Plans

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This section is about the young person's plan for the future in custody and who are the key people involved.

Map 2.1: The Changes I Want to Make

Note – identify which capacity the change relates to from 1.16 (Confident Individual – Successful Learner – Responsible Citizen – Effective Contributor) and note the score 1-6

Guidance - Map 2.1 The Changes I Want to Make

In preparation for this session, the personal officer should review the maps completed so far and familiarise themselves with the information generated. The case manager should bring these maps with them to this session. Particularly relevant maps are Maps 1.4; 1.5; 1.7; 1.8; 1.9; 1.10; 1.11; 1.12; 1.13; and as noted on the map, maps 1.16 and 1.17.

Prior to completing Map 2.1, the case manager should work collaboratively with the individual to summarise and synthesise the information that the previous maps have generated. Free mapping might be a constructive way of presenting the information and clarifying the discussion that this generates.

The purpose of Map 2.1 is to help the young person identify the areas they want to make changes in. The personal officer should avoid identifying areas for change for the person. Not only must the identified areas for change reflect the changes the person is motivated to make, but processes of problem solving, strategizing and solution finding are useful life-skills for the person to develop.

After this discussion, the personal officer should ask the individual to complete Map 2.1 inserting the areas for change they have identified in the left hand column (node 1). The personal officer should use the capacities identified in map 1.16 to help the person identify which capacity they see themselves improving (node 2), and to identify what progress towards change (outcomes) will look like (node 3).

Map 2.2: My Plan for Case Management Board   Personal Officer -

Signed   **Date __/__/__**
Signed   **Date __/__/__**

Map 2.2 My Plan for Case Management Board

Map 2.2 is designed to map the plan for change and is outcomes rather than outputs led. The outcomes identified in Map 2.1 should now be linked to specific steps and actions. The support plan then requires the personal officer and young person to identify what is available within custody and what external/community resources that needs to be mobilised to support the realisation of the outcomes. At this point personal officers should use the inventory of services from SharePoint to identify with the young person the service he feels he requires to achieve the outcome. The use of the plan also requires the personal officer and the young person to identify who, from their previously identified support team, can support this plan and how.

When this is all complete submit the plan to the Standard ICM team for presentation to the Case Management Board who will sequence and confirm the services to be provided. Personal officers should highlight any potential obstacles or resource limitations that might inhibit the plan at this point.

This map will be revised following a review of progress. It should form the basis, however, of subsequent interactions between the personal officer and young person in the interim period. It can be used as a focus for supporting the person to sustain their motivation for change, to respond to any difficulties or challenges arising, and for reviewing progress.

Map 2.3 Review of Plan

Date of Next Review: __/__/__

Note – use the planning profiler on Map 2.5 for the young person to gauge how far they have progressed. The profiler should be used for every time a review is carried out.

Guidance - Map 2.3 Review of Plan

This MAP should enable a collaborative review of the support plan. As an outcome of this review, a new support plan should be agreed using Map 2.3.

The personal officer should ensure that they have Maps 2.1 and 2.2 with them for reference. Everyone present should be given a copy. A discussion of progress towards meeting each outcome should ensue between the young person, personal officer and anyone else present at the review (node 2) asking the young person where they see themselves in terms of progress

towards change. Examples of questions that might be asked in this review include: What's changed? What's better? What did you do that made the change happen? What effects have the changes had?

Any difficulties highlighted during this discussion in gaining services identified should be fed back to the CMB via the Standard ICM team.

When completing a review of the plan on every occasion please complete Map 2.5 which will allow the PO to monitor progress on how the young person sees themselves.

Map 2.4a: What I've done for other people since the start of My PFP

Map 2.4b: What I'm most proud of since the start of My PFP

Guidance – Maps 2.4a and 2.4b

These Maps should be completed between the personal officer and young person to get the young person to identify how far they have progressed since the start of the PFP. By doing so, it will allow the TSO's to map out his achievements whilst in custody which will follow into the community. It will also build the base for identifying stronger social capital for the young person as he prepares to go back to the community.

Map 2.5: Planning profile – Review

Guidance - Map 2.5: Planning profile – Review

It is important that personal officers continue to assess with young people where they see themselves in these indicators. The Personal officer and young person should at this stage re-visit Maps 1.16 and 1.17 to gauge where the young person sees themselves now and how they have moved on from Map 1.16 and how close they are to achieving the factors identified in Map 1.17. This should then form the basis for any continuation into the pre-release stage and into the community.

Section 3

Pre-release - My Plans for the community

This section is about the young person's plan for the future in the community and who are the key people involved. This includes his plan for his family or people who are close to him. This should be completed with PO and TSO.

Map 3.1: Building on the past. Note – From here the maps should be completed with PO and TSO

Guidance - Map 3.1 Building on the past

Map 3.1 draws on the person's previous experiences to identify what happened when they experienced a lapse (nodes 1-4) and what happened or was different about the times when they abstained from the problem behaviour, when they managed not to offend/use drugs (nodes 6-9).

Nodes 1-4 encourage problem exploration to enhance the individual's awareness of the circumstances, thoughts and feelings that were happening for them when they experienced a lapse. The personal officer should engage the individual in thinking about the circumstances, thoughts and feelings they might encounter on release. The person should then be encouraged to think about what they could have done differently or what they would do differently now should a similar situation arise. The strategies and resources that the individual thinks might help should be noted in node 5.

Nodes 6-9 encourage the individual to find exceptions, when they managed not to engage in the problem behaviour. The idea is to help the person think through when, how and why things were different then. The skills, strengths, strategies and supports on which the person was able to draw then should be noted in node 6.

Map 3.2: Getting Out and Staying Out Note – this map can be used several times for different individual goals and outcomes

Guidance - Map 3.2 Getting Out and Staying Out

Map 3.2 is the culmination of all the preceding work. It is a Map for change. The individual is invited to revisit their motivations and incentives for change in the first node. Personal officers

and TSO's may want to revisit with the young person Maps 1.7 (*Thinking about Change*); 2.1 (*The Changes I Want to Make)*, for example. Node 2 draws on the most recent version of Map 2.2 *My Support Plan* to identify the individual's current goals and intended outcomes – what they want for themselves. Node 3 similarly draws on the most recent version of Map 2.2 to identify the next steps / actions they have decided to take in order to make these outcomes, in node 2, happen. Node 4 draws on the discussion generated by Map 3.1 to identify the individual's plans for doing things differently when they get out. Nodes 5, 6, and 7 map out the support systems and resources that is in place to help this individual. Node 8 should delineate one or more emergency strategies that the person can deploy if required preventing relapse. This should draw on the learning from 3.1 and the resources and supports already mapped out in this map, 3.2 i.e. if A, B or C happens then I can do X, Y or Z.

Map 3.3: Final planning profile Note – this final profile should be completed as the community plan is agreed as it will inform how far the young person has viewed his progress. The TSO can also use it as tool for targeted motivational work in areas he still sees as lacking.

Note - to be completed at pre-release with TSO and compare with how far young person has come from previous planning profiles and encompassed in summary report for community *Summary* **My Positive Future - making real plans and strategies**

My Positive Future - making real plans and strategies

My Positive Future – making real plans and strategies

My Positive Future – making real plans and strategies

My Positive Future – making real plans and strategies

Guidance - My Positive Future - making real plans and strategies

This Map is the community plan for the young person and should be shared with the various services that the young person wishes to engage with. This Map will be completed by the Through-care Support Officers (TSO's) where all previous Maps should be referred to with a particular emphasis on Map 2.2; 3.1; and 3.2 and any reviews.

Map 3.3 Final Planning Profile should also be completed at this point with the figures being recorded by the Standard ICM team for data purposes.

The completed document should be kept on file in the ICM area should the young person come back into Polmont. If he does his PFP will become live again where it should pick up from where he left off with a particular emphasis on what went well or not so well in the community.

My map for first week – first 6 weeks – first 6 months – first year