

**Defining a Curriculum for Offenders:**

**A case study of the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention  
incorporating e-learning in a prison establishment**

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Contents	Page
Abstract	6
Acknowledgements	7
Prelude	8
Chapter One	9
1.1 Introduction	9
1.2 The aim of the research project	9
1.3 Contextual outline of the study	10
1.4 Policy outline of the study	13
1.5 Literature Review	14
1.6 Outline of the methodology and methods	15
1.7 Boundaries and details of the case study establishment	16
1.8 Outline of analysis, findings and conclusion	17
1.9 Details of case study establishment and curriculum intervention	18
1.10 The contribution of this study	20
1.11 Summary	21
Chapter Two	22
2.1 Introduction: Prison education: the historical context	22
2.2 The penal debate	22
2.3 Historical context to present day	24
2.3.1 Late eighteenth century to middle of the nineteenth century	24
2.3.2 Late nineteenth to middle of the twentieth century	27
2.3.3 Historical context from late twentieth century	29
2.3.4 Early twenty first century up to Project Rex	30
2.3.5 Early twenty first century through to the OLASS era	31
2.4 Summary	34
Chapter Three	35
3.1 Introduction: Policy	35
3.2 Prison education: the policy context	35
3.2.1 Government policies	35
3.2.2 Prison Service Orders	36
3.2.3 OLASS and the offender learning journey (OLJ)	38
3.2.4 E-learning and IT refresh project	40
3.3 Summary	43
Chapter Four	45
4.1 Introduction: Literature review	45
4.2 Social Exclusion	45
4.3 Participation	49
4.4 Summary	53

Chapter Five	55
5.1 Introduction: Background and details of case study	55
5.2 The case study establishment	55
5.2.1 Population details	55
5.2.2 Curriculum provision details	55
5.2.3 Background to curriculum intervention and e-learning provision	57
5.2.4 Curriculum Intervention	61
5.3 Case study positionality	62
5.3.1 Introduction	62
5.3.2 Prison Experience	63
5.4 Summary	66
Chapter Six	67
6.1 Introduction: Methodology and Methods	67
6.2 Research project	67
6.2.1 Aims and research questions	67
6.2.2 Rationale of the research project	68
6.3 Methodology	69
6.3.1 Case study approach	70
6.3.2 Critiques of case study approach	72
6.3.3 Rationale for the methodology	74
6.4 Grounded Theory	75
6.5 Data collection methods	76
6.5.1 Questionnaire	78
6.5.2 Interview stages	81
6.5.3 Interview process	82
6.6 Data Analysis	84
6.7 Positionality	86
6.7.1 Prison considerations	86
6.7.2 Insider researcher	87
6.8 Ethical considerations	89
6.8.1 Anonymity and protection	90
6.8.2 Portraits of participants	91
6.9 Summary	92
Chapter Seven	93
7.1 Introduction: Analysis, findings and discussion	93
7.2 Initial questionnaire analysis and findings	93
7.2.1 Staff demographic data	94
7.2.2 Offender demographic data	97
7.2.3 Comparison staff and offender survey responses	98
7.3 Staff interviews – Findings on Factors	99
7.3.1 <i>Category: Educational: Component: Curriculum: Factors</i>	100
7.3.1.1 Progression	101
7.3.1.2 Embed skills for life	101
7.3.1.3 Flexibility and mainstream provision	102
7.3.1.4 Employability and standards	103
7.3.1.5 Time	104
7.3.2 <i>Category: Environmental: Component: External/Internal: Factors</i>	105
7.3.2.1 Whole Organisational Approach	106
7.3.2.2 Strategies	106
7.3.2.3 Wider agenda	107

7.4	Staff interviews June and October 2008 – Findings on barriers/obstacles	108
7.4.1	Attitudes/Culture	108
7.4.2	Security	110
7.4.3	Installation/staff	111
7.5	Staff interviews June and October 2008 – Findings on responses	112
7.5.1	<i>Category: Organisational: Component: Institutional: Responses</i>	113
7.5.1.1	Attitudes	113
7.5.1.2	Partnership approach	115
7.5.1.3	System Capacity	118
7.5.1.4	Motivation and achievement	119
7.5.1.5	Attitudes to learning	120
7.5.1.6	Progression	122
7.6	Offender interviews June and October 2008 – Findings on student responses	122
7.6.1	Responses by category and component	123
7.6.2	<i>Category: Educational: Component: Curriculum: Response</i>	124
7.6.2.1	Employment and release	124
7.6.3	<i>Category: Educational: Component: Learner: Responses</i>	125
7.6.3.1	Anticipation and confidence	125
7.6.3.2	Individualised learning	126
7.6.3.3	Support from tutors	127
7.6.3.4	Motivation	128
7.6.3.5	Resource issues	129
7.7	Summary	129
Chapter Eight		131
8.1	Introduction: Conclusions	131
8.2	Factors	132
8.3	Staff Responses	132
8.4	Barriers/obstacles	135
8.5	Student Responses	136
8.6	Evaluation and Reflection	138
8.7	Limitations	140
8.8	Implications for research, policy and practice	142
8.9	Summary of Key Conclusions	144
References		146
Appendices		5
List of figures and tables		5



## **Appendices**

Appendix 1	Abbreviations	157
Appendix 2	Quality improvement group terms of reference	158
Appendix 3	Development improvement group terms of reference	159
Appendix 4	Initial questionnaire staff	160
Appendix 5	Initial questionnaire offender	167
Appendix 6	First set of semi-structured interview questions for staff and offenders,	174
Appendix 7	Second set of semi-structured interview questions for staff and offenders	176
Appendix 8	Example analysis grids	178
Appendix 9	Participant Information Sheet	184
Appendix 10	SurveyMonkey overall analysis – staff	186
Appendix 11	SurveyMonkey overall analysis – offender	198
Appendix 12	Survey data 03/08 Teacher ICT use and frequency of use	212
Appendix 13	Comparison of staff and offender responses given to same questions on respective initial surveys	213

## **List of figures and tables**

Figure 7.2.1	Survey data 03/08 – Officer ICT use and frequency of use	96
Figure 8.3	The Optimum Tripartite Working Model	134
Table 6.2.2	Summary of methodology and methods	69
Table 7.3	Quick reference guide to staff portraits	100
Table 7.3.1	Category Educational: Staff interview summary of important factors	100
Table 7.3.2	Category Environmental: Staff interview summary of important factors	106
Table 7.4	Staff interview summary of key barriers/obstacles	108
Table 7.5	Staff interview summary of responses to development and implementation of a curriculum intervention and e-learning	113
Table 7.6	Quick reference guide to offender portraits	123
Table 7.6.1	Offender interview summary of responses to the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention and e-learning	124

## Abstract

The context for this study is set within a brief historical account of the development of prison education up to and including present day policies. The current policy background encompasses the Offender Learning Journey, Offender Learning and Skills Service and the government's Green Papers *Reducing Re-Offending through Skills and Employment* (2005) and *Next Steps* (2006). Furthermore, the literature review considers education and employment discourse in relation to social exclusion and participation in learning.

The research design is predominately qualitative within a single case study framework, utilising a mixed methods approach. It investigates perceptions of staff and offenders to the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention involving an integrated full-time programme of production, training and e-learning delivered in a prison establishment. The rising prison population resulted in an expansion programme which saw a new residential unit, workshop and learning and skills activity centre built to accommodate an extra 180 adult male offenders in the case study establishment. This provided the opportunity, as an insider researcher, to explore specifically the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention integrating technology into one of the new workshop facilities.

The three partners namely, the Prison Service, OLASS and Learndirect college providers collaborated together on the integrated programme. Hence, research has been conducted at a practical level describing obstacles and outcomes of a local initiative adopting a partnership approach to the said curriculum intervention and the responses of a purposive sample of 5 staff and 6 offenders to it.

Data was analysed using a grounded theory approach and research conclusions suggest that barriers/obstacles are not unique to the case study establishment particularly when integrating technology into the curriculum. Furthermore, some negative staff attitudes emerged but this did not undermine the project. The study indicates effective tripartite working which was instrumental to the success of the intervention which motivated and engaged offenders to succeed.

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## Prelude

*As criminals can neither be coerced nor bribed into a change of purpose, there is but one way left: they must be educated. We must provide a training which will make them, not good prisoners, but good citizens; a training which will fit them for the free life to which, sooner or later, they are to return...they should be educated, not for the life inside, but for the life outside. Not until we think of our prisons as educational institutions shall we come within sight of a successful system; and by a successful system I mean, one that not only ensures a quiet, well-balanced prison, but has genuine life in it as well; one that restores to society the largest number of intelligent, forceful, honest citizens.*

(Osbourne 1924, quoted in Howard 1960, p. 125)

## **Chapter One**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The first chapter of my thesis sets out to introduce the research project which has been undertaken in a penal establishment. There have been a number of significant changes in the way that training, learning and skills have been procured and delivered, particularly during my experience of working in a prison environment over the last thirteen years. The rationale behind this study is concerned with how partnerships work together in trying to develop and implement curriculum interventions with e-learning provision for the benefit of offenders. This is set against a background of constant change, not only in new sentencing arrangements, continued expansion of prison populations and prison establishments, but also within the wider policy context for prison education, learning and skills. Certainly, during the last three years there have been major changes to the prescribing of content and delivery of learning and skills provision in prison establishments. The particular aspects of the changes that are most pertinent to this research project are the underpinning of a broader curriculum offer and access to information technology which has the flexibility to meet individual offender needs.

Therefore, in this first chapter I aim to provide a succinct outline as to what awaits in the more detailed chapters ahead. The format of this first chapter, therefore, is to draw attention to some of the key points in relation to the study and to provide an overview of the thesis.

### **1.2 The aim of the research project**

The aim of the research project is to contribute to the understanding of what factors influence the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention incorporating an element of e-learning provision within a prison establishment. The research questions focus on two groups of people, staff and offenders. Hence, their responses are sought to provide evidence for the study. Their views are elicited on developing and implementing a curriculum intervention in a workshop environment to improve understanding in relation to the issues faced, and/or any positive outcomes that may unfold.

Therefore, four research questions were devised for the study to address. In order to identify and understand these issues more fully within the offender learning context, I considered it pertinent to construct three questions for staff and one question for offenders. The three staff questions sought to gather evidence on the factors, barriers

and responses that they perceived enabled, or otherwise, development and implementation of the said curriculum intervention. Hence, the first question focused specifically on development and asked what staff felt were important factors in developing a curriculum intervention involving e-learning in a prison establishment. The second question focused on implementation and asked what staff felt were barriers or obstacles to this, if indeed there were any. The third question for staff sought their responses overall to the development and implementation of this particular curriculum intervention. To further understand the experience and perceptions of the offender, the fourth question sought to gather evidence on their responses to the development and implementation of the said curriculum intervention involving e-learning within the case study prison.

It is appropriate at this point to provide a brief explanation of the terms '*offender*', '*intervention*' and '*categorisation or category*' which are used throughout this thesis. For the purposes of this study, the term '*offender*' is used to define a person who has been convicted, in a court of law, of a criminal offence and has been given a custodial sentence. The term '*intervention*' is one which has a fairly broad definition in order to include the variety of educational, learning and skills activities which occur in a prison context. Furthermore, the term '*categorisation or category*' is used in relation to prison establishments in that a category 'A' prison is one where offenders would be considered highly dangerous to the police, public or to national security if they escaped and, as such, represent the high security estate. The next category, 'B' is one in which the case study presides. A category 'B' prison is one where it is not necessary to have the highest security conditions for offenders, but it needs to be difficult to escape. A category 'C' prison is one where offenders are unlikely to try to escape but cannot yet be trusted in open conditions and finally a category 'D' prison is one where the offender has open conditions and can therefore be trusted not to make an attempt to escape.

Furthermore, throughout this thesis a number of abbreviations will be used as outlined in Appendix 1. However, on the first use of an abbreviation it will be preceded with the full wording and then abbreviated in brackets. After this the abbreviation will be referred to and used in most instances throughout the text.

### **1.3 Contextual outline of the study**

The historical development of education in prisons, along with policy changes that I have considered in chapter two, allows for contextualisation of the study and so provides an opportunity to gain a broad understanding as to how prison education has evolved and

where it now 'sits' in relation to government policy and the prison regime. The early references to education in prisons relate to bible reading, represented as the evangelical theory, which was a strong basis for the reformation of offenders in the early era, and as the name suggests, was pioneered by chaplains in prison establishments.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the association theory was developed and in practice the purpose was to take into account individual needs, and the tailoring of the prison regime to enable the offender to develop new skills and attributes which could be maintained on release. Indeed, Jeremy Bentham used this type of reasoning in developing his model of the 'Panopticon' prison which due to lack of government support never materialised. However, as a reformist Bentham proposed that offenders should develop skills through useful work and education in prison that could be continued on release. Certainly, during this period the work of Elizabeth Fry and Sarah Martin also initiated useful activities and work for offenders in prison to encourage reading, writing and, in Sarah Martin's case, making articles for sale to provide funds which the offender could use on release.

Robert Peel's Gaol Act (1823) provided for deterrent as well as reformatory measures in prisons which were derived from guidance through the John Howard (1726-1790) era. It was a feature of this Act that reading and writing should be provided to all offenders and that, for the first time, 'schoolmasters' should be appointed to prisons. However, during the period from 1823 and up to the Prison Act of 1865, there was much debate in relation to the philosophies of deterrence or reformation. As such, the 1865 Act had little to do with reformation and was predominantly retributive and deterrent. Hence, the middle to late nineteenth century saw a decline in reformatory objectives until in 1894 the Gladstone Committee condemned deterrence. However, even with this condemnation there was slow progress made in relation to laws regarding prison education. It was not until after World War two in 1947, that things started to move forward again, when the Prisons Education Advisory Committee was appointed in order to consider the purpose of prison education. Reformist philosophies were brought to the fore again and they advocated adult education including vocational, social, physical and spiritual education. Furthermore, the Education Act of 1944 received an amendment in 1948 to place education arrangements with Local Education Authorities and, as such, the Home Office then provided the funding for delivery of education provision in prison establishments.

Hence, from the late twentieth century, the Local Education Authorities provided some growth in prison education, although a consistent approach to developing and integrating

education provision was not in evidence on a national scale and, as such, contributed to an ad-hoc approach to the development of education provision in prison establishments. The Conservative government's privatisation agenda in the early 1990's introduced a tendering process into prison education which saw Further Education Colleges win contracts to deliver education provision in prisons from 1993. There was a strong government agenda to introduce competition in order to drive up standards which attracted much discourse at the time. A further two rounds of the tendering process later, the responsibility for prison education transferred, in 2001, to the Department for Education and Skills, in partnership with the Prison Service. As such, this created the Prisoner Learning and Skills Unit which was later in 2003 renamed the Offender Learning and Skills Unit, to have responsibility for offender education. This is an indication of how terminology had started to change at this time, as it moved from prisoner to offender and from education to learning and skills.

In 2003, Patrick Carter produced an influential report, namely, *Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime*, which recommended a National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to put the emphasis on individual management of offenders and for the system, in this respect, to become more 'end-to-end'. The sentence plan was advocated as the vehicle through which education and employment would be managed for each offender. The aim was to integrate, more coherently, education and vocational training in custody and the community for offenders. Furthermore, in 2003 another re-tendering process was commissioned, named *Project Rex*, which aimed to combine education and vocational training in prison establishments. However, this was abandoned in 2004 awaiting the creation and implementation of NOMS. It was at this point that the responsibility for offender education transferred once more, this time to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). They replaced *Project Rex* with a new Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS), which focused on the impact on the learner and adopting a more 'joined-up' approach to enabling offenders to gain appropriate skills and education to reduce re-offending and aid resettlement back in the community. In this respect, the government's Green Paper *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment* (2005), provided the focus of progression for offenders to improve their skills and to enable the prospect of employment on release.

The vision for OLASS was that it would provide an approach which underpinned better assessment of offenders; a broader curriculum offer; accurate availability of data; mainstreaming delivery of learning and skills; partnership working and progression opportunities. After implementation in 2005 of the new service in the three development



regions, it was rolled out fairly rapidly to all nine English regions from July 2006 the following year. By December 2006 the government had launched their next Green Paper, namely *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment: Next Steps*, which set out to achieve better integration of the work with offenders so that skills and employment outcomes would more effectively contribute to a reduction in re-offending. Following on from this Green Paper, the LSC have published proposals in the form of the *Prospectus*, which sets out the latest changes to offender learning and skills provision with the aim to prioritise specific offender groups, in accordance with release dates, to focus on the skills necessary for employment in a timely manner.

The key prison education developments outlined in this section of the introductory chapter are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

#### **1.4 Policy outline of the study**

The report by Patrick Carter in 2003, *Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime*, was the catalyst for a radical change in policy. This was due to it recommending improvements in offender learning and skills to improve employment prospects as well as the development of the National Offender Management Service. The development of this service was an attempt to focus, in a more coherent and integrated way, on offenders from custody into the community. The framework to deliver this multi-agency approach was provided in the government's *Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan (2004/5)*, which identified seven pathways to deliver the work to reduce re-offending. The most relevant pathway to this study is the Education, Training and Employment (ETE) pathway.

Also relevant to this study are the Prison Service Orders (PSO), which are in place in all prison establishments and provide headquarter guidance outlining the standards to be achieved in relation to prison education. PSO 4200 outlines the core curriculum for prison establishments and PSO 4205 has some further guidance in respect of education in prison. However, both of these orders are somewhat out-of-date, and at the time of this study, were still in place and operational.

The creation of the Offender Learning and Skills Service has significantly changed the delivery of offender education, particularly over the last three years, with the emphasis on a broader curriculum offer, progression, mainstreaming of provision and employability. In addition, the adult version of the *Offender Learning Journey*, from the Department for Education and Skills in 2004, outlined a broader curriculum offer with a focus on developing skills to meet and improve employment prospects for offenders.

The priorities and approaches for change were further detailed in the government's Green Paper in 2005, *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment* and in 2006, *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment: Next Steps*. These papers clearly outline a change in direction and priorities to include more engagement with employers, developing education through the offender learning and skills service and possibly a campus model of delivery, and more effective support and use of information, communication technology (ICT).

Furthermore, the LSC have outlined their policies and proposals, taking into account the challenges detailed in the Leitch Report 2006: *Prosperity for all in the Global Economy-world class skills*. They have outlined developments through the proposed *Prospectus* to the Offender Learning and Skills Service, which will prioritise funding and delivery to specific offender groups, in line with their sentence plan and release dates.

Furthermore, they are in collaboration with partners to develop an e-learning framework within offender education to more appropriately use computers for offender learning. In this respect, funding was provided, through the LSC as part of the *IT Refresh Project*, to expand and embed the use of e-learning and information, communication technology with offenders.

The key policies and context for my research project, as outlined here in this section of the introductory chapter, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

## **1.5 Literature Review**

The literature review considers theoretical issues in relation to social exclusion, participation and learning. Certainly, with the current policy context and employability agenda for offenders, the notion of the learning society as a learning market prevails, with the emphasis on obtaining skills and qualifications for individual achievement and economic competitiveness. However, this presents a number of challenges in respect of offenders in relation to equality of opportunity and discrimination within the 'market place'. The challenge here, is to overcome some of the barriers and disadvantages faced by offenders and ex-offenders, so that they can be usefully engaged in employment or training on release.

Furthermore, social exclusion is important when considering the issues of inequality within education and employment domains. Certainly, the literature shows that offenders are more likely than the general population, to suffer from disadvantage and as such, the challenge is to address their learning and skills needs (Canton and Hancock, 2007;

Braggins and Talbot, 2003; Rack, 2005). The needs of socially excluded offenders are closely linked to criminogenic factors, such as, education in relation to literacy, numeracy and computer skills (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). Hence, the educational needs of the socially excluded should be developed in contexts which are meaningful and motivating from a learner's perspective. This is important if they are to gain the transferable skills necessary to participate and progress in education, training and employment.

The social exclusion issue is further compounded by the labelling of offenders as 'dangerous' or in some way 'different' to others. In order to remove the offender label, they need to acquire new skills, and in so doing, can move forward to a new career path. Vocational training opportunities are particularly appropriate in this respect, in that they can become a tradesman, for example. However, participation in learning can be problematic for disadvantaged groups, such as offenders, who have been excluded and/or have poor experiences of schooling and, as such, are classed as 'hard to reach'. Barriers to participation have been documented which Harrison (1993) categorised as institutional barriers implying issues to do with the institution, access and flexibility of provision; situational barriers incorporating lifestyle and possibly family issues; and dispositional barriers which are to do with attitudes and motivation by individuals towards learning.

However, technology is seen as one way to solving the barriers to participation. For offenders, the revised initiative of Learndirect provision is one way in which this is being progressed. However, there are still residual issues in prison establishments to do with security and internet access in relation to the implementation of such initiatives. Certainly, learners' perceptions of technology, how they use and learn with it are important considerations. From an institutional perspective within a prison establishment, it is important to identify institutional issues in relation to developing and implementing curriculum interventions which embed e-learning and enable an effective e-learning strategy to be developed.

The outline of theoretical themes and issues explored briefly in this section of the introductory chapter are discussed in more depth in Chapter 4.

## **1.6 Outline of the methodology and methods**

I considered that a case study framework would be most appropriate for my research project. It provided me with a more in-depth opportunity to explore and investigate issues relating to the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention within

a prison establishment. I elected to use a case study approach with a mixed method of enquiry. Hence, the data collection methods included an initial questionnaire, informal observations and meeting notes, and two semi-structured interviews with staff and offenders. I adopted a grounded theory approach for data analysis purposes. After absorbing myself in the data my interpretation and analysis of the data began to evolve. It was at this point that I considered the most appropriate way to disseminate the findings was through a more ethnographic stance of allowing the participants their own 'voices' as the research project aimed to elicit their thoughts and opinions. Therefore, I used their actual statements and comments, verbatim, in a narrative approach so as to 'ground' the analysis and findings in the data. The rationale for the methodology and methods are considered and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Furthermore, I have given a great deal of consideration to my positionality in relation to this research project, detailed in Chapters 5 and 6, particularly as I am Head of Learning and Skills in the establishment selected for study. Consequently, at a strategic level, I have contributed to a number of curriculum developments within the establishment over a period of two and a half years. I have reflected on my position in respect of bias and preconceptions in relation to my career in prison education in order to alleviate any threats to the validity of the project. Furthermore, I consider my position and advantage as an 'insider researcher' conducting research in the selected prison establishment and the difficulties that can be encountered researching, more generally, in prison establishments.

### **1.7 Boundaries of the case study**

The research project is limited to a single case study on a category 'B' training prison. The study is placed within prison education and meeting the educational needs of offenders within the Offender Learning and Skills Service. The structure of the study is based within this conceptual framework and an understanding of the issues involved. The expansion of the prison establishment to meet population pressures, consequently changing the profile of the population incarcerated within it, provided an opportunity to study the development and implementation of one curriculum intervention incorporating an element of e-learning to meet learning and skills needs. This provided the planned boundary of the study and determined the participation of staff and offenders in the project. The aim is, therefore, to explore and present the perceptions of staff and offenders in relation to the development and implementation of a specific curriculum intervention involving e-learning in the case study establishment. The study does not seek to compare prison establishments but adopts a descriptive and evaluative stance,

within a case study framework, with an overall aim of being informative and possibly useful to other practitioners within prison education, in order to influence change within their own particular environment. The methodology and methods used for this research project are considered extensively in Chapter 6.

### **1.8 Outline of analysis, findings and conclusions**

The responses from the initial questionnaire were input manually onto a software package named SurveyMonkey. The browse, filter and crosstab features of the package gave the opportunity to produce specific reports for more detailed analysis. One of the aims of analysing in this way was to draw out tentative themes from the data which could be explored further during the interview stages.

The staff demographic data from the initial questionnaire showed that, with the exception of officer support grades, a representative sample of staff completed the survey. The data was analysed by different job-related groups to compare strength of opinion related statements and, as such, themes in relation to experience and attitudes began to emerge. Furthermore, the offender demographic data reflected the current population make-up of the establishment representing, almost equally, public protection, determinate and life sentenced offenders. In this respect, the data reflected the increase in population that the establishment had experienced in relation to public protection offenders.

There were four questions on both offender and staff questionnaires which were identical and related to factors concerned with the impact on and prevention of use of computers and e-learning. This provided the opportunity to analyse and compare their respective opinions to elicit any similarities or indeed differences in the data. I considered it appropriate to try to make comparisons in this way as the research project was aiming to address questions on both their responses in respect of the development and implementation of the curriculum intervention involving e-learning.

The technique of content analysis was used to analyse the first and second interviews for both staff and offenders. I found that analysing the data in this way revealed three higher level categories namely educational, environmental and organisational. The categories were further sub-divided into component parts and so, in this respect for example, a curriculum development component was identified in relation to the educational category. Factors were then assigned to the various components. So again, in this example, one of the factors relating to the curriculum component identified

in the data provided by staff was progression routes. Throughout Chapter 7, I describe and analyse the categories, components and factors which have emerged from the data. In addition, I discuss the findings which have arisen from my analysis of the data and, use a narrative approach to disseminate explanations of the findings.

Furthermore, Chapter 8 draws conclusions in respect of the study. The key conclusions are that factors identified in relation to development of the curriculum intervention include progression, embedded skills for life, flexibility, mainstreaming provision, employability, standards and time factors (Ertmer 1999, 2005; Burgess and Taylor, 2005; Wilson and Wahidin, 2006).

The study identified a number of positive staff responses which were summarised into two categories. The educational category and learner component had responses in relation to motivation and achievement, attitudes to learning and progression. The organisational category and institutional component had responses in respect of attitudes, partnership approach, system capacity, communication, roles and responsibilities. This study concluded that partnership working had emerged as a particularly strong response with a relatively high number of comments and examples provided by staff throughout the duration of the project. In respect of factors in relation to barriers/obstacles the staff identified culture/attitudes, security and installation/staff issues. Indeed, these barriers are again not unique to the case study establishment particularly when integrating technology into a curriculum intervention (Ertmer 1999, 2005; Wilson and Wahidin, 2006; Wilson and Logan, 2007).

The learner responses to the curriculum intervention were very positive. They identified confidence, motivation, resources, support from tutors and individualised learning as important. Certainly, they were motivated to learn and enjoyed the programme and the evidence suggests that the curriculum intervention has engaged the more 'hard to reach' learner. Furthermore, Chapter 8 provides an evaluation and reflection on the research project as well as a few limitations with reference to methodology and methods used in order to aid interpretation of results and conclusions. Finally, some implications for further research, policy and practice are made.

### **1.9 Details of the case study establishment and curriculum intervention**

The establishment in which I currently work was selected for the focus of this case study. It is an adult male, category 'B' training prison which holds indeterminate sentenced offenders, indeterminate for public protect offenders and 'traditional' life sentenced

offenders. It is appropriate, at this point, to provide a brief explanation of sentencing as there are a number of different types of indeterminate sentences. The main ones include a mandatory life sentence for those offenders who commit murder; a discretionary life sentence for those offenders who commit a serious offence such as manslaughter or arson, for example; and imprisonment for public protection. It was the Criminal Justice Act 2003 which created a number of public protection sentences specifically aimed at dangerous offenders. The most recent change in April 2005 has meant the introduction of the indeterminate sentence for public protection which applies:

to offenders who are convicted of a serious offence (that is a specified sexual or violent offence carrying a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment or more) and who are considered by the court to pose a "significant risk to members of the public, of serious harm".

(HM Prison Service 2007a, p. 1)

This means, therefore, that serious offenders are prevented from release from custody until all relevant authorities agree that they no longer pose a threat to the public. This sentence was initially introduced to ensure the detention of a small number of dangerous offenders. However, it has in fact, made a significant contribution to the recent rapid increase in the prison population and as such has become one of the main drivers for population pressures in prisons. This is one of the reasons why the case study establishment has undergone a recent expansion programme to accommodate an extra 180 offenders. However, in respect of population pressures, an immediate consequence of this is that offenders are being kept in prison establishments longer than the originally imposed tariff because they are unable to address their identified needs and complete programmes and rehabilitative interventions in the timeframes set by the courts. The current policy requires that indeterminate public protection offenders should be treated as life sentence offenders. As such, this presents a significant challenge for the establishment to identify and implement appropriate interventions for this particular group of offenders and meeting their needs is likely to be a resource intensive business.

Furthermore, the prison has had two expansion programmes to increase the population since it was opened, after being purpose built, in 1986. The latest expansion programme has increased the population to a maximum capacity of 847. The case study establishment was required to develop appropriate interventions for the increase in offender population and their particular individual and learning needs. The curriculum opportunities are developed in line with the regional Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) and the vocational training courses are in line with the NOMS key sectors as per the Corporate Alliance, identifying employer skills shortage. All the core delivery throughout the learning and skills curriculum is nationally accredited, allowing

learners to achieve appropriate industry and educational qualifications. The provision ranges from Basic Skills awards through to GCSE's, 'A' levels, Open University, National Vocational Qualifications and City & Guilds training awards.

The development of learning and skills is overseen by the Quality Improvement Group (QIG). This group is focused on the strategic monitoring and evaluation of the Learning and Skills Strategy and Self-assessment Report Action Plan. Another focus of the group is to identify and support Quality Improvement opportunities throughout the prison and work in partnership with a number of agencies. Reporting to the QIG is the Development Improvement Group (DIG) and this group is focused on operational delivery, implementing strategies and sharing of information. Over the last three years, a broad range of provision has developed and, as such, one of the curriculum interventions, which incorporated e-learning provided the opportunity for this study to be conducted.

The details of the selected curriculum intervention are that in 2007, the case study establishment became the first prison in the region to begin to develop the provision of e-learning for offenders in custody. The provision has been developed in partnership with the Prison Service, the OLASS provider and a local college providing Learndirect delivery. It was decided to develop the curriculum intervention incorporating e-learning with workshop provision, so as to provide for a broad curriculum offer to include literacy, numeracy, key skills, computers, training and employability skills from entry to level 2. An overall programme title 'construction' was agreed and delivered full time with clear progression routes from skills training to production with a total of 36 learner places available.

The case study, curriculum provision and curriculum intervention outlined at this point in the introductory chapter are described and explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

### **1.10 The contribution of this study**

The study aims to contribute to an understanding of what factors influence the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention including e-learning provision within a prison context. In this respect, the study makes particular contributions to the identification of contributing factors to the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention within a prison establishment. It also offers further evidence in relation to staff and offender perspectives on education within a prison establishment.



## **1.11 Summary**

This introductory chapter has provided the opportunity for explanation of the context of my research project, outlining and describing the pertinent details of the study. This has included a brief overview of the research questions, historical and theoretical contextual basis for the study, methodology and methods used and details of the case study itself. In Chapter 2, I provide a brief introduction to the penal debate as well as a chronological outline of prison education developments through to the present day and the offender learning and skills service.

## Chapter Two

### 2.1 Introduction: Prison education, the historical context

This chapter sets out chronologically the historical development and context of prison education with reference to some of the key developments in relation to education, training, learning and skills over the last two centuries. It begins with a short introduction to the penal debate, moving on to provide a brief outline of prison education developments from early to the middle of the nineteenth century through to the early twenty first century and the offender learning and skills service of today.

### 2.2 The penal debate

From a philosophical perspective, the term imprisonment provides the formal aspect to punishment whereas prisons, and ultimately the prison regime, may be viewed as the instrument for social engagement and resettlement. It is interesting to note, within the research literature, that the paradoxical expectation of society is one in which imprisonment is retributive as well as rehabilitative. As a punishment, imprisonment is a deterrent in that it protects the public by incarcerating offenders and removing them from society for a period of time. However, more controversially is the notion that prison can provide an opportunity for individual reflection and a chance to change attitudes, values and behaviour, in order to successfully re-integrate back into society. Indeed, Foucault (1977, p. 233) asserted that the role of the prison 'supposed or demanded, [is] as an apparatus for transforming individuals'. Foucault's assertion provides a contradiction to the societal view of prisons, which is still somewhat prevalent nowadays, in that they are places for punishment rather than rehabilitation and change. In this respect, the focus of government policy can fluctuate between the two stances so, it is not surprising, therefore, that 'public opinion can [also] waver between favouring these two quite different purposes and [as such] policies reciprocate' (Bayliss, 2003, p. 159). Furthermore, the literature (Taylor, 2006; Forsythe, 1987; McConville, 1981) has shown that public opinion can sway dependent upon the reports provided through the media which often have headline reports on violent crimes and crime rates that are perceived to be rising.

Therefore, historically, there has been much penal debate on the role of punishment. The 'role' in this respect, has been questioned, particularly in terms of deterrence, retribution, reformation and rehabilitation. Hence, the punishment approach features, not only individual opportunity, choice and accountability for actions, but suggests that the punishment should be proportional to the severity of the crime committed. In this

respect, society's disapproval expressed as punishment serves as a general deterrent and the historical 'hard labour' prison regimes were viewed very much as a form of punishment. Therefore, the traditional concept of imprisonment combined with short sentences meant that the notion of useful activities, including education for offenders in prison, was slow to materialise. Certainly, in the early eighteenth century, the need for solitary confinement was expressed by prison reformers. By the mid eighteenth century, however, the 'silent system' was considered popular whereby offenders were allowed to work together but they were not able to communicate with each other. But, as reforms progressively moved forward during the nineteenth century, they began to include the notion of rehabilitation.

So, the rhetoric regarding punishment, 'hard labour' regimes and the 'silent system' of work without communication gave way to the gradual shift towards providing meaningful prison work and activities within the prison regime and so reflected a more rehabilitative framework for reform. The framework throughout the twentieth century encompassed the rehabilitation model, which viewed the prison environment as an ideal opportunity to modify offender behaviour 'through counselling and to educate via vocational training' (Garth-Lewis, 2005, p. 21). Certainly, I would say that the development of vocational training in prisons has been an important factor in providing alternative opportunities to learning new skills. In this respect, it has contributed to a high quality and diverse education provision which provides for a more appropriate myriad of benefits, particularly in relation to the positive impact on the prison regime and on the possible rehabilitation of offenders. In respect of the positive impact that education may have with offenders and recidivism, the literature (Wilson and Reuss, 2000; Winters, 1995; Duguid, 1998;) notes that a number of research studies have shown a correlation between education and a reduction in recidivism. Indeed, 'the link between crime rate and educational level is well established [as] according to Tewksbury and Gennaro (1994), insufficient education is one variable that has resulted in an increased crime rate in the United States' (quoted in Batchelder and Pippert, 2002, p. 269).

Hence today, the delivery of learning and skills is very much a part of the prison regime and is a contributory function of what is called 'purposeful activity'. As such, delivery of learning and skills makes a positive contribution to a busy daily routine for offenders. However, it has to be noted that it has been well documented (Unesco, 1995; Forum News, 2005) that education cannot benefit all offenders nor is it a panacea for all the problems that can be encountered in a prison environment. It should not be underestimated working in a long-term establishment with some habitual criminals and

lifers the effect that years of imprisonment can have. In this respect, education, learning and skills will not hold all the answers but it is important in providing opportunities to change even though 'we expect some aspects of this socialisation to be indelible' (Wilson and Reuss, 2000, p.79). However, the prison, as a social institution, does contribute to the development process and facilitates individual freedoms to learn and transform. This contradicts the societal view of prisons, which is still prevalent, in that they are places for punishment rather than rehabilitation and change, compounded by a public perception that prisons are places full of dangerous people.

### **2.3 Historical context to present day**

The research literature clearly shows, albeit somewhat sketchily, that education provision within prisons has had a long and complicated history. Consequently, the following sections of this chapter couch, in general terms, a brief historical account of the way in which the arrangements for prison education have evolved over the last two hundred years or so. It explores the early literature for references of prison education and the acquisition of skills. The term education therefore, within this chapter, is broadly interpreted as meaning literacy in the form of reading and writing which is known to have featured in some prison regimes as early as the eighteenth century.

#### **2.3.1 Late eighteenth century to middle of the nineteenth century**

It is clear in the literature that education, in the early era, was closely linked with religion and in particular reading of the bible. The bible was accessible for some offenders in 1822 and by 1829 this was extended to all offenders as it was hoped that this would lead to offenders' spiritual redemption and social rehabilitation. This represented the evangelical theory which was a traditionally strong basis for prisoner reform in the early era. It was pioneered in prisons by chaplains who were later assisted by prison schoolmasters. However, by 1830 spiritual reformism began to attract opposition which questioned whether these particular beliefs and aims should form part of a prison's primary function and indeed regime. As a response to this criticism 'spiritual reformists accordingly added to their arsenal of religious instruction, reflection and repentance, an emphasis upon useful skills to enable the offender to work after release' (Forsythe 1987, p. 54).

As the evangelical theory and utilitarian philosophy permeated the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century it was developed further by Jeremy Bentham, particularly in relation to prison administration and law reform. Bentham set up a workshop in close proximity to the prison so that released offenders could continue to

work and practise the skills learnt in prison. Bentham asserted that useful work would provide offenders with a sense of achievement and satisfaction instead of a loathing for the pointless tasks associated with hard labour. He proposed to 'turn a prison into a school; thereby returning its inhabitants into the world instructed in the most useful branches of vulgar learning, as well as in some trade or occupation whereby they may afterwards earn their livelihood' (Howard 1960, p. 20). Bentham's proposal encapsulates a reformist perspective and belief in that the gaining of skills and knowledge would help the offender on release to reintegrate into the community and so have the ability to face social, personal and economic difficulties with a new focus and attitude. The philosophy of this proposal is, to all intents and purposes, similar to that which is being proposed today. However, initially Bentham asserted this proposal back in 1791 and what makes it particularly interesting is that it still has currency, aligned to current day proposals, which advocate a more 'joined up and seamless approach' in the delivery of learning and skills to offenders. Furthermore, more recently, Gehring (1989) has also asserted that prisons should be transformed from 'work houses' and function more as schools.

However, towards the end of the eighteenth century the association theory was developed from a psychological perspective which asserted an explanation of the formation of attitudes in relation to the individual's experience and the impact that this experience had upon them. The primary purpose of this form of reformatory practice was that it would take into account individual needs. Furthermore, in doing so, the expectation would be to tailor the prison regime accordingly to meet those identified needs. In this scenario, the individual's reformation and progress would need to be monitored by staff and, in addition, new skills and attitudes would also be taught to enable the likelihood that the offender would be ultimately able to maintain himself on release. It is worthy of note that, during the late eighteenth century this type of associationist reasoning was at the heart of Bentham's model prison, which he named Panopticon. This was the ideally designed prison in which it was Bentham's intention to reform offenders 'by measured and prolonged infliction of pleasure and pain within a carefully regulated regime, [so that] behaviour patterns would be systematically altered' (Forsythe 1987, p. 12). However, as he was unsuccessful in persuading governments to build such a prison, this approach was not developed further.

Robert Peel's Gaol Act (1823) provided deterrent as well as reformative measures, some of which are still of relevance today. It recommended progressive measures such as education by schoolmasters, religious instruction by chaplains, separate confinement and classification, purposeful hard labour, profit-share earnings and money on release

for offenders. The measures and guidance were derived from the John Howard (1726-1790) era which focused attention on the need for physical and administrative prison reforms. Indeed, the 1823 Act made statutory provision for the instruction of reading and writing to all offenders and featured, for the first time, schoolmasters in prison legislation. The Act required that prison authorities should appoint 'schoolmasters' and it is perhaps pertinent to say that prison education developed, albeit slowly, from this point onwards to become one of the central elements of the prison regime as it is today.

The literature purports that the inclusion of schoolmasters at this time is attributable to Elizabeth Fry who was influential in raising prison issues and attracting public attention due, in some part, to her social connections. Indeed, 'she applied in practice the principle of her brother-in-law, Fowell Buxton, that once a prisoner is taken into captivity the task is to reform him, not to add further discomforts to the punishment of losing his liberty' (Howard 1960, p. 37). Buxton advocated that the reformation of offenders would prevent further crime and as such a prison sentence should be viewed 'as a punishment, and not *for* punishment' (Howard, 1960, p. 31). Therefore in this respect, Elizabeth Fry initiated useful activities and work for offenders in Newgate Prison and encouraged basic numeracy, literacy and religious teaching as part of their reformatory regime. The lesser known work of contemporary Sarah Martin (1791- 1843) at Yarmouth Prison also sought to encourage offenders to engage in useful activities and 'as well as teaching the prisoners to read, to write, and to make articles for sale, Sarah Martin acted as chaplain to them' (Howard 1960, p. 40). One of the most original features of her work was a scheme to provide money to offenders on release from articles which had been produced whilst in prison. However, after her death the scheme was discontinued which indicates the difficulties and fragmented approach during this time of providing some form of continuous and embedded practice.

The early work of Elizabeth Fry, Sarah Martin and Jeremy Bentham provide evidence of ideas which formed part of a reformatory regime in some prisons which led to the development of occupational training, education and spiritual instruction. Indeed, as Forsythe (1987, p. 229) also purports 'it is also true that many of these proponents of reformism sought to base their action upon a more independent ethic of very high importance, an ideal of social inclusion and human value of prisoners which stood at the heart of many of their endeavours. They preached this consistently and spent much of their lives seeking to promote it'. Certainly, by 1850, assertions are documented in the literature (Forsythe, 1987), made by Michael Ignatieff and Michel Foucault that a heavy

dependence upon reformatory theory was in place in many European regimes as an accepted system of regulation within prisons.

The debates concerning prison management, crime rates and how offenders should be occupied and managed, particularly when serving long custodial sentences, gathered momentum during this period. The result of this discourse was that the measures outlined in Robert Peel's Gaol Act had little chance to develop as the public attitude towards reformatory prisons deteriorated in the wake of a perceived increase in violent crime rates. Hence, discontentment at this time provided significant debates in relation to the philosophies of deterrence or reformation. During this period of public panic and obsession with crime rates a report by the Royal Commission on Penal Servitude in 1863 made recommendations to increase the deterrent and punitive measures within the discipline elements of prison systems. Consequently, the reorganisation of education in 1863 meant that for prisons the offender's educational allowance of half a day of education per week finished and classes were replaced with cellular instruction. This fuelled prison education discourse at the time to such an extent that as Higgs (2007, p. 57) points out 'the insistence of the central authorities that education should be provided in the form of cellular instruction attracted strong opinions on both sides'. Public outcry certainly contributed to the direction of penal policy at this time in which reformatory objectives were eliminated to such an extent that the 'Prison Act of 1865 was almost exclusively deterrent and retributive' (McConville 1981, p. 363).

### **2.3.2 Late nineteenth to middle of the twentieth century**

Thus, the decline of reformation prevailed during the middle to late nineteenth century until the Gladstone Committee (1894) condemned the notion of deterrence and severity of imprisonment. One recommendation of the Committee was to re-introduce productive labour because of the positive effect that it would have on the offender. Consequently, the condemnation of deterrent imprisonment by the Gladstone Committee provided the opportunity to build on the promise of Robert Peel's Act by developing offenders' 'moral instincts, to train them in orderly and industrious habits, and whenever possible, to turn them out of prison better men and women physically and morally than when they [went] in' (Howard 1960, p. 107).

However, there had been slow progress during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century and as such very little change in laws relating to prison education during this period. Baxendale (1981, p. 156) comments that 'in some ways the history of prison education from 1878 to 1948, when it became a local responsibility again, may be

regarded as a search for the most suitable way back into mainstream education in the community'. The school-oriented emphasis had been on reading, writing and arithmetic, colloquially named 'the 3 Rs', and with a particular focus towards religious and moral instruction. However, from 1919 discourse was advocating more of an adult educational approach to prison education rather than a school-oriented one. As a result, during the 1920s and 1930s the curriculum was broadened to include more than 'the 3 Rs' and was based on evening provision provided by educational institutions of the day. The broadening of the curriculum after the First World War gained further acceptance and a myriad of subjects and activities were developed, mainly by teachers who worked voluntarily. The chaplain's role in education began to subside during this era as they found themselves increasingly on the periphery of this activity, enabling them to concentrate more on their religious responsibilities. The outbreak of the Second World War curtailed such promising curriculum development, however, it did provide the opportunity for vocational training to become part of some prisons' regimes to help the war effort.

Arrangements for post-war custodial education were considered by the Prison Commission which was established in 1878 by an Act of Parliament. Indeed, Baxendale (1981) purports that the Prison Commission were clearly searching for a means to mainstream offender education in prison regimes from the era of the Gladstone Committee and the period between the First and Second World Wars. Hence, after the Second World War the Commission appointed the Prisoners Education Advisory Committee in 1947, who considered the arrangements and purpose of prison education. Their considerations 'reflected the humanitarian and reformist philosophies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, [and were] clear at last of the avowedly punitive and deprivatory practices which had so long engulfed them' (Baxendale 1981, p. 158). This was because they strongly favoured adult education and arrangements which included vocational, social, physical and spiritual education.

Thus, after the Second World War there was a period when a rehabilitative discourse prevailed, albeit criticised by some. Indeed, the Committee also made an important organisational recommendation in that these arrangements should be placed within Local Education Authorities. Consequently, the 1944 Education Act received a 1948 amendment to this effect and, under this agreement, the Home Office provided the funding for the contracts to deliver the education provision.



The Prison Department invited the Local Education Authorities to restructure and professionalise prison administrative arrangements with a particularly important focus of changing from a school-orientated to an adult education approach. The need to mainstream provision was an important consideration and, in this respect the Education in Prisons Policy Statement (1969) concluded that they were 'convinced of the importance of education in the penal situation, as an aid to living, and of the necessity of bringing it into line with all that is best in the national mainstream of education' (p. 13).

### **2.3.3 Historical context from late twentieth century**

Following 1969, Local Education Authorities provided a growth in prison education albeit unevenly from a national perspective until 1993. This ad hoc approach with individual Local Education Authorities resulted in anomalies which meant that in some prisons the development of education had been minimal, whereas in others, it was structured and well integrated. Budget constraints were also a factor in the inconsistency in that the governor of the establishment held the education budget and would often divert this to other areas of the prison regime due to conflicting priorities and financial pressures. As a consequence, during this period the education provision lacked stability as it was the governor's decision as to whether there was enough funding for the education provision to continue.

The early 1990s saw the Conservative government in power with a strong privatisation agenda. In 1991 they introduced a tendering process which meant that potential contractors were invited to bid for the delivery of prison education provision. This signalled the first step in a major overhaul of prison education. Consequently, in 1993 prison education was 'quasi-privatised' as Further Education Colleges bid and subsequently won contracts to deliver prison education. The contracts were awarded in order to raise standards and increase accountability and were for a term of five years, based on the number of teaching hours to be delivered in the prison establishment. The education budgets provided to prison establishments could only be used for educational purposes and so became 'ring-fenced'. This meant that it was no longer possible for the governor of an establishment to detrimentally cut the education provision in order to subsidise other areas of the prison regime.

The government wanted to challenge the quality of education provision in prisons and promote more 'joined-up' delivery of both education and vocational training. Hence, there was a strong government agenda to introduce competition to raise standards and improve quality focusing education at the centre of the prison regime. A significant driver

for the contracting out and marketisation of offender education was to provide for a more robust system of accountability, particularly through the inspection process. So, since 1993 education in prisons has been delivered by a number of different contractors and, as such, prison education succumbed to, what could be termed 'quasi-privatisation' on the basis that it would provide better value to the state. These measures were initially opposed by organisations such as the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education and the Howard League for Penal Reform. Their opposition and contribution to debate at the time, highlighted concerns as to whether these measures would actually improve the quality of service or even provide better value for money by the inauguration of competition between providers.

#### **2.3.4 Early twenty first century up to Project Rex**

Consequently since 1993, there were a further two rounds of the tendering process completed before, in 2001, the responsibility for prison education was transferred to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in partnership with the Prison Service. At this time the Prisoner Learning and Skills Unit (PLSU) was created and assumed responsibility for offender education. It was renamed, in 2003 to the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU) and from 2004 also had responsibility for offenders' education in the community. The aim, once again, was to bring offender education in line with mainstream provision. The government, at this time, had a manifesto commitment to increase the quantity and quality of prison education provision. They were committed to the creation of learning opportunities for everyone including offenders in prison. Consequently, they prioritised the development of an 'excellent' offender learning and skills service and provided a substantial increase in resources and funding in an effort to meet it. It was at this time that Minister Ivan Lewis commented that the government were 'also investing in a number of activities such as ICT. [They wanted] prisons to have up-to-date PCs so that prisoners [would] be learning IT skills on equipment [that] they would use in the community' (2003, p. 19). However, it was five years from Minister Ivan Lewis's comments on investment in ICT for offenders before it materialised through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the form of the *IT Refresh* project in prisons.

Over the next ten years the broad terminology of offender education began to change to one which more specifically encompassed learning and skills. Certainly, by 2003, the change to delivering learning and skills was a key recommendation in Patrick Carter's report, namely *Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime* (2003). The report recommended a central single system through a National Offender Management Service (NOMS) that would put the emphasis on the individual management of offenders. The introduction of

NOMS was to bring forward the notion of 'end-to-end' offender management by 'ensuring [that] a single professional has responsibility for each offender throughout their sentence, managing education and employment provision as part of a wider sentence plan' (Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment 2005, p. 8). Subsequently, this would provide correctional services with an opportunity to more effectively reduce re-offending by integrating education and vocational training provision for offenders both in custody and the community in a more coherent way. Hence, learning and skills terminology rather than education is used to encapsulate this change. It is interesting to note that the aim to improve continuity and to ensure that offenders on release are able to complete the qualifications and training started in custody is no different to Bentham's philosophy as purported some two hundred years earlier, which proposed vocational as well as academic training. Indeed, Minister Ivan Lewis also made this point in 2003 when he commented that 'education and skills training [should] be tailored to prisoners' distinct needs [...] which give them the opportunities they need to progress [and] to ensure that the education which prisoners receive is compatible with the work opportunities they will find when back out in the community' (2003, p. 19). Hence, there was an expectation that prison education should focus on increasing the employment prospects of offenders and thereby contribute to reducing recidivism. The government adopted an instrumental approach towards learning for work which was mirrored in the discourse regarding prison education at this juncture.

Consequently this resulted, in 2003, in another tendering process which was commissioned to combine education and vocational training, namely, *Project Rex*. The objective was to contract out the vocational training provision delivered by Prison Service instructional officers because it had been identified that, on the whole, there had been poor professional practice in this area. However, early in 2004 the project was abandoned by government and as such the government wasted a large amount of money. They decided instead to extend the existing contracts with current providers until the creation of NOMS was completed. Hence, it was at this point that the responsibility for the planning, funding and delivery of offender education was transferred to the LSC.

### **2.3.5 Early twenty first century through to the OLASS era**

The LSC replaced *Project Rex* with a new Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) which provided an opportunity to radically overhaul the way in which education provision was to be procured and delivered. A key change in the transition from *Project Rex* to OLASS was that the new service was to apply to offenders in custody as well as in the community. The new service aimed to focus more on the learner and to adopt a

holistic approach to reducing re-offending and resettlement. Hence, it was about the impact on the learner rather than about competition between providers. Thus, OLASS did not set out to act as a silo within the criminal justice area but to sit under the umbrella of NOMS and, as a consequence, was a development towards satisfying the Regional Offender Management (ROM) agenda. The ROM agenda set to establish strategies regionally and locally to reduce re-offending by creating local partnerships and alliances to meet offenders' needs. The coherence of the sentence plan is particularly important in this respect and provides the opportunity for offender management 'to plan interventions to improve skills and employability in the context of other support' (Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment 2005, p. 18).

Consequently, the new service level agreement for learning and skills which emerged at this time was predominantly based on the increased requirement for prison regimes to deliver the government's agenda on learning and skills as documented in the *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment (2005)* paper. The focus, in recent years, of delivering nationally recognised qualifications has tended to satisfy this, however the importance now was to ensure that under OLASS there was coherent progression for offenders into either further training in the community or employment. The LSC's vision was that OLASS would enable offenders to gain economically valuable skills which would positively promote their reintegration into society.

This positive approach required the new service to advocate a much needed 'joined up' delivery of offender education in collaboration with partner agencies. As such:

the new service [would be] underpinned by better assessment and planning; a broader, richer curriculum offer; availability of accurate and up-to-date data; mainstreamed delivery of offender learning; alliances forming at regional level; progressive development of offender learning and correctional services workforces; and strengthened and refocused external inspection arrangements.

(DfES 2005, p. 1)

However, the forming of alliances is one of the real tests for the new service, in particular, developing links with employers and changing the attitudes and procedures which operate against employing ex-offenders. There is a huge question mark with regard to inequalities in this context. It needs to be addressed 'by making sure that everyone who is willing to work, has the opportunity of getting a job and is ensured of 'employability'' (Bottery and Wright 2000, p. 25). It cannot be assumed that by delivering the new offender learning and skills service and ensuring that an offender has appropriate skills and training that attitudes and inequitable recruitment policies will cease to be a factor in their future chances of employment.

Initially therefore, three development regions were identified as the North-West, North-East and South-East, which were to lead the way and implement the Offender Learning and Skills Service from August 2005. Once again, the aims of the new service were to better integrate learning and skills provision in both custody and the community based on the Offenders' Learning Journey (OLJ). Particular elements of the OLJ relevant to this research project are the arrangements for ICT, work-based learning and e-learning. Hence this was a new specification for delivery of offenders' learning and skills which outlined a broader curriculum offer with a particular focus on employability and increasing employment prospects on release. Certainly research has shown that, for ex-offenders, a crucial link exists between employment and a reduction in re-offending (Farrington et al, 1986; SEU, 2002).

However, the consensus generally amongst agencies involved in employability issues of offenders was that it was difficult to get offenders into employment, education or training on release due to barriers such as disclosure of criminal records, low level skills and poor previous work history. Even as long ago as the 1930s, 'there was a call for prison educators to diagnose, prescribe, and treat each prison inmate separately and to give every prisoner what he or she needed to enhance academic and vocational skills' (Batchelder and Pippert, 2002, p. 270). It is interesting to note that more than three quarters of a century later, the new Offender Learning and Skills Service and the role of the development regions was to attempt to deliver a more individually focused and flexible learning and skills service. The aim of the government was then to progressively replace existing prison contracts for learning and skills with the new integrated service and for the new service to be rolled-out nationally from July 2006.

Once OLASS was rolled out and in operation in the nine English regions, the political focus became one of implementation emphasising employability and a reduction in re-offending. Consequently, the central focus to government policy on reducing re-offending was now on gaining employable and transferable skills. Hence, in December 2006 the government launched their action plan, namely, the Green Paper on *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment – Next Steps* which was to set out an ambitious agenda for change; to integrate work with offenders into mainstream policy, ensuring that they achieve better skills and employment outcomes in order to reduce re-offending (LSC 2006a). The government selected two test bed regions in 2007 to push forward the reforms and create a model which will be considered for wider implementation in 2009 with the expiry of the OLASS contracts. Following on from the Green Paper, the LSC published a consultation proposal in September (2007a) namely,

*Developing the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service: the Prospectus* which sets out to change the way in which custodial offender learning and skills provision is planned, delivered and funded. The aim is to prioritise specific offender groups and focus on employment skills and employability.

The *Prospectus* outlines proposals to prioritise key groups of offenders and provision in order to facilitate a re-distribution of resources to correct what is perceived to be the historical imbalance of contracted hours delivery. The LSC have put forward a targeted approach within the *Prospectus* proposals as their budget for the whole of learning and skills within the offender population is not sufficient to meet demand. Funding eligibility will be derived from an individual offender's assessed needs and will need to take into consideration sentence length and the timeliness of accessing education and the offender's readiness to participate in learning. The proposals also indicate that there is a long term commitment between the Prison Service and the LSC to engage with the contract providers more in supporting, and indeed advising, on the opportunities for training within prison industries and workshops. In other words, 'out-of-scope' activity.

## **2.4 Summary**

In this second chapter I have provided an introduction to the penal debate in relation to the role of punishment and imprisonment with particular reference to forms of deterrent, retributive, reformative and rehabilitative philosophies and frameworks. It has briefly chronicled the development of prison education and vocational training up to the present day developments encapsulated within the offender learning and skills service. In chapter three I provide and discuss the key policy contexts pertaining to this study and prison education today.

## Chapter Three

### 3.1 Introduction: Policy

In chapter two I briefly outlined, in chronological fashion, the historical context of prison education from the late eighteenth century up to the present day. The third chapter now considers policies deemed relevant for this research project and prison education. It focuses on the key policy contexts and sets out to discuss the impact of a number of policies in relation to reducing re-offending, prison service orders, the offender learning journey and information technology (*IT Refresh* project).

### 3.2 Prison education: the policy context

#### 3.2.1 Government policies

The government's main priority is to protect the public. The theme of present policy represents a significant drive towards a reduction in recidivism by strengthening opportunities within prison to tackle the causes of re-offending. Two key criminogenic factors which have been well documented in policy literature are education and unemployment. Hence, recent policies are about providing a balance of opportunities for offenders to aid rehabilitation and to overcome some of the barriers that they face. The measures include providing opportunities to learn new skills and benefit from education and training courses which allow for reintegration back into the community. Statistics for 2006/7 show that '36501 [offenders] went into training and employment at the end of their sentence, a critical factor in moving them away from crime. [In addition], spending on offender learning has almost trebled since 2001, and now stands at £164m' (Ministry of Justice 2008, p. 11). The aim, clearly, is to turn offenders away from a life in crime to become law abiding and useful members of society.

To progress this aim, the government commissioned a report by Patrick Carter, namely, *Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime* (2003) which provided a platform to radically change policy. The report stated that 'very often offenders have missed out on much of their education [and] this normally means [that] they have little or no prospect of a job' (Carter 2003, p. 4). The report identified measures that had been put in place 'to improve offenders' educational attainment and improve their chances of securing work' (Carter 2003, p. 4) and provided a key recommendation to develop NOMS which would put the emphasis on the individual management of offenders through a single central system. Hence, the service was to be set up with the aim of focusing on offenders in a more integrated and coherent way from custody to community. The government's

response and proposals to Patrick Carter's report were documented in *Reducing Crime – Changing Lives* (2004) which noted that 'simply keeping somebody in prison only to release him with the same lack of education as when he was convicted is a [...] waste of opportunity' (p. 9). The importance of a partnership approach to delivery was stressed which, in terms of learning and skills, increased the emphasis to co-ordinate programmes incorporating education, training and work so as to make a difference to individual offenders' life chances and re-offending rates. Certainly a main focus was on creating opportunities to integrate educational and vocational provision, with the aim of improving continuity and developing new partnerships to ensure that released offenders are able to complete training and qualifications started in custody.

Furthermore, a report by the Social Exclusion Unit entitled *Reducing Re-offending by ex-prisoners* (2002) had identified the importance of successful multi-agency collaboration and described seven pathways which provided the framework for the government's *Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plans* (2004/5). The seven pathways to deliver the work to reduce re-offending were named as; Accommodation; Education, Training and Employment (ETE); Health; Drugs and Alcohol; Finance, Benefits and Debt; Children and Families; and finally, Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour. Most relevant to this project is the ETE pathway. It is interesting that over two hundred years later, Bentham's philosophy and proposal for academic as well as vocational training is still being proposed and this work today is being developed under the resettlement pathways outlined above. The pathway framework was an important, innovative piece of work which attempted to provide for collaborative working which focused action on practitioners as well as policy-makers. The contextualisation of the pathways under the umbrella of the reducing re-offending strategy allows for cross referencing between them. However, more recently there has been criticism that the pathways have in fact created silos and marginalisation rather than the joined up holistic approach to interventions that was originally envisaged. It is important to seek to position the employment, learning and skills pathway within the broader mainstream policies relating to the worklessness strategies. Skills shortages provide opportunities which offenders can take advantage of and as such *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment: Next Steps* (2006) could 'piggy back' on the broader and more recent worklessness agenda.

### **3.2.2 Prison Service Orders (PSO)**

For all prison establishments the focus is on 'providing skills and qualifications for offenders [in order to] help them to lead law-abiding productive lives during custody and



after release' (Prison Service 2007, p. 1). The qualifications that offenders can gain are delivered through the core curriculum which is in place for offender education. This sets out the priority areas for learning as the basis for delivering learning and employability skills. The core curriculum stipulates courses and facilities which should be available in prison. In addition, it identifies other educational programmes such as social and life skills which include for example, parent craft, citizenship and alcohol and drug misuse, which can provide an important framework to support offender learning needs and influence their behaviour positively.

Hence, Prison Service headquarters provide guidance and orders which outline the standards to be achieved in establishments. Subsequently, the Prison Service implemented a Prison Service Order Number 4200 (1997) which outlined a core curriculum that was to be put in place in prisons. It stipulated the courses, qualifications and facilities which should be made available in prison education and set out the priority areas for learning to include literacy, numeracy, art and information technology. However, the core curriculum outlined is completely out of date as it stipulates, for example, that 'wordpower and numberpower is required to be in place in all establishments' (PSO 4200, chapter 1, p. 1, 1997). In addition, the recommended computer specification for information technology is a 'PC – Pentium 95 [and] accreditation at the basic level must be through RSA Clait' (PSO 4200, chapter 2, p. 1 and p.2, 1997).

The Prison Service Order Number 4205 (2000) provides further guidance and mandatory requirements in respect of education provision for offenders albeit out dated in certain sections. However, it clearly states that 'the purpose of education within prison is to address the offending behaviour of inmates, by improving employability and thus reduce the likelihood of re-offending upon release' (PSO 4205, p. 4, 2000). It also stipulates that 'education programmes **will**, wherever possible, be integrated into other activities within prisons' (p. 6, 2000) and that 'the education programme must enable prisoners to achieve nationally accredited qualifications in key and basic skills up to level 2, which **will** enhance their employability on release. The Prison Core Curriculum (PSO 4200) must be in place to facilitate this' (p. 7, 2000). The emphasis placed on 'will' is part of the document.

So, the focus of prison education provision has primarily been on basic literacy and numeracy skills which are reported to be necessary to prepare learners for employment. There is no doubt that raising functional skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are

important. However, as such the intrinsic value of learning to improve one's capability or 'learning just for the sake of it' is neglected in favour of a functional approach to learning, which, in practice can be banal. Much of the learning and skills policy within prison education has been of an instrumental nature and has lacked the cultural dimension which provides for a more personalised learning experience and the development of the 'whole' individual. The implication for prison education here is to review the curriculum offer and in particular to identify the cultural aspects and activities that are being neglected. This is particularly pertinent if the prescribed narrow curriculum offer within the PSOs is still being adhered to in some establishments. In this case, it makes it challenging for providers of learning and skills to deliver a range of provision which stimulates the offenders' interest to learn, and subsequently, motivate them to improve their capabilities.

Indeed, a review of the curriculum was a recommendation made by Braggins and Talbot (2003, p. 67) in that 'the core curriculum for education and training should provide a framework that ensures a degree of consistency of provision between prisons [and that the] OLSU delivery plan commits to 'undertaking a major review of the curriculum''. As far as I am aware, although we do review our curriculum locally at establishment level, we are still waiting for a major national curriculum review. However, it could be that the responsibility to actually do this may well lie with the providers of the new 2009 OLASS contracts when they attempt to 're-balance' provision, locally and regionally to begin with, in line with the LSC's *Prospectus* proposals.

### **3.2.3 OLASS and the offender learning journey (OLJ)**

So, although the Prison Service Orders are still in place at the time of this study, the delivery of offender learning and skills has in fact changed significantly over the last three years, particularly in relation to the creation of OLASS. The responsibility for planning, funding and commissioning of offender learning and skills was given to the LSC whose aim was to ensure personalised programmes and interventions which were appropriate to individual offenders. The idea was to provide an integrated learning and skills provision which would deliver a seamless transition from custody to the community and mainstream with adult education. Consequently, the framework provided by OLASS was one in which it was possible to refocus standards and move more effectively towards mainstreaming programmes for offenders. The focus of the integrated service was on the early assessment of offenders' learning needs which would lead to a more appropriately targeted sentence plan which would lead on further to better opportunities for educational outcomes, progression and ultimately employment. The service

introduced an early focus on initial assessment, advice and guidance which would lead to the production of an individual learning plan which would follow the offender through the criminal justice system. In addition, there were separate adult and juvenile versions of the *Offender's Learning Journey* (DfES, 2004) which outlined a broader curriculum offer focusing on the development of skills necessary to improve the employability and employment chances of offenders on release and thus lead to a reduction in recidivism.

Hence, this 'new service' introduced a number of aspects to the OLJ in order to make learning relevant to identified labour market needs. It was also to take into account a number of government Green Paper initiatives, such as *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment* (2005) which hitherto provided the initial developmental framework and recommendations for change in this respect. The government were keen to change the historically low profile of offenders' employment prospects and the paper emphasised the need for more employers to become engaged so that real work opportunities could be pursued on release. It was noted that any increased opportunities for learning must focus on the skills and qualifications that are meaningful to prospective employers. Hence, in this respect, employers' involvement in developing a curriculum which reflects industry standards is key. The current drive is to engage employers and the challenge is to ultimately begin to change their perceptions of offenders to one where they are seen as employees and not ex-offenders.

The Green Paper quite rightly identified the costs to society that re-offending represents and signalled a move away from the notion of punishment to one of encouraging offenders to develop their skills and into work. The government recognises that improving offenders' learning and skills is critical to developing safer communities and reducing re-offending. Indeed, they made a manifesto commitment to develop excellence within offender education so that appropriate learning and skills provision would support increased employment prospects and learning activities would contribute to an effective prison regime.

The priorities and approaches for change were detailed further within the subsequent implementation strategies incorporated within the *Reducing Re-Offending through Skills and Employment: Next Steps* (2006) and the *Offender Learning Journey*. These strategies clearly outlined a change in direction and priorities for action which included engaging with employers and focusing on their needs; building on OLASS by developing a campus model; and to develop more flexible access to support through the effective use of Information Communication Technology (ICT). During the last twelve months the

dual agenda of reducing re-offending and employability have been dominant factors in the development of OLASS. This underlines the importance of developing a curriculum which leads to employability qualifications from basic skills, on the one hand, to vocational occupational specialisms, on the other.

#### **3.2.4 E-learning and IT refresh project**

This review indicates that challenging developmental frameworks for the future were outlined within the implementation strategies and set at national, regional and local levels. The two main points at a local level within the *Offender Learning Journey* pertinent to this project are that the service was to underpin a broad, rich curriculum and introduce a specific section of the journey in relation to ICT which has the flexibility to meet individual needs and include access to e-learning. It is acknowledged that individuals, including offenders, need to be not only competent but confident users of ICT in order to participate successfully and not be disadvantaged in today's society. ICT is constantly changing the way that we learn, live and work and as such employers are requiring improving levels of knowledge and skills in relation to ICT in the workplace.

The issue of using up-to-date ICT with offenders is a contentious one in a prison environment, particularly as it is perceived to pose a security risk. Certainly, Braggins and Talbot (2003, pp 28/29) in their research on prisoners' views on prison education found that 'in half of the groups, prisoner-learners regarded both hardware and software as 'old and outdated [...and that a] lack of internet access was particularly bemoaned'. Indeed, it has been acknowledged that 'prisons have been cautious about opening up access to e-learning facilities, but the government is keen to make more progress in this area' (HMSO, 2005, p. 35). In order for this to happen, it is widely agreed that offenders need internet access and industry standard IT facilities.

At a regional level, it was the intention of the LSC to develop a curriculum framework which ensured a clear focus on employability within a range of programmes which also provided for individual progression. Their aim was to encourage delivery providers to develop a broad, rich curriculum within the establishment which was appropriate to offender needs, their length of sentence and particular point of progress through their sentence plan. This is an important point for exploration within this project as to the possibilities of developing a more flexible, individually focused intervention and curriculum delivery model in the context of the sentence plan and supporting the overall aim to reduce re-offending. Whilst acknowledging the limitations that an establishment regime can create, the LSC wanted to see transformational change incorporating

relevant responsive learning and skills programmes brought about through a flexible curriculum model. They also wanted training establishments to develop vocational specialisms aligned to appropriate labour market data, and to take into consideration the challenges as detailed in the *Leitch Report* (2006).

The LSC have further outlined developments to the offender learning and skills service in the *Prospectus* proposals made in September 2007. These proposals highlight the priorities for funding offender curriculum areas and target groups which have been identified and set as high, medium and low. Therefore, it is proposed that high priority is given to offenders with less than one year to serve in relation to skills for employment and skills for life. Offenders with at least two years to serve will be high priority for a first level two qualification. The medium priorities will be those groups who have learning difficulties and need to improve functional skills. This will mean achieving within a curriculum framework which encompasses communication, learning for work and personal skills development. The low priority is for those offenders who are above level two and so relates to curriculum areas such as distance learning, access to higher education and personal interest learning.

There has been quite a lot of heated debate about the proposals. The implications of these proposals for establishments holding long-term offenders are significant and will present a huge challenge. How any changes are to be managed has not been addressed at this point. From my experience and discussions that I have had with the regional LSC, locally they use the case study establishment as an example of how the *Prospectus* will impact to address the 'imbalance' of provision. This is quite interesting bearing in mind that, due to the expansion of the establishment, the curriculum provision has been reviewed, agreed and increased in line with LSC guidelines and approval. However, they continue to make the general assumption that a category 'B' establishment only holds long-term offenders. This is not the case, due to population pressures and management, establishments quite often have a mix of sentenced offenders. In this category 'B' training establishment, for instance, there are currently 180 category 'C' offenders and with the introduction of the IPPs, they are likely to have much shorter sentences.

Since 2005, the LSC has introduced, for the post-16 sector, its change programme agenda. The impact of this for offender learning and skills, in addition to the *Prospectus* already mentioned in this section, is the fact that the LSC are in consultation with partner agencies to develop an e-learning framework within the Offender Learning and Skills

sector in order to make appropriate use of information technology for learning. They do, however, acknowledge the limitations of some custodial regimes but they would advocate 'where appropriate and possible within the security constraints, the use of e-learning should be encouraged as this facilitates flexible delivery and allows offenders to learn at their own pace' (LSC 2007b, p.3). It is anticipated that the framework will support the need to best use information and communication technology not only as a discrete subject and key skills for employment but also as a vehicle for e-learning other subjects.

Hence, there are opportunities to influence policy and decisions with regard to offender ICT and e-learning. Certainly, this area of work lies under the umbrella of the government's change agenda in relation to the wider learning and skills sector and the drive for improvement. It is documented in the research literature that it can be particularly challenging to engage offenders in education and training due to their difficult past school and learning experiences. However, there have been links made to increased learner motivation through the use of e-learning and ICT and as such this will have a key role to play in developing a coherent approach aimed at improving offenders' skills and employment prospects.

The LSC gained funding to update the ICT equipment within OLASS delivery and secured an opportunity to purchase new information technology resources. This project is known as the OLASS *IT Refresh* programme. The OLASS *IT Refresh* project has shown the LSC's commitment to expanding and embedding the use of e-learning and ICT within offender learning and skills provision in prison establishments. The establishments which were eligible to benefit from this project were given the opportunity to detail broken and out-of-date computer equipment that was being used for the delivery of learning and skills so that it could be replaced. It was also important to identify any new equipment which could be used to expand and develop new areas of learning and skills.

The funding from this project sought to address some of the infrastructure deficiencies within prison establishments which would enable the transformation of teaching and learning strategies through effective use of e-learning technologies. This project was commissioned in response to the documented evidence that 'provision for e-learning across offender learning and skills, both in custody and the community is patchy and at the moment it is difficult for a learner to continue developing their skills when they are moved around the system' (Chips, Sept 2007). The evidence gathered also suggests

the excellent motivational aspect of e-learning for offenders, noted as a particularly 'hard to reach group' with which to engage in learning. Therefore this research project has a key role to play in guiding development and implementation of curriculum initiatives by identifying the main challenges encountered during the development and implementation stages, helping to solve issues and problems that emerged and also identification and dissemination of what worked and could be considered good practice.

### 3.3 Summary

In this third chapter I have provided the policy context for this research project in relation to reducing re-offending policies; the current but out-dated prison service orders; the offender learning journey and LSC *Prospectus* proposals; e-learning and the *IT refresh* project. The two key themes emerging from the policy context in relation to offenders and reducing recidivism are education and employment. Certainly Patrick Carter's report *Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime* (2003) provided a step-change opportunity to overhaul policies to provide for a more coherent and integrated way of focusing on the management of offenders from custody to community. Furthermore, the ETE pathway framework as outlined in the *Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan* (2004/5) provides a context for reducing re-offending through a collaborative approach to learning and skills provision. One of the key points here is the development of new partnerships to more effectively provide continuity of learning and skills provision, enabling completion of training and qualifications started in custody.

However, in custody PSOs outline standards to be achieved in prison establishments in relation to education and training and are somewhat out-of-date, although still operational at the time of this study, and have not been reviewed in light of current policy and practice. Furthermore, the delivery of learning and skills in prison establishments has changed considerably with the implementation of OLASS some three years ago. This 'new service' sought to make learning relevant to identified labour market needs and introduced the OLJ as the vehicle through which to focus on meeting the individual needs of offenders to improve their employment prospects. Initially the developmental framework for focusing on progression opportunities for offenders to improve their skills and employment prospects on release were documented in the government's Green Paper *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment* (2005). Furthermore, the changes required to ensure that offenders achieve better skills and employment prospects in order to reduce re-offending were set out in the *Next Steps* (2006) Green Paper. Certainly the LSC have followed on from this and proposed a *Prospectus* (2007) which aims to prioritise specific offender groups, focusing on their individual needs and

employability skills in a timely manner aligned to release date. These proposals are to be implemented with the new OLASS contracts from August 2009 and are likely to present a real challenge to establishments holding long-term offenders.

In chapter four I consider literature and a number of theoretical perspectives in relation to prison education and offenders within the domains of social exclusion and participation in learning.



## Chapter Four

### 4.1 Introduction: Literature Review

The previous chapter considered the policy context for prison education and the relevance of it to this research project. The fourth chapter now considers the literature in the context of theoretical issues in relation to social exclusion and participation in learning for offenders. It is worth noting, at this point, that a reasonable amount of literature exists on education in prisons, which from a theoretical perspective is concerned with the purpose of prison education and the issues of dehumanization in such a setting. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the current focus on developing prison education is to further meet employment and learning and skills needs of offenders in anticipation that this will lead to a reduction in recidivism as they become employed or in further training on release. In this respect, therefore, I intend to reflect on educational and employability issues in relation to the domains of social exclusion and participation in learning.

### 4.2 Social exclusion

Certainly, when considering the issue of inequality within education, research (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Machin and Vignoles, 2005; Ball et al, 2000; Maguire et al, 1999) has shown that the participation rates within post-compulsory education are characterised by gender, status, socio-economic, ethnicity and social exclusion factors. Generally, people who lack the necessary skills and appropriate qualifications are more likely to suffer social exclusion and disadvantage. The research literature indicates that offenders are more likely to suffer from disadvantage in a number of ways than the general population and, as such, it is therefore a challenge to address their learning and skills needs (Canton and Hancock, 2007; Braggins and Talbot, 2003; Rack, 2005; SEU, 2002). Disadvantage, in this context, relates to a life circumstance which has a negative affect on life chances and qualities. The disadvantage manifests itself in drug abuse, mental health issues, accommodation problems and, as is well documented, in the fact that offenders often have poor educational backgrounds. The disadvantage is considered extensive if a person has three or more disadvantages and, as such, the term social exclusion is generally used to indicate this situation.

It is also worth noting that for some of the population, including offenders and the disaffected, social exclusion can be described as a 'state of being'. This is further emphasised by their deficient economic contribution to society through a lack of access to employment opportunities and the labour market. It is increasingly important,

therefore, that the best help and support to be offered to the most disadvantaged is the opportunity to attain the necessary skills to support sustainable employment and hence, social inclusion. The assumption is that increased participation in learning and skills will address some of these issues by improving competitiveness, both personal and economic. Consequently, tackling social exclusion issues faced by both offenders and ex-offenders is necessary if they are to be helped to re-establish themselves as active citizens and contribute positively back to society.

It is well documented that education is considered to be an essential tool which facilitates personal development and provides individuals with the ability to apply their skills and thus participate in society. In addition, the skills which are developed need to be transferable in order to enhance opportunities for full participation and progression in education, training and employment. Therefore, in order to address inequality of opportunity for marginalised groups such as offenders, it is necessary to develop different approaches to learning and skills which ensure mainstreaming of provision for a seamless transition into the community. The argument in relation to offenders therefore, is that imprisonment should not lead to further removal of human and civil rights, which include that of education, even if the punishment is viewed as being justified in relation to the crime committed. In this respect therefore, opportunities to develop educationally and vocationally within prison are particularly important for the majority of offenders who will eventually be released back into society. This is especially so if that reintegration is to be successful and they are to remain as ex-offenders. It can be argued that, particularly from the concept of lifelong learning, imprisonment should not interrupt the process and the benefits that educational activity and learning can bring.

It is increasingly important therefore, in an age of fast technological and social change, that the employment and educational needs of the socially excluded are identified, addressed and, in educational terms, developed in contexts that are meaningful to them as learners, as well as motivating. This is an important point. The needs of socially excluded people in relation to offenders and education are closely linked to such criminogenic factors as poor literacy and numeracy skills; ineffective team working skills; poor problem solving and decision making skills; and a lack of social and life skills, responsibilities and self-esteem. Unemployment, drug misuse, mental disorders and lack of formal qualifications are usually the contexts in which the needs of those who suffer from social exclusion are found. Consequently, the need for improved literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are important particularly with regard to enabling access, participation and progression within education, training and employment. Without the

attainment of functional skills a person is more likely to be excluded from personal development and essential learning opportunities. It is generally acknowledged that the prison population is skewed with an over-representation of marginalised groups which does not necessarily reflect the demographics of the community. Hence, the literature purports that prisons hold an over-representation of people with low levels of numeracy and literacy and who were probably jobless or homeless prior to incarceration (Graffam et al 2004; Hurry et al 2005; SEU 2002).

Hence the current learning, skills and employability agenda for offenders reflects the notion of lifelong learning through economic policy frameworks which develop and support learning opportunities to meet the demands of both employers and individuals. Certainly, the LSC (2007b, p. 1) consider that 'offenders often have limited skills or qualifications and [they] are often among the most socially deprived; qualifications that are relevant to employment are their key to social mobility and cohesion'. As such, one of the main aims of the LSC is to improve the quality of learning so that it maximises offenders' chances of gaining employment which can be sustained on release. However, the possible concerns from the perspective of providing opportunities for offenders within this concept are ones of discrimination and inequality within both education and employment domains. Although there is a lack of reliable research data in respect of the employment status of ex-offenders, there is a common view held that employment is an important contributory factor in their rehabilitation. There has certainly been consistent reporting over several decades in respect of the association between crime, employment and/or unemployment. Offenders' high risk of unemployment is well documented and the work of Farrington et al (1986) provides evidence in relation to the association between unemployment and recidivism. Certainly, further research studies, for example Gendreau et al (1998) tend to support the view that if offenders are in employment the likelihood of them offending again is reduced.

Hence, one of the current tasks for organisations who represent offenders and ex-offenders is to open up employment opportunities in order to gain a reduction in unemployment amongst the offender group. It is believed that unemployment rates are generally high amongst ex-offenders and that they experience disadvantage within labour markets. There is evidence that offenders are moving up the worklessness and employability agendas in an attempt to address this issue (LSC, 2006b). In addition there is undoubtedly, within the employment domain, a number of employment-related barriers for offenders which include them having poor work histories, disclosure issues in relation to criminal records and having to face negative attitudes from prospective

employers. Certainly, a key message in the work of Graffam et al (2004) is the need for a re-appraisal of employer attitudes towards ex-offenders. Hence, as documented in the government's recent Green Papers on reducing re-offending, there is a need for a drive to engage employers and the challenge is to ultimately begin to change their perceptions of offenders to one where they are seen as potential employees and not offenders or ex-offenders.

Consequently, adult and offender learning policies need to be responsive to identity, culture and social exclusion issues in order to prioritise appropriate opportunities for them. It is important that opportunities are provided which respect diversity and eliminate the prejudice and stereotyping of offenders and other marginalised groups. As already acknowledged this quite often limits their access to education and employment. Overcoming the issues of social exclusion is needed if democratic and lifelong learning participation is to be achieved. A particularly pertinent definition of social exclusion is one which defines exclusion as a 'loss of access to the most important life chances that a modern society offers' (Perri 6, 1997). This is relevant to offenders who have usually encountered disengagement from learning and education and who have become disconnected from jobs and family life. Thus, they are more likely to be alienated from mainstream society and lack the necessary capabilities to effectively participate within social, economic and political domains. It is important therefore, to recognise that marginalised people are likely to suffer from poor self-esteem, low status and power which significantly limits their capacity to participate as fully functioning members of society.

Here, the challenge in relation to offenders is how to develop 'their capabilities' (Sen 2000, p. 288) and agency in becoming active participants ready for their reintegration and resettlement back into the community. The aim is therefore to develop a sense of individual responsibility and well-being so that they can then decide how to use their 'new' capabilities and thus decide which personal and employment opportunities to take once released. The teaching of socially excluded people should be focused on attaining transferable skills necessary to enable them to become socially included and functioning members of their respective communities. Offender education is about reducing offending not only by increasing the employability skills of their learners but by developing the person as a whole. As such:

including the socially excluded in the learning age is a complex business. It requires a fine balance between fostering inclusion while recognizing difference – and nurturing stability and cohesion while avoiding the continued exclusion of

those marginalised social identities that are already disadvantaged by the majority.

(Jarvis 2001, p. 180)

I think that it is interesting that the problem of others perceiving an individual or group as 'different' is that they are likely then to be labelled as such and I agree with Norton (2002, p. 2) that 'the problem about labelling is not *difference* itself – even when it is used as the defining characteristic of a person – but the condemnation of that difference. Viewing difference in a negative light leads to isolation' and this can be particularly true in relation to offenders.

Consequently, the social image of offenders is one that works against them in their attempts to break away from the criminal label. However, in prisons, particularly with the promotion of the decency agenda, approaches are adopted which look further than the labels to see offenders as individuals, rather than dangerous people. The labelling of certain offender groups as dangerous contributes to the social exclusion issue in that it compounds inequalities by suggesting that these offenders do not deserve to be supported or indeed helped. It is interesting to note that interventions available in prison do not necessarily relate to dangerous individuals per se, but to addressing social exclusion issues such as accommodation, education and employment. As such this is why education, learning and skills become really important as 'a means for greater access to the levers of power and control in society and possibly a way to break the hold of the label 'criminal' by acquiring a new language [and] a new set of skills' (Wilson and Reuss 2000, p. 55).

In particular, vocational training opportunities can provide the chance for an offender to make a break from the 'criminal' label to one where they become a tradesman, for example. Hence, participating in vocational training is one way to provide the necessary skills development which can lead to new career options and ultimately 'acceptable' lifestyles. Consequently, reducing re-offending action plans focus on the importance of providing such opportunities within offender education. Hence, exploration opportunities in a vocational context for an offender is about removing the 'criminal' label and 'thus enabling greater access to and control over decisions about their own lives' (Zetter 1991, p. 60).

#### **4.3 Participation**

At a basic level good communications, interactions and supportive relationships help offenders to feel valued and positive self-esteem is vital for learning. This is particularly

relevant for groups of adults who have generally had poor experiences of education, negative attitudes and consequently poor participation in learning. In an attempt to remove barriers to participation there needs to be a 'joined up' rather than isolated approach. There needs to be, in conjunction with other policies, strategies and stakeholders, a more effective approach to engaging with those who do not wish to participate. The differences in participation patterns can be further explained through examination of the barriers to participation and thus to creating a learning society. Harrison (1993) has conveniently categorised the barriers into three types which consist of 'situational, to do with the lifestyle of the prospective learner; institutional, to do with the structure of opportunities; and dispositional, relating to the learners' own attitudes' (quoted in Gorard and Rees, 2002, p. 97).

The barriers to participation which have been identified by Harrison provide a useful tool with which to analyse the issues for many disadvantaged groups who, more often than not, lack access to any form of lifelong learning. Indeed, offenders need to have equal opportunities the same as any other individual or group and, as such, one of the major concerns here is the provision of learning opportunities which include those who have been excluded or who are hard to reach. There needs to be a focus on initiatives for those groups who are traditionally under-represented in adult education, such as ex-offenders, so that the inequalities in participation can be reduced. It can be argued that the determinants of participation are long term and as such difficult to put right as they are grounded in history, family and locality. Consequently, it is important to explore further the potential of adult learning, vocational training and higher education in relation to offenders within a framework of lifelong learning. There needs to be a rejection of the assumption that offenders are in some way different from others who engage in post-compulsory education.

Furthermore, an institutional barrier is one which is created, as the term implies, by institutions and would involve such factors as access, flexibility and the scale of provision. It is interesting to note that research with offenders has shown that, for them, prison education provides an 'acceptable' opportunity to overcome institutional barriers and provides a 'catch up' opportunity to engage in learning and skills to address any deficits from initial education (Wilson and Reuss 2000, p. 93). Dispositional barriers are represented by an individual's attitude towards learning and the motivation to learn, which are further evidenced by lack of appropriate learning opportunities and/or poor initial education experiences. Indeed, research with offenders has found that experiences and 'incidents from early years in education are not forgotten but harboured'

(Wilson and Reuss 2000, p. 96). In addition, social background, fragmented family circumstances, chaotic lifestyles, early 'drop-out' or exclusion from school and failure to complete successfully their compulsory education are factors which further contribute to negative attitudes towards learning and non-participation in education. Hence, a lack of confidence in their learning ability and bad school experiences consolidate the barriers to lifelong learning. It is not surprising, therefore, that research has 'established that many prisoners had not taken advantage of [opportunities in adult education] before they came to prison' (Wilson and Reuss 2000, p. 102).

Undoubtedly, a vast majority of learners in prison would, in relation to adult post-compulsory education, be traditionally classed as non-participants. The limited research literature available suggests that offenders, as a section of the population, have low educational attainment rates which result in very low participation rates in post-compulsory education as previously indicated. Again, research has shown that a disproportionate amount of non-achievers are likely to be imprisoned as there is a strong link between poor initial educational achievement and offending (Wilson and Reuss 2000, p. 102; Davies and Byatt 1998, p. 6). And again, in relation to employment 'offenders tend to have lower levels of education, qualifications and vocational skills than other members of the community and this may act as a barrier to employment' (Hurry et al, 2005 p. 14).

In addition, a lack of education is noted as a contributory factor regarding low self-esteem. It demoralises those who are not successful during initial education in that they do not meet the expectations of the education system as placed by society. Research literature relating to offenders has shown that they are well aware of the significance society places on initial education and:

those [offenders] who 'failed' at school often come to see post-school learning of all kinds as irrelevant to their needs and capacities. Indeed, they frequently refer to adult education and training as 'school' suggesting the enduring influence of their earlier experiences of learning.

(Gorard and Rees, 2002, p. 83)

This is a pertinent point and one which relates extremely well to my experience working with adult offenders, particularly male, who often refer to the prison education department as 'school'. Research with offenders has also found that negative labelling of poor achievement at the initial education stage has reinforced, for some, a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure (Wilson and Reuss 2000, p. 95).

It is interesting to note that whether the barriers are situational, institutional or dispositional that technology is seen as a solution to solving the existing participation barriers. Technology, in this respect, is meant to widen access to learning opportunities particularly for those who are excluded from participating in lifelong learning and skills programmes. Learndirect was an initiative through the University of Industry which has an emphasis on reaching learners who would be traditionally viewed as non-participant. As such, offenders were identified as eligible for Learndirect provision and it was piloted in a number of prison establishments. However, the success of the initial programmes was mixed as there were many difficulties to overcome and eventually funding was withdrawn for new projects. The assumption that internet access was readily available within prisons was a particular barrier and downfall to the projects in some establishments. Certainly, the Evaluation of the Learndirect ESF Pathways Project by Wilson and Logan (2007, p. 10) found that security was an issue and that 'internet-based systems draw a disproportionate focus from prison security' but that 'a robust, secure internet based e-learning solution for offenders is possible, if managed correctly' (p. 1).

Hence, access to information and new technologies are problematic for offenders. It is challenging within a prison environment and the associated security risks to adapt to the latest technologies and as such the risk of social and occupational exclusion in this context is high for offenders. Funding for Learndirect provision commenced again in prisons in 2007 and the anticipation is that it will be more successful this time, taking on board lessons learnt from previous projects and evaluations. However, there are still major issues regarding internet access and so it cannot be taken for granted that offenders will benefit from the opportunities that delivery of this provision would present. Working in a prison establishment, I am well aware that, at the present time, offenders are still poorly served by the e-learning agenda and as an acknowledged socially excluded group they are 'most likely to be digitally excluded – least likely to access or benefit from information and communication technologies' (Foley *et al* 2005, p. 4).

The development of an e-learning strategy for the establishment is important to specifically address participation issues for both staff and offenders. It may therefore be argued, particularly in relation to offenders, that the underpinning sustainability of an e-learning strategy within a prison establishment is encased in a social inclusion philosophy, whereby e-learning is used to enhance the progress and achievement of offenders who are acknowledged as a specifically disadvantaged group in this respect. There are a number of institutional issues with regard to developing, implementing and embedding e-learning within a prison establishment. It requires an understanding and



evaluation of the institution which expands further than pedagogical considerations in that there is a requirement for institutional issues to also be examined. This would include issues relating to staffing, funding and resourcing, infrastructure and support, and perhaps more importantly, change management.

Certainly in my experience working in a number of prison establishments, participation by offenders in education can also be for a variety of non-educational reasons. The reasons vary from keeping busy and being out of their cells to avoiding work and keeping out of the way of other offenders who might be a threat towards them. It is important, therefore, to find ways to remove barriers to participation and to motivate and engage offenders in learning. Consideration of some theoretical approaches to motivation may be necessary in order to consider features which may lead to an increase in motivation. Student engagement is particularly pertinent when debating approaches to teaching and learning using technologies in order to address affective issues in particular. Research literature has documented that one of the aims of education in prison is as a means 'of forming or developing or assisting in the formation or development of individual persons, particularly in their intellectual and affective aspects' (UN and Unesco 1995, p. 73). In this respect, the term 'affective' is being used as a general term to cover such concepts as value and attitude in relation to motivation and engagement. A further area of interest is the enhancement of learner motivation and participation through the exploitation of learning technology and its properties. Issroff and del Soldato (1996) completed a literature review on learning and motivation through learning technology in which four motivational factors emerged as curiosity, challenge, confidence and control. In respect of this research project therefore, learners' perceptions of technology, its usability and how they would learn and be motivated by it is a key concern from a pedagogical research perspective.

#### **4.4 Summary**

In this fourth chapter I have considered and discussed some of the theoretical perspectives and issues relating to offenders and social exclusion and participation, including barriers to participation. The issues have been considered in relation to the current employability agenda and the need to attain relevant skills. Developments within prison education are currently focused on meeting employment, learning and skills needs of offenders to enable further training or employment on release in order to contribute to a reduction in recidivism. However, a number of issues pertinent to offenders in relation to education and employment reside in the domains of social exclusion and participation.

In respect of social exclusion, offenders are likely to suffer disadvantage in a number of ways including drug abuse, mental health and poor educational attainment, for example. In addition, their needs are closely linked to criminogenic factors such as poor literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and low self-esteem. It is important, therefore, to offer support to the most disadvantaged so as to provide opportunities to attain the appropriate skills to support sustainable employment on release and to facilitate positive personal well-being and contributions to the community and society as a whole. There are, however, a number of employment-related barriers to overcome in relation to offenders including, for example, disclosure issues and negative attitudes of some prospective employers. Certainly the government's Green Papers (2005, 2006) are aimed at reducing re-offending by engaging with employers to drive some of these issues forward. The importance of acquiring sustainable employment on release cannot be underestimated if a contribution to reducing re-offending is to be achieved. Certainly if offenders are unemployed then the likelihood of offending is greater as is evidenced in the work of Farrington et al (1986) pointing to a possible association between unemployment and recidivism.

Furthermore there are barriers to participation in learning which can be categorised as situational, institutional and dispositional (Harrison, 1993). Certainly from an offender's perspective the opportunity of prison education provides an 'acceptable' way to overcome institutional barriers. In respect of dispositional barriers, an offender's poor experience of initial education and/or exclusion from schooling can also affect attitudes and motivation to learn (Wilson and Reuss, 2000). It is also worth noting that a lack of education can be a contributory factor regarding low self-esteem. However whatever the barrier as categorised by Harrison (1993), a solution in the form of technology is seen as one way in which to solve existing participation barriers. This would appear to be a relatively straightforward solution until it is applied to a prison environment when it becomes more problematic due to associated security risks and issues of internet access for offenders.

In chapter five I set the scene for the research project in relation to the boundaries of the case study, details of the case study establishment itself and curriculum intervention as well as consideration of my prison experience and positionality as a Head of Learning and Skills working in the establishment selected for study.

## Chapter Five

### 5.1 Introduction: Background and details of case study

I have considered in the previous chapters the historical context of prison education, the policy context of offender learning and skills, and the literature in respect of social exclusion and participation. This chapter now outlines the boundaries and details of the case study establishment including the curriculum intervention which has been selected for the purposes of this research project. In addition, I also examine my positionality as Head of Learning and Skills in the establishment selected for study and provide a brief account of my prison experience so as to be explicit about my 'accumulated knowledge' in a prison sense.

### 5.2 The case study establishment

#### 5.2.1 Population details

The selected prison establishment is a long term category 'B' training prison for sentenced male adults. It was purpose built in 1986 and has had two expansion programmes to increase the operational capacity during the last twenty years. The offenders are serving long custodial sentences of four years up to indeterminate sentences, and include indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP) and 'traditional' life sentence offenders. The prison can hold a maximum of 847 offenders. Within the last twelve months the prison has moved from having a fairly static population of approximately 100 life sentenced offenders, to a population of 450 indeterminate sentence prisoners and of these, 175 have been sentenced to indeterminate sentences for public protection. In this respect, the case study establishment as a category 'B' training prison forms both a national and regional resource. At the start of this research project, fifty percent of the offender population were from the North West region whilst the remainder of the population consists of offenders from all corners of the United Kingdom. As a consequence, and in acknowledgement of the resettlement issues that have been identified in the regional strategies, the aim of the establishment is to develop and increase the range of programmes and courses designed to enhance employability and transferable skills for offenders.

#### 5.2.2 Curriculum provision details

It has been widely documented that the prison population in the United Kingdom is expanding and as a result the case study establishment was part of the expansion programme with a new residential unit accommodating an extra 180 offenders completed

in 2008. In addition, to ensure enough purposeful activity for the extra population, a new activities centre was built which accommodates both education classrooms and workshop facilities which were opened in late November 2007. The new activities centre incorporated three vocational workshops, an additional gymnasium, a purpose built training kitchen and learning and skills centre. The workshops, gymnasium and kitchen all had purpose built classrooms as part of their new facilities. This new accommodation provided increased opportunities for offenders to participate in learning and skills, and to gain relevant vocational and educational qualifications. The developments were planned in accordance with the *Offender Learning Journey* and aimed to deliver high quality, effective targeted interventions for offenders. It was anticipated that a more integrated programme for learning and skills would provide the necessary improvements required to support the new management and supervision of offenders.

Employers' needs in relation to skills gaps had been identified as technical, practical or job skills, team working skills, problem solving skills, oral communication skills, general IT skills, literacy and numeracy skills. Many of these are 'soft skills' and as a consequence, the provision needed to be developed with an increased focus on the skills which were identified nationally as in need of improvement. Certainly, the LSC have identified that 'feedback from employers suggests that soft skills such as working as part of a team, attitude and behavioural skills are as important to them as vocational skills when considering whether to recruit' (2007b, p. 3). The challenge, therefore, for the establishment was to develop provision to meet the identified gaps and so, as a consequence, the OLASS Labour Market Information Report (July 2006c) was initially used to inform the curriculum planning and development of interventions in relation to the employability agenda. The provision was to provide employment opportunities in the sectors which consistently had vacancies and also in the growth areas of employment. The initial areas identified were construction, ICT and Sport and Leisure.

Over the period of the research project a broad range of curriculum provision has developed to meet the varied needs of the establishment's population. The OLASS contract is delivered by a college provider. The current provision includes vocational training in the area of Motor Mechanics, Light Engineering, Construction and Industrial Cleaning. The remainder of the provision incorporates classes of Art, ICT, Skills for Life, Social and Life skills, Distance learning, Access to Higher Education, Personal and Social Development as well as some workshop support and outreach provision. The workshop and outreach provision supports key/basic skills and the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Performing Manufacturing Operations. In addition, the OLASS

provider delivers NVQs in the kitchen and has developed progression routes from the Prison Service Physical Education department in respect of Sport and Leisure qualifications. In addition, Learndirect provision was introduced in March 2008 and is delivered by a local college. The provision incorporates skills for life and IT courses.

The Prison Service Physical Education department itself delivers courses in Football Association Treatment of Injuries, Gym Instructors at Level One and Two, Community Sports Leader Awards, First Aid at Work, Get Fit for Life, British Weight Lifting Association Leaders Award, English Badminton Leaders Award, Heart Start, Safety Matters, Manual Handling and Lifting and Open College Network accreditations in Rugby Union, Rugby League, Football, Basketball and Sports Massage Therapy. Furthermore, the industries and workshop activities deliver accreditation in NVQ Performing Manufacturing Operations as well as an NVQ qualification in polymers. The activities currently delivered by the Prison Service include contracted Mechanical Plastic Moulding, contract electrical Speedy Hire Partnership, Computer build and refurbishment, Construction, Needle Trades, Light Fitting assembly work, Farms and Gardens, Waste Management, Braille, Community workshops, Media centre and PICTA. The Prisons ICT Academy (PICTA) is already a successful project delivered in a number of prisons. This is a project which has been set up to offer individual e-learning opportunities for offenders which lead to industry standard vocational and academic qualifications to aid employment opportunities on release. One of the main objectives of this project is to provide offenders with an identical learning environment as they would expect in the commercial world using the latest technology and gaining 'hands-on' experience.

### **5.2.3 Background to curriculum intervention and e-learning provision**

The expansion of the prison in terms of offenders and regime facilities provided an opportunity to shape a curriculum intervention in what was considered to be a new and innovative way. The strategic direction of learning and skills within the prison was organised through the Quality Improvement Group (QIG), as outlined in the terms of reference (Appendix 2) and attended by Heads of Department and a representative of the Senior Management Team (SMT). Reporting to the QIG is the Development Improvement Group (DIG) which is the operational arm of developing and implementing learning and skills initiatives, as outlined in the terms of reference (Appendix 3), and as such provides for two-way communication between strategic vision, policies and the operational reality of delivery.

In March 2007 the QIG made a strategic decision in response to the government's paper *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment: Next Steps* (2006) and our own self-analysis through the self-assessment process, that a curriculum intervention which integrated more coherently education and vocational training with an e-learning element would be appropriate to enhance the offenders' learning experience. This proved to be forward thinking on our part as it was prior to the LSC's *Prospectus* proposals and draft consultation period which commenced in September 2007. It was decided therefore, by the QIG members, that it was important to try to develop a curriculum intervention which met the objectives of delivering functional skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT integrated within employability and training skills to provide for a more personalised learning experience which stimulated the offenders' interest to learn and would subsequently motivate them to do so.

The aim was to adopt a holistic partnership approach which placed the learner at the centre of the provision. A further aim was to follow the LSC's ideology in that learning should be about the impact on the learner and not about the competition between providers as discussed earlier in chapter 2, section 2.3.3. The decision was taken that the aim locally, at establishment level, would be to create a partnership approach to meeting offenders' needs. Once again, at the time that this decision was taken by the QIG, the regional LSC had not yet advised that 'taking account of security and other operational constraints, providers and partners should explore and identify opportunities for linking training to other regime activities such as prison shops' (LSC 2007b, p. 4). This advice was received in June 2007 and in this context 'prison shop' was understood as an industrial workshop and so this linked nicely with the plans underway to develop a curriculum intervention in a workshop environment to improve skills and employability in the context of a partnership approach to learning and support.

It was decided that the curriculum intervention would be developed through construction and one of the new workshops was identified for this purpose. Both LSC and NOMS had identified construction as a key sector to meet skills shortages and their expectation was that providers and their partners should gear their curriculum offer towards the sectors that they had identified in order to provide the best opportunities for offenders, on release, to find employment. At this stage there were two partners involved in the development phase, one being the prison for the production training and the other the OLASS provider, for skills training. A decision still needed to be made in relation to the e-learning element of the intervention and it was not until June 2007 that the possibility of learndirect provision was forthcoming. Certainly, information communicated at this time

from the regional LSC indicated that they were exploring possibilities with partners for the custodial estate to engage with learndirect delivery once more. It was not long after this communication had been received that the funding arrangements changed to allow new learndirect provision in prison establishments again.

Hence, as Head of Learning and Skills, it was my role to ensure that we were able to access learndirect provision and put forward the proposals to the SMT for approval. I thought that it may prove difficult to gain commitment and approval from SMT with the establishment being one of the higher security category of prisons. However, this was not the case. The SMT were in favour of the idea and of what we were trying to achieve. There was one concern raised, however, in relation to that old chestnut, security. Therefore, I did need to address this issue, particularly with the e-learning element of the curriculum intervention and so I alleviated their security fears with Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS) security protocol for IT which also included the preferred supplier of the computer equipment. After this the SMT gave approval to fund the learndirect computer systems. This was a particularly pleasing outcome for the start of the curriculum intervention as funding in a prison establishment is always difficult to get. Certainly, the fact that the prison was expanding and gaining a new residential unit and workshop facilities helped to secure the funding. The next step was to find the learndirect provider and as the prison and OLASS heads of department were involved in this process through the QIG, there were no 'competition' issues and a local college provider was brought on board to deliver the e-learning element of the curriculum intervention.

Hence, all the decisions had been made and agreed and the computer system procured by the end of June 2007. However, the procurement of the computer systems was in itself problematic as the establishment had just changed to a new computerised procurement system. This meant procuring the equipment via a shared service centre which, in the early days, took considerably longer than doing it manually through the now defunct finance department. However, by the end of June the equipment was ordered and the preferred supplier contacted. I optimistically thought that everything would be ready for the opening of the new workshop in November 2007, particularly after having ordered furniture and carpeting in plenty of time to ensure that the centres would open with the 'right image' and environment from the outset.

However, there were issues in relation to setting up the areas for the curriculum intervention which needed to be resolved, the first of which was electricity. The prison

works department had to ensure that the power boards could take the extra capacity generated by the computer systems. It was deemed that they could not and so the electricity system had to be upgraded. The next point in relation to electricity was that there were not enough electrical sockets and data points in the classroom where the learndirect provision was to be. Due to the demands on the works department at this time because of the expansion programme, it was agreed to bring in a contractor to supply the electrical sockets and data points. This was arranged and the work completed, however, on inspection it was found that the contractor had supplied data points on one side of the classroom with no electric sockets for the computers, and on the other side, there were electric sockets but no data points. An alternative contractor was called in to do the job correctly, which they did.

However, there were still more issues to resolve with the establishment's Quantum Personal Computing (QPC) Co-ordinator whose job it was to order and maintain computer equipment and telephone lines. The order was placed with British Telecom for the broadband lines for the learndirect system within a timescale of six to eight weeks for completion. They had stated that they did not need to do a site survey but when they arrived they were not able to do the job as they thought it was only transferring the telephone lines over and so they did, in fact, need to do a site survey. The site survey revealed that no telephone lines were connected to the new activities building where the workshop was sited. Therefore new cables needed to be laid. This sounded straightforward, but it was not, as there were a number of security issues to overcome as the cables had to go through a sterile area and the use of a 'cherry picker' machine was needed to complete the job. The problems encountered with security protocols, procurement, infrastructure, installation, contractors and communication provides some evidence as to the complexities and difficulties involved when working and researching in a secure environment. Problems like those identified in this case study can be extremely time-consuming to overcome and need a certain amount of determination and resolve by those involved in the setting up and implementation of the intervention. Certainly a 'can do' attitude was demonstrated by the partners involved to resolve the issues and open the facilities for the intervention as quickly as was feasibly possible in a prison environment.

Therefore, the new workshops opened in late November 2007 but still had 'snagging' problems which were being completed by an external contractor. It was not until January 2008 that offenders were starting to be allocated to the workshops, in the first instance to help with the setting up of the workshop environment, for example, painting the floor.



Due to all the problems highlighted in respect of setting up the learndirect provision, it was not until March 2008 that it was in a position to begin delivery of the integrated element of the curriculum intervention, eight months after inception. However, the learndirect tutor had been on site for four months and had worked with the prison and OLASS staff to develop the partnership arrangements and curriculum intervention. In this respect, there were many meetings organised and attended by the staff involved in the project and monitored by the QIG and DIG, between January and May 2008. The staff organised the workshop environment and ensured that plant and equipment was bought and commissioned ready for use. The time was also spent making contacts with employers and charities to gain contracts, both voluntary and commercial, for joinery work and production. There was the designing of the courses, particularly in relation to the NVQ programme, City and Guilds Basic Skills Tests and employability courses that needed to have gained scheme approval from the awarding bodies before delivery could commence. It was decided that the curriculum intervention would be delivered by all three partners working together on a full time basis with progression from the training course to the production course and for the learner to have access to two sessions per week in the learndirect centre to address skills for life and/or IT needs.

#### **5.2.4 Curriculum Intervention**

The curriculum intervention was developed through construction as an identified key sector skills shortage area. The most appropriate locality for this was identified as a workshop environment and the aim was to develop an intervention to meet the objectives of functional skills integrated with employability and skills training. A further aim of the intervention was to motivate and stimulate offenders' to learn in a more personalised and practical way.

A tripartite approach to the development and implementation of the curriculum intervention was adopted by the Prison Service, the OLASS contract provider and Learndirect provider. The intervention had specific areas of responsibility for each partner involved which included the prison for the production element, the OLASS contractor for the skills training element and the Learndirect provider for functional skills and ICT. Involved in delivery of the course were four staff and these consisted of one Prison Service instructional officer, two OLASS vocational tutors and one learndirect tutor. An overall programme title of 'construction' was agreed and planned to be delivered full time in the workshop with clear progression routes from skills training to production. Full time delivery was equivalent to six hours per day for four and a half days per week and there were a total of 36 learner places available on the programme.

Within the full time programme the offenders could also participate in a maximum of two optional recreational gym sessions lasting one hour per session. An offender would be identified for allocation to the intervention by the Activity Allocation Board in line with their individual sentence plan needs. This would ideally be within two years of release to maintain the currency of qualification on release.

The offender commences the intervention on the skills training phase which includes a health and safety induction and initially a twelve week City and Guilds Basic Skills Test Level 1 course in joinery and Key skills at the identified level. Progression after completion of the first course is on to Level 2 of the City and Guilds Basic Skills Test in joinery and Key Skills, as well as the National Certificate Further Education Employability Skills course delivered over a further twelve weeks. At this point it is considered that they will have the necessary skills to progress on to the production phase which involves commercial and charitable projects. The offender can gain a Level 2 NVQ Performing Manufacturing Operations over the following six months whilst undertaking production work. In addition, throughout the skills training and production phase of the intervention, an offender can have access of up to two sessions per week in the Learndirect centre to address individual functional and/or ICT needs. The accreditation available is City and Guilds literacy and numeracy from entry level through to level 2 and the European Computer Driving License (ECDL) qualification.

### **5.3 Case Study Positionality**

#### **5.3.1 Introduction**

It is pertinent, at this point, to consider my position in relation to this study. I have to be aware of my positionality in relation to the research project, as being Head of Learning and Skills at the selected establishment I have been involved and contributed to, at a strategic level, the development and implementation of a number of curriculum interventions at the establishment. As such, I need to recognise my positionality in an attempt to alleviate any threats to the validity of the research of which I have some involvement. However, as Wellington (2000 p. 42) purports, 'the researcher and research are an integral part of the world they are investigating and as such, cannot offer an impartial view of a world of which they are part' and in addition 'the researcher influences, disturbs and affects what is being researched'.

Certainly, support for the notion of positionality in educational research stems from a number of arguments relating to ontological and epistemological stances in terms of the

way the world is seen and understood by the researcher. It is important for me, therefore, to think about how I am positioned as the researcher and to have an awareness of how my positioning and fundamental assumptions may influence my research project and process. Therefore, I must question not only my assumptions about myself but also my values, ideas, bias, attitude, perspective, perceptions and motivation. Although this list is not exhaustive, it does constitute some of the 'baggage' that an individual researcher can bring to the research process. However, I agree that it is quite clear that if all research is conducted by humans then, as such:

no one can be fully detached from any type of research – or offer a value-free analysis – precisely because researchers are the sum of their accumulated knowledge, which is based on certain assumptions of the world.

(Grix 2004, p. 117)

Consequently, in the context of using my present establishment as the focus for the research project and case study, it will be necessary for me to make sense of my positionality, responsibilities and assumptions in this particularly sensitive prison environment. Hence, I will be reflecting on this and although reflexivity is about being explicitly 'self aware' throughout the process of the research project, it does not mean being over indulgent about 'oneself' and narrating excessively about this. However, being reflexive is important 'but does not merit an excessively long, confessional, autobiographic account which includes unnecessary details. A statement of a researcher's position ('positionality') can be brief and [should] include relevant information only' (Wellington 2000, p. 43). For me, if I am the 'sum of [my] accumulated knowledge' in a prison sense, then I need to be explicit about this and detail briefly how I have arrived at this position.

### **5.3.2 Prison Experience**

My first experience of prison education began in 1996 with responsibility for the contract management of three prisons in Scotland. The main focus was for me to manage contractual issues for the college and co-ordinate the curriculum provision which in all three prisons was narrow. The delivery of education services within each establishment was relatively small compared to the population, however, the contracts provided an insight into the differing learning and skills needs of offenders. The education services were specifically tailored to meet the individual needs of offenders within the three establishments which were a large male local prison including lifers; a male adult prison including young offenders and an adult female prison. Hence, the three Scottish prisons represented a microcosm which encompassed the full range of establishments with diverse learners' needs and their different ways of learning. This first experience of

prison education provided me with a solid foundation in understanding offenders' learning and skills needs in relation to issues such as gender, age, offending behaviour and sentence length.

My next experience was to manage the education contract in a private training prison in England which had been identified as 'failing'. The introduction of competition in England as discussed in chapter 2, section 2.3.3, had provided private sector organisations the opportunity to deliver prison contracts, albeit limited to Service Level Agreements for new and failing prisons. There was a strong government agenda at this time to introduce competition to improve quality and focus education and training at the heart of the prison regime. The Service Level Agreements were linked to outcomes and key performance targets which ensured accountability with a clear commitment on monitoring, measuring and evaluation. The main focus for me was to ensure that the quality of education, training and learning support was improved to meet National Standards.

Hence, it was important for me to ensure that all education and training delivered within the prison regime was in accordance with mainstream education and training provision delivered through colleges, training providers and organisations in the workplace. This promoted effective practice in that what was delivered externally was also mirrored within the prison environment. It was important for me to produce development plans regularly in line with current education and employment initiatives. Once objectives were identified then quality systems were devised and put into place to ensure effective monitoring of the provision. In particular self-assessment was a useful tool for monitoring standards of delivery and producing appropriate action plans, whilst implementing curriculum reviews identified appropriate accreditation routes for learner progression.

The quality of provision throughout the establishment improved significantly as documented in subsequent audits and inspection reports. After three years, the tendering process started again and the private sector organisation were asked to submit another bid. There was much controversy in the establishment at the time when the new Service Level Agreement went to the Prison Service. The establishment had been acknowledged as successful but the contract was awarded to the competition. After a period of two years the financial viability of the Prison Service bid was under pressure and this coincided with an increase in the female offender population nationally. As a

result the establishment was re-roled from adult male to adult female. This meant that the Service Level Agreement could be revised and more funding was made available.

My next establishment was a closed male Young Offender Institution and secure juvenile establishment. I managed the largest education contract in the country at the time for Young Offenders and Juveniles. Soon after my arrival at the establishment it was identified as failing in certain areas and as a consequence went through the performance improvement process. The introduction of performance improvement was successful in reducing costs, changing the culture and enabling a more flexible staffing profile to be introduced. This resulted in the establishment being awarded a Service Level Agreement for five years. I then moved to my present establishment which is the case study for this research project. In terms of my experience to date in prisons, I have always advocated that the curriculum offer, in terms of both design and delivery, is reinforced by rigorous continuous quality improvement and achieved through application of comprehensive quality assurance strategies. I consider that my role is to evaluate the quality of provision against industry standards such as the Common Inspection Framework, Matrix Standards and Investors in People and ensure that all aspects of provision meet or exceed mainstream professional standards. At each level of operation it is important to continue to implement the quality assurance cycle. This includes an internal inspection and culminates in a rigorous annual self assessment which is then used to inform the development plan.

This style of critical self-analysis followed by development has proved highly successful in significantly improving the quality of provision. I revised the Quality Improvement Group (QIG) membership and terms of reference to outline a more strategic approach to delivering quality learning and skills provision. In addition, reporting to the QIG, I implemented a Development Improvement Group (DIG) with terms of reference which focused on the operational requirements for delivering learning and skills. Hence, this is a reflection as to how I constantly strive to ensure delivery of quality curriculum provision to best meet the needs of learners and to make the experience as motivating and meaningful as possible, in a student-centred way. To strive to be and to provide 'the best' I can is the underlying principle of my professional teaching career. This is probably reflected in the methodological stance that I have taken in this study in the form of a case study, so as to better allow for discussion, explanation and detailed description as to 'what works' and possible 'good practice' guidance and scenarios. The methods incorporating the use of semi-structured interviews to endeavour to get the views and perspectives of both staff and offenders, also reflects the importance that I place on

gaining and listening to other perspectives and views in order to help to improve practice and provision.

#### **5.4 Summary**

I have provided the background and details of the case study establishment in this chapter which also outlines how the curriculum intervention and e-learning provision evolved, with some of the early problems associated with it. I have detailed the curriculum intervention itself which uses the vehicle of construction for the delivery of the whole programme. In addition, I have considered my positionality in relation to my professional history in prison education and any bias or assumptions that this may present, acknowledging the influence that this may have on the methodological stance I have taken, including any resulting evaluation claims of the study. The next chapter now considers and discusses the methodology and methods chosen for this study.

## Chapter Six

### 6.1 Introduction: Methodology and Methods

In this chapter it is my intention to explain the rationale for my overall research methodology, along with the issues that it raised and the specific methods that I used for collecting and analysing the data. Therefore, in this respect the chapter outlines the aims, questions, rationale, methodology and methods used in conducting the empirical work for this research project. It also provides detail of the insider researcher perspective and ethical considerations. The research is exploratory as is, to some extent, the combination of methods used in order to conduct the research. I provide explanations as to the rationale for the overall research methodology, as well as some of the issues it raises. Furthermore, I outline and justify the specific methods I used for collecting and analysing the data with reference to some of the literature available on the subject.

### 6.2 Research project

#### 6.2.1 Aims and research questions

The aim of this research project is to contribute to the understanding of what factors influence the development, successful implementation and delivery of a curriculum intervention incorporating e-learning provision within a prison context. As such, the dual purpose of this research project is, therefore, to improve understanding in relation to the issues facing implementation and delivery of curriculum interventions including the identification of any contributory factors which aid the successful implementation and delivery of a curriculum intervention for offenders.

Hence, the four key questions that this research project seeks to address are:

- What do staff feel are the important factors in developing a curriculum intervention and e-learning in a prison establishment?
- What do staff feel are the barriers/obstacles, if any, to implementing a curriculum intervention and e-learning in a prison establishment?
- What are the responses of staff to the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention?
- What are the student responses to the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention and e-learning in a prison establishment?

### 6.2.2 Rationale of the research project

This research has been conducted to provide evidence to inform the implementation of curriculum interventions and e-learning programmes for offenders. There are a myriad of reasons as to why this is a concern for prison education practitioners, not least because of the major changes over the last three years in the delivery of offender learning and skills provision. A number of aspects have been advocated as part of the 'new service'. The particular aspects most pertinent to this research project relate to the underpinning of a broader, richer curriculum offer with access to e-learning and ICT for offenders incorporating flexibility of delivery to meet their individual needs. In addition, the LSC's *Prospectus* proposals and the fairly recent changes in sentencing which has introduced the indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP) means that there are significant challenges ahead in relation to implementing appropriate interventions for offenders in a category 'B' prison establishment. Certainly there is an aim to link employment, learning and skills for offenders more closely with reducing recidivism and to maximise curriculum interventions which contribute towards reducing re-offending by determining the type, level and range of curriculum provision aligned to the category of prison establishment.

As a consequence, my research questions focus on two groups of people, staff and offenders, and their views in the attempt to find innovative ways to meet the requirements of offender learning and curriculum as they are now evolving. In addition, this research has been conducted in a prison establishment and so there are also underlying cultural factors to consider and take into account. Bearing these points in mind, the focus of the research project is more qualitative than quantitative although the methodology of a mixed methods approach is used. Hence, the research project addressed the research questions through a multi-methodological approach that combined questionnaires, observations and interviews within a case study framework.

In order to provide an overview of the methodological approach that I have taken, a summary of the methodology and methods is provided in Table 6.2.2, which are discussed further and in greater detail throughout the remainder of this chapter.



Table 6.2.2

Summary of methodology and methods for answering research questions in relation to developing and implementing a curriculum intervention and e-learning provision in a prison establishment

Research Questions	Data Collection	Data	Data Analysis
Staff – important factors in development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study</li> <li>• Questionnaire</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation, notes</li> <li>• First Survey reports</li> <li>• Transcripts</li> </ul>	C/A C/A, SM C/A
Staff – barriers/ obstacles in implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study</li> <li>• Questionnaire</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation, notes</li> <li>• First Survey reports</li> <li>• Transcripts</li> </ul>	C/A C/A, SM C/A
Staff – responses to development & implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study</li> <li>• Questionnaire</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation, notes</li> <li>• First Survey reports</li> <li>• Transcripts</li> </ul>	C/A C/A, SM C/A
Student responses - development & implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study</li> <li>• Questionnaire</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation, notes</li> <li>• First Survey reports</li> <li>• Transcripts</li> </ul>	C/A C/A, SM C/A

Note: C/A = content analysis, SM = SurveyMonkey package

### 6.3 Methodology

The research project has been conducted in an adult male category 'B' training prison which holds serious long term offenders serving custodial sentences of over four years, up to and including life. The methodology needed to be appropriate to the setting therefore, after considering both case study and action research methodologies, I decided that a case study framework would be the most appropriate methodology for my research project, although I believe that there are some elements of action research within it as well.

Certainly, my early considerations on methodology veered more towards an action research approach as this linked appropriately to change, both planned and managed, which would be involved in the development of a curriculum intervention. Action research has grown in popularity and, in the educational field, has been used in curriculum development, institutional improvement as well as policy development. I initially thought that as this project was looking at a curriculum intervention then the reference to curriculum development might be a good starting point in considering action research as the methodology. The originator of action research is deemed to be Kurt Lewin (1946) and for him this approach was typified by discussion of the problem leading on to the group making the decisions on how to proceed. Hence, active participation is necessary by those who are exploring the problems which they identify.

However, as the planning stage of the study evolved, it became apparent that this approach would not quite fit as the participants would not be actively engaged, at all times as groups, in all aspects of an action research approach. For example, I was predominately involved in the planning stage relating to the infrastructure necessary for the curriculum development and e-learning provision and so, as such, it did not involve group decision making. However, the participants were involved, to varying degrees, in the action and reflection elements of the implementation part of the project.

### 6.3.1 Case Study Approach

Next I considered a case study approach, as a common way to conduct qualitative inquiry is through case studies. It is interesting to note that some authors have the opinion that case studies involve the study of a group, whilst others regard a case study as being a single case. Yin (1994) purports that when a study represents a unique case then the rationale for a single case study approach is justified. Certainly Stake (2005, p. 444) asserts that 'we may simultaneously carry on more than one case study, but each case study is a concentrated inquiry into a single case'. When adopting the research technique of single case study, it poses the epistemological question as to what is it that can be learned, in particular, from a single case study? The simplicities or complexities of a case are revealed by the 'depth' of coverage rather than the 'breadth' which enables evidence to be formally collected which can then be 'presented as an interpretive position of a *unique case*, and includes discussion of the data collected during fieldwork and written up at the culmination of a cycle of action, or involvement in the research' (McKernan 1996).

Stake (2005, p. 445) found it useful to categorise the types of case study as intrinsic, instrumental and multiple or collective. He describes an intrinsic case study as one which is undertaken because of the interest in the case itself and not because it is representative of other cases or illustrative of other problems. Hence, the study is conducted due to, for example, an intrinsic interest in the curriculum. On the other hand, the instrumental case study is undertaken when an area of interest or specific issue is examined to provide further insight and understanding. In this respect, the case is supportive rather than being the primary interest and so it is able to facilitate understanding of other things. The multiple or collective case study is undertaken when several cases are jointly studied so as to investigate a population or phenomenon. This approach is chosen when it is considered that researching a number of cases will lead to improved understanding and, to some extent, an improved ability to theorise.

Other academics, such as Yin (1994) describe case studies as explanatory, exploratory or descriptive. An explanatory case study is an approach which tries to answer the 'why' questions of the event under investigation. As such, it attempts to explain what is happening within a 'how' and 'why' framework of investigation as well describing the event. A descriptive case study is a type, as the name suggests, which describes events or problems in their real-life context. Investigation adopting a descriptive approach may try to answer the 'who', 'how' and 'what' type of questions. It is interesting to note that Yin (1994) asserts that it is worthwhile conducting case study research if only for its descriptive information alone, which may be revelatory. An exploratory case study is where a researcher explores an event which does not have clear outcomes and as such, conclusive answers about the event or problem cannot be reached or even attempted. However, an exploratory approach does provide a guide for a researcher so that they are able to develop ideas for use in future research.

I thought that the basic list of skills required for case study research outlined by Yin (1994) was a useful tool in assessing my attributes and capabilities for a case study approach to my research project. I thought it important to be honest in my assessment of skills, as advocated by Yin, in order to ensure that, not only was a case study approach right for the project, but that I could undertake it with confidence. Consequently, the first point, in relation to question-asking, was the ability to not only 'ask good questions' but also to be able to interpret the answers that are given. Yin (1994, p. 56) states that 'asking good questions is to understand that research is about questions and not necessarily about answers'. The second point relates to good listening skills and the ability of the researcher not to be caught up in their own preconceptions. The skill of listening is particularly relevant at the interview stage, as is having an open mind and a good memory. I considered that my skills in relation to the first two points had been developed, as I have been trained as an investigator and my experience of conducting investigations within a prison environment would stand me in good stead. The third point is about being adaptable and flexible in order to see new situations as opportunities rather than threats particularly as the case study evolves, because as Yin (1994, p. 57) points out 'very few case studies will end up exactly as planned'. Certainly, working in a prison establishment you are always ready to expect the unexpected and often have to adapt to a new situation. Fleshing this out in case study terms would mean being able to balance being adaptive with rigour to ensure that the research design remained appropriate.

The fourth point refers to having a firm understanding of the issues under study, whether from a policy or theoretical background. Certainly, important clues could be missed if a solid grasp of issues was not forthcoming. Also, a poor understanding of policy or theoretical issues and interpretation of information collected could lead to a lack of additional evidence being sought, particularly when the information sources contradict themselves. In relation to this point, I felt that as a senior manager in the Prison Service, I did have a good understanding of local and national strategies including government thinking and policies in relation to offender learning and skills. In addition, it was useful to gain a perspective on how prisons have developed historically and in particular how education and training has developed within that framework, as discussed in Chapter 2. The fifth point is one of being open to contradictory evidence as bias and predetermined ideas could present a problem to the researcher who uses a case study approach to confirm a preconceived stance, and as such then jeopardises the validity of the research. Indeed, Tooley (1998) criticised educational research for being partisan and biased but his position has since been widely critiqued. Therefore, it is important that the researcher can deal objectively with conflicting evidence by acknowledging their stance in order to present their findings with confidence by 'reflecting on [...] bias [as] part of the business of reflexivity' (Wellington 2000, p. 42). Stake (2000) also draws attention to the importance of reflection, particularly when trying to make sense of the meanings within the case study.

### **6.3.2 Critiques of case study approach**

However, critics of the case study approach purport that studying a single case or even a few cases offers no grounds for the researcher to be able to establish reliability or generalisation of their findings. Certainly, a lack of rigour is seen as a concern, particularly when the researcher fails to follow procedures systematically, 'or has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions' (Yin 2003, p. 10). Hence, reliability is required in order to minimise bias and/or errors in the study. It is further argued that the findings of a case study may be biased due to the positionality of the researcher, particularly in relation to their intense exposure in researching the case. Indeed, the stance would be that the researcher may have a priori assumptions which would lead to interpretations of the study being open to bias. However, as Yin (2003 p. 10) points out, bias can also be found in the conducting of experiments and questionnaire design but that this type of bias 'is often forgotten [...]. The problems are not different, but in case study research, they may have been more frequently encountered and less frequently overcome'.

One of the methodological issues of a case study approach is that of generalisability. The lack of capacity for generalisation is therefore another common criticism of case study research and Yin (1994, p. 10) draws attention to this concern in that case studies 'provide little basis for scientific generalisation'. Bassey (1981) argued the importance of reliability over generalisability and then later on introduced the notion of 'fuzzy generalisation, which states what *may be*. [Hence] with this perspective it is possible to generalise (in fuzzy terms) from a single case' (Swann and Pratt, 2004, p. 119). Stake (1995) also purports that within a single case study or 'bounded system', 'results are generalisable in that the information given allows readers to decide whether the case is similar to theirs' (p. 277). The case study approach allows for interpretation and explanation which Stake called 'naturalistic generalisations', however he points out that it is not possible to generalise the results to other populations. It is interesting to note that Gillham (2000) states that theories and explanations from case study research may have to be generated from scratch. As such:

theories (explanations) derived in that way may be the most generalisable aspect of case study research i.e. the actual *data* that you find may be specific to a particular school, [...] but your theory (rooted in what you find) may be usable by other people; or generalisable in understanding how other schools, [...] work.  
(Gillham 2000, p. 12)

Wellington (2000) also raises the issue of generalisability and suggests that although the study may not render generalisations immediately, it could be a useful basis for further research. He also suggests that people may be able to relate to the study, even if generalisation from the investigation is not possible.

In addition, Wellington (2000) identifies a further two main problems of case study research as being validity and sampling. In some cases, the size of the sample may be questioned, especially if generalisations are drawn from it. Certainly, the validity of generalisations will be in doubt if the selected participants are not representative of the research study. Stake (2000, p. 443) also acknowledges the need for validity and proposes triangulation as an effective method of achieving this. He also asserts that this provides opportunity to identify and see the phenomenon in different ways which serves to clarify meanings.

Many issues relating to case study methodology need careful consideration before the approach is adopted for use in any particular study. Certainly, it is worth noting Verma and Mallick's (1999, p. 114) point that 'if a case study is carried out systematically and rigorously, the interactive processes that it reveals can be generalised. However, it needs to be emphasized that the case study is one of the more difficult methods to use in educational research'. Therefore, even though there are acknowledged difficulties

when conducting case study research, there are also a number of strengths, which I regarded as appropriate to this project.

### **6.3.3 Rationale for the methodology**

I considered it pertinent to use a case study approach in order to gain a 'completeness' to the planning, action and reflection elements of conducting research within a prison environment, using a mixed-methods approach. This provides for a more in-depth study presenting the opportunity for a unique interpretative position and the prospect of narrating, describing and explaining the evolution of the research project more fully over a period of time. A case study approach provides a perspective from which understanding of the situation and issues should help to establish a basis to solve problems and make improvements. It is an important vehicle in reporting the perceptions of the participants, and certainly in action research terms, case study methodology attempts to relay a 'story' about what has gone on. Another useful characteristic of case study is that it allows me, as the researcher, to concentrate and report on the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention within a prison establishment, so as to reveal the way in which certain situations or issues come together in order to create outcomes for improvement. This is certainly one of the strengths of an investigative case study framework as, in addition, it also allows for exploration of the different interactions and interactive processes as they develop within the situations.

A case study framework within educational research is perhaps a more personal way to investigate situational issues. As such, it provides for a more in-depth study of the issues relating to the development and implementation of curriculum interventions which are likely to elicit opinions and behaviours of participants. For this reason, it was very important to ensure that ethical approval was gained, prior to commencement of the study, which provided legal and ethical protection for the participants. This was particularly important due to the sensitive nature of any information and findings relating to prison establishments and their inhabitants. As a consequence, it has been necessary to use fictitious names so as not to compromise any individual's identity.

The rationale, therefore, for adopting this methodological approach is further justified in 'that naturalistic settings are best studied and researched by those participants experiencing the problems [.and] that qualitative methodologies are perhaps best suited for researching naturalistic settings' (McKernan 1996, p. 5). So, in respect of this investigation, a case study was conducted, using some elements of action research, into

aspects of offender education in order to examine how one prison was responding to the challenges of developing and implementing curriculum interventions including e-learning provision. Hence, for this research project a primarily qualitative research design was necessary in order to emphasise the importance of interpretation, however, a quantitative approach was also utilised and both these strategies informed the data collection methods. The data collected over the twelve month research period consisted, therefore, of my notes from informal observations and meetings, the transcripts of the interviews and the initial questionnaires. I concur with Burke *et al* (2004, p. 17) that the mixed methods approach formulated for this study 'is an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining researcher's choices'. In addition, being responsive to the particular research environment is also considered a strength of using a predominantly qualitative approach and in this respect 'the researcher can use the primarily qualitative method of 'grounded theory' to generate inductively a tentative but explanatory theory about a phenomenon' (Burke *et al* 2004, p. 20).

#### **6.4 Grounded Theory**

Early on in the research process, I was encountering difficulties conceptualising a theoretical framework for the study and, after reading literature on research methodologies, I came to the decision that a grounded theory approach would be most appropriate for my investigation. Adopting this approach was further confirmed as I did not have any preconceived concepts against which to analyse the study and so the notion that theory building or explanation would emerge from the data appeared to be the solution and seemed to make sense. I found Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 12) particularly useful in confirming my approach as they advocated that 'a researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind [..but] rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data'. In this respect, therefore, the methodology is theory-building rather than theory-testing.

Initially, the grounded theory approach was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and underpinned by logic and a positivist template for conducting qualitative research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 509) this objectivist stance within the original grounded theory was contributable to Glaser's positivist foundations. However, grounded theory has since been developed away from this stance in a new direction towards a more constructivist one. Indeed, within grounded theory Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 509) are in favour of building upon constructivist elements and purport that 'constructivist grounded theory [...] adopts grounded theory guidelines as tools but does

not subscribe to the objectivist, positivist assumptions in its earlier formulations'. Hence, a more reflexive stance to research and knowledge is taken by 'constructivist grounded theorists'. It is in this more modern, constructivist form that I feel grounded theory is relevant to my research.

Certainly, I liked the concept that a more creative and intuitive approach could be taken by collecting and analysing data, allowing themes to emerge from the data to inform theory-building and explanation. In addition, I wanted to have the opportunity to be able to see my data in new ways, explore ideas from the data early on in the research process and, to be able to, as Charmaz (2006, p. 2) purports 'construct an original analysis of [my] data'. Furthermore, because grounded theories 'are drawn from data, [they] are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 12). The data were constructed from questionnaires, interviews and observations gathered throughout the project.

Hence, I undertook a preliminary analysis of the data using my research questions as the main headings within a grid and analysed the content of the questionnaires, interviews and informal observations against the headings. This also provided the opportunity to allow new themes to emerge naturally from the recorded data. This simplistic approach provided an initial framework to give my analysis a structure allowing themes to emerge. Further analysis of the early data led to qualitative coding. This means attaching labels to the data in order to depict what it is about. In this respect, 'coding distils data, sorts them, and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other [sections] of data [.and] such codes and our ideas about them point to areas to explore during subsequent data collection' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 3).

## **6.5 Data collection methods**

The collection of data via a mixed method strategy combines elements from one particular method with those from another. The advantage of mixing methods in this way means that it is possible to use the strengths from one method to offset weaknesses from another. However, there has been much debate in relation to qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, and in this respect, there has been an emergence of purists who take either a qualitative or quantitative stance. 'Both sets of purists view their paradigms as the ideal for research and [...] advocate [...] that qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, including their associated methods, cannot and should not be mixed' (Burke and Onwuegbuzie 2004, p. 14).



So, for example, a quantitative purist such as Popper would adopt a positivist philosophy. This would entail an objective and value-neutral perspective which favours a quantitative paradigm and scientific method to research. They will try to eliminate their personal bias and views from the research process. Certainly, a researcher who supports quantitative research analyses will consider replication of method important as this provides a sense of reliability and objectivity which leads to legitimacy of result. Epistemologically, the resulting knowledge claim is likely to be considered true if the validity of knowledge was grounded in scientific method. This is because the scientific method used by the researcher would be systematically and methodically carried out through observation and measurement which could be replicated and tested. They consider that this approach provides the certainty for the knowledge claim to be valid. However, the positivistic approach of the researcher in this context is unlikely to have any relevance when researching behaviour and complex social situations. Hence, a researcher who wanted to measure behaviour or trust, for example, would support a qualitative approach as 'qualitative researchers tend to be working in an 'interpretivist' philosophical position, using methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the data are produced' (Grix 2004, p. 120).

Therefore, a qualitative purist would reject positivism in favour of interpretivism and advocate, for example that generalisations are not possible or even desirable; that explanations are yielded inductively from data and that research cannot offer value-free investigations. The interpretivist researcher would therefore acknowledge their beliefs and values and 'accepts that the observer makes a difference to the observed and that reality is a human construct. [And so] the researcher's aim is to explore perspectives and shared meanings and to develop insights into the situation' (Wellington 2000, p. 16).

In some respects, I considered that taking a polarised quantitative or qualitative stance to research for this project would not be beneficial and that a mixed method approach would be more appropriate. As such, I agree with Burke and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 15) that a 'mixed position allows [the] researcher to mix and match design components that offer the best chance of answering their specific research questions'. In addition, Clough and Nutbrown (2005, p. 19) acknowledge that they have 'worked within both positivist and interpretivist paradigms' and advocate that it is important to adopt the paradigm most appropriate to the research undertaken. Hence, it is important to recognise that there are useful aspects to both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and so by utilising a mixed methods approach, it is possible to take advantage of the strengths from each method in order to counterbalance any weaknesses. Certainly, Burke and

Onwvegbugzie (2004, p. 18) purport that 'many research questions and combinations of questions are best and most fully answered through mixed research solutions'.

Therefore, for this research project I decided to use a combination of methods. I considered that a primarily qualitative approach to data collection would offer more scope in relation to investigating the experiences of participants. In this respect, it also offered the opportunity to place greater emphasis on interpretation, particularly when the focus was one of developing insights into problematic situations and exploring participants' perspectives. The initial questionnaire, however, was designed to provide more quantitative data which could then be followed up through the two interview stages to obtain qualitative data. Hence, a mixed approach was relevant for collecting the data pertinent to the research questions posed. In addition, informal observation and informal contacts were also conducted during the research period and also contributed to the collection of data.

### **6.5.1 Questionnaire**

An integral element of the research design phase was formulating the initial questionnaire. It was the intention of the initial questionnaire to gain a 'snap-shot' of the situation in the prison establishment predominately with reference to attitudes in relation to ICT, with the additional purpose of collecting some demographic characteristics and opinions of the population with a particular focus on computers and e-learning. The reasoning for this approach was that the data collected would not only help to inform the e-learning element of the curriculum intervention but also the e-learning strategy for the prison more generally and, particularly in relation to the IT refresh programme which was due to commence in July 2008. Hence, I designed the initial questionnaires (Appendix 4 for staff, Appendix 5 for offender) so as to collect information in a structured way from both staff and offenders and, as a consequence, the data gathered from the initial questionnaire would help to inform the design of the interview questions.

As this was the first instrument to be used in the study it was important to design it as effectively as possible to enable valid inferences to be drawn from the data collected. As Oppenheim (2001, p. 8) states a:

poorly designed survey will fail to provide accurate answers to the questions under investigation; it will leave too many loopholes in the conclusions; it will permit little generalisation; and it will produce much irrelevant information, thereby wasting case material and resources.

The design of the questionnaire was adapted from an original framework provided by National Institute of Adult Continuing Education. However, there was a lot of work

involved in making it appropriate for this study. As Oppenheim (2001, p. 47) says 'we can borrow or adapt questionnaires from other researchers, but there still remains the task of making quite sure that these will 'work' with *our* population and will yield the data we require'.

One of the difficulties in preparing the questions for the survey was deciding on the actual wording of the questions. This was due to the possibility that a question may appear complicated for one respondent but straightforward to another. Certainly, this was a consideration because of the use of computer jargon on the questionnaire in relation to e-learning and information, communication technology which may have been poorly understood by respondents. Therefore, I tried to use the simplest words possible for the 'jargon'. In order to ensure that the questionnaire would stand a good chance of being completed, I also tried to ensure that it would take no longer than twenty minutes. Hence, the Likert scale was used with a number of closed questions to offer a range of responses from which the respondent could choose. The aim of this was to provide questions which needed minimal effort to complete so that the respondent would be more likely to answer if they did not have to 'think' too much. I felt that this was particularly pertinent point as attention span of respondents and time for completion may be issues.

As the initial questionnaire was a vital tool in collecting the essentially fact-finding data, it was important to pilot it first. This was important in order to ascertain the appropriateness of the wording and the sequencing of the questions. I was also concerned about the layout of the questionnaire as it was designed for self-completion. The design of the questionnaire is crucial when respondents have to complete it without assistance. A couple of problems with questionnaires are that they are often ignored or not completed properly by respondents. When this happens, Gillham (2000, p. 80) purports that 'data quality or completeness suffers'. Furthermore, I originally produced the questionnaire portrait style and although this saved on paper, the font was too small to be read by the respondent. So, the questionnaire was printed landscape. I then trialled a draft copy with both staff and offenders to ensure that it was easy for respondents to complete and that there were no ambiguous questions. I was surprised to find that after the testing of the first draft, only two minor amendments were necessary.

The format of the initial questionnaire was the same for both offenders and staff, however some of the questions within the sections were different due to the nature of the

group being surveyed. For example, the staff questionnaire had a gender question male/female, whereas this was not necessary for the offender questionnaire as they are all male. However, four questions were identified on both questionnaires to allow for some comparison of opinions between staff and offenders primarily in relation to factors which impact on and prevent use of ICT and e-learning. Hence, the initial questionnaire had six sections, with the first section containing general information about the questionnaire. Section two contained closed questions on demographic details pertinent to the individual completing the questionnaire. Sections three through to five contained a mix of mainly closed questions combined with a limited number of options for selection as well as questions with statements to give the opportunity for agreeing or disagreeing on an attitude scale. It was important to use agree/disagree statements to determine the strength of opinion held by the respondent. The questions were devised within sections to attempt to gauge responses in 'confidence in using computers' (section three); 'access and use of computers and e-learning' (section four); and 'impact of computers and e-learning' (section five). The final section (six) gave the opportunity for the respondent to indicate if they would be prepared to take part in a follow-up interview and, if so, space was provided to write their contact details.

The questionnaire was descriptive and so its main purpose was to count. Due to time and resource issues it was not possible to include all 807 offenders and 300 staff who were on duty in the survey. Therefore, a representative sample was taken so that inferences could then be made about the whole population. As Oppenheim (2001, p. 12) states 'the important point to recognise is that descriptive surveys chiefly tell us how many (what proportion of) members of a population have a certain opinion or characteristic [.]; they are not designed to explain anything'.

The initial questionnaire was conducted early in March 2008. For staff, 100 questionnaires were randomly distributed across work areas including residential units, administration offices, workshop and education to ensure a representation of staff would complete it. For offenders, 100 questionnaires were randomly distributed across activity areas incorporating workshops and education as all offenders would be engaged in activity and if they were on a residential unit, say due to 'rest in cell', then they would be locked up and not able to complete the survey. The aim was to conduct the initial questionnaire in as short a time as possible to avoid the risk of duplication due to staff shift patterns and offenders changing activities from morning to afternoon. Therefore the questionnaires were handed out at the start of the morning session and collected back at the end of the session. I and a small team of staff co-ordinated the distribution of the

questionnaires and during this process we verbally informed the participants of the process of completing the questionnaire within the timescale set. The first section on the questionnaire also provided information in relation to the research project; an estimation as to how long it would take to complete; encouragement to complete the questionnaire and a statement regarding confidentiality and anonymity. The responses were collated on a package named SurveyMonkey.

### **6.5.2 Interview stages**

The data gathered from the initial questionnaire helped to inform the first stage of the semi-structured interview questions (Appendix 6). The responses from the first interview then helped to formulate some of the questions for the second semi-structured interview (Appendix 7). For the interview stage of the research process, I considered that a semi-structured interview approach would be more beneficial than conducting focus groups. One of the main reasons for this was because I intended to interview a number of key respondents and felt that a face-to-face interview would present a richer source of data collection. Although interviewing in this way is more time-consuming, the advantage would be that more qualitative data could be generated and literacy issues, particularly with offenders, are more likely to be overcome. Certainly, in a focus group situation the group dynamics could potentially distort data collection in that 'informants may be hesitant to share ideas in front of peers that they would offer in individual interviews' (Axinn and Pearce 2006, p. 7). In addition, I know from previous experience of using focus groups for prison impact assessments that it can be difficult, for a myriad of reasons, to get a productive offender focus group together. Due to the nature of the research investigation, I considered that the emerging key issues would be best answered in one-to-one interviews. Therefore, the next stage was to conduct the first of two semi-structured one-to-one interviews in order to explore the views and opinions of individuals in more depth.

I planned to allow up to half an hour per interview. I had contact details of respondents willing to participate further in the research project from the initial survey and so, using purposive sampling, I selected six offenders and five staff to interview. The criterion for selection of the offender participant was that they had to have employment in one of the workshops which was to have e-learning provision as part of the curriculum offer. I gathered the list of offender names from the initial survey contact details and visited the workshops to ascertain their likelihood of participating further in the interview stages. This gave the opportunity for me, on an individual basis, to discuss the research project with them and to answer any questions they had. Six offenders consented to take part in

the project and so I gave them the information sheet and consent form to sign, which they did. They were asked to consent to the tape recording of the interviews and they all agreed to this without exception.

As this research project investigated development and implementation of a curriculum intervention and e-learning, the criterion for staff participation was that they had to have particular insight into these areas because of their work responsibilities. I collated the staff names from the initial survey and visited them individually to ask for their participation in the project. I gave each potential participant the information sheet about the project and discussed their involvement. They were given the opportunity to ask questions and each participant completed the consent form and agreed for the interviews to be recorded.

### **6.5.3 Interview Process**

The interviews for both staff and offenders were semi-structured and had a standardised set of questions pertaining to each. This was important in ensuring parity between interviewees as well as helping to put them at ease during the interview process. The interviews started with a brief discussion about what the interview was about and what the interviewee had agreed to do. According to Drever (1995, p. 26) this ensures that any misunderstandings can be cleared up prior to the recording of the interview. I used open questions and prompts, where possible, in an effort to encourage responses and initiate dialogue, as it was important that the interviewees responded in their own words. I did not deviate too much from the set of standard questions so as to avoid leading questions and I gave the interviewees an opportunity for 'open comments' at the end of the questioning so that they could provide further comment if they wished. Drever (*ibid.*) also recommends using this general 'sweeper' type question at the end of the interview to allow for any further comments from the interviewee to be captured.

The first semi-structured interview for staff had thirteen pre-prepared questions and the interview for offenders had ten pre-prepared questions. The questions drilled down further from the initial questionnaire in relation to the sections on 'confidence in using computers' particularly statements relating to question nine for both offenders and staff; 'access and use of computers and e-learning' relating to questions nineteen and twenty one for staff, and questions twenty and twenty two for offenders and; 'impact of computers and e-learning' particularly relating to questions twenty for staff and twenty one for offenders. There were four questions on the staff and offender pre-prepared interview schedule to allow for exploration in more detail of the three sections on the

questionnaire, as detailed previously. This gave the opportunity to explore aspects from the initial questionnaire in more depth. The remaining questions on the respective interview schedules were devised to further explore the research questions for this project. The interview schedule was developed and the interview designed so as not to replicate the evidence which had already been collected. In this respect, I agree with Verma and Mallick (1999, p. 123) in that:

there are advantages in postponing the design of the interview schedule until the questionnaire data have been collected and analysed. These results often provide the researchers with valuable information and insights, not to mention surprises, which they will wish to investigate further.

The first of the semi-structured interviews were conducted early June 2008. Classroom settings were used to conduct interviews with offenders and I used the individual offices of staff for their interviews. I considered that the use of these venues, rather than in say, residential units or my personal office, would provide a more comfortable environment in which to interview the participants. The interviews were tape-recorded on the prison tape system which is normally used for investigation and disciplinary purposes. The system was quite old, heavy and cumbersome to move to where the interviews took place, but it did the job and the interview recordings were transcribed manually. I tried to ensure a reasonable consistency in my interview approach with the participants. However, in attempting to do this, it is my perception that I conducted the first interview stage quite formally. I obtained agreement from the participants to tape record the interview, however, the use of the prison recording system perhaps did not help this situation as both staff and offenders knew that its primary purpose was for use in investigations and disciplinaries. Certainly before recording commenced a number of participants made comment about the recording equipment and one offender in particular commented that it was like "being back in a police station". Consequently, it seemed to dominate the proceedings rather than be unobtrusive and allowing conversation to flow. It is interesting that Verma and Mallick (1999, p. 127) state that 'some researchers believe that the presence of a tape recorder can inhibit the subject's responses. We have to say that, in our experience this does not happen'. I would tend to disagree with this statement if the research is conducted in a prison environment, and based on my interview experience the prison recording system was an inhibiting factor particularly with the offenders, more so than staff.

The second interview, however, was more open and consisted of eleven pre-prepared questions for staff and fourteen pre-prepared questions for offenders (Appendix 7). The interviews were conducted at the end of October 2008 and at this point the prison tape system was out of action and so I used a new digital device to record the interviews. It

was so small it easily fit into my pocket. I was slightly apprehensive about using a new piece of technology but it was easy and simple to use and so the interviews were recorded and transcribed successfully. I still adopted a consistent approach to the second interview. However, the conversation flowed more freely and rather than put this down to the rapport between the interviewer and interviewee, I would assert that it was more likely to be due to the tiny, unobtrusive recording device which we forgot was actually there and recording. Indeed, participants in the second interview made comment at the end of the interview session that they "must have gone on a bit as they had forgotten it was there". This was a new piece of technology which had only just been authorised for use in the prison and so no preconceptions could be attached to it that would inhibit responses.

The transcripts of the first stage interviews were obtained by interviewing six offenders and five staff. The transcripts of the second interviews were obtained by interviewing the same participants, although one offender was no longer engaged in the project. Therefore second interviews were transcribed from five offenders and five staff. The transcription phase was very time-consuming and I carried this out immediately after interviewing whilst conversations and meanings were 'fresh'. In this respect, I agree with Gillham (2000, p. 71) that 'transcription should be carried out as soon as possible after the actual interview; your memory will help you in hearing what is on the tape'. This tactic helped me to decipher some of the words used by participants which were difficult for me to hear and/or understand due to their accent. Consequently, I had to keep playing the tapes backwards and forwards until I was satisfied that the transcription was accurate. I also discussed individual transcripts with participants for triangulation purposes and accuracy of content.

## **6.6 Data Analysis**

When considering how to analyse my data I particularly liked the advice from Dey (1993, p. 63) who stated that 'before you analyse your data, make sure your cup is empty'. In this respect he was advocating that it is important to avoid any assumptions or preconceived ideas about the data and that this is the stance from which you must try and begin your data analysis. By adopting a 'grounded' approach to my data, the use of inductive coding was deemed to be the most appropriate technique. Charmaz (2006, p. 2) acknowledges that:

grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves.[.] Thus data forms the foundation of our theory [and explanations] and our analysis of these data generates the concepts we construct.



A researcher using inductive approaches is therefore more likely to be open-minded about coding and would not necessarily want to pre-code any of the data prior to collection. This would provide for a more context-sensitive approach to coding the data which needs to be reduced from a mass of collected data to a more condensed format in manageable chunks aligned to labels or categorisation. This then allows for key elements or evidence to be linked or 'woven into a narrative account' (Gillham, 2000, p. 20) in support of your findings. As such, data analysis is a critical activity if it is to provide credible answers to the research questions. I decided, therefore, to use a content analysis technique to analyse the interview transcripts and informal observation notes as this technique 'can be applied to any form of communication' (Verma and Mallick 1999, p. 111). The essence of this technique is in the identification of '*substantive* statements [that is] statements that really say something' Gillham (2000, p. 71). It was necessary, therefore, to adopt an approach whereby I was totally immersed in my data so that I could analyse and re-analyse that data against my research questions. This followed the basic notion of grounded theory in reading and re-reading text so as to form my own interpretations of the data in order to make possible comparisons with theories from the literature and/or explanations in relation to the study.

It was necessary, therefore, to develop a system so that I could identify and classify the content from informal observation notes and interviews. Firstly, I developed a framework from my research questions by breaking them down into component parts and using these as headings for my analysis of the interviews. I developed one grid for each research question. Then, I went through the notes and interview transcripts manually line by line, highlighting statements and transferring them to the relevant analysis grid (Appendix 8 for example grids) with the participant's number, a reference code to establish which line from the transcript the statement had originated from, the statements and finally an abbreviated code signalling the factor. I did this so that I could retrieve a whole sentence from a participant, attribute that sentence to the participant and use it as evidence to substantiate and/or explain any findings. It is obviously not possible to retain the full data set in a grid analysis display format due to its volume and complexity, however, I thought that it was important to keep as much of the 'raw data' as possible without the size of the analysis grids becoming too excessive or complex. I contemplated the use of a count analysis grid to count how many of the participants said a particular thing, but decided against it as I wanted to capture more meaning in my analysis.

Hence, I used statements to populate the grid analyses as I agreed with Gillham (2000, p. 75) that the tabulating of actual statements brought the 'category to life, conveys the range of responses that come under it, and provides material for the qualitative analysis write-up that comes later'. The data from the interview transcripts were broken down into 'bits' and then assigned to the relevant analysis grids. All the statements that I thought were relevant to a particular grid/category were brought together so that I could analyse further to see if there were any sub-divisions to the data. The sub-division of the category led to identification of component parts, which I considered to be relevant to a particular category. Furthermore, the component parts were then sub-divided or broken down further into factors, which I considered were specific to a particular component and provided evidence to the research questions posed. This approach provided the basis of my technique for analysis of the data.

## **6.7 Positionality**

### **6.7.1 Prison considerations**

I have discussed, in some detail, my positionality in chapter 5, section 5.3 in relation to my experience of prison establishments and the case study itself. However, it is pertinent to consider other factors in relation to positionality of conducting research in a prison environment. It is therefore necessary to consider my position as a female governor grade which may, for example, raise issues of power. Particularly, in a prison environment I have to be mindful and question my social power as I am working with 'others' who relative to me, in this research context, could be perceived to have less power. This is in respect of both staff and offenders. Certainly, Wilson and Reuss (2000, p. 36) noted that 'there are observable and highly visible differences in the distribution of power between individuals within a prison'. Consequently, it is important to note that the research process has relationships of power embedded within it and this may prove particularly relevant for me as the researcher and researching within my own prison establishment. There are varying degrees of 'power and control' exercised within prison and as such this could potentially leave the subject of the research without an effectively represented 'voice'. This raises issues around consent and validity particularly in relation to offenders as they are 'members of "vulnerable populations" whose ability to consent is in doubt' (Howe 2003, p. 9).

In addition, there are many regulations in a prison environment which stipulate what is or is not acceptable in relation to professional behaviour and relationships and these are to be found in professional conduct protocols. In this respect therefore, as an example, it

would not be acceptable for me to go to work 'scantily clad' for obvious reasons, not least, that it would be signalling inappropriate messages to the offenders and even to staff. This is an important consideration with regard to field relations within the research study 'where 'messages' which were 'passed' to the prisoners via clothing, spoken language, personal demeanour and so on [are] of great significance – metaphorically speaking' (Wilson and Reuss 2000, p. 34).

Also, I would question the issue of data validity that this may pose if not taken on board as a possible problem. It would not be easy to decide what counted as 'truth' or what counted as 'lies' with regard to the subject's account. The epistemological assumption within this research context would be that knowledge is subjective and experiential. This means that great emphasis would be placed on the subject's verbal interview and as such a major consideration is likely to focus on whether the subject has been honest in their response. My position may well be biased if I consider honesty and 'truth' to be any more of a major challenge in this context because some of the subjects are offenders and the staff may be elaborating 'colourfully' to impress me. Hence 'there are complex ethical issues to consider for any researcher engaged in this kind of work, issues which have to be confronted on both a personal and public level' (Wilson and Reuss 2000, p. 46).

Furthermore, within the interview process there may be issues with regard to the 'words' used in relation to 'spoken language' as a formalised response. This is because there can be misunderstandings of what is being asked, inadequate vocabulary, poor memory and even a desire on behalf of the subject to tell you something that they think you want to hear. This is not about being deliberately deceptive in their responses but it is something to be mindful about when deciding on how to validate such 'truths'. Consequently, I would need to be clear about my own epistemological assumptions in order to be in a position to substantiate any valid knowledge or evaluation claims from this study. There will be a need to be realistic about imprisonment and balance my own involvement as well as my detachment in order to achieve positive, reliable claims.

### **6.7.2 Insider researcher**

It is appropriate at this point to discuss my positionality further with specific reference to 'inside research'. Therefore, in this respect, in order for me to make sense of my positionality, assumptions and responsibilities as a researcher in a particularly sensitive prison environment, I needed to ask myself the question as to whether or not 'relevant past experiences and prior knowledge, carrying bias, prejudice or insider information

[..would] affect my role as researcher' (Wellington 2000, p. 44)? As a practitioner within a prison establishment I have gained extensive knowledge and experience over a period of thirteen years and so being in the position of an 'insider researcher' I needed to be aware of, and explicit about, the advantages and disadvantages that this brought to the research project.

I have worked at my present establishment for two and a half years and have developed professional relationships with all levels of staff. There is, therefore, the problem of 'being known' as an insider researcher already working inside the establishment selected for study and I needed to be mindful that my position on the senior management team may also present a disadvantage. One of the main criticisms of insider research is that the researcher may not be as open minded as an 'outsider' or external researcher. It was important, therefore, to be explicit about any preconceptions and/or prejudices that were held or as they arose throughout the research process, so as not to be detrimental to it. This was particularly relevant to the interview situation where an 'important factor is the nature of preconceptions, beliefs, attitudes and so on, that the interviewer brings to the assessment' (Verma and Mallick 1999, p. 123).

However, I assert that my position as an insider researcher was an advantage in respect of conducting research in a prison environment. It meant that I was able to, fairly quickly, design a robust protocol for researching in a prison context as I was aware of a number of specific challenges which could be encountered that you would not normally expect. For example, there can be issues of access when dealing with serious offenders as they can be moved to other establishments at very short notice due to security reasons. In addition, there may be a 'lock down' which would make access difficult as all offenders would be locked in their cells or they may have been moved to the segregation unit for 'good order and discipline' reasons. However, being an insider researcher I was very experienced in the realities and procedures of prison life and so access to participants was made far easier than it may have been for an external researcher. Indeed, during the study one of the offender participants went on 'accumulated visits' to another establishment but I knew that I had not lost access completely, as he would have to be back in the establishment within a number of weeks.

Another advantage gained from being in an inside research position was in relation to timescales for the research project. For example, an external researcher would have to go through security clearance, which for an establishment like the one selected for study, could take up to six months as enhanced clearance is required. It also would not matter

if you had clearance from elsewhere, the prison would need to conduct its own clearances. Hence, there could have been a significant delay before the research project was able to start. In addition, consideration of ethical issues was an advantage from an insider perspective. Certainly, the political and social dimensions associated with conducting research in penal environments means that they have the potential to 'present a serious ethical problem [particularly] for the dissemination process, in that different parts of the findings could be used as ammunition for very different political positions' (Halpin and Troyna 1994, p. 193). Certainly, Wilson and Wahidin (2006, p.7) when conducting research into 'real work' in prisons encountered a number of problems and 'hurdles' and reflected that 'HM Prison Service remains one of, if not the most difficult public institutions to conduct research about'. As in this scenario, even if the researcher has official acceptance to be able to conduct the research project in a prison establishment, access can easily be thwarted by individual governors as, in my view, they are particularly sensitive about anything which they perceive may provide 'ammunition' to be used against their establishment.

It is worth noting, therefore, that prisons are usually operating in highly political internal and external frameworks. So much so, that the researcher has to be aware that there are important consequences for any research conducted in a prison environment. This is a particularly pertinent point in relation to the number of different audiences that the dissemination process has to take into account and with this in mind 'it is also worth remembering that most people have a fairly negative attitude towards the prison population' (Wilson and Reuss 2000, p. 46). The educating of offenders has a tendency not to appease the political or public agendas which are inclined to swing between punishment and rehabilitation depending on the 'mood' of the nation and the government of the day. It is interesting to note that the current rhetoric is for punishment and this is clearly evident in government messages relating to recent prison policies. It could be argued that when conducting research in a sensitive environment, the politics and ethics become intertwined.

## **6.8 Ethical considerations**

I was able to gain ethical approval for this investigation within a relatively short period of time, even though it has been documented in the literature that prison research projects can experience problems in gaining ethical approval which then result in significant time delays. Research which involves both offenders and staff as participants has the same ethical considerations. A key issue for this study, as with any project which involves 'people', is that of informed consent. Prior to consent from participants being officially

obtained an information sheet was devised which gave information on the purpose of the research project and methods to be used (Appendix 9). The first section of the initial questionnaire also gave a brief outline of the project. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, along with participant information sheets, and return of the questionnaires signified 'implied consent'.

The information sheet also included details on the likelihood of publication and all participants were given time to consider the information and ask questions if they wished. In three cases with offenders we actually read the information sheet together. All contact with participants was open and honest as this was not a covert research study. In this respect, the foundation of an ethical study is based on trust and the rapport developed through the fieldwork relationship proved important, particularly as a collaborative approach to the research process developed.

During the interview stage, especially with offenders, I had to ensure their well-being and safety. For this reason, I had to check prior to interviewing the offender participants that they were not vulnerable or had been identified as at risk of suicide or self-harm before proceeding with the interviews. In addition, there were no disclosures during the interview process which could have been regarded as a danger to the establishment, the offender himself or indeed others. Consequently, the interviews did not give rise to any breaches of confidentiality in this respect, as clarified in the protocol.

### **6.8.1 Anonymity and protection**

Participants in the project have the right to anonymity and protection of their privacy and so fictitious names have been given to the participants for data collection, analysis and reporting purposes. Details of the portraits of participants can be found in section 6.8.2 along with their pseudonyms given to protect their identities. It was also important that data was not taken out of context, particularly as information regarding offenders can reinforce prejudices and so may lead to a climate of mistrust. This currently is a 'hot potato' issue in prison establishments where there are concerns relating to the access of personal and sensitive information which could potentially be vulnerable to misuse or even lost altogether. Therefore a great deal of consideration was given to designing a protocol which addressed specific issues of access, personal safety, ethical management of data, reporting of any security issues, wearing appropriate clothing and realistic timescales for the project as a whole. In this respect, therefore, I agree with Wilson and Reuss (2000, p. 26) that to 'manage to survive the rigours of conducting

research in a prison' it is particularly important for any researcher to have a robust protocol in place.

### **6.8.2 Portraits of participants**

I have allocated names to the participants which have been chosen to reflect gender. The participants were given pseudonyms in order to protect their identity and, in addition, I have allocated (O) after the pseudonym to signify an offender and (S) to signify staff. To ensure anonymity I only refer to the participants using their fictitious first name.

- Adam (O) is a 37 year old adult male serving a fourteen year determinate sentence. He is from a black Caribbean background and has only attended junior school.
- Ben (O) is a 27 year old adult male serving a life sentence. He is from a white British background and has attended both junior and secondary school. However, he was excluded from secondary school for fighting with the Headmaster.
- Calum (O) is a 26 year old adult male serving a life sentence. He is from a white British background and has attended college after being excluded from both junior and secondary school in the past.
- Darren (O) is a 30 year old adult male serving a ten year determinate sentence. He is from a white British background and has attended both junior and secondary school. However, he was excluded from secondary school.
- Eric (O) is a 41 year old adult male serving a life sentence. He is from a white British background and has never attended school.
- Frank (O) is a 50 year old adult male serving an indeterminate public protection sentence of 3 years and 3 months subject to 10 years on licence when released. He has attended all schooling and is educationally well qualified.
- Gary (S) is a male prison instructional officer who has worked for the Prison Service for 9 years. He has been working in his present establishment for twelve months. He has responsibility for training, production and external contracts within the workshop.

- Hannah (S) is a female teacher with management responsibilities employed by the college Learndirect provider. She has worked in the establishment for less than a year and has responsibility for co-ordinating and delivering the Learndirect provision.
- Iris (S) is a female teacher with management responsibilities employed by the college OLASS provider. She has worked in the same prison establishment for five years and previous to this was Head of Department for a local college. She has responsibility for delivering the OLASS provision.
- James (S) is a male Prison Service non-operational manager who has worked for the Prison Service for 12 years. He has been working in his present establishment for less than a year. He has responsibility for training within all the Prison Service workshops in the establishment.
- Keith (S) is a male vocational instructor employed by the college OLASS provider. He has worked in the establishment less than a year and is new to working in a prison environment. He has responsibility for training, learning and skills within the workshop.

## **6.9 Summary**

In this chapter I have discussed the rationale for the research project and considered the most appropriate methodological approach with which to address the research questions. The chosen approach was predominately qualitative using data collection methods which combined questionnaires, observations and interviews within a case study framework. I considered an action research approach before deciding that a case study approach was more appropriate for this study. In addition, I have acknowledged my positionality in relation to the research project and considered some of the implications that this may have on the research process and the validity of the study. Furthermore, I have given consideration to being an 'insider researcher' and provided some ethical considerations necessary for a study in a penal establishment. I have considered some of the issues with data analysis and outlined the approach taken in respect of analysing my data. The next chapter, seven, is the chapter in which I will describe, discuss and analyse the themes and categories which have emerged from my data, along with the findings which have arisen from analysis of the data. I have used a narrative approach to disseminate an explanation of the findings.



## Chapter Seven

### 7.1 Introduction: Analysis, findings and discussion

This chapter outlines and considers findings in relation to the study and provides further discussion and explanation of these. The chapter is presented in sections with section 7.2, providing analysis of my data and findings in relation to the initial questionnaire. Section 7.3 provides findings in relation to the factors which staff considered important in development of the curriculum intervention. Findings are presented in Section 7.4 in relation to what staff felt were the barriers/obstacles to implementation. Further, Section 7.5 reports findings from analysis of interview responses from staff to the curriculum intervention as well as findings in relation to what staff considered the student responses to be. Finally, Section 7.6 considers findings in relation to the student responses to the implementation and development of the intervention. Furthermore, the sections take a narrative approach to dissemination of the findings as, for me, this was a more appropriate way to present the findings of this case study. I also advocate that a more narrative approach to articulating the findings provides a 'voice' for participants and so I have included, in section 7.3 (staff) and 7.6 (offenders), brief portraits of the participants in table format, so that a clearer picture of who gave the attributed response can be formulated when reading the findings.

### 7.2 Initial questionnaire analysis and findings

The initial questionnaire was conducted in March 2008 with the dual purpose of using the data collected to firstly, provide some demographic characteristics and opinions of staff and offenders particularly focusing on computers and e-learning for further consideration within the scope of this study, and secondly to inform the prison e-learning strategy. The responses from the initial surveys were input manually onto a software package, named SurveyMonkey. Overall analysis reports were produced for staff responses (Appendix 10) and offender responses (Appendix 11). The analysis features of this software package allowed for browse, filter and crosstab responses which could be detailed in report format. The filter and crosstab features allowed for more detailed responses to be compared and analysed, particularly in relation to category of job for staff and category of sentence for offenders. Of the 100 questionnaires distributed to staff, 86 were returned and had been completed, giving a response rate of 86%. In respect of the 100 questionnaires distributed to offenders, 85 were returned and had been completed, giving a response rate of 85%. The aim of this initial stage of analysis was to draw out some themes from the data. However, it could be argued that I had already set the questions within some loosely defined themes on the questionnaires under the section

headings of confidence, access and use, and impact. The headings provided a useful starting point, however, it was important to compare and analyse the data in order to draw out more or alternative tentative themes which could be explored further during the interview process.

### **7.2.1 Staff demographic data**

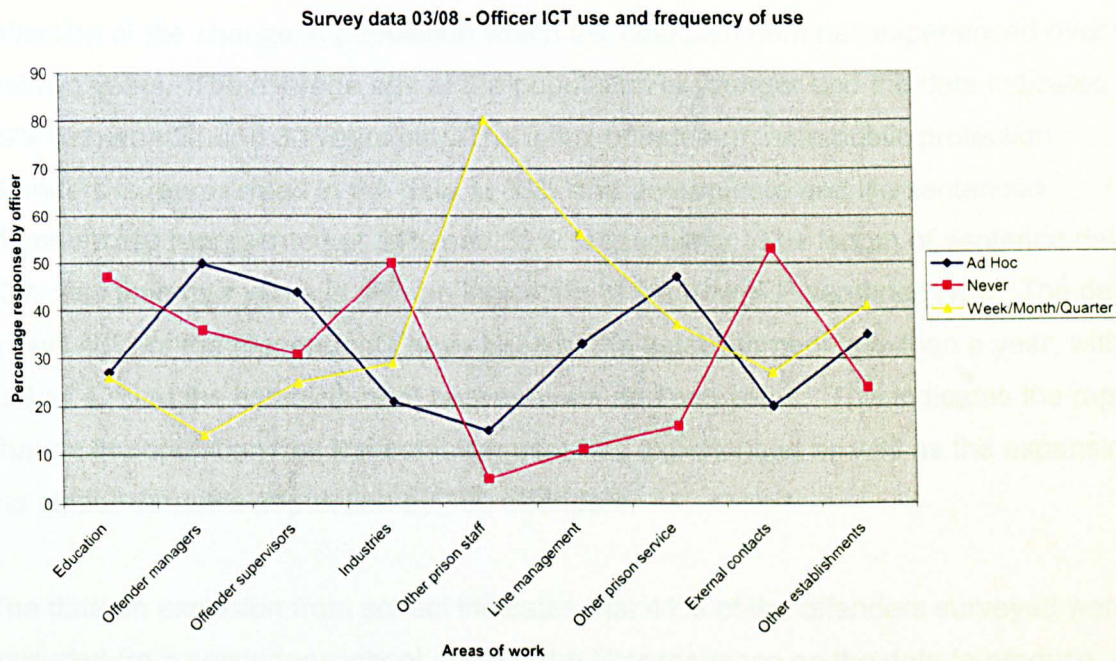
The staff demographic data (Appendix 10, response questions 2, 4 and 5) shows that a representative sample of staff completed the questionnaire with the exception of officer support grades (OSG). It is interesting to note that overall 20% of staff had been working in a prison establishment for less than two years. I have interpreted this to be representative of the increase in new staff who were needed and, indeed, had been recruited for the expansion of the prison due to the building of a new residential unit and activity building. Further analysis of the data revealed that 37% teachers, 20% instructional officers and 5 % officers had worked in a prison for less than two years. The higher percentage of teachers and instructional officers is a reflection of the expansion in education and workshop provision which has resulted in recruitment of staff who are new to a prison environment. In addition, in order to staff the new residential unit there has been a number of new officers recruited, however, the majority of new operational staff into the establishment have been on transfer from other establishments.

I used the filter response to produce reports showing data from teacher and vocational tutor only, officer grades only and instructional officer/officer instructor only to aid the teasing out of themes. Data on the confidence section of the questionnaire showed that 76.2% of officer grades did not have an ICT qualification. In addition, 40% instructional officers/officer instructors and 33.3% of teacher and vocational staff did not have one either. When looking more closely at training opportunities in relation to ICT and e-learning, 85.7% of officer grades, 47.4% of teaching staff and 33.3% of instructional officer/officer instructor staff had responded that they had not had any. This gave an overall response rate for lack of staff training of 60%. This provided evidence to support the aim of introducing learndirect provision not only for offenders but also for staff to offer an opportunity to address the identified gap in ICT-related training for staff. This point links to the Learndirect ESF Evaluation report (Wilson and Logan 2007, p. 15) which noted that learndirect 'learning resources were not limited to offenders, as the service was also made available to staff' to maximise efficient use of resources. The dual purpose here, in respect of this evidence therefore, is to address staff training needs through the opportunity to engage with learndirect aiming to promote staff involvement in the initiative which was highlighted in the report as a factor in successful projects.

However, when considering their respective attitudes to use of ICT and e-learning it appears from the data that teachers and vocational tutors agree positively with all the statements whereas officer grades and instructional officers/officer instructors, albeit a small number, either disagree or have no opinion on it. The difference in attitudes could be an indication of the lack of ICT qualifications for officers and instructional officers which, certainly in the case of the officers, was significantly higher than teaching and vocational staff. This may also compound their lack of confidence particularly as research has shown that completion of relevant ICT qualifications can lead to 'an increase in computer skills and personal confidence in those skills' (Lockyer et al 2007, p. 283). It could be argued that as an officer's role is predominantly 'people management' within a structured and regulated regime, it is therefore likely that some officers will not be using information technology regularly within their daily routines. Research conducted by Martin (1998) concluded that if a person's computer usage was less than two hours per day then they would be more likely to be anxious about computer use. Furthermore, she identified that anxiety of use was also linked to age, particularly with people aged over forty years. It is interesting to note from the filtered data that the survey results show 70% instructional officer and 52% officer grades were over forty years old. Consequently their attitudes to the use of information technology for themselves personally, professionally and also with offenders suggests a higher likelihood of being negative as indicated in the data. Evidence from the log-on reports of the Prison Service Quantum IT system further support this as a large proportion of officer staff do not regularly access the internal information system, even though all officer grades responded that they do have access to ICT facilities.

The filtered officer responses to question 18 in respect of ICT use and frequency of use, shows that they gave a relatively poor response to using computers when liaising with other work areas as the 'ad hoc' or 'never' responses show. The exception however was when dealing with 'other prison staff' which provided a response rate of 80% as shown in Figure 7.2.1 below.

Figure 7.2.1



Comparison of Figure 7.2.1 above and the filtered data (Appendix 12) in respect of teacher ICT use and frequency of use, appears to show that teaching staff use computers more frequently than officers. This may be an indication of their more positive attitude overall towards ICT. In this respect research by Carcy et al (2002 quoted in Ioakimidis 2006, p. 42) concluded that 'the greater the [person's] usage of PCs, the more positive his or her attitudes towards the technology will be'. However, one interesting point to note is that teaching staff have indicated that they do not use ICT to liaise with offender managers/supervisors. This would suggest that either they communicate information in a different format, for example paper based or telephone, or that they are not communicating educational information, at a personal level, to offender managers/supervisors. This may indicate evidence to support lack of data transfer which is an issue often debated and not yet satisfactorily resolved in relation to electronic transfer of educational information.

Furthermore, I considered that data analysis of the opinion-related statements on the staff survey showed some negativity in response by the different job related groups and, as such, tentative themes in relation to experiences and attitudes began to emerge. As the curriculum intervention incorporated an ICT and e-learning element to it, I thought it pertinent to investigate the data further during the first interview stage.



### 7.2.2 Offender demographic data

The offender demographic data (Appendix 11, response questions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) is a reflection of the change in population which the establishment has experienced over the last two years. The average age of the population is younger and the data indicates 49% between 21 and 30 years old. The influx of indeterminate public protection offenders is represented in the data at 33% and determinate and life sentenced offenders are represented at 34% and 33% respectively. The length of sentence data at 23% less than four years is also an indication of the new IPP sentence type. The data shows 46% of the respondents have been at the establishment less than a year, with a further 42% at the establishment between one and two years. This indicates the rapid change in population that the establishment has experienced as well as the expansion of the establishment's population by 180 offenders.

The data on exclusion from school indicates that 41% of the offenders surveyed were excluded from secondary school. I used the filter response on the data to produce reports but this time showing data for determinate only, IPP only and lifer only. The breakdown of data in relation to exclusion shows that 42.3% determinate, 46.4% IPP and 32% life sentenced offenders were excluded from secondary school. This provides evidence to support previous research with offenders in relation to their higher likelihood of exclusion from school compared to the general population. I thought that this was an interesting finding to note, in that offenders are still coming into the prison system with a significant proportion having suffered exclusion from school. Certainly, the issue of exclusion relates to Patrick Carter's report (2003, p. 4) where he documented that 'very often offenders have missed out on much of their education'. Exclusion from school was not a criterion for selection of the offender participant group for this study. However, on further analysis of the data relating to the selected six offender participants, only one had attended all schooling, one had attended junior school, whilst one offender had not attended any schooling and three had been excluded from school.

In relation to confidence with computers the data showed that overall 45.9% of offenders did not have an ICT qualification and on further breakdown of the data it showed that 34.5% determinate, 46.4% IPP and 57.1% life sentenced offenders did not have an ICT qualification. In relation to training on computers and e-learning, 47.6% of offenders responded that they had not had any. However, 86% responded positively that computers and e-learning would enhance their employment prospects, with 56% stating that it was good or better. Furthermore, when offenders were questioned on what they found interesting to do, the top four responses were to learn from a computer; use

electronic resources; learn on their own and receive training/teaching in a classroom or workshop. This informed question setting and further exploration of views during the interview stage in relation to the integration of ICT within a practical activity in a workshop. In addition, when asked how they liked to learn best the top three responses were using technology, viewing information and watching demonstrations with the least being learning by sharing and learning with others. On the whole, the data show that the responses to the opinion related statements are more positive than negative and so further tentative exploration of the emerging themes of attitude, experiences and motivation were considered for the interview stage.

### **7.2.3 Comparison staff and offender survey responses**

I thought it would be useful to try to compare opinions of staff and offenders as the research project was seeking to address questions on both staff and student responses to the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention and e-learning. Therefore, on both staff and offender questionnaires there were four identical questions in relation to factors which impact on and prevent use of computers and e-learning. This allowed for the opportunity to compare opinions of staff and offenders to elicit any initial similarities or differences in the data (Appendix 13). In relation to confidence which has been discussed earlier in sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2, one further observation is made from the data in that there is a similar response for both staff and offenders regarding overall positive attitudes in relation to wanting more computers and e-learning within a prison environment. However, it should be noted that staff appear more positive overall in that the data shows staff have a 92% agreement rate compared to 73% of offenders.

Furthermore, staff responses appear to indicate that they have had less access to training than offenders. However, I would say that overall the data displays a broadly similar picture in relation to the responses from both staff and offenders with the main differential relating to the strength of opinion related statements. In this respect a number of statements show the extent of opinion is perhaps more divided or indeed more or less strongly opinionated. For example, Appendix 13 section 2 relating to access and use of ICT, 75% of offenders considered that access and use in relation to prison service approach to the internet was an issue to a large extent, compared to 42% of staff who shared this strength of opinion. Furthermore in this section, 49% of offenders agreed to a large extent that it would improve learner motivation, compared to 27% of staff. Section 3 relating to the impact of ICT shows very similar responses by staff and offenders, particularly in relation to the difficulties of implementing e-learning in a prison establishment; learners progressing at their own pace and having the

opportunity to learn more flexibly. Although Appendix 13 section 3 overall shows that 60% offenders and 54% staff agreed that ICT and e-learning would help to reduce re-offending, on closer inspection of the data 23% offenders agreed strongly that access and use of ICT would lead to a reduction in reducing re-offending, compared to 8% of staff.

I thought it pertinent to investigate further what appeared to be an overly negative view on the part of staff in relation to offenders developing useful ICT skills which they perceived may help in reducing re-offending. I analysed the individual questionnaires further and contacted a member of staff who had responded negatively on this point but had indicated that they would be willing to take part in a follow-up interview. Their response when asked to clarify their opinion was that it was "not possible to consider education in isolation" as the sole contributor to recidivism as other factors may be influential in the likelihood of re-offending. Indeed, the research work of Winters (1995, p. 49) reported that 'our findings indicate that jobs and education alone will not end the criminal activity of some offenders'. Furthermore, Taylor (2006, p. 171) notes that 'there are many factors in addition to education and training that influence the propensity to offend and subsequently re-offend'. The staff member provided further information on this point and identified examples of factors such as housing, family, drug and mental health issues which may also need to be addressed if a reduction in re-offending was to be a realistic outcome for some offenders. The member of staff who provided this response also became part of the cohort of staff selected to participate at the next interview stage.

### **7.3 Staff interviews – Findings on Factors**

This section seeks to provide evidence in respect of findings from analysis of the data that staff provided in response to the research question which sought to identify the important factors in the development of a curriculum intervention involving e-learning within a prison establishment. I have presented the findings from both first and second interviews in this section and have clearly noted from which interview the data is derived.

Table 7.3 below provides a quick reference guide to staff portraits. This is due to my adoption of a more narrative approach to presenting the remainder of the findings and so the table provides a quick reference which can be used to inform and attribute responses more fully if required. I considered that the presentation of the findings would benefit from using the verbatim statements of participants as this would provide for more rigour and reliability in using their actual views and words rather than what I thought they might

have contributed. Furthermore during the interview process staff in particular, on several occasions, made comments that were “just between you and me”. In order to protect the identities of the staff involved I have not identified any comments which were provided in this way.

Table 7.3 Staff quick reference portrait details

Pseudonym	Participant details
Gary	Male prison instructional officer, worked for the Prison Service for 9 years, responsibility for workshop, production and external contracts.
Keith	Male vocational instructor employed by the college OLASS provider, new to working in a prison environment, responsibility for training, learning and skills within the workshop.
James	Male Prison Service non-operational manager, worked for the Prison Service for 12 years, responsibility for training within all the Prison Service workshops in the establishment.
Hannah	Female teacher with management responsibilities employed by the college Learndirect provider has responsibility for co-ordinating and delivering the Learndirect provision.
Iris	Female teacher with management responsibilities employed by the college OLASS provider has responsibility for delivering the OLASS provision.

The analysis from the interviews in relation to the development of a curriculum intervention found three higher level categories, namely, educational, environmental and organisational categories. The categories were sub-divided further into components and the educational category had components relating to curriculum development and learning; the environmental category had components relating to external and internal conditions; and the organisational category had an institutional component. Factors were identified and assigned to the components. Hence the factors found relating to the curriculum development component of the educational category are as detailed in Table 7.3.1 below. The findings and factors are discussed in terms of the participant responses and I proceed to expand on the factors in more detail using the participant's actual statements and comments throughout this section.

### 7.3.1 Category: Educational: Component: Curriculum: Factors

Table 7.3.1 Category Educational: Staff interview summary of important factors

Category	Component	Factor
Educational	Curriculum development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed Skills for Life</li> <li>• Mainstream provision</li> <li>• Standards</li> <li>• Progression routes</li> <li>• Link to employability skills</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Induction</li> </ul>



The first interviews were conducted after the initial development and implementation phase of the curriculum intervention. At this point, the workshop facilities had been open for six months, with a significant amount of time spent by both Prison Service and OLASS staff, including a limited number of offenders, in resourcing and commissioning the workshop facilities ready for full occupancy and use. They had gained approval to deliver NVQ Level 2 in Performing Manufacturing Operations for the production element and City and Guilds Level 1 basic skills test for the joinery training element. In addition, Learndirect had facilities ready and open in the workshop one month prior to the first interviews, and were offering a range of skills for life and IT courses from entry through to Level 2. The workshop was now being allocated up to full capacity which was 36 places, and consequently offenders were just starting to embark on the new integrated programme. Hence, analysis of the data provided by staff at this point in the study, following initial development and implementation phases of the new curriculum intervention found a number of factors that staff thought important in relation to progression, skills for life, mainstreaming of provision, employability and quality standards.

#### **7.3.1.1 Progression**

Certainly in respect of progression opportunities, from Gary's production perspective he thought that it was important to ensure a range of courses were developed which incorporated varying levels of attainment and appropriate accreditation. He thought that this would enable progression and learner motivation in that it "keeps the lads interested in something". From Keith's training perspective he also thought that progression was important and that the course "needs to be developed further" than the current City and Guilds Level 1 stage. Furthermore, Hannah thought that it was important to have a range of courses to provide for appropriate progression for the learner and to keep them engaged, particularly as, from a learndirect point of view, the "hard tough outcomes are test passes, qualifications and certificates" and it was important that the learner could "continue that learning with us outside" and so progression of learning on release was an important consideration for her. The importance of this point is also reflected in the House of Commons report (2004/5, p. 37) in that 'it is essential that learning can continue after release [...] especially if this is learning towards a particular qualification that will enable them to gain employment'.

#### **7.3.1.2 Embed skills for life**

Keith thought that just as important as the practical activities were the skills for life needs of the offenders and these should be integrated within the provision as planned. He

thought that this would be easy to achieve in respect of numeracy as within joinery “there’s quite a lot of maths involved”. In addition, the offenders would need to develop their literacy skills, as he perceived that “they’re not happy reading and writing and things like that”. In this respect he had contributed to the development of an induction programme which he considered important particularly in relation to skills for life, to further inform the offenders as to what was involved in the course. He commented that in the “induction process, you know, we get it across to them that key skills is involved”. Gary also thought that the courses needed to embed skills for life and key skills as they would need to be “bringing the lads up to speed with their literacy and writing”. Staff from all three areas responded that they were keen to ensure that they embedded skills for life in practical activities in the workshop. Their joined-up approach to this issue addresses a concern in the House of Commons report (2004/5, p. 63) which noted the ‘difficulty in embedding basic skills [due to] the separate nature of education, vocational training and work in prisons’.

### **7.3.1.3 Flexibility and Mainstream provision**

In relation to the training element which was being delivered by the OLASS provider, Gary thought it important that they offered training to a “decent level”. By this he meant that “they’ve got to meet the trade standards” by ensuring the curriculum intervention was equitable to mainstream provision. Hence, it was important for him that the “college do their bit to get them to a standard” for him to be able to progress them further with the NVQ Level 2 and to be confident that they would be able to work effectively on producing goods for clients. Iris agreed that it was important to ensure provision was mainstreamed with external provision so that the learner would have the “level of experience that they would have in college or with a training provider outside”. She thought that offenders should be offered “different ways that they can access [provision], you know, rather than having to come to the education department or computer room”. In this respect she was referring to locality and flexibility of provision which she hoped would “change the way that offenders learn [and] give learning and study perhaps a new meaning” so that they would “hopefully stop seeing it as school”. It is interesting to note that her opinion corresponds to Gorard and Rees’s (2002) research which made reference to offenders perceiving adult education and training as ‘school’, and as such, reinforced their earlier feelings of failure in relation to compulsory education. In this respect, therefore, Iris’s view was that a change in perception of ‘school’ would contribute to offenders engaging in education and “making learners more independent and having more responsibility for their own learning”. Hannah also considered flexibility of provision in that the offender should have as “many ways in which they can learn as

possible" taking into account "identified learner need [and] sentence planning" so that the "skills they develop lead to them becoming more marketable on release".

#### **7.3.1.4 Employability and standards**

Developing the curriculum in respect of employability skills was considered important by all participants. In this respect, 'employability skills [was considered to be] preparing an individual for employment [itself] rather than for a specific occupation' (Scottish Government 2008, p. 1). In particular, Gary thought that expansion in relation to gaining further business contracts for the workshop would ensure continuity of work in relation to production and so give the offenders an opportunity to develop a variety of realistic work-related skills necessary for employment as "it can only benefit them on release". Keith agreed with this member of staff that the course would develop skills that the offender could take away with them on release. In addition, Iris was positive about the impact that appropriate skills development could have on future employment prospects for offenders and that the curriculum development should therefore be "driven by the needs of society [and] employment skills or the need for employment skills". The factor of employability was also important from James's perspective in that they would be able to offer a different approach through this curriculum intervention, to providing the "right skills [that] offenders need to get a job on release". In this respect, he thought that a crucial factor was the integration and combination of "woodworking skills, the IT side and the training side of it, [which] are really important". These opportunities would provide "areas of progression" and would "give the offender the basic three skills they need to get work on the out".

In addition, from a workshop management perspective James thought that standards in relation to quality, health and safety needed consideration. He was particularly focusing on the workshop and production of goods for external contracts as they would be "working towards business objectives and quality standards". He thought that it was important for the curriculum intervention to have the "real-work production element" so that offenders could develop "soft skills [and become] used to working to deadlines producing goods to quality standards" within a "client-led production" culture. It is interesting to note that James's views, in respect of 'real-work' are the same as some of the views evidenced in the research conducted by Wilson and Wahidin (2006, p. 27 and p. 42). Hannah also considered the development of links with employability skills important so that the offender would have the "opportunity to go out there, well equipped to compete in a market". Certainly, these opinions at the time of the first interviews reflect the current employability focus in policy for offenders to reduce recidivism in that if

offenders are to contribute economically then developing skills which facilitate access to employment and the labour market are important factors. Certainly, all participants agreed that gaining the 'right' skills provides an opportunity to make offenders more economically viable on release to sustain a crime free lifestyle.

When the second interviews were conducted all three partners had been working together on the curriculum intervention for six months. The analysis of the second interviews with staff conducted at the end of October 2008, continued to find what the staff perceived to be important factors in relation to employability. In this respect Iris was still refining the development of the "right kind of skills" through the curriculum. She advocated, in line with the Scottish Government (2008, p. 4) but in relation to offenders, that the new integrated course had enabled them 'to develop practical vocational skills and to improve their employment prospects by acquiring a range of employability skills'. In this respect, the OLASS provider had been "looking at [their] own curriculum offer to make sure that [they] are moving further towards employability and personal development". She commented that, in relation to developing an integrated curriculum with appropriately accredited courses, they were "not only developing employability skills or vocational skills but the underlying key skills" as well. So, in this respect during the last five months they had further developed key skills, a City and Guilds course at Level 2 and an employability course as integrated elements of the curriculum intervention. Furthermore, she considered that this further curriculum development had contributed towards another important factor, in respect of "progression routes [which are on] a par with further education outside". She considered, particularly within a vocational curriculum, that it was important to recruit staff with "appropriate trade backgrounds" to be able to "pass on their employment-related knowledge and skills". She commented that "getting the right tutors, with the right qualifications and experience" had been crucial to the "development and implementation of the training element of the programme". This was reiterated by Gary who commented that if a new member of staff were to be recruited then they "gotta be the right person, [with] the right qualifications, [and] right attitude too".

#### **7.3.1.5 Time**

Analysis of the data from the second interviews found that time emerged as an important factor which staff thought was needed to ensure effective development of the curriculum intervention. In relation to this factor, Iris had encountered difficulties in recruiting to the vocational posts due, in the main, to poor response rates to the job advertisements. However, she made the point that it had taken a "considerable amount of time" to recruit

the right calibre of staff with the relevant vocational expertise to deliver this particular intervention. She acknowledged that their expertise and knowledgeable contributions in relation to curriculum development and implementation had been "invaluable".

Furthermore, Gary commented that he had not "had the time with everything else" to concentrate as much as he would have liked on delivering the NVQ. For him "everything else" constituted the practicalities of running the workshop on a day-to-day basis and taking a lead in sorting out problems as they arose. He felt that this deflected his attention away from delivering production training, although he did have two offenders currently on the NVQ programme. He also found that there was a lack of time in being able to complete the amount of production work that they had contracts for. This was because he felt that the development and implementation of the curriculum intervention had "gone a lot smoother than what I thought and it's gone a bit quicker", so much so that "I was turning work down [as] I haven't got the time to do it".

Indeed, Keith also considered time as important in being able to appropriately "develop the course [and] provide the materials" for use on the course. He thought that there were "a lot of time issues" in relation to delivering the course, as due to the security protocol for tools, the offenders have "all to be shown how to use them, you know, you've got to hand them out and get them all back in twice a day". In this respect, therefore, he felt that he did not have as much time as he would have liked to actually deliver the content of the course. Furthermore, Hannah considered an important factor in the success of developing the learndirect provision within the establishment was the development time that she had received prior to delivery commencing. Hence, she was positive about the fact that she was "allowed quite a bit of time to come in here and to get a feel as to how this place worked". She commented that this had "helped in the integration of technology into the curriculum programme" which would otherwise have been "more troublesome than it was" during the development phase. I would suggest that the evidence presented here reflects the points made by Burgess and Taylor (2005, p. 26) of the importance of 'sufficient time and resources' to facilitate design and development of curriculum programmes, as well as Ertmer's identification of the 'need for time for [...] curricular development' (1999, p. 56) to alleviate what she described as 'first-order' barriers to technology integration.

### **7.3.2 Category: Environmental: Component: External/Internal: Factors**

The next higher level category to be identified via the data in relation to the development of a curriculum intervention was environmental. This was sub-divided further into external and internal components. The factors identified by staff in relation to these

components are detailed in Table 7.3.2 below. The findings are discussed in terms of the participant responses and I proceed to expand on the factors in this category in more detail using the evidence of the participant's actual statements and comments.

Table 7.3.2 Category Environmental: Staff interview summary of important factors

<i>Category</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Factor</i>
Environmental	External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider policy and agenda</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>
	Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole organisation approach</li> <li>• Joined up strategies</li> </ul>

Analysis of the data from the first interviews found a small number of factors that two of the staff with management responsibilities identified were important in relation to external and internal components. Analysis of the second interviews did not identify any new factors in relation to this category and only one brief comment in respect of strategy was made by the participants.

### **7.3.2.1 Whole organisational approach**

During the development phase of the curriculum intervention Iris felt that one of the factors to "take into account [was] prevailing government policy" in relation to learning and skills. She considered that this was a factor which would need to be taken forward at establishment level and in order to do so a "framework needs to be developed to include all parties in the prison, education, workshop instructors, sentence planning" and so on. From the point of view of the curriculum intervention she considered that if "we can get it working really well, I think it could transform the establishment" but that "it's got to be a whole prison approach" to driving the learning and skills agenda forward.

Certainly, this view is in line with a recommendation in the Wings of Learning research conducted by Braggins and Talbot (2006, p. 55) in that 'a whole prison approach should be adopted towards encouraging and supporting education and training for both prisoners and staff'. Furthermore, Iris thought that the tripartite approach to the curriculum intervention was an example of how "a whole prison approach" was now beginning to "evolve through the QIG" to developing and implementing initiatives and policy both from a local, regional and national level.

### **7.3.2.2 Strategies**

Also, Hannah thought that in relation to learning and keeping up with technology, it was important to be at the "forefront of pushing the e-learning agenda forward". In this respect she felt that embedding of new strategies was important particularly as there

should be an “overarching strategy” so that the “e-learning strategy inside mirrors what is available on the outside for [offenders]”. In addition, she particularly stressed the importance of having “a clear strategy [with] everybody feeling that they are equally able to contribute”. However in addition, Iris thought that the strategies in relation to e-learning and the IT refresh at this point still “needed embedding to make it all work”. It was important therefore, at this early stage, to develop the e-learning strategy so that the vision of how technology was to be used could be shared with all stakeholders and used as a vehicle for communication and focus. Hence the data from the initial survey in relation to sections on confidence, access and use and impact of ICT helped to inform the establishment’s e-learning strategy which, through the QIG membership was duly written, agreed and widely disseminated throughout the prison. However by the second interviews Iris still thought in terms of the e-learning strategy that “the whole prison still had a long way to go” and that the embedding of the strategy “would take some time” to roll out due to the “size and complexity of the establishment”.

### **7.3.2.3 Wider agenda**

Another aspect which staff made comment on during the first interviews was the political learning agenda. In this respect, Iris thought that this curriculum intervention and approach would “take learning in prison onto an entirely different level” and was “glad that prison learning now has that recognition that it is important and [is] getting the funding from government”. The ‘wider policy and agenda’ factor continued to feature during the second interviews by the two staff with management responsibilities. They provided further comment on the importance of developing a curriculum intervention in a prison establishment in line with strategy and the wider public and government agendas. In this respect, Iris commented that they were “dealing now with the wider agenda. It isn’t just about skills for life, you know, with a few nice courses thrown in on top of that”. This comment in particular reflects the shift away from an ‘unremitting diet of basic skills [..and] key performance targets focusing on basic skills [which drove] prison educators to focus [predominantly] on these qualifications’ (Taylor 2006, p. 34). The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2004/5, P. 6) noted that ‘it is widely accepted that basic skills are not sufficient to enable prisoners to improve their employability in isolation of broader learning including soft skills’. Thus Iris stressed the importance of a broader curriculum offer which should be developed “on a par with further education outside” incorporating “soft skills within strands like employability and personal and social development”. Therefore it was important for her that she had taken into account the current strategies and wider agenda as she felt a more “defined sense

of accountability, not only to our funders, but also to future employers [and] the public at large as part of the reducing re-offending agenda”.

#### 7.4 Staff interviews June and October 2008 – Findings on barriers/obstacles

This section seeks to provide evidence in respect of findings from analysis of the data that staff provided during the interviews conducted in June and October 2008, in response to addressing the research question which sought to identify what they felt were the barriers/obstacles to implementing a curriculum intervention and e-learning provision in a prison establishment. The findings are discussed in terms of the participant responses and Table 7.4 below summarises the key barriers/obstacles that they identified. A single category of ‘organisational’ and component ‘institutional’ has been identified in relation to the factors which emerged from the data. The details of the identified barrier/obstacles are discussed under each factor heading throughout this section and expanded on using the participants’ actual comments and statements.

Table 7.4

Staff interview summary of barriers/obstacles to implementing a curriculum intervention and e-learning in a prison establishment

Category	Component	Factor
Organisational	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Attitudes</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Installation</li> <li>• Staffing issues</li> </ul>

##### 7.4.1 Attitudes/ Culture

Analysis of the data relating to what staff felt were barriers or obstacles to implementing a curriculum intervention and e-learning found a number of points for consideration. The first finding acknowledges that there had been an “us and them” attitude, particularly in relation to instructional officers and the education department. Gary commented that the background has “always been seen as them and us hasn’t it? The education department and the Prison Service department”. This is an interesting admission by the instructional officer and although it is difficult to ascertain how far back this ‘feeling’ goes it is probably reasonable to assume this attitude was heightened around the time of *Project Rex* when it was recommended to re-tender prison education combining both education and vocational training. Although *Project Rex* was abandoned in 2004, the professionalising of vocational training was taken up through the new OLASS contracts in 2005. In this respect Gary comments that “prison instructors used to be terrified of OLASS and getting transferred over”. Certainly as far as I am aware there are no plans under current policy thinking for this to happen again and indeed I think it highly unlikely due to funding



implications. However, as Ertmer (2005, p. 28) acknowledges 'beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals define [...] problems' and as such it is considered that this belief can still act as a residual barrier, in some cases, to implementing joint curriculum initiatives in a workshop environment. Furthermore, the *Project Rex* scenario, even after a number of years, is still harboured and not forgotten as the evidence suggests, and could be argued that it is reflective therefore of Nespor's (1987 quoted in Ertmer 2005, p. 29) viewpoint that 'early episodes or events, [...] have potential to colour perceptions of subsequent events, especially if early experiences are particularly unique or vivid'. However, in this case study the attitude of the instructional officer was to acknowledge that he had tried to move on and that "this shop [was] sort of like, trying to break that down, you know, trying to join the two together".

In respect of attitudes the learndirect tutor Hannah made comment that "staff can be negative if they're not properly informed of what we're doing and why we're doing it and how they can get involved". Furthermore, the OLASS tutor Iris thought that there may be a more negative attitude from prison officers towards the curriculum intervention due to what she hesitated to state as their "lower levels of knowledge of computers and other equipment". This comment provides further evidence to support findings from the initial survey which suggest a more negative attitude to the use of information technology by prison officers and their lack of ICT qualifications. She felt that this may lead to "a reluctance from the officers to get as involved as we would like" as she perceived that "sometimes prison staff demonstrate a 'can't do' rather than a 'can do' attitude to new initiatives". This point is also reflected in the research of Wilson and Wahidin (2006, p. 27) specifically relating to prison industries staff and incorporating a 'culture of where officers "do not need to try"'.

In addition, vocational instructor Keith perceived "there to be a little bit of an issue" with the attitude of an instructional officer towards the e-learning element of the curriculum intervention and did not know "whether it's because it's something new and [...] whether they consider this sort of an invasion somehow, like old habits die hard don't they"? Indeed, Hannah commented on the issue of "trying to promote something that people are afraid of and e-learning in a prison environment, people are afraid of". In this respect, in relation to attitudes and integrating technology within curriculum initiatives, Ertmer (1999) identified what she called 'second order barriers'. These related to teacher values and beliefs in relation to teaching and learning and the notion that these beliefs could impede the change necessary to progress and embrace such technological initiatives. This is due to the teacher having underlying personal and ingrained beliefs about technology.

This appears to hold some claim here in relation to the prison staff and instructional officer in particular. Certainly, the use of the word 'invasion' by Keith in respect of an instructional officer denotes a 'struggle to negotiate a foreign and potentially disruptive innovation into their familiar environment' (Zhao, Pugh, Sheldon and Byers 2002, p. 483 quoted by Ertmer 2005, p. 27). This probably reflects that there were some underlying tensions beneath the surface at times which needed to be overcome in relation to the curriculum and may also indicate that there could have been 'certain tensions in their individual experiences of partnership [working]' (Scottish government 2004, p. 3).

#### **7.4.2 Security**

The analysis showed a number of references to what staff perceived to be security obstacles in relation to the setting up of both the workshop environment and computer systems. The etching of tools, for instance, for use in the workshop is a security control measure which has to be carried out by the security department. All tools must be etched prior to use in the workshop and placed in shadow cupboards. The time allocated for etching the vast array of tools before the workshop opened was not sufficient. This meant that when the workshop opened there were not enough sets of etched tools for the number of offenders allocated to the workshop. The vocational tutor Keith felt that this compromised security in the workshop and commented that "it should have all been in place really before the lads attended this workshop". He was particularly concerned when he was informed that four more offenders had been allocated to the workshop and commented that "fortunately there's only two arrived now but we still have no tools for them so it causes no end of problems".

In relation to the computer systems required for e-learning both the learndirect tutor Hannah and the OLASS tutor Iris commented on the nervousness of the security department which was an initial obstacle which had to be overcome. This was perceived by Iris to be "standard security problems" in relation to offenders' use of computers in prison establishments. She felt that security was still the primary purpose within the prison and commented that "still at its centre, for obvious reasons, is keeping the men secure". Nonetheless, she felt that the prison was in a position to "show real insight rather than dangers that hoodwink" in relation to computer learning and security issues, although noted that, "it's very easy and quick for a prison to revert to that position if threatened at all". However, she felt that they had made significant headway on this issue by involving the college IT department in meetings with the prison security department to agree and introduce accepted computer use protocols. This provided an opportunity for security staff to better understand the security implications of the

computer system in use and realise, as Iris commented that there is “quite a lot that a college or provider can do to make it as water tight as possible” to allay their fears.

Indeed, Hannah commented in respect of learndirect that “security people are very nervous about what you are doing so they’re going to need a particular way of convincing”. This is a barrier which is particularly sensitive to the issue of internet access for offenders. This has already been highlighted as a key finding in the Evaluation of the Learndirect ESF Pathways Project in Prisons and Probation (Wilson and Logan, January 2007, p. 10) whereby ‘internet-based systems draw a disproportionate focus from prison security and staff’. The convincing of the security department in respect of the learndirect element of the curriculum intervention was relatively straightforward. It simply followed the recommendation made in the evaluation project report to use the HMPS IT security guidelines which had been produced by headquarters to clarify computer security issues for use in new computer-based projects. It is interesting to note that, in respect of the learndirect provision, it was the QPC co-ordinator in the prison that needed more convincing than the security department. This is reflected in Hannah’s comment that “IT people, again, the people who are ultimately responsible if this goes wrong, [in that] some measure of blame will lay at their door, they’re very nervous of it, they need to buy into what we are doing”.

#### **7.4.3 Installation/ Staff**

During the initial set up phase a number of obstacles were highlighted which basically boiled down to time lapses and resource issues. Indeed, Ertmer (1999) identified resource issues, such as time and equipment as ‘first order barriers’ in relation to integrating and implementing technology. Certainly, Hannah pointed out it was “organising to get things in the prison” which was frustrating and very time consuming. It was necessary to use external expertise to install the computer systems and large items of workshop machinery. This meant relying on contracted staff to complete this work and as such obstacles in relation to organising escorts arose. The escorting of external staff within a prison establishment to carry out contracted work is a security protocol. The amount of work being conducted in the prison at this time due to the new build project was considerable. This in turn put pressure on Officer Support Grades (OSGs) to ensure that there were sufficient numbers to carry out the escorts required each day. Any time taken for annual leave and sick absence had an impact on the planned daily escorts and, as a consequence, decisions were made at governor level as to which installations and work schedules were prioritised.

The installation of the learndirect provision was used as an example to illustrate this point. It had taken six weeks to arrange an appointment for British Telecom to visit the establishment to set up the telephone lines for the learndirect system. Unfortunately there was a mix up with escorts on the day in question and so they were turned away from the prison gate. The impact of this one instance was a further six week delay in arranging a convenient date for the installation of the BT lines. There was also a considerable amount of pressure on the internal works department at this time and this amounted to further time delays in getting the facility ready for use as Hannah made the point that it was necessary to get "people in the prison to do particular jobs before you could even get started". These examples provide further evidence in support of the Learndirect ESF Evaluation report by Wilson and Logan (2007, p. 13) in relation to the obstacles which had to be overcome 'when incomplete installation or technical problems led to delays'.

Another example of an obstacle was provided which related to the installation of workshop machinery. Although there were still some issues with lack of escorts, prison instructional officers were allowed to step in to do the escort if a problem arose on the day of installation. However, this had an impact as Gary commented in that they then did "not have time to do stuff" which they had planned to do. In addition, they also experienced "niggly little things like the power" going off which, during the installation of machinery, meant more time delay.

## **7.5 Staff interviews June and October 2008 – Findings on Responses**

This section seeks to provide evidence in respect of findings from analysis of the data to address the research question identifying staff responses to the development of a curriculum intervention involving e-learning within a prison establishment. As already mentioned at the start of this chapter, the first interviews with staff took place in early June 2008 shortly after the integrated curriculum intervention incorporating training, production and e-learning was implemented in the workshop. The second interviews were conducted in October 2008 five months after the intervention had started. At this point, staff made responses which had already been identified, albeit briefly, during the first interview stage in respect of attitudes and partnership working. Therefore I have combined the responses from both interviews for discussion purposes in this section, but have clearly noted from which interview the data were analysed. Hence, the findings are discussed in terms of the participant responses and Table 7.5 below summarises their key responses by category, component and response from both first and second

interviews. I proceed to expand on the responses in more detail using participants' actual statements and comments.

Table 7.5

Staff interview summary of responses to the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention and e-learning in a prison establishment

<i>Category</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Response</i>
Educational	Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Achievement</li> <li>• Attitude to learning</li> <li>• Progression</li> </ul>
Organisational	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes</li> <li>• Partnership approach and Shared ethos</li> <li>• System capacity</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Meeting structure</li> <li>• Shared aims and objectives</li> </ul>

### **7.5.1 Category: Organisational: Component: Institutional: Responses**

#### **7.5.1.1 Attitudes**

Analysis of the first interviews found responses in relation to attitudes in which the workshop staff, Gary and Keith, admitted that they were apprehensive about the e-learning part of the curriculum intervention. Gary admitted it was "not my strong point, computers" and Keith commented that "I'm one of them that probably missed out on the computer age". This demonstrates, as Ertmer (2005, p. 28) noted that they had 'negative beliefs about their own technical capabilities' in respect of computers which could make acceptance of them less likely. Furthermore Keith stated that he was "not too sure about computers" and the benefits that this might bring to an integrated course. In addition, Gary was also not convinced about the integration of computers within the workshop and he admitted that "I don't know how I'd like to see some way of the computers actually developed into the woodwork side". This relates well to the point made by Ertmer (1999, p. 51) in that when implementing technology staff can face 'a general uncertainty about the relevance of technology in their prescribed curricula'. However, later on Gary did suggest that he might like to "experiment in the future with CAD" if it could be loaded onto the computer system and then he would be "all for computers". He did acknowledge that it was important to have computer knowledge

nowadays and that “the days of sitting behind a drawing board have gone, you know. I don’t like to accept it sometimes but they have, it’s all done on computers now”.

On the whole, however, the attitudes of the workshop staff to this new curriculum initiative were positive as Gary commented about technology that “it seems the way forward”, and Keith thought that although it was “at an early stage, this workshop” it would be “viewed actually as one of the better workshops in the prison cos of the integrated approach”. In addition, James thought that staff responses during the development and initial implementation phase were “all positive and no real negatives”, whilst Hannah considered it to be “really exciting to be at the start of something like this” with Iris also commenting that it was an “exciting and positive time”.

During the second interview phase, staff attitudes generally remained positive regarding the curriculum intervention but in relation to security Gary felt frustrated that the other providers did not see it “as the one priority”. He thought that, in this respect, “there is always going to be a little divide there” between Prison Service and other providers in respect of security issues but did feel that “it’s worked here better than it’s been anywhere else before”. Certainly, James thought that the attitude of workshop staff had been a “little bit sceptical at the start” but that now they have developed a positive attitude and they have been able to “move on and progress [the intervention], especially on the learndirect and educational sides”.

The attitude of OLASS staff particularly in relation to learndirect was positive and they made several comments that they thought “it was a good thing”. Furthermore, Iris thought that attitudes were “very positive [with] a sense that we are all [one]”. In this respect she thought that there was “a definite will to make it all work” which had resulted in “growth, in the sense of moving the right way and doing the right things” to develop the curriculum programme for the benefit of learners. From Hannah’s perspective there had been a really positive attitude from staff and she commented that “nobody has actually put their hand up and said I’m not interested in talking to you and I don’t care what you’re doing”. She found the attitude of prison staff motivational, particularly when the centre engaged in a mural project to enhance the appearance of the learndirect centre from the learners’ perspective. Prison staff were “actually physically coming in and saying keep it up lads it’s looking great”. This provides evidence of another example which, as documented by Wilson and Logan (2007, p. 15) ‘reinforces a number of studies – most recently *Wings of Learning* (Braggins and Talbot, 2005) that suggests that once

discipline staff become involved they can have a strong impact on the success of a project'.

#### **7.5.1.2 Partnership approach**

Another response identified during the first interview phase was the importance of a partnership approach. Certainly it was considered by all participants that the tripartite partnership arrangement for the curriculum intervention was an "innovative approach". In order to ensure success James considered that the "combination between education, prison staff and learndirect must be smooth" with "team ethos [and] communication being a massive factor". Certainly, Gary thought that the "Prison Service working alongside the college in the same workshop, needs doing", particularly as he felt that there had been an historical barrier between the two. In this respect, he felt that now "those barriers are down" and that "they're integrating well with each other, the staff from all three departments [and] it's like we're a team in here". Certainly Hannah also considered that a "team spirit" had developed "fairly rapidly" during the curriculum design phase "working together with vocational trainers, linking in with NVQs" which had now developed into a "shared ethos amongst everyone who's delivering". This reflected "good relationships" from Hannah's perspective particularly as she thought that prisons were used to working in silos. Therefore she considered that this curriculum intervention would "help with building relationships and the notion that more than one or two departments can all work together". During this early development phase, the focus from staff is clearly on the need to develop relationships, communication and partnership working with a shared ethos. These are pertinent points particularly as Burgess and Taylor (2005, p. 26) highlight the importance of 'the quality of relationships' and encouragement 'to share ownership' particularly during the design and development phases of a curriculum programme.

Certainly, Hannah thought that the partnership working had already had an impact, even at this early stage, in that "people are talking about the way in which the workshop is different and how it's almost seen as a collective unit, where people can go, learn, work, produce something that is of use and interest". She also considered that integration of education was "innovative" in that it was being delivered "in a number of different ways". Gary also commented on the fact that "this [curriculum intervention] is different because it's full time, side by side [whereas] before it was just a workshop and education would come down into a little room or learning pod and just deliver a bit, you know, one day a week". Therefore the evidence suggests that there was a positive response from staff to the adoption of a partnership approach which was seen by all to be critical to the

success of the intervention particularly as 'innovation cannot succeed unless the majority of staff are at worst neutral but it is clearly important to have a majority positively inclined to the curriculum change' (Givens 2000 quoted in Barnes 2005, p. 4).

During the second interviews the responses from the staff indicate that the partnership approach had continued to develop positively over the period of the project and, as such, there was a more reflective stance to their responses at this stage. Certainly, Gary stated that he had "a good relationship" particularly with the OLASS provider and the way that offenders were "progressed from training to production". He identified that "regular conflabs" (meetings) had resulted in partnership working developing "quicker and smoother than what I thought it would, in all honesty". These points were also made by Hannah who acknowledged that "relationships were good" and the integrated delivery approach was "running smoother [and] working much better, in fact probably better than we originally thought in terms of the workshop".

All participants mentioned "communication" and defining "clear roles and responsibilities" as critical to the success of partnership working. James considered that at the start of the project there "were pitfalls regarding the initial setup, of who was doing what and when" which needed clarification. Keith regarded "guidelines" as important which "needed setting down, so that people know what's being provided and by who" and indeed, Hannah noted that clarity had developed about "who's doing what, where and when [with] joint learners that we have between us". Gary provided an example of the way in which roles and responsibilities of the partners had developed in relation to his own workload which was now more manageable because he had been able to hand over "some of the responsibilities to other staff". The responsibilities related to "paperwork, the pay, the wages" for offenders and "printing the activity list off". The activity list informs the workshop of who should be attending and needs to be printed both morning and afternoon. He contributed the 'realignment' of responsibilities to the fact that staff were now more confident in what they were doing in the workshop. Therefore, although the curriculum programme "has had its ups and downs, responsibilities of who does what" James considered that the areas had now "knitted" together and were "co-ordinating and working well in all three areas". Certainly the formalisation of roles and responsibilities is a finding that has also been evidenced in the Scottish government's partnership research report (2004) which acknowledges that this aids good partnership working and, as such, is evident in this study too.



The staff identified that communication had made a significant contribution to effective partnership working. Certainly as the project evolved and developed there had been a "series of meetings to discuss" and more clearly define roles and responsibilities. James further evidenced good partnership working in relation to the "air of comfortableness with the students and the tutors within the workshop" as "tensions and issues" would be evident in the "atmosphere" of the workshop if this was not the case. Iris noted that "whilst there are issues, at least we can talk about them and move them on". She felt that communication through "types of meetings [that] we have [such as] the QIG and the DIG" provided a sound vehicle through which to progress the issues and provide a "holistic approach to prison, learning and training". It was this meeting structure which ensured that all partners had the "same vision, aims and objectives in mind" and was important in contributing to "getting the prison to recognise where education stands, in terms of reducing re-offending". Furthermore, the meeting structure allowed for opportunities to reflect on the progress of developing and implementing the curriculum intervention and provided the forum for evaluating what had happened so far and to plan the next phase of curriculum development in a collaborative way. The evidence of shared vision, aims and objectives in this study supports the points made by Ertmer (1999, p. 54) in that 'a shared vision offers a vehicle for coherent communication [and that] when new issues, problems or opportunities arise, our vision keeps us focused on what is central to our [...] efforts'.

All participants made comments about partnership working and in particular for Keith it was about "all working together as well as side-by side". James gave examples of "two-way and three-way working partnerships" mainly in relation to collaborating on resource issues and developments for progression opportunities for the learner. Hannah considered that she worked with each partner individually as well as collectively to more effectively integrate learndirect provision and so a key response to partnership working for her was "to be proactive, collaborate" and to "talk to people". Certainly, Conole and Oliver (2007, p. 50) asserted that 'however successful [the integrated curriculum] collaboration is notoriously difficult'. Hannah acknowledged that "partnership working had been crucial [but that it] can be difficult to forge and if you don't nurture it, it's going to wither and die. It has to be nurtured constantly" and "communicating and collaborating with each other" is a vital tool in this respect. Ertmer (1999, p. 55) identified that 'ongoing conversations with colleagues' is one of the 'critical ingredients to successful technology integration'. From evidence in this study it is apparent that Hannah, the learndirect tutor, has adopted this approach in that she was "constantly

talking to people” to ensure “successful integration of learndirect with training and production”.

In respect of nurturing relationships Iris responded that there was “this sense of coming together more, perhaps this year than in the past [so that] partner relationships actually work very well”. In particular, she thought that the “way we work with prison colleagues has certainly developed and come a long way”. This she thought had contributed to the establishment becoming a “well managed prison and there’s recognition, at senior management level which hasn’t always been the case, you know, that education is important”. Certainly, from an institutional perspective Laurillard (1994 quoted in Phillips 2005, p. 6) specified that ‘senior management support influences success’ and all participants felt that “support from management” was evident in relation to this initiative.

The curriculum intervention was at a point in October 2008, where it was beginning to attract external interest, and as Hannah commented “outside people have wanted to know just what’s going on in this prison and how does it work”. She added, in relation to partnership working that we would not be being “put forward for things and [have] people interested in us, if we weren’t working well [together] in relation to the offender and their learning”. She commented that they all “work together to work out what their journey is” which has developed “understanding [in that] we’re starting to realise that these learners are everybody’s responsibility”. She considered that partners were starting to adopt an approach whereby the “learner sits at the centre and we look at what we can contribute to his journey”. She used an analogy “wheels within wheels” to demonstrate how the partners were working together “to make it work for the benefit of the learners”.

#### **7.5.1.3 System Capacity**

The only negative response in relation to resources that staff had encountered from the learners was in relation to the slowness of the computer system. Here, it was James who mentioned that it had been “negative in the way that the systems running slow, learners get frustrated”. The analysis of the data from this study identified this as an issue, however this particular problem has already been cited in research literature which acknowledges that ‘slow download times [...] are frustrating for [...] students’ (Eastman and Swift, 2001; Smith, 2001 quoted in Birch and Burnett 2009, p. 121). It would seem therefore that this is an issue which crops up on a regular basis in relation to integrating technology and their related systems.

#### **7.5.1.4 Motivation and achievement**

Staff responses to the development and implementation of the curriculum development and e-learning were very positive in relation to the way that the students had responded to it. In the first interviews there were no comments made by staff in relation to offender responses to the initiative because the curriculum intervention had only just got off the ground and the offenders were just starting their courses. However, by the second interviews the staff had a number of examples of how the offenders had responded to the curriculum intervention and e-learning provision with the first of these examples relating to motivation and achievement.

In the workshop Gary commented that the two offenders he currently had studying the NVQ Performing Manufacturing Operations were “happy [and that] they’re made up” that they were on the course and making good progress. He thought that generally in the workshop environment the offenders were motivated to work and learn in that “the feedback I get from them, not verbally, but it’s more like their actions speak for them”. This, from his perspective was because “they just come in, get their tools and boots on and start by themselves, which basically says that they are enjoying it”. In addition, Keith also stated that he “gets very positive feedback” usually after a period of time in the workshop although initially it is “not always so positive when they first come in. However, once they’ve enjoyed the course” they become more motivated and “they all achieve”.

From Hannah’s viewpoint the awards day ceremony, when learners gain recognition for their achievements and receive their certificates is a huge motivating factor. The awards day has developed over the period of the research project into a multi-disciplinary approach to achievement where all providers of provision are present and take part in the event. She stated that she thought that “[the learners] experiences have been enhanced [.] by the way in which the regime and everyone around us has taken on the awards day”. The impact of this is that “one learner, who previously was renowned for redecorating cells at a rate of knots, cos he was very difficult to manage, is absolutely living for Christmas. The Christmas award ceremony where he will gain his level two certificate”. Hannah also commented that they were motivated by achievement in that they had gone from “never having a certificate of any sort, to now a collection of certificates in a record of achievement”. This provides further evidence to support the ‘motivational aspect’ (Wilson and Logan 2007, p. 12) of learndirect and its ‘non-traditional’ learning approach which encourages difficult and reluctant learners to achieve.

Another motivating factor from Hannah's perspective was when the "learners decided they wanted to take ownership of the centre and they wanted to stamp it, mark it as their own. They wanted to do something creative with the walls" and so they undertook a project to transform the fairly blank walls with a mural which depicted their learning journey in the centre. She felt that this had contributed to their motivation to continue with their learning programmes in that "they've settled in class, they've succeeded, they've stayed, whereas previously they would have just walked or been extremely disruptive". She thought that the offenders had responded in a very positive and motivated way to the curriculum intervention with the e-learning element in that "you can see people come in, you can see people change, you can see them engage with something that's new and different and unusual".

#### **7.5.1.5 Attitudes to learning**

Overall, there appears to be a positive attitude to learning perceived by the staff. However, in the first instance when the offender starts in the workshop there is, according to Keith "a bit of a negative attitude [in that] they're not always so positive when they first come into it". But Keith felt that as their attitudes began to change, they became "more willing to learn" and they started to enjoy their learning experience, so much so that, "they've wanted to stay on and they're staying on for further courses". Also, from Gary's perspective he thought that "generally, I think, even if they [are] sort of like, apprehensive about when they come in here, they soon change cos they see the atmosphere of the shop" which for him related to "quite a happy atmosphere". However, in relation to learndirect he thought that "the lads are apprehensive about coming in here". When questioned further about this he responded that from his perspective he thought that some of the offenders "think that there's a stigma attached to it cos it's basic skills or key skills". However, he then commented that there were "about eight or nine lads attending here [learndirect] now, so it's working out for them" and that "in here [learndirect] to tell you the truth, the lads are always interested". He explained this point further by providing an example situation in that when the learndirect tutors are on leave and "say they're not in on a certain day, when the lads find out they're not happy, [...] so if they didn't want to be in here they wouldn't moan. That's the way I see it". It is interesting to note that the responses of the offenders to basic skills, although lacking in confidence initially, were positive and did not appear to corroborate the instructional officer's view that there was a stigma attached to them.

Furthermore, James commented that he had seen a "willingness to go into the centre to do the learning" and that this was because they were a lot more positive about "the

actual thought of going in to use the computer and the learning style” which was not just a “traditional pen and paper exercise” as they were “taking on board a different way of learning through ICT”. He thought that their attitude to learning was one of enjoyment as from his perspective “they do enjoy the fact that they are interacting with a PC, it’s like staying in touch with technology as well as enjoying the practical side in the workshop”. This provides evidence to support the claim that ‘emphasis on flexibility and combining skills in a practical setting tends to bring out dormant enthusiasm and determination in prisoners who long ago gave up on more conventionally delivered education of the ‘pen and paper’ variety’ (Taylor 2006, p. 48).

Certainly the comments made by the staff in relation to the students’ attitudes to learning with integrated technology has shifted from a rather negative perspective in the first interviews to a more positive outlook in the second interviews. It could be as Stein et al (1999 quoted in Barnes 2005, p. 4) argue, that the enthusiasm of the student to the changes encompassed in the new integrated curriculum particularly their ‘positive response to the technology [element], has encouraged the [staff] to rethink their attitudes to existing curricula’. From Iris’s perspective, she thought that the existing longer term population at the establishment had an attitude to learning in which “they welcomed it” but in relation to the IPPs there was “a real marked reluctance to engage in learning in some ways”. However, Hannah commented that some long term offenders are also difficult to engage but that she had examples in which “their attitudes have altered”. She gave an example of one offender who “was renowned for being uncommunicative” but who was now coming out of his cell and into the centre so that “he’s actually engaging with other learners around him, he’s engaging with people on the landing, he’s engaging again with the staff and it’s giving him a new lease of life”. In this respect she enthused that it was “dynamic the way in which his attitude has changed”.

She also thought that they were motivated to learn because they could “work individually, so they don’t have to feel as if they’re part of a group and they’re not fitting in”. This links to the data from the initial offender survey which found that they were interested in learning on their own from a computer. Furthermore, she noticed that this was contributing to a “level of enthusiasm that I’m seeing in the learners themselves” which was lacking previously. In this respect, because they were working individually it also contributed to their motivation to continue learning on release. Hannah then gave an example of one learner who “on his release, he’s going to continue to be my learner [and] continue that learning with us outside”.

### **7.5.1.6 Progression**

Progression of the learner, in terms of continuing learning on release, is one example that has been highlighted in relation to attitudes and motivation to learning. In addition, staff identified a number of other progression examples in how students had responded to the curriculum intervention. In the workshop, one offender had taken on the role and responsibilities of a peer tutor as, according to Gary "he's level two anyway [and] he enjoys it, you know, he's actually not far off the same level as me in the actual trade". Indeed, Keith also acknowledges that "these lads have gone on to be really good" which has meant that they have progressed onto higher level courses. In addition, Hannah pointed out that as "their time has been purposefully spent, they've seen a great deal of progress" and that they have actually "recognised their own progress by following their own learning plans and what they've actually done on line". In this respect therefore, she commented that the progress they had made, particularly in skills for life, had helped them to do certain jobs in the workshop. They had developed the ability to recognise and "put into practise [their skills] in a different area". She thought that evidence of progress was "indicative of effective learning" and, as such, was in agreement with Phillips (2005, p. 2) that 'for learning to be effective, it needs to be transferable to other contexts'. She noted that their experiences had developed "in terms of how they've carried that across into other things" so that they were now more effectively able to relate and use their skills in the workshop environment as well as in their relationships with other staff. She also gave another example of a learner who had progressed from entry level three to level two and was "a changed lad. It's really addressed his offending behaviour as he's preparing for an ETS [Enhanced Thinking Skills] course that twelve months ago he would not have had the capacity to do". This, for her, demonstrated a high level of progression and so she questioned the usefulness of the provision in that "if this wasn't here, would that man be that far on now? The answer to that question would be absolutely no". She further commented on the progress of learners who had been traditionally difficult to teach in that they "seemed to have got on with this e-learning and integrated curriculum" and made good "individual developmental progress".

### **7.6 Offender interviews June and October 2008 – Findings on student responses**

This section seeks to provide evidence in respect of findings from the analysis of the data to address the research question identifying student-offender responses to the development of a curriculum intervention including e-learning within a prison establishment. The first interviews with offenders were conducted in early June 2008 just as they were commencing the curriculum intervention. The second interviews were

conducted at the end of October 2008 after they had been engaged in the curriculum intervention for five months. The responses during the first interview stage were fairly brief and reflected their anticipation as to what lay ahead with their courses within the workshop. Therefore, I have combined responses from both interviews for discussion purposes in this section but have clearly noted from which interview the data were analysed. Table 7.6 below provides a quick reference guide to offender portraits which can be used to attribute offender responses more fully if required, as the findings are discussed in terms of the participants' verbatim responses.

Table 7.6 Offender quick reference portrait details

Pseudonym	Participant details
Adam	37 year old adult male, 14 year determinate sentence, black Caribbean, attended junior school only.
Ben	27 year old adult male, life sentence, white British, attended both junior and secondary school, excluded from secondary school.
Calum	26 year old adult male, life sentence, white British, attended college after being excluded from both junior and secondary school.
Darren	30 year old adult male, 10 year determinate sentence, white British, attended junior & secondary school, excluded from secondary school
Eric	41 year old adult male, life sentence, white British, never attended school.
Frank	50 year old adult male, IPP sentence of 3 years and 3 months subject to 10 years on licence when released, attended all schooling.

### 7.6.1 Responses by category and component

Table 7.6.1 below summarises the key responses by category, sub-divided into component and then by response for offender interviews. I proceed to expand on the responses in more detail using their actual statements and comments throughout this section in relation to the educational category. However, the responses in respect of the organisational category were very brief during the first interview stage and no further responses were identified in the data during analysis of the second interviews. Therefore, I consider no further explanation in relation to their responses is necessary other than to note that they commented on problems that security issues can have when implementing an intervention such as this. The security issues were in relation to getting things passed by security in the first place, banning of the internet or access to it and messages being blocked, for example, email facilities.

Table 7.6.1

Offender interview summary of responses to the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention and e-learning in a prison establishment

<i>Category</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Response</i>
Educational	Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment and release</li> </ul>
	Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipation and confidence</li> <li>• Resource issues</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Support from tutors</li> <li>• Individualised learning</li> </ul>
Organisational	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security</li> </ul>

## 7.6.2 *Category: Educational: Component: Curriculum: Response*

### 7.6.2.1 Employment and release

Analysis of the data from the first interviews revealed that they all considered it would be beneficial to be able to have computer skills as being able to use a computer would enhance employment prospects and as such from their perspective may lead to a reduction in re-offending. This may be a valid point as American research has reported in relation to technology-based programs that there has been a 'wide range of positive effects [..including] decreased rates of recidivism' (Hall and Bannatyne 2000 quoted in Koski 2002, p. 3). Certainly, Adam recognised that most companies have computer systems that you would have to be able to use nowadays to do your job. He continued further and related this to an example in a workshop environment whereby he expected that he would have to "take the job off the computer" and then use it to plan his work in the workshop. In addition, Ben thought that "if you know how to use a computer, I reckon you could get a good job". The flexibility of learning with computers and particularly the ease of access to be able to continue once released was considered by Adam to help stop re-offending. He thought that it would be beneficial as it was "not something where you have to go in a classroom [as] you can sit at home and anytime you feel like something you can just take it up and do it". It appears, in the early stage of the interview process and the set up of the workshop facility that the offenders were focusing on computer aspects of the curriculum programme rather than the other skills that they would be developing in relation to skills training and production techniques. This possibly reflects their interest and engagement with the new approach to integrating technology alongside the more traditional workshop skills.



### **7.6.3 Category: Educational: Component: Learner: Responses**

#### **7.6.3.1 Anticipation and confidence**

Analysis of the responses from the first interviews found that when the participants were asked about experience of e-learning, five out of six offenders commented that they had not had any experience previously. In this respect Adam commented that "I don't really have much experience cos me only just started the other day"; Ben commented "none, this is my first time"; Eric commented "oh loads, no absolutely none" and then laughed; Calum responded that this was his "first time" and Frank had had "no experience at all". However, Darren stated that he "used computers once in Parkhurst at the beginning", but he felt that his prior experience of e-learning was "not much at all really". Interestingly, even though he did have some experience of computers, his confidence in using and learning with them was low and he actually commented that "they daunt me". He considered that using his play station in his cell, of which he was confidently using, was "as far as my computer knowledge goes, really".

Of the five respondents who had no prior experience of e-learning, Eric and Calum were "not very confident at all" in using computers, whereas Ben commented that he did "enjoy using them [and he knew] a little bit, not much though". Adam thought that he was averagely confident and Frank expressed that he was very confident in that he would be able to use them. Certainly, Eric had a barrier in relation to confidence with computers in which he admitted that it was actually "getting [him] on one to start with [as he was] not very comfortable with them". He was apprehensive about learning in this integrated way with computers as he said that "at one time you could shy away from them [computers] but now they seem to be everywhere". The comments show that the offenders were apprehensive about the technology element of the curriculum and Piskurich (2004, p. 41) noted that 'if you are afraid of the technology [...] you greatly reduce your chances of having a positive experience'. However the responses of the offenders during the second interview stage show that they gained confidence quite quickly with comments like "it was easy to get started" and as such they became extremely positive about their computer experiences.

Furthermore, in relation to confidence with skills for life they all commented that they did lack confidence with either literacy and/or numeracy. However, they acknowledged the benefit of functional skills and in linking Skills for Life to practical activities in the workshop. Certainly, mathematics featured more strongly in their comments than English as Ben commented that "it would help a lot of lads in doing maths" as well as

Adam and Darren who also mentioned “maths” whereas Calum commented on “English”. However, they all agreed without exception, that computers were an essential basic skill particularly nowadays and as Calum said “it’s all computers now innit, so if you don’t learn you’re stuck”.

### **7.6.3.2 Individualised learning**

The second interviews with the offenders, in October 2008, took place five months after the first interviews and at this point Frank was no longer participating in the research project. However, the five remaining participants were still involved with the curriculum intervention and their responses reflected that they were enjoying the integrated programme, they were achieving and motivated in what they were doing. Analysis of the responses from the offender second interviews found that they all commented in a positive way about their own individualised working and learning. Adam commented that “everybody work individual” and he put this down to the fact that everyone was at “different levels” so therefore they could plan and work at their own pace using their own initiative. This response provides further evidence to the research work of Koski (2002, p. 9) with offenders in that ‘when computers are included in instruction, students work at a pace suited to them and take responsibility for their learning’. Certainly Adam thought that this way of learning made “you do things more self-sufficient” and that it makes him “feel more motivated to learn”. He also thought that the “best thing, you know, is the way of access for develop your skills” and by this he meant that he could go at his own pace to “refresh” the skills that he had forgotten from school. Another positive point for Adam was that he had been “away for a short time” on accumulated visits but on his return he was able to go straight back into the workshop and continue with his learning.

Furthermore, Ben felt that “using the learndirect system has been absolutely excellent [and] it’s proper helped me a lot”. He thought that this was because “being able to interact with a computer has been a lot easier, you know, than just grabbing a teacher”. He also commented on the integrated way the curriculum had been organised and how his learning had developed which had “been really helpful all round”. In addition Calum, Darren and Eric all commented that they were learning “by myself” and getting on with the work “on me own”. This provides further evidence to support data from the initial questionnaire which showed that offenders liked to learn on their own. However, this did not mean that they did not communicate with each other as Darren pointed out that “most people, with it being what it is, do tend to work by their self, but the person you sit with, ask you a question or vice versa” then you would answer and try to help.

They were all involved in training in the workshop either on the basic skills testing or production side. In addition, in the learndirect classroom Adam was “doing a literacy course at the moment”; Ben was “finishing level two maths”; Calum had “nearly finished the spells qual”; Darren had learnt how to use the computer again and was “just doing spreadsheets” and Eric was “just getting used to the computer and [had] learned maths, like, [to] do maths in the proper way”. All the participants felt that they had learned something during their time in the workshop and whilst on the integrated programme. In addition they made numerous comments like “I’m learning a lot more in here” (Adam); “learning to do different stuff” (Calum); “I’ve learnt more here than on any of my sentences before” (Ben); and “I’m actually learning proper skills” (Eric). I would agree with Wilson and Wahidin (2006, p. 17) that it became ‘routine’ in this workshop to gain positive responses from offenders in relation to the work they were doing and their learning. Certainly Ben felt that “this type of work [was] absolutely brilliant” and the best employment that he had had whilst in prison. When asked more specifically what they had learned Adam, Eric and Ben responded that the most important thing they had learned so far was “maths”, with Adam adding that it is because “we use it a lot in the joinery shop” and Ben adding that, it had helped in “developing my angle skills”. These responses in particular show how they were transferring their skills learned into other areas of the workshop and in this respect, I agree with Ertmer (1999, p. 50) that the integration of technology has provided an individualised curriculum in which ‘basic skills are learned within the context of answering real questions’. In addition, for Calum it was important to have learnt spelling as he can “write letters now”, and for Darren it was familiarising himself with a computer again, particularly as he was due for release next year and wanted to have “up-to-date computer skills”.

#### **7.6.3.3 Support from tutors**

Further analysis of the second interviews found that the offenders appreciated the support that they received from their tutors and thought that it contributed to their “enjoyment and success” on the course. This factor provides further evidence to the research conducted by Koloto et al (2006, p. 82) in which ‘the support of tutors [...] was seen as critical to the success of [...] learners’. Overall, all the participants felt that they had received a lot of support but, more importantly for them, at an appropriate time when they felt that they needed it. They felt that if they could not understand something then they would just “grab” a teacher and they would help to explain so that they could understand. Generally, the comments made are best summed up by Ben who said that “they explained it brilliantly, you know, they were really thorough in what they were saying and that, and helping you as you got stuck”.

#### 7.6.3.4 Motivation

Furthermore, during the second interviews achievement, not only in terms of qualifications but also with personal development skills, was commented on by participants. Certainly, Eric was “chuffed to bits” about getting “numeracy level one, [as] I’ve done no schooling at all so quite pleased I was, quite pleased about that”. He also felt that he had developed his computing skills so that he was now “getting used to the computers”. Ben reflected that he “could have probably spent a bit more time in school” but that he was “coming close to finishing level two maths now, all done via this” and that he was also “a couple of units away” from completing his joinery qualification. He felt that he had developed his computer skills and angle skills which had been very helpful when in the workshop. For Darren he had completed his level one in computers and felt that he had also developed his communication skills. Due to having gone on accumulated visits, Adam had not yet completed his literacy level one course but felt that he had developed skills in being able to work on his own initiative and had become a more independent learner as in “do things more self-sufficient”. Calum also felt that he was an independent learner in that he had developed skills in “getting on with it myself” and that he had nearly finished the spelling booklets and was hoping to take the test soon. He also said that the best thing about being in the workshop and the way that it was set up was “learning to do different stuff so I’m getting better” and that “I enjoy it, I like coming to work”.

All offenders, without exception, found the experience of this curriculum intervention in the workshop motivating and enjoyable. In particular Adam commented that “it make me feel more motivated to learn”. Eric said that “it’s more motivating” and “I don’t know why, it just seems better”. Darren commented that “the workshop, I think it’s ideal, it has motivated me to learn a bit more” and that “I’ve enjoyed myself whilst I’ve been in here, you know, I haven’t sat back on my bum like I have throughout most of the sentence, you know I’ve enjoyed it, I’ve enjoyed it, I’ve enjoyed it”. Calum said that he enjoys it and “it makes me feel good about myself” which demonstrates an ‘improved self-image’ (Wilson and Logan 2007, p. 17) and the point that the curriculum intervention had enabled the offenders ‘to learn in ways that develop their self-confidence and self-esteem’ (Burgess and Taylor 2005, p. 25). Certainly, there is evidence here that they have ‘engaged in activities which they enjoy [...] and have gained [...] motivation’ which the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2004/5, p. 68) noted was important particularly if previously negative experiences of education and training are to be altered.

The final response relating to motivation comes from Ben who commented that he was more motivated to learn “especially this type of work, as it’s been a God send this job, I love it, absolutely brilliant, I wouldn’t change it for the world”. I consider that he demonstrated what Wilson and Wahadin (2006, p. 18) described as a ‘future perspective’ in that he recognised the usefulness of the experience and skills he had gained in the workshop to his release plans. In this respect he commented that one of the best things about the whole programme was that “learning a trade is something that can come in good stead for when I get out. It means that I won’t be stuck or anything, you know, I’ll have the skills of a trade to ply on and everything else I’ve learnt on this course” which he believed would “motivate me to succeed on the out”.

### **7.6.3.5 Resource issues**

Finally from the offenders’ viewpoints during the second interviews, there were only a few negative findings which were in relation to resource issues such as sometimes there were not enough tools in the workshop for everyone to use, which also supports the comments made by staff; the computer system was very slow at times and that it was not possible to get email messages from their tutors; the classroom should be bigger so that more people would be able to access it; they would like an extra session in the learndirect classroom. This last point links to the evaluation findings of Wilson and Logan (2007, p. 20) in that ‘the learners themselves were, not only receptive to the use of computers, but wanted to spend more time on them’.

## **7.7 Summary**

This chapter has provided some discussion on the analysed data and considered findings in relation to the initial questionnaire, staff and offender responses regarding the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention incorporating e-learning in the case study establishment. Higher level categories were identified from the data as educational, environmental and organisational. These were further sub-divided into component parts and then by factor. Staff first interview data analysis following initial development and implementation phases of the new curriculum intervention found a number of factors that staff thought important in relation to progression, embedding skills for life, flexibility and mainstreaming provision, employability and quality standards. Staff continued to consider employability an important factor during the second interview stage after the curriculum intervention had been operational for five months. However, another factor emerged at this point in relation to time issues not only for continued development but in relation to the practicalities of delivering the intervention and running the workshop.

Staff with management responsibilities also recognised external/internal factors in relation to the environmental category. These factors considered the wider policy and agenda for learning and skills as well as adopting a whole organisational approach and 'joined-up' strategies for developing and implementing the curriculum intervention. In identifying what staff felt were the barriers/obstacles to implementing the curriculum intervention and e-learning provision in a prison establishment, factors in relation to a single category of 'organisational' and component 'institutional' emerged from the data. The details of identified barrier/obstacles included attitudes/culture, security, installation and staffing factors.

The data in relation to staff responses to the development and implementation of the curriculum intervention identified an educational category with a learner component. The responses in this section included how the offender had responded to the intervention from the perspective of staff and included motivation and achievement, attitude to learning and progression. In respect to how staff had responded, an organisational category and institutional component was identified which incorporated responses in relation to attitudes, partnership approach and ethos, system capacity, communication, roles and responsibilities.

Data in relation to offender responses identified the organisational category and institutional component in relation to security. No further responses were identified in the data during analysis of the second interviews in respect of this category and indeed no new categories emerged. Therefore, in respect of their response to security they commented on problems that security issues can have when implementing an intervention such as this. The security issues were in relation to getting things passed by security in the first place, banning of the internet or access to it and messages being blocked. The data in relation to the educational category found learner and curriculum components. The response to the curriculum component was in relation to employment and release whereas the responses to the learner component were in relation to anticipation and confidence as they embarked on the new programme, resource issues, motivation, individualised learning and support from tutors.

In the following eighth chapter, I will formulate and discuss my conclusions.

Furthermore, I evaluate and reflect on the research project overall and consider some limitations of the study before indicating further research, policy and practice potential and finally, summarising key conclusions.

## Chapter Eight

### 8.1 Introduction: Conclusions

The thesis began with a brief historical overview of the development of prison education up to the present day to contextualise policy and practice. From a reformist perspective Fry, Martin and Bentham held an ideal of social inclusion and purported that offenders should do useful work and practise skills that would provide them with a sense of achievement and satisfaction and something they could use on release. Indeed, the historical work of Bentham and Osbourne is worthy of further reflection, particularly as they identified training for employment as an important aspect of rehabilitation for offenders, which is still a component of current thinking today. In this respect consideration is given to reducing re-offending policy drivers in relation to the government's Green Papers *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment* (2005), *Next Steps* (2006), OLJ and ETE pathways as well as the LSC's OLASS and *Prospectus* proposals. These have influenced the development of the curriculum intervention in this study. The main influence has been partnership working, which is clearly advocated in the policies to facilitate better integration of education, training and work. Therefore a tripartite approach was adopted to develop and implement the curriculum intervention which included the Prison Service, OLASS and Learndirect providers. The curriculum intervention delivered production, training and e-learning components within a construction workshop environment. The intervention provided a broad curriculum offer including literacy, numeracy, key skills, computers, training and employability skills from entry to level two.

The research project, therefore, was conducted to examine how a category 'B' training prison was responding to the challenges of developing and implementing a curriculum intervention involving an element of e-learning in a penal establishment. A case study framework was adopted and for interpretation purposes a predominately qualitative research design was necessary which informed the data collection methods. An initial survey was conducted, followed by two interview stages which provided qualitative data for analysis from staff and offender participants. Therefore, the conclusions of this predominately qualitative study are, to some extent, context bound. In this respect it provides others with an opportunity to increase their understanding and insights into prison environments including prison education and, as such, is not concerned with making broad generalisations but it is hoped that people can relate to the study. The research study focused on identifying factors, barriers/obstacles and responses of staff and offenders to the development and implementation of the curriculum intervention.

The study specifically sought the views of staff and offenders on these points and conclusions are drawn in respect of factors in Section 8.2; staff responses in Section 8.3; barriers and obstacles in Section 8.4 and offender responses in Section 8.5. Furthermore, Section 8.6 provides an evaluation of the study with Section 8.7 identifying a few limitations. Section 8.8 considers implications for research, policy and practice and finally Section 8.9 provides a summary of key conclusions.

## **8.2 Factors**

The factors that staff identified as important in the development phase of the curriculum intervention related specifically to educational aspects of curriculum development with a strong focus on the current employability skills agenda for offenders. Certainly the participants' opinions reflected the current employability focus in policy for offenders in order for them to develop appropriate skills which facilitate access to employment and the labour market. Indeed, as the curriculum developed specific employability modules were added to enhance the programme and provide further progression opportunities to aid in the process of offenders becoming more economically viable on release. The factors identified in relation to development, which are clearly evidenced in the study include progression, embedded skills for life, flexibility, mainstream provision, employability, standards and time factors (Ertmer 1999, 2005; Burgess and Taylor, 2005; Wilson and Wahidin, 2006). The flexibility of the curriculum intervention has gone some way towards eliminating institutional barriers (Harrison, 1993) particularly in relation to accessibility. The main concern, however, seemed to be time as this was considered an important factor to enable effective pre and post curriculum development which echoes the findings of previous research particularly on integration of technology into the curriculum. In addition, staff highlighted difficulties encountered in a prison environment when trying to further develop the curriculum once operational, particularly in relation to security protocols. The study showed little knowledge of wider environmental aspects in relation to policy amongst the instructional and vocational staff who tended to focus solely on employment skills in this respect. It was staff with management responsibility who considered environmental aspects more broadly in relation to external and internal factors such as the wider policy and agenda, accountability, whole organisational approach and joined-up strategies.

## **8.3 Staff Responses**

The study identified a plethora of positive staff responses in respect of the development and implementation of the curriculum intervention. The responses were summarised into two categories. The educational category and learner component had responses in



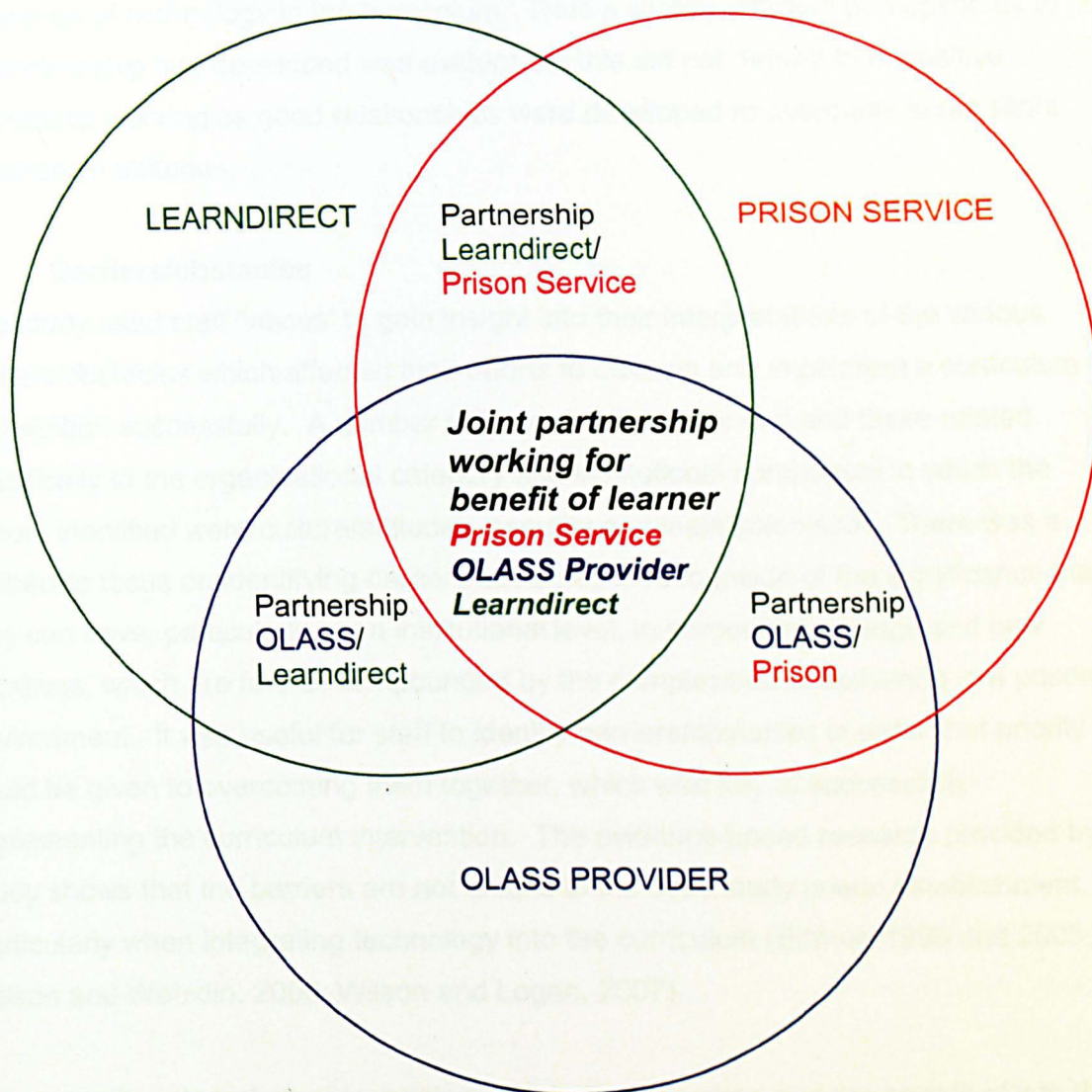
relation to motivation and achievement, attitudes to learning and progression. The organisational category and institutional component had responses in respect of attitudes, partnership approach, system capacity, communication, roles and responsibilities. In this study partnership working emerged as a particularly strong response with a relatively high number of comments and examples provided by staff throughout the duration of the project.

The rationale behind the study was concerned with how partnerships work together in trying to develop and implement curriculum interventions with e-learning provision for the benefit of learners. Evidence from the study found a strong commitment to partnership working which enabled this to happen effectively. The partnership grew and established itself over the period of the study as, for the curriculum intervention to work effectively, it was necessary for the three partners to collaborate together to determine how the three components of production, training and technology would fit together successfully to enable the curriculum change to embed and become sustainable. The collaboration and partnership working evident throughout this study shows that it is possible to work together rather than in competition or isolation of each other as illustrated by Wilson and Logan (2007, p. 12) in respect of 'the prison and the provider being seen as working within separate 'bubbles''. The participants used terms like 'team ethos', 'empowered' which indicates an inclusive approach where they were encouraging partners to relate with each other in a positive way acknowledging that they all contribute something important to the integrated curriculum programme.

The analogy "wheels within wheels" provided by one of the participants demonstrates how the partners were effectively working together to make the curriculum intervention work for the learner. Certainly, the majority of responses seem to show that participants had a good degree of commitment to partnership working and the benefits of this approach for the learner. As the partners 'knitted' together the implementation phase became a smooth process which they all considered happened more effectively/easily than they had anticipated. Developing the "wheels within wheels" analogy further, I have used a Venn diagram (Figure 8.3 below) to represent the three partners recognising that where partnership working takes place there is a bipartite overlap between the components with the central tripartite overlap representing joint partnership working for the benefit of the learner.

Figure 8.3

The optimum tripartite working model



There was a clear need identified for discussion and agreement on roles and responsibilities, which was considered crucial to constructive partnership working. Investment in communication was essential to ensure shared vision, aims and objectives along with a meeting structure which facilitated dialogue between partners to resolve issues and evaluate progress together. The QIG was a vital tool in this respect and the findings provide evidence of a joined-up establishment approach to learning and skills which is a significant strength in development of partnership working. This supports the wider quality agenda in raising standards across provision including prison industries and 'out-of-scope' activities. In this respect the study indicates partnership working at a range of levels with good communication to enable 'high intensity participation' which is acknowledged as crucial in effectively dealing with and overcoming issues (Werner 2001, p. 68). Although the findings have identified good practice in partnership working, one area of tension relating to staff attitudes surfaced in this study. Some of the

participant comments highlighted that there may have been tensions underneath the surface in relation to historical barriers between providers and the Prison Service and integration of technology in the curriculum. Thus a slightly different perception as to how the partnership had developed was evident but this did not detract from positive partnership working as good relationships were developed to overcome some slight negativity in attitudes.

#### **8.4 Barriers/obstacles**

This study used staff 'voices' to gain insight into their interpretations of the various barriers/obstacles which affected their efforts to develop and implement a curriculum intervention successfully. A number of factors were evidenced and these related specifically to the organisational category and institutional component in which the factors identified were culture/attitudes, security and installation/staff. There was a deliberate focus on identifying barriers/obstacles in recognition of the significance that they can have, particularly at an institutional level, in introducing change and new initiatives, which are further compounded by the complexities of delivering in a prison environment. It was useful for staff to identify barriers/obstacles in order that priority could be given to overcoming them together, which was key to successfully implementing the curriculum intervention. The evidence-based research provided by this study shows that the barriers are not unique to the case study prison establishment, particularly when integrating technology into the curriculum (Ertmer, 1999 and 2005; Wilson and Wahidin, 2006; Wilson and Logan, 2007).

However, the integration of technology within the workshop and the benefit of it to the whole curriculum intervention required a radical shift in thinking, particularly with the instructional officer and vocational tutor who displayed, initially, a more personal and ingrained negative attitude to technology integration. They were not convinced the technology, in the form of a classroom full of computers, was that relevant to their curriculum, in respect of teaching practical skills. However, as the curriculum intervention developed and the impact of activities learned in the technology-based classroom began to transfer into more workshop based training, a different perspective on learning ensued and resulted in a more positive change in the attitude towards technology.

Previous research/evaluations have shown that there are always security issues in prison establishments which can hinder progress (Wilson and Logan, 2007; Braggins and Talbot, 2005). Although this study echoed the security issue it was relatively

straightforward to overcome, demonstrating that the recommendations made in earlier evaluation reports have worked in practice (Wilson and Logan, 2007). Certainly, some barriers were overcome with little effort whilst others required a more concerted approach particularly in respect of installation/staff problems. However, there is always an expectation working in a prison environment of problems arising unexpectedly. Staff manage to overcome difficulties and barriers in innovative and proactive ways.

Therefore, in respect of the success in implementing this curriculum intervention I would agree with Fullen (1993 quoted in Ertmer, 1999) that success is due to staff coping with the obstacles better and not necessarily because there have been fewer obstacles than other projects in prison establishments.

## **8.5 Student Responses**

The study identified mainly positive student-offender responses to the development and implementation of the curriculum intervention. The responses identified by the offenders were in relation to educational and organisational categories. The organisational category and institutional component had a security response whereby the offenders noted the problems that security issues can have when implementing an intervention with an e-learning element in a prison establishment. Both staff and offenders considered that the Prison Service approach to internet facilities was a factor in relation to access and use of ICT. However, evidence from the study has shown that there was a positive response to security issues in the case study establishment which did not hinder progress in this respect. The educational category and curriculum component had responses in relation to employment and release. The learner component identified responses in respect of anticipation and confidence, resource issues, motivation, support from tutors and individualised learning.

All offender participants considered that having computer skills would benefit their employment prospects on release. They also considered that it was an essential basic skill nowadays alongside traditional skills for life and practical skills development. This evidence is in line with that found by Braggins and Talbot (2003) in which computer courses appeared to be important to the offender partly because computer knowledge was considered a transferable skill and also the general recognition that IT skills were needed for jobs. Historically, the focus on prison education was to enable offenders to read and write, whereas nowadays, particularly with the advancement of technology, the skills required are much broader. In this respect the technology component of the curriculum intervention is an important one, particularly as 'reading and writing are only part of what [offenders] are going to have to learn in order to be able to communicate

effectively in the future' (Loveless and Ellis 2001, p. 56). Certainly the integrated curriculum intervention was a move towards embedding the 'three Rs' with the 'three Cs [of] communication, collaboration and creative problem-solving' (Ertmer 1999, p. 49), which the offenders appear to have responded well to in this study.

There is evidence that offenders in this study have overcome dispositional barriers (Harrison, 1993) to participation in that they were motivated by the curriculum intervention to learn. Certainly technology is seen as one way of solving barriers to participation and combined with the practical skills and production training a positive learning environment developed. This supports the notion that the needs of the socially excluded should be developed in contexts which are meaningful and motivating from a learners' perspective. This is particularly important if they are to participate and progress with transferable skills into further training and employment. The curriculum initiative combined production, training and e-learning to facilitate offender participation to improve their learning and employment skills. In general terms however, it is difficult to argue, on the evidence presented in this case study, which of the elements has been more specific in contributing to increased motivation on the part of the offender. However, I would suggest that the overall impression was that the integrated approach and delivery supported the increased motivation and enjoyment that offenders' experienced whilst on the course.

Certainly learning specialists agree that amongst the leading reasons why learning does not occur is learner disinterest and lack of relevance of the programme to them (Piskurich 2004). However, the evidence demonstrates that the offenders were personally and independently engaged with the programme due to finding the learning process self-enriching and motivating. In this study therefore, the evidence suggests that offenders were interested in the course and found it relevant to their needs.

Earlier research studies have found that offenders can have negative attitudes towards learning due to their poor experiences of schooling, which often leads to exclusion from school. The evidence from this study seems to point to a higher likelihood of exclusion from school for offenders as only one of the offender participants selected for this study had attended all schooling. Although school exclusion was not a criterion for selection for the study it is interesting that the evidence points to the curriculum intervention engaging the more 'hard to reach' learner, as five offender participants who had suffered some form of exclusion all remained on the programme and achieved.



## 8.6 Evaluation and reflection

Evidence-based research in a case study framework is a helpful way of enabling an establishment to examine the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention with the aim of developing practice and sharing experiences with others. Gillham (2000, p. 102) purported that 'case study research is a method not to be wasted on issues that are unimportant' and I consider issues, in relation to learning and skills for offenders, are important. Therefore the selection of a case study approach was the most appropriate for this research project as this study contributes to building a robust and constructive account of how staff and offenders view developing and implementing curriculum provision in prison education. By detailing what has happened 'on the ground' in one prison establishment this case study communicates more fully the current situation and experiences of those involved in the project which may help to identify areas for further research by interested parties.

Reflecting on my earlier assessment of capabilities to undertake a case study approach I consider that I was realistic in my assessment in terms of my listening skills, adaptability throughout the process, open-mindedness and firm understanding of issues relevant to the study. However, in respect of asking questions I consider that as a researcher I lacked some experience in knowing when to probe more deeply on certain responses during the interview process. This was due to me being somewhat cautious in my approach so as not to lead the participant to respond in a way that might have been influenced by my view and would thus lead to the response being biased and lacking validity. However, I consider that my approach in this respect has not detracted significantly from the fullness of data gathered by this process.

I consider that the predominantly qualitative approach to data collection and analysis was important, particularly as this study was investigating the experiences and perceptions of prison staff and offenders. The aim was to investigate in a broad sense the importance of factors in developing and implementing a curriculum intervention in a penal establishment. The data were analysed using a grounded theory approach as I favoured the concept of a more creative and intuitive approach to data analysis. The initial questionnaire was devised in sections to gauge staff and offender responses in relation to confidence, access and use, and impact of ICT. This was particularly useful for developing the prison e-learning strategy but, with the benefit of hindsight, it was somewhat restricting in allowing themes to emerge from the collected data. However, it did provide useful snap-shot data in relation to demographic characteristics and what

proportion of the prison population had a particular opinion and the strength of that opinion.

Data provided by the initial questionnaire was planned, and indeed used, in a number of ways. Utilising the initial questionnaire for a dual purpose is perhaps not an orthodox approach but when working within the constraints of a prison establishment it is crucial to make the most of opportunities when they are presented as the chance to gain permission to 'do it again' may not be forthcoming. The first use, therefore, was to provide evidence for this study in relation to demographic characteristics of the prison population and their opinions. The second use was to contribute to the prison e-learning strategy. In this respect, I consider that the initial questionnaire provided useful data on both these points and that the data were representative of the changes the establishment had undergone in relation to offender and staffing population profiles in respect of the prison expansion programme to accommodate an extra 180 offenders. The data clearly indicated a lack of training and qualifications in ICT for staff and also a slightly more negative attitude from prison staff in the use of technology. In respect of offenders the data showed a positive response to technology use which they considered would enhance employment prospects. Furthermore, the data on exclusion from school was consistent with previously reported research with offenders and their higher likelihood of exclusion from school than the general population.

I drew further on the ethos of grounded theory during the interview phase and tried to ensure that analysis emerged from the data. The vast amount of data meant that it was a time consuming process to identify key categories, related components and factors. I tried to keep an open mind throughout the process and considered that the data produced educational, environmental and organisational categories which I felt confident had emerged from the data and were indeed 'rooted' in it. As such, therefore analysis of the data involved an inductive process whereby supporting text were categorised into higher level categories, sub-divided further into components and finally factor level. This process resulted in identification of a number of factors for each component which had influenced the development and implementation of the curriculum intervention and the participants' responses to it. Although the process was repeated singularly for each participant to minimise the influence from previous data analysis, the identified higher level categories and subsequent components were noted as common to both sets of participants with any variation being identified at the factor level. Once the factors had been identified I researched the literature further to ascertain whether the factors were similar to other evaluations or had been identified previously in other research projects or

even had links to existing theories to support my interpretations in the findings and evidence from this study. This approach followed the advice of Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 50) who noted that 'it is only after a category [or factor] has emerged as pertinent that we might want to go back to the [...] literature to determine [...] what other researchers have said about it'.

I also consider that using verbatim statements from participants has provided more rigour in analysis, findings and conclusions. This is because I have tried to eliminate my preconceptions or bias by using their actual views to influence the formulation of findings and conclusion in a more reliable manner. I was also keen not to bias the findings of the study due to my positionality as a researcher in my place of work and so consideration and clarification on my position as an insider researcher within the case study establishment has been extensive which, as Conole and Oliver (2007, p. 37) purport, 'is a necessary condition for establishing the credibility of research findings'. I consider that this research project has benefited from my position as an insider researcher and that there have been more advantages than disadvantages to it. This is particularly relevant to my ease of access to participants, time scale for completion of the research project, understanding of prison protocols and peculiarities and sensitivity in respect of 'awareness of subtleties of meaning of data [...] refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't' Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 42).

## **8.7 Limitations**

This section focuses on a number of limitations in respect of the research project with specific reference to methodology and methods used as it is important to note these in order to aid interpretation of results. I would suggest that at the time that it was decided to adopt a tripartite approach to the development of the curriculum it was considered by all involved to be a new and innovative approach. This does not mean, however, that this necessarily was the situation but from our perspective we were not aware of any other establishment, certainly in the regional location of the case study establishment attempting to approach development and implementation of the curriculum intervention in this way.

The study used an initial questionnaire as a device to gain information and as a 'snapshot' of the situation in the prison establishment in March 2008. The validity of this type of instrument has been questioned in the literature (Dornyei, 2001; Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1991; Nunan, 1999) with the main issue relating to the assertion that



respondents may not provide a true answer and so as such there is no guarantee that people are telling the truth when they complete the survey. Indeed, Dornyei (ibid.) makes the point that respondents may provide a 'good guess' in relation to what they think the acceptable or expected answer should be and then provide this response whether or not it is true. Certainly problems of self-report bias need to be taken into account especially as self-report ratings were used on the questionnaire in this study. Hence responses may not be completely accurate or reliable.

A further limitation in respect of the survey used in this study is the risk of human error during data entry. I manually inputted the completed questionnaires and whilst every effort was made to minimise the risk of inaccuracies it cannot be assumed that this was completely avoided. Furthermore, it was my first experience of using the software package SurveyMonkey for data collection and analysis and so I would question my expertise, particularly in setting up the questionnaire template, in relation to the percentages which were calculated for some questions (see for example Appendix 10, questions 11 and 17). Therefore I would need to ensure for any future studies that I pre-test the template on the software package so that all the responses produce logical statistics in the correct format.

I also consider that it may have been limiting to use predetermined categories on the initial survey in relation to confidence, access and use and impact of ICT. Certainly Nunan (1989, p. 62) argues that 'the problem with questionnaires is that, having developed our categories and questions before collecting data, we may predetermine, to a large extent, what we actually find'. Indeed, Drever (1995, p. 68) also asserts that 'there is a danger that predetermined categories may distort the data'. However, I would assert overall that the initial survey and classification of categories provided a platform from which further tentative themes emerged for exploration during the interview stages of the study particularly, for example, in relation to attitudes. The identification of the higher level categories of educational, environmental and organisational came from the inductive analysis of the interview data itself. The 'extracting of categories from the data itself' is a process recommended by Drever (1995, p. 68).

The case study focused on staff and offenders in one prison establishment and as such this may limit the scope and depth of analysis and findings. However, the sample size for this research project was considered adequate and representative of the population providing an indication of general themes and factors in an exploratory way. Furthermore, purposive sampling was used to choose the participants for interview to

ensure that the research study was sufficiently focused and provided the depth of coverage in relation to the research questions posed. Certainly available time and resources at my disposal may have limited the sample size somewhat but this is not necessarily considered a problem as 'there are no rules for sample size in qualitative [research]. Sample size depends on [...] what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources' (Patton 1990, p. 184). Therefore, I consider that the sample was appropriate for this study. Certainly time was a consideration in relation to the observation process whereby there were a number of instances during the research project when informal observations were noted for evidence purposes. However, there were no formal observations conducted in the workshop or learndirect classroom to provide supporting evidence for the study.

Furthermore, analysing and relating the findings of the study to available literature and research within the context of prison education proved more problematic than envisaged due to time constraints for the study and consequently the search process. As such, although I consider I was exhaustive in my approach to gathering electronic and paper-based sources, particularly early on in the research project, this may have been compromised slightly in the later stages due to submission deadlines and so it is possible that I may have missed some relevant studies. However, to counteract this problem somewhat I used web searching to find as much available material as possible but also acknowledge that there are some dangers in taking web-based information as factually reliable, unless accessed from an authorised site. In addition, there may also be disadvantages in that some of the literature and studies are not solely prison-based.

### **8.8 Implications for research, policy and practice**

The study identified difficulties and obstacles as well as positive responses and outcomes from developing and implementing the integrated curriculum intervention. In this respect, it is hoped that this case study can provide a contribution in guiding the development of practice in relation to curriculum initiatives and partnership working. Indeed, I considered that the use of this case study as an example of what can be achieved in a prison establishment deemed to be of 'higher security' should give assistance and hope to others facing obstacles and challenges in their respective establishments. An unexpected contribution of this study was to provide evidence to further support research findings that in prison establishments there are still hidden tensions and a closed institutional culture to overcome, even in the most proactive 'can do' establishments.

Certainly in recent years the government has recognised the importance of the offender learning and skills agenda and the delivery of this agenda has undergone major changes particularly with the creation of OLASS. The evidence from this case study provides an example of how one curriculum initiative has been developed and implemented within the current policy context providing a model of good practice. I acknowledge that the research findings are preliminary indicators in respect of barriers/obstacles and so further research is necessary. Caution needs to be exercised when drawing implications for practice and/or policy on the basis of a single case study such as this. In this respect therefore, dissemination of preliminary findings from this study have contributed to a national research project in respect of barriers faced in developing e-learning in a prison establishment and at a regional conference in respect of implementing a curriculum intervention incorporating e-learning. This study has therefore already contributed to providing supporting evidence in respect of barriers/obstacles to integration of technology to a wider audience.

The findings from the study will be used to underpin the local establishment policies which are further informed by regional and national issues in relation to learning and skills. The curriculum intervention has been aligned with the LSC's *Prospectus* proposals, taking into account length of sentence, individual needs and readiness to participate in learning. However, the implications for these proposals are unclear and there needs to be a broad debate on how the arrangements are to be implemented, particularly as the *Prospectus* proposals will require a developmental approach that does not de-stabilise establishments and provision. In this respect although the curriculum intervention has been developed and implemented successfully, the long term sustainability of it is threatened if the population profile changes and becomes predominantly long term. In addition, further research is needed to establish whether initiatives like the one in this study do more effectively offer the range of skills that offenders need to enhance their employment prospects and successfully reintegrate on release. 'Through the gate' or follow-up research on release will provide important evidence to substantiate this.

It would also be useful for further research to evaluate the legacy of *Project Rex* and explore the potential of prison industries as vehicles for learning and employment skills acquisition, particularly as the LSC's *Prospectus* proposals would like contract providers to support and work with prison industries or 'out of scope' activities more closely. Considering the evidence from this study in relation to instructional officer attitudes, further research into understanding instructional officers' attitudes, beliefs and resistance

to change through personal and engrained experiences is probably necessary if the new policy and thinking in respect of prison industries and more integrated working is to be effective. Hence it will be important to ascertain what persuasion or shaping is required to get them to think differently if indeed the attitudes from this study are reflective of instructional officer attitudes across the prison estate.

### **8.9 Summary of Key Conclusions**

Finally, to summarise the key conclusions therefore, the rationale behind the study was concerned with how partnerships work together for the benefit of learners and evidence from the study found a strong commitment to a partnership approach which enabled this to happen effectively. However, it has to be acknowledged that some initially negative attitudes, hidden tensions and historical barriers, particularly in relation to *Project Rex* and the relevance of technology in the curriculum were overcome by building productive relationships and gradually changing the mind-set of some staff. In this respect, staff participation in the development and implementation of the curriculum intervention has been characterised by integrative working, shared vision and ownership of the new curriculum initiative thus enabling an integrated programme of training, production and e-learning to be delivered successfully in a more flexible and individualised way within the case study establishment.

A strong focus on the current employability skills agenda for offenders and the development time for staff prior to delivery were key factors identified by staff as important in the development phase of the curriculum intervention. The development time was particularly important in that it allowed the opportunity for relationships to be nurtured and joint working protocols to be agreed. In this respect there was a clear need identified for discussion and agreement on roles and responsibilities which was considered crucial to constructive partnership working and facilitated through a clear communication structure. The study deliberately focused on identifying barriers/obstacles recognising the significance that they can have, particularly at an institutional level, in introducing change and new curriculum initiatives, which can be further compounded by the complexities of delivering learning and skills in a prison environment. In this respect staff identified key factors in relation to culture/attitudes, security and installation problems. I would agree with Fullen (1993) regarding implementation of the curriculum intervention in that the evidence does not suggest that this initiative experienced fewer barriers/obstacles than other projects but that staff coped with them more effectively as they were able to resolve issues and evaluate progress together. The collaborative tripartite approach has been instrumental in

overcoming barriers/obstacles which were not unique to the case study, particularly when integrating technology into the curriculum and in a penal establishment.

Hence this study has provided evidence that a significant step-change through partnership working can be achieved which successfully integrates education, training and work for the benefit of offenders and ultimately motivating them to participate, learn and achieve. Certainly integration of e-learning in a construction environment was a positive outcome that unfolded throughout the period of study encouraging flexibility of delivery and allowing offenders to learn at their own pace, as well as providing opportunities for them to use transferable skills within a variety of situations. Historically, the focus on prison education was to enable offenders to read and write, whereas in today's society, with the advancement of technology, the skills required are much broader. Technology is often regarded as the vehicle to solve participation barriers. In this study, technology combined with the practical skills and production training elements of the curriculum intervention contributed to the development of a positive learning environment. It is difficult to argue, on the evidence presented here, which of the elements has been more specific in contributing to offenders' increased motivation. However, the overall impression suggests that the integrated approach and delivery method supported the increased motivation and enjoyment experienced by offenders in this study. In addition, the evidence points to the curriculum intervention engaging the more 'hard to reach' learner, particularly as five offender participants who had suffered some form of exclusion from school remained on the programme, meeting and achieving their individual needs.

As such, it is my view that the evidence presented in this case study represents 'good practice' within the current policy context which stresses the importance of partnership approaches to the delivery of learning and skills. Furthermore, the timing of the intervention linked to sentence planning and release takes account of the increased emphasis on co-ordination of curriculum interventions incorporating education, training and work with the aim of making a difference to individual offender life chances and attitudes. I consider that this case study has provided some insights into prison environments and offender education, particularly identifying and overcoming barriers/obstacles, developing and successfully implementing a curriculum intervention which has motivated and engaged offenders. It has developed their individual capabilities with the aim, in the words of Osbourne (1924) to 'fit them for the free life to which, sooner or later, they are to return' and just as importantly, provided them with a learning experience which they have enjoyed.

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## Appendix 1

The abbreviations used are as follows:

Education, Training and Employment Department for Education and Skills Development Improvement Group Her Majesty's Prison Service Information, Communication Technology Indeterminate Public Protection (Offenders) Information Technology Learning and Skills Council National Offender Management Service National Vocational Qualification Offender Learning and Skills Service Offender Learning Journey Offender Learning and Skills Unit Officer Support Grade Prison ICT Academy Prisoner Learning and Skills Unit Prison Service Order Quality Improvement Group Quantum Personal Computing Regional Offender Management Senior Management Team	ETE DEES DIG HMPS ICT IPP IT LSC NOMS NVQ OLASS OLJ OLSU OSG PICTA PLSU PSO QIG QPC ROM SMT
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**Training, Learning and Skills  
Quality Improvement Group**

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**Terms of Reference**

- To monitor a robust quality framework, strategy and policy for all areas of training, learning and skills across the establishment.
- To produce, monitor and evaluate the Learning and Skills Self Assessment Report, Strategic Plan and Development Plan, which contributes to the Establishment Development Plan.
- To report on the progress and completion of targets identified on the Strategic and Development Plans and Risk Register.
- To provide an overarching 'Communication Strategy' to inform all areas of the training, learning and skills provision, and to inform and direct the Development Improvement Group.
- To fulfil the role of strategic management of health and safety, quality improvement, quality assurance procedures and policies.
- To act as a forum to develop, implement and share good practice at a local and national level, in relation to the Offenders Learning Journey.
- To review, plan and implement the resource needs and provision relevant to training, learning and skills.
- To ensure equality of opportunity and diversity in accessing the training, learning and skills and provision.
- To work alongside reducing re-offending and partnerships in developing robust community links supporting offender management and the implementation of NOMS.
- To develop and implement appropriate data and management information systems in order to effectively monitor and evaluate training, learning and skill provision.

**Training, Learning and Skills  
Development Improvement Group**

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**Terms of Reference**

- To support the training, learning and skills vision of [establishment] as a 'Secure Training College' focused on widening participation and providing socially inclusive programmes of learning to support individual resettlement needs.
- To develop the operation of local training, learning and skills, and quality assurance procedures and policies.
- To produce a monthly learning and skills activity report.
- To make contributions to the monthly SMT report
- To fulfil the role of operational management of quality improvement and implementation.
- To monitor the Development Action Plan
- To develop and improve delivery in line with the Offenders Learning Journey.
- To develop learner centred opportunities in all areas of training, learning and skills.
- To develop establishment-wide knowledge of the role of the DIG in relation to training learning and skills and the Quality Improvement Group.

## Appendix 4: STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE - MARCH 2008

### SECTION 1: ABOUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of a research project to study the development and implementation of e-learning in a prison establishment. Findings from this research will help inform the e-learning strategy for the establishment and decisions surrounding the development and implementation of e-learning with offenders. It is important to note that e-learning refers to the use of any technology to enhance learning.

This questionnaire should be completed by staff involved in working in the prison environment and answers should relate exclusively to the current situation within the prison. I would be grateful, therefore, if you could take a short time to complete the questionnaire, which should take no longer than 20 minutes.

It is important to gain a good response from staff to ensure that results are robust and informative. All responses will be treated as confidential and will not be used to identify you as an individual.

### SECTION 2: DETAILS ABOUT YOU

1 Which group do you consider best describes your ethnicity? Choose one group only

<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian - Bangladeshi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian - Indian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian - Pakistani
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other Asian background
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black - African
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black - Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other Black background
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Ethnic - Asian/White
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Ethnic - Black African/White
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Ethnic-Black Caribbean/White
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other Mixed ethnic background
<input type="checkbox"/>	White British
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Irish
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other White background
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other Ethnic background

2 Age - Please tick one box only

21 - 30	<input type="checkbox"/>
31 - 40	<input type="checkbox"/>
41 - 50	<input type="checkbox"/>
51 - 60	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 60	<input type="checkbox"/>



3 Gender - Please tick one box only

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

4 Which of the following categories best describes your job - Please tick one box only

<input type="checkbox"/>	OSG	<input type="checkbox"/>	Officer Instructor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vocational Instructor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	EO/AO/AA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Principal Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Operational Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher with management responsibilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-operational Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychologist
<input type="checkbox"/>	Instructional Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please state

5 How long have you worked in a prison environment? - Please tick one box only

<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than a year	<input type="checkbox"/>	5 to 10 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Between 1 and 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	10 to 24 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Between 2 and 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	25 years or more

6 What type of contract are you on? - Please tick one box only

F/T permanent	<input type="checkbox"/>	P/T permanent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary contract	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sessional contract	<input type="checkbox"/>
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### SECTION 3: Confidence in using ICT

7 Do you have an ICT qualification? - Please tick one box only

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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a) If yes, what is it?

8 How would you rate your ICT skills? Please circle one rate between 1-5, with 5 being excellent, and 1 poor.

	<b>1 (excellent)</b>				<b>5 (Poor)</b>
	1	2	3	4	5

9 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Please circle response.

a) I have a positive attitude towards the use of ICT and e-learning for myself	<b>Strongly</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
--	-----------------	--------------	-----------------	-----------------	-------------------



professionally

agree

disagree

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

b) I have a positive attitude towards the use of ICT and e-learning for offenders

c) I have a positive attitude towards the use of ICT and e-learning within a prison environment

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

1 Have you had any training in relation to ICT and e-learning?

Yes

N

0

a) If yes, what is it?

1 If offered, would you take up training and personal development in relation to any of the following? Please tick responses.

1

Basic ICT skills

Advanced ICT skills

Using ICT to manage learning

Using ICT to develop electronic learning materials

Using specialist software packages with offenders

Using interactive whiteboards

Using ICT to manage your workload

1

2 How would you rate your skills in using ICT and e-learning with offenders? Please circle one rate between 1-5, with 5 being excellent, and 1 poor.

1 (excellent)

5 (Poor)

1

2

3

4

5

#### SECTION 4: ACCESS AND USE OF ICT AND E-LEARNING

1 Do you have access to computer facilities?

Yes

N

o

3

1

4 How would you rate the quality of computer facilities? Please circle one rate between 1-5, with 5 being excellent, and 1 poor.

1 (excellent)

5 (Poor)

1

2

3

4

5

1 What resources are available for you to use? Please tick responses.

5

Inside Establishment

Outside Establishment

- Internet
- Intranet
- Interactive whiteboards
- Data Projectors
- Electronic learning materials
- Virtual learning environment
- Software on CD-Rom/DVD
- Digital Resources



1  
6 How would you rate the extent to which the following are available to offenders? Please circle one rate between 1-5, 5 being excellent, 1 poor.

1 (excellent)

5 (Poor)

Computers	1	2	3	4	5
Interactive whiteboards	1	2	3	4	5
Internet	1	2	3	4	5
DVDs	1	2	3	4	5
Software packages	1	2	3	4	5
Electronic interactive resources	1	2	3	4	5
Projectors	1	2	3	4	5
Dedicated ICT areas	1	2	3	4	5
Digital resources	1	2	3	4	5

1  
7 Do you use ICT and e-learning in any of the following tasks? Please tick responses.

- Lesson plans/training plans
- Creating teaching/training resources
- Researching your subject area
- Researching for information generally
- Communication with others
- Marking and feedback
- Retention and achievement




Managing your own workload

- 1 Please complete the following table, indicating a) in which areas of your work you need to liaise through the use of ICT, b) how frequently you use  
 8 ICT, and c) whether you believe you are using it frequently enough.

	Areas of work in which liaison needed through ICT	Frequency of use							What is your opinion of the frequency of use?
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	AdHoc	Never	
Education	<input type="text"/>								
Offender Managers	<input type="text"/>								
Offender Supervisors	<input type="text"/>								
Industries/workshop	<input type="text"/>								
Other Prison staff	<input type="text"/>								
Line Management	<input type="text"/>								
Other Prison Service	<input type="text"/>								
External contacts	<input type="text"/>								
Other establishments	<input type="text"/>								
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>								

- 1 To what extent do any of the following prevent effective use of ICT and e-learning: Please tick responses.  
 9

To a large extent

To some extent

Not at all



- Lack of training opportunities
- Inadequate ICT and infrastructure
- Inadequate e-learning resources
- Security issues
- Lack of commitment from senior managers
- Lack of strategy and direction
- Operational issues eg. Increase in population
- Lack of funding
- Lack of physical environment eg. Room
- Prison Service approach to internet access




## SECTION 5: IMPACT OF ICT AND E-LEARNING

2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following ICT and e-learning statements : Please tick responses.

0

**Strongly agree**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Strongly disagree**

**No opinion**

- It encourages offenders to learn
- It helps to reduce re-offending
- It can motivate learners
- It can engage hard to reach offenders
- It is difficult to implement in a prison environment
- It helps to encourage offenders to continue learning in the community on release
- It enables learners to progress at their own pace
- It creates individualised learning programs
- It enables learners to learn more flexibly
- It is necessary to effectively manage my workload






Please provide comments on the above if you wish.

--

2 In your opinion, to what extent would the use of ICT and e-learning lead to any of the following in this prison establishment: Please tick responses.

1



	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all
Greater participation in learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More effective teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More effective learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved retention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help reduce re-offending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve learner motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve staff satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Save time in lesson/training preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Save time in assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Save time in record keeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More efficient management of workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 6: CONTACT DETAILS**

Thank you for your time and co-operation in the completion of this questionnaire.

Would you be prepared to take part in a follow-up interview as part of this research project?

Yes  
s

No  
o

If yes, please complete the following details:

Name:

Contact number:

Email address:

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE RETURN TO JANET LONG, ROOM 9, B WING.**



## Appendix 5: OFFENDER QUESTIONNAIRE - MARCH 2008

### SECTION 1: ABOUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of a research project to study the development and implementation of e-learning in a prison establishment. Findings from this research will help inform the e-learning strategy for the establishment and decisions surrounding the development and implementation of e-learning with offenders. It is important to note that e-learning refers to the use of any technology to enhance learning.

This questionnaire should be completed by offenders and answers should relate exclusively to the current situation within the prison. I would be grateful, therefore, if you could take a short time to complete the questionnaire, which should take no longer than 20 minutes.

It is important to gain a good response from offenders to ensure that results are robust and informative. All responses will be treated as confidential and will not be used to identify you as an individual.

### SECTION 2: DETAILS ABOUT YOU

1 Which group do you consider best describes your ethnicity? Choose one group only

Asian - Bangladeshi

Asian - Indian

Asian - Pakistani

Any other Asian background

Black - African

Black - Caribbean

Any other Black background

Chinese

Mixed Ethnic - Asian/White

Mixed Ethnic - Black African/White

Mixed Ethnic-Black Caribbean/White

Any other Mixed ethnic background

White British

White Irish

Any other White background

Any other Ethnic background

2 Age - Please tick one box only

21 - 30

31 - 40

41 - 50

51 - 60

Over 60

3 What is your sentence type? - Please tick one box only



Determinate   
IPP   
Life

4 What is your length of sentence? - Please tick one box only

- Less than 4 years  
 Between 4 and 10 years  
 Between 10 and 15 years  
 Over 15 years

5 How long have you been at HMP Garth? - Please tick one box only

- Less than 6 months  
 Less than a year  
 Between 1 and 2 years  
 Between 2 and 5 years  
 5 to 10 years

6 a) Which of the following schools have you attended in the past? - Please tick boxes

Junior school  Secondary school  College  University

b) Which of the following schools have you been excluded from in the past? - Please tick boxes

Junior school  Secondary school  College  University

### SECTION 3: CONFIDENCE IN USING COMPUTERS

7 Do you have a computer qualification? - Please tick one box only

Yes  No

a) If yes, what is it?

8 How would you rate your skills in using computers? Please circle one rate between 1-5, with 5 being excellent, and 1 poor.

1 (excellent) 2 3 4 5 (Poor)

9 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Please circle response.



- |  |                |       |          |                   |            |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| a) I would like to know more about using computers and e-learning for myself     | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | No opinion |
| b) I think that computers can help you to learn more quickly                     | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | No opinion |
| c) I would like more use of computers and e-learning within a prison environment | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | No opinion |
| d) I do not know much about computers and e-learning                             | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | No opinion |

10 Have you had any training on computers and e-learning? Yes  No

a) If yes, what was it?

11 Which of the following would you find interesting to do? Please tick responses.

- Learn from a book
- Learn with a computer
- Use electronic resources such as CD-Rom and DVD
- Receive training/teaching using an interactive whiteboard
- Receive training/teaching in a classroom or workshop
- Learn by yourself
- Learn as part of a group
- Learn on a residential unit/wing

12 How would you rate computers and e-learning in enhancing employment prospects? Please circle one rate between 1-5, 5 being excellent, 1 poor.

1 (excellent) 2 3 4 5 (Poor)

**SECTION 4: ACCESS AND USE OF COMPUTERS AND E-LEARNING**

13 Do you have access to computer facilities? Yes  No

14 How would you rate the quality of computer facilities in the prison? Please circle one rate between 1-5, with 5 being excellent, and 1 poor.

1 (excellent) 2 3 4 5 (Poor)



15 What computer equipment and resources do you use now or would like to use in the future? Please tick responses.

Available now

Would like but currently not available

- Internet for distance learning
- IT classrooms
- Interactive whiteboards
- Data Projectors
- Electronic learning materials
- Learndirect
- Software on CD-Rom/DVD
- Digital Resources
- Computers on residential unit/wing
- IT in library

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

16 How would you rate the extent to which the following are available to you? Please circle one rate between 1-5, 5 being excellent, 1 poor.

1 (excellent)

5 (Poor)

	1	2	3	4	5
Computers	1	2	3	4	5
Interactive whiteboards	1	2	3	4	5
Internet	1	2	3	4	5
DVDs	1	2	3	4	5
Software packages	1	2	3	4	5
Electronic interactive resources	1	2	3	4	5
Projectors	1	2	3	4	5
Dedicated computer areas	1	2	3	4	5
Digital resources	1	2	3	4	5
Television	1	2	3	4	5

17 Do you use computers and e-learning in any of the following areas? Please tick responses.

- Education
- Workshops
- Residential unit/wing
- Gymnasium
- Communication with others

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>



Chapel  
 Care and separation unit  
 Healthcare  
 Visits


18 a) How do you like to learn best?: Please tick responses.

Best

Least

Not at all

Listening  
 Viewing information  
 Watching demonstrations  
 Sharing  
 Participating in discussion  
 On computer  
 By yourself  
 With others  
 Using technology  
 Small groups  
 One to one tuition

	Best	Least	Not at all
Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Viewing information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watching demonstrations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
By yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
With others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
One to one tuition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19 b) Would you like to use computers and e-learning to help you in any of the following topics?: Please tick responses.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Literacy  
 Numeracy  
 Employment  
 Music  
 Video  
 Distance Learning  
 Computer aided design  
 Spreadsheets  
 Databases

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Numeracy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distance Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer aided design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Databases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



- Word processing
- Web design
- Personal study
- Family learning




20 To what extent do any of the following prevent effective use of computers and e-learning: Please tick responses.

To a large extent

To some extent

Not at all

- Lack of training opportunities and courses
- Inadequate computers and infrastructure
- Inadequate e-learning resources and materials
- Security issues
- Lack of commitment from staff in the prison
- Lack of strategy and direction
- Prison environment
- Lack of funding
- Lack of up-to-date equipment
- Prison Service approach to internet access




## SECTION 5: IMPACT OF COMPUTERS AND E-LEARNING

21 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following computer and e-learning statements : Please tick responses.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

- It encourages offenders to learn
- It helps to reduce re-offending
- It can motivate learners
- It can engage hard to reach offenders
- It is difficult to implement in a prison environment
- It helps to encourage offenders to continue learning in the community on release
- It enables learners to progress at their own pace
- It creates individualised learning programs








It enables learners to learn more flexibly

It is necessary to effectively manage my workload

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Please provide comments on the above if you wish.

22 In your opinion, to what extent would the use of computers and e-learning lead to any of the following at HMP Garth?: Please tick responses.

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all
Greater participation in learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More effective teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More effective learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved retention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help reduce re-offending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve learner motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve staff satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Save time in lesson/training preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Save time in assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Save time in record keeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More efficient management of workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### SECTION 6: CONTACT DETAILS

Thank you for your time and co-operation in the completion of this questionnaire.

Would you be prepared to take part in a follow-up interview as part of this research project?

Yes

No

If yes, please complete the following details:

Name:

Number:

Residential Unit/Wing:

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE RETURN TO JANET LONG, ROOM 9, B WING.**

## Appendix 6

### Interview Schedule One - Staff

Interviewer name:

Number of staff:

Participant Number	Date	Time	Location

#### Preparation:

- A preamble to the interview session to be made to ensure understanding of research project and participant involvement including issues such as confidentiality
- Explain importance of their view
- Confirm agreement to tape record interview session
- Ensure participant is ready and happy to proceed and that there are no other issues which might be detrimental to the interview session.

#### Interview questions: Staff

- 1 What factors do you think influence the development of a curriculum intervention in prison?
- 2 There are three aspects to the curriculum intervention namely production, training and e-learning. How do you see this working in practice?
- 3 From your perspective, what are the important factors to ensure that this intervention develops successfully?
- 4 How would you describe your attitude towards the use of ICT and e-learning?
- 5 What experience have you had of e-learning previously?
- 6 What prior training in this area have you had?
- 7 What do you consider are the benefits of integrating ICT with this particular curriculum intervention?
- 8 Do you foresee any barriers to developing ICT and e-learning within the workshop?
- 9 Are there any other obstacles to developing this curriculum intervention?
- 10 How do you see the strategy and direction developing for this intervention?
- 11 What impact do you think it will have?
- 12 a) How difficult do you think it will be to implement all three aspects of production, training and e-learning as an integrated curriculum intervention?  
b) Why?
- 13 Do you have any other comments? Thank you for your time.

Appendix 6

Interview Schedule One - Offender

Interviewer:

Number of offenders:

Participant Number	Date	Time	Location

Preparation:

- A preamble to the interview session to be made to ensure understanding of research project and participant involvement including issues such as confidentiality
- Explain importance of their view
- Confirm agreement to tape record interview session
- Ensure participant is ready and happy to proceed and that there are no other issues which might be detrimental to the interview session.

Interview questions: Offenders

- 1 a) If we were to introduce a course in this workshop that focused on ICT (computers), what sort of initiatives would you like to see developed?  
b) Why?
- 2 What benefits would be gained, if any, from the integration of ICT (computers) with a practical activity in a workshop?
- 3 Are there any other areas in the prison that would benefit from e-learning and ICT initiatives?
- 4 What prior experience do you have of e-learning?
- 5 How confident are you with the use of computers?
- 6 a) Do you think that being able to use a computer is an essential basic skill or not?  
b) Why?
- 7 a) Do you think that by being able to use a computer it will enhance your employment prospects or not?  
b) Why?
- 8 a) In your opinion, if it was possible to continue e-learning on release do you think that it would help to reduce re-offending or not?  
b) Why?
- 9 What barriers do you think there would be to developing e-learning in a prison education environment?
- 10 Do you have any other comments? Thank you for your time.

Appendix 7

Interview Schedule Two - Staff

Interviewer name:

Number of staff:

Participant Number	Date	Time	Location

Preparation:

- A preamble to the interview session to be made to ensure understanding of research project and participant involvement including issues such as confidentiality
- Explain importance of their view
- Confirm agreement to tape record interview session
- Ensure participant is ready and happy to proceed and that there are no other issues which might be detrimental to the interview session.

Second interview questions – Staff

- 1 What has been your role in developing this curriculum intervention?
- 2 In your opinion, what has been the students' learning experience to date?
- 3 What changes, if any, have you noticed in student attitudes?
- 4 From your perspective, describe how the roles and responsibilities for this curriculum intervention have been evolving?
- 5 How much training and support has been received?
- 6 What do you consider the key issues in implementing this initiative?
- 7 In your opinion, how effective has partnership working been in developing the strategy and direction for this intervention?
- 8 What obstacles/barriers have you personally had to deal with during the implementation phase of this curriculum intervention?
- 9 From your perspective, how are the three aspects of this curriculum intervention, namely production, training and e-learning working in practice?
- 10 What, if anything, needs to be improved to ensure the success of this initiative?
- 11 Do you have any other comments? Thank you for your time.

## Appendix 7

### Interview Schedule Two - Offender

Interviewer:

Number of offenders:

Participant Number	Date	Time	Location

Preparation:

- A preamble to the interview session to be made to ensure understanding of research project and participant involvement including issues such as confidentiality
- Explain importance of their view
- Confirm agreement to tape record interview session
- Ensure participant is ready and happy to proceed and that there are no other issues which might be detrimental to the interview session.

### Second interview questions – Offender

- 1 How easy was it for you to get started with e-learning?
- 2 Are there things that you could have done to prepare yourself more effectively for e-learning?
- 3 Are there things that others could have done to prepare you more effectively for e-learning?
- 4 What has been your experience to date on using on-line materials/courses?
- 5 What would you say has been the most important thing you have learned so far?
- 6 What have you achieved? (courses/modules)
- 7 How much support have you had from your tutor?
- 8 Have you worked in groups or pairs on anything?  
If yes, what?
- 9 What skills do you think that you have developed by learning in this way?
- 10 Has the introduction of this workshop and the way that it has been set up made you feel more motivated to learn?
- 11 What has been the best thing about it up to now?
- 12 In your opinion, what do you think could be improved?
- 13 Do you have any other comments? Thank you for your time.



Appendix 8

**Data Analysis - Obstacles/Barriers/Responses Statement Grid 1**

**Factor code:**

ATT	attitude	FUND	Funding	PROG	Progression
INST	Installation	GOV	Government	SEC	Security
MOT	Motivation	EXT	External	TRN	Training
CUL	Culture	PART	Partnership	RES	Resources
TIME	Time	COM	Communication	MAN	Management
CUR	Curriculum	STR	Strategy		

Respondent	Ref Code	Statement	Factor
5	1P2Q4L1	it's not my strong point computers	ATT
5	1P3Q9L1	only obstacles I've had as hands on	INST
5	1P3Q9L3/4	try to get a balance with the lads now because sometimes they can go too much for it and come away from the woodwork production side	MOT
5	1P3Q9L6/7	actually slow them down because they want to be in here all the time which I've tried to explain that they can't do that	MOT
5	1P4Q13L5/6/7	always being seen as them and us hasn't it the education department and the prison service department and this shop sort of like trying to break that down you know trying to join the two together and sort of respect whereas the prison instructors used to be terrified of OLASS and getting transferred over	ATT LINK TO CUL
5	1P4Q13L9	that seems to have gone now so those barriers are down	ATT
6	1P2Q8L1	don't see any barriers at all	ATT
6	1P2Q9L1/2	I do actually question about how far it can go and what value it can have to them	ATT
6	1P2Q9L3	course that we are doing is a very basic level	CUR
6	1P2Q9L4	no way whatsoever does it prepare them for a job in joinery outside this prison	ATT
6	1P3Q12L6	financial implications or what the stumbling blocks	FUND
6	1P3Q12L7/8	goes back to management doesn't it governments and all sorts	GOV
6	1P3Q13L2/3	its in its infancy like and I think there's a few teething problems	INST
7	1P2Q8L1	barriers come through threats	ATT
7	1P2Q8L1/2	different threats the industry can take on	EXT
7	1P2Q8L2	approach in time schedules	TIME
7	1P2Q8L4	come around to the communication	COM

		again of the staff in allocated times with prisoner	
7	1P2Q8L5/6/7	standards of qualifications of the prisoners within the workshop where the skills the learning packages that are going to be delivered err are at the right level if they're not at the right level err then they could be seen as bad practice	CUR PROG
7	1P2Q12L1/2	Only as difficult as the team in place. Right blend and team ethos then shouldn't be an issue. All a positive and no real negatives	PART
8	1P2Q8L1	standard security problems	SEC
8	1P2Q8L4/5	quite a lot that a college erm or provider can do to make it as water tight as possible	SEC
8	1P2Q8L6	we already have men in here whose knowledge is very advanced so I think that that will always be a worry	SEC
8	1P2Q8L7	dare I say, perhaps lower levels of knowledge of computers and other equipment with the officers may be a barrier	ATT
8	1P2Q8L8/9	I think there may be a reluctance from the officers to get as involved as we would like	ATT
8	1P2Q8L10/11	there may be a lack of understanding to perhaps at Governor level as to why it's happening, and why it's needed	ATT
8	1P2Q8L12	more workshops, dialogue and training that can be done a governor level	COM
8	1P2Q9L1	help if every department supporting prisoners at xx can work together on it	PART
8	1P2Q9L2	very difficult if it's just education whose leading this and involved	STR
8	1P2Q9L4	we'll still need a lot of training	TRN
8	1P3Q9L9	I think a barrier to getting started will be our training needs which hopefully the college can support us with	TRN
8	1P3Q11L5	transform the whole attitude of prison	ATT
8	1P3Q11L10/11	its very easy and quick for a prison to revert to that position if threatened at all you know so I would like to see a little bit more expansive thinking about some on behalf of prison leaders or governors	ATT CUL
8	1P3Q12L4/5	it'll be a massive project so I think it will be difficult	PART
8	1P3Q13L4/5	I think for too long we've limped along you know we're expected to prepare prisoners for life on the outside but of	RES



		course if you using equipment which I know a nearby prison was you know that's almost Amstrad and word perfect it's very difficult isn't it	
8	IM1notes	Sometimes prison staff demonstrate a cant do rather than a can do attitude to new initiatives	ATT
9	1P3Q8L3/4	certain barriers that are laid down by the regime which we work and the thing is to be proactive and creative in your thinking in terms of how can we get around this barrier	ATT
9	1P3Q8L7	see e-learning, its one of those strategies that its an arm that gives us a little bit power to do that	STR
9	1P3Q9L1/2	going to take quite capable management if we're working on a industry which is what its mirroring	MAN
9	1P3Q9L6	may take a little bit of management if it goes large very quickly	MAN

Appendix 8

**Data Analysis - Obstacles/Barriers/Responses Statement Grid 2**

**Factor code:**

ATT	attitude	FUND	Funding	PROG	Progression
INST	Installation	GOV	Government	SEC	Security
MOT	Motivation	EXT	External	TRN	Training
CUL	Culture	PART	Partnership	RES	Resources
TIME	Time	COM	Communication	MAN	Management
CUR	Curriculum	STR	Strategy	OBJ	Objectives
RESP	Responsibility				

Respondent	Ref Code	Statement	Factor
5	2P1Q2L10/11	lads are apprehensive about coming in here	ATT
5	2P1Q2L15/16	a stigma attached to it cos if its basic skills or key skills	ATT
5	2P2Q4L9/10	haven't been able to recruit a full time member of staff to work	RES
5	2P3Q6L6/7/8	security make sure that's right all that where at first they did do see that as priority	SEC
5	2P3Q6L14	just priorities	OBJ
5	2P4Q8L4	the machine that's becoming a problem	INST
5	2P4Q8L6/7	niggly little things like the power	INST
5	2P4Q8L11/12	the staffing, the time to do stuff	TIME
5	2P4Q8L16/17	haven't really had that many obstacles really to tell you the truth	ATT
5	2P4Q9L8/9	got to a point where it went out of control it really did and I had to really slow it down	TIME
7	2P1Q2L3	systems running slow err learners get frustrated	INST
7	2 P2Q8L2	initial onset from the logging on point of view	INST
7	2P2Q8Para2L4/5	log in situation not being able to get logged on and then when they were registered the machine has been very slow	INST
7	2P3Q9L3/4	ups and downs responsibilities of who does what erm certainly that's working a lot better	RESP
6	2P3Q8L4	so many men being put into this workshop now	MAN
6	2P3Q8L5/6	increases the difficulty in managing them and teaching them	CUR
6	2P3Q8L6/7	issues, tooling for instance	RES
6	2P3Q8L9	a lot of time issues	TIME
6	2P3Q8L11/12	lot of time's been wasted in what	TIME

		you could have been teaching with you know and I think it's just because of the volume of men	
6	2P3Q8L16/17	not enough benches and space for benches they're just cramming too many men into too smaller a space	RES
6	2P3Q11L4	they consider this sort of an invasion	ATT
6	2P4Q11L8/9	I don't think people really understand how it should be working	MAN
6	2P4Q12L2	security obviously from a tools point of view	SEC
6	2P4Q12L6	wasn't enough preparation done to set it up	INST
6	2P4Q12L8/9	still trying to get tooling organised, materials and things like that	RES
6	2P4Q12L11/12/13/14	we don't seem to be given any time and we can't shut the workshop down they all need etching, every tool needs to be etched, security point of views, cupboards put up for them things like that, we haven't got them but we've still had the four lads	TIME
8	2P2Q6L1/2	getting the right tutors with the right qualifications and experience	RES
8	2P3Q8L1/2	barrier in some quarters is the lack of recognition given to the value of education	ATT
8	2P3Q8L2/3/4	although things have moved along you know we're still fighting problems with learner attendance, learners being given other jobs that are not directly related to their development	MAN
8	2P3Q9L1/2/3	the whole prison on e-learning I feel that really hasn't started to happen yet, then we're only just coming to the end of the IT refresh	STR
8	2P3Q9L4/5/6	quite a lot of work to be done you know both with our prison training colleagues and also with officer colleagues and governors to recognise the importance of e-learning	TRN
9	2P4Q6L2/3/4	installation and BT and organising things to get things in the prison, people in the prison	INST

		to do particular jobs before you could get started	
9	2P4Q6L13	other people who are maybe thrown in	MAN
9	2P4Q6L18/19	trying to promote something that people are afraid of and e-learning in a prison environment people are afraid of	ATT
9	2P4Q6L20/21	got one provider who's already providing some sort of e-learning and they're going to say we're already doing that why do we need you, what are you doing any different to us	PART LINK ATT
9	2P4Q6L23/24/25	simply looking at security and are like oh my god you can't possibly want to put that in here but you have to prove time and again, it is safe, it does work	SEC
9	2P4Q7L2/3	partnerships err they can be difficult to forge	PART
9	2P4Q7L8	been quite sort of a challenge	PART
9	2P4Q7L10/11	what looked like total isolation	CUR
9	2P5Q8Para2L1	generic barriers	
9	2P5Q8Para2L3/4	security people who are very nervous about what you are doing so they're going to need a particular way of convincing	SEC
9	2P5Q8Para2L4/5/6	IT people again the people what are ultimately responsible for if this goes wrong some measure of blame will lay at their door, they're very nervous of it, they need to buy into what we're doing	SEC
9	2P5Q8Para2L7/8	Staff can be negative, if they're not properly informed of what we're doing and why we're doing it and how they can get involved	ATT
9	2P5Q8Para2L9/10	People feel left out, some people are getting something and some people aren't and they can feel left out	ATT
9	2P6Q8Para2L20/21	issues where we cross over or whatever but you've to work round that but we're now linking up so those are like barriers that were originally there	PART LINK RESP

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD  
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR OFFENDERS AND STAFF**

**1 Research Project Title:**

**A case study on the development and implementation of a curriculum intervention incorporating e-learning in a prison establishment**

**2. Invitation Paragraph:**

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

**3. What is the purpose of this project?**

The Prison Service Orders Numbered 4200 and 4205 relating to education and training have not been updated for a number of years. However, there has been much change within offender learning and skills particularly over the last three years. The focus of this project therefore, is to find out what factors contribute to developing a curriculum intervention and e-learning strategy for offenders to meet their personal needs and employment prospects. It is also intended to explore how to better understand the issues regarding implementation and delivery of e-learning and interventions particularly in a prison context and with a changing prison population. The project will last nine months from March 2008 to December 2008.

**4. Why have you been chosen?**

You have been chosen to participate in this research project as your views and experiences are very important to it. Both staff and offenders within this establishment have been chosen to participate because you will have valuable contributions to make regarding the personalised needs of Lifers and Indeterminate Public Protection Offenders in relation to relevant interventions and courses.

**5. Do I have to take part in the project?**

Taking part in this research project is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Refusal to take part will involve no penalty or loss of wages to which you are otherwise entitled. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without penalty or loss of wages, and without giving a reason.

**6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you take part you will be involved in the research project from March 2008 until December 2008 at a time convenient to you. It will involve completing an initial questionnaire in the first instance which will be followed by an interview if you are willing and if issues need clarifying. The interview will last for twenty minutes on a one to one basis.

**7. What do I have to do?**

I should be grateful if you could complete the initial questionnaire and make yourself available for an interview.

**8. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There are no anticipated disadvantages or risks of taking part in this project. The questions for the interview will be piloted before I meet with you so as to eliminate unclear or difficult questions.

**9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

There may not be any immediate benefits to you, but by taking part in this research you will help to inform curriculum and intervention development for offenders in the future.

**10. What happens when the research study stops?**

You will be fully informed when this research project stops.

**11. What if something goes wrong?**

You will need to bring it to my attention immediately if you experience any problems or issues connected with the research. If you feel that you cannot address your concerns to me then you should contact my supervisor Professor Jackie Marsh. You can find her contact details at the end of this sheet.

**12. Will my taking part in this research project be kept confidential?**

Confidentiality and anonymity are very important issues. All information which is gathered about you and provided by you during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. All responses will be anonymised before analysis and they will not specify information particular to you.

**13. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The results of the project will be incorporated into my Doctorate thesis, which will be examined in June 2009. Afterwards the thesis will be stored in Sheffield University's library where it will be accessible to the public. If you would like to request a copy of the summary report of the thesis, I would be only too happy to provide one for you. Findings from the thesis may lead to a published article in the future.

**14. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is part of my Doctorate in Education at the University of Sheffield and is being funded by HMP Garth.

**15. Who has reviewed the project?**

The University of Sheffield Department of Education Research Ethics Committee has reviewed the research project under the auspices of the Departmental Ethics Review Procedure.

**16. Contact for further information**

Janet Long  
Head of Learning and Skills

Supervisor: Prof Jackie Marsh  
Department of Education Studies  
University of Sheffield  
388 Glossop Road  
Sheffield  
UK

Tel 0114 2222000  
[j.a.marsh@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:j.a.marsh@sheffield.ac.uk)

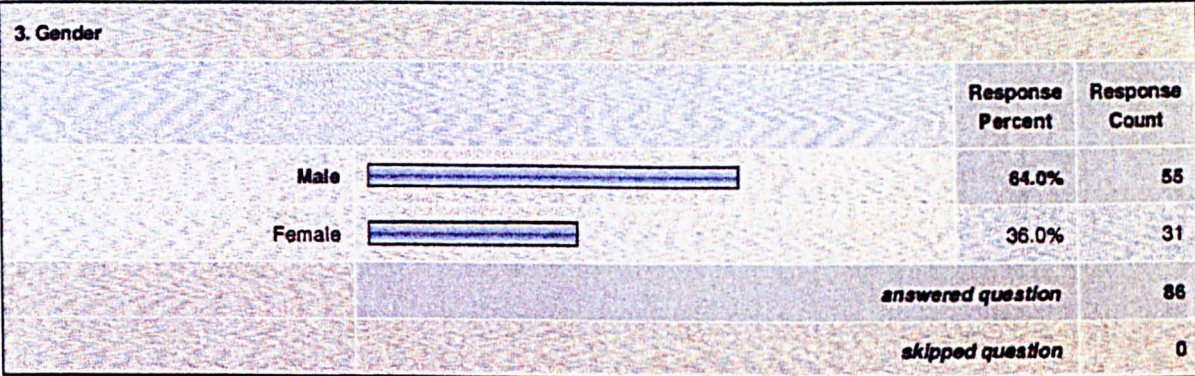
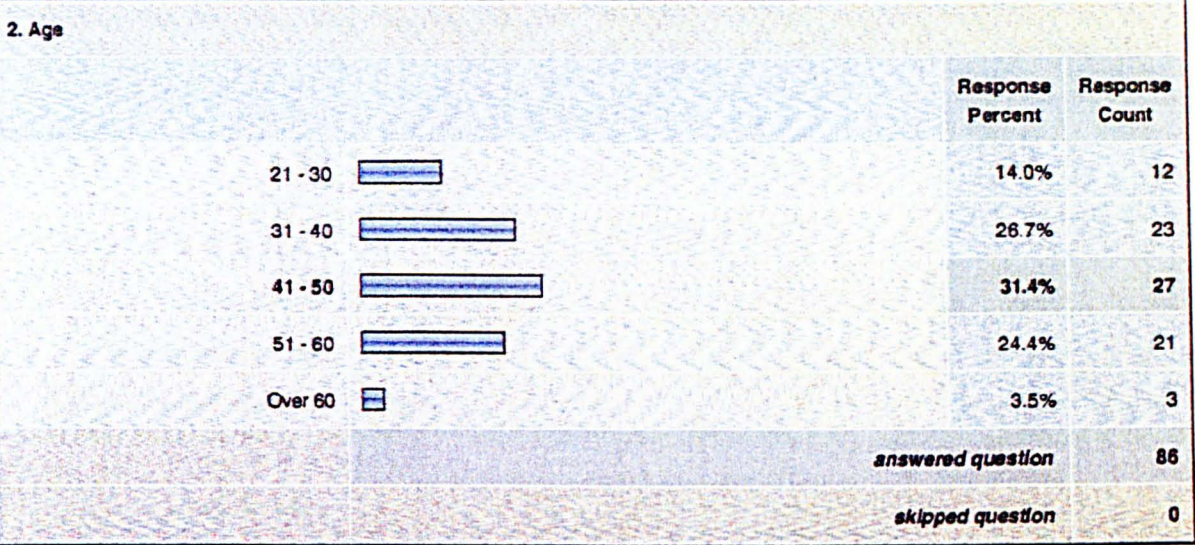
**Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and in anticipation of you agreeing to take part in the research project.**



**Staff E-Learning**

1. Which group do you consider best describes your ethnicity?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Asian - Bangladeshi	0.0%	0
Asian - Indian	0.0%	0
Asian - Pakistani	0.0%	0
Any other Asian background	0.0%	0
Black - African	0.0%	0
Black - Caribbean	0.0%	0
Any other Black background	0.0%	0
Chinese	0.0%	0
Mixed Ethnic - Asian/White	0.0%	0
Mixed Ethnic - Black African/White	0.0%	0
Mixed Ethnic - Black Caribbean/White	0.0%	0
Any other Mixed ethnic background	0.0%	0
White British	95.3%	82
White Irish	2.3%	2
Any other White background	2.3%	2
Any other Ethnic background	0.0%	0
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>86</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>0</b>







4. Which of the following categories best describes your job?

	Response Percent	Response Count
OSG	0.0%	0
Officer	18.5%	15
Senior Officer	4.9%	4
Principle Officer	2.5%	2
Prison Operational Manager	9.9%	8
Prison Non-Operational Manager	11.1%	9
Instructional Officer	11.1%	9
Officer Instructor	1.2%	1
Vocational Instructor	3.7%	3
EO/AQ/AA	7.4%	6
Teacher	12.3%	10
Teacher with management responsibilities	7.4%	6
Psychologist	9.9%	8
Other (please specify)		7
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>81</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>5</b>



5. How long have you worked in a prison environment?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than a year		16.3%	14
Between 1 and 2 years		3.5%	3
Between 2 and 5 years		17.4%	15
5 to 10 years		16.3%	14
10 to 24 years		39.5%	34
25 years or more		7.0%	6
<b>answered question</b>			<b>86</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>0</b>

6. What type of contract are you on?

		Response Percent	Response Count
F/T permanent		91.8%	78
P/T permanent		2.4%	2
Temporary contract		2.4%	2
Sessional contract		3.5%	3
<b>answered question</b>			<b>85</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>1</b>



7. Do you have an ICT qualification?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	41.2%	35
No	58.8%	50
If yes, what is it?		30
<b>answered question</b>		<b>85</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>1</b>

8. How would you rate your ICT skills, with 1 being excellent and 5 poor?

	Rating					Rating Average	Response Count
	Excellent				Poor		
1	6.0% (5)	25.3% (21)	53.0% (44)	15.7% (13)	0.0% (0)	2.78	83
<b>answered question</b>							<b>83</b>
<b>skipped question</b>							<b>3</b>

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion	Rating Average	Response Count
I have a positive attitude towards the use of ICT and e-learning for myself professionally	44.7% (38)	48.2% (41)	2.4% (2)	1.2% (1)	3.5% (3)	1.71	85
I have a positive attitude towards the use of ICT and e-learning for offenders	25.9% (22)	61.2% (52)	4.7% (4)	1.2% (1)	7.1% (6)	2.02	85
I have a positive attitude towards the use of ICT and e-learning within a prison environment	35.3% (30)	56.5% (48)	2.4% (2)	1.2% (1)	4.7% (4)	1.84	85
<b>answered question</b>							<b>85</b>
<b>skipped question</b>							<b>1</b>



10. Have you had any training in relation to ICT and e-learning?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.0%	34
No	60.0%	51
If yes, what is it?		21
<i>answered question</i>		85
<i>skipped question</i>		1

11. If offered, would you take up training and personal development in relation to any of the following?

	1	Response Count
Basic ICT skills	100.0% (32)	32
Advanced ICT skills	100.0% (49)	49
Using ICT to manage learning	100.0% (36)	36
Using ICT to develop electronic learning materials	100.0% (37)	37
Using specialist software packages with offenders	100.0% (34)	34
Using interactive whiteboards	100.0% (40)	40
Using ICT to manage your workload	100.0% (51)	51
<i>answered question</i>		78
<i>skipped question</i>		8

12. How would you rate your skills in using ICT and e-learning with offenders, with 1 being excellent and 5 poor?

	Excellent			Poor	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count	
1	2.5% (2)	6.2% (5)	43.2% (36)	24.7% (20)	12.3% (10)	11.1% (9)	3.43	81
<i>answered question</i>							81	
<i>skipped question</i>							5	



13. Do you have access to computer facilities?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	83
No	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		83
<i>skipped question</i>		3

14. How would you rate the quality of computer facilities, with 1 being excellent and 5 poor?

	Excellent					Poor	Rating Average	Response Count
1	5.9% (5)	29.4% (25)	45.9% (39)	9.4% (8)	9.4% (8)	2.87	85	
<i>answered question</i>							85	
<i>skipped question</i>							1	

15. What resources are available for you to use?

	Inside establishment	Outside establishment	Response Count
Internet	57.3% (43)	90.7% (68)	75
Intranet	100.0% (76)	6.6% (5)	76
Interactive whiteboards	96.8% (30)	9.7% (3)	31
Data projectors	96.6% (28)	17.2% (5)	29
Electronic learning materials	72.7% (24)	51.5% (17)	33
Virtual learning environment	61.5% (8)	53.8% (7)	13
Software on CD-Rom/DVD	51.0% (25)	79.6% (39)	49
Digital resources	39.1% (9)	95.7% (22)	23
<i>answered question</i>			83
<i>skipped question</i>			3



16. How would you rate the extent to which the following are available to offenders, with 1 being excellent and 5 poor?

	Excellent				Poor	Rating Average	Response Count
Computers	18.4% (14)	30.3% (23)	39.5% (30)	9.2% (7)	2.6% (2)	2.47	76
Interactive whiteboards	7.6% (5)	18.2% (12)	37.9% (25)	15.2% (10)	21.2% (14)	3.24	66
Internet	3.3% (2)	3.3% (2)	20.0% (12)	10.0% (6)	63.3% (38)	4.27	60
DVDs	9.8% (6)	14.8% (9)	32.8% (20)	19.7% (12)	23.0% (14)	3.31	61
Software packages	3.2% (2)	11.1% (7)	36.5% (23)	30.2% (19)	19.0% (12)	3.51	63
Electronic interactive resources	5.1% (3)	6.8% (4)	44.1% (26)	23.7% (14)	20.3% (12)	3.47	59
Projectors	7.0% (4)	7.0% (4)	45.6% (26)	17.5% (10)	22.8% (13)	3.42	57
Dedicated ICT areas	10.6% (7)	22.7% (15)	37.9% (25)	15.2% (10)	13.6% (9)	2.98	66
Digital resources	5.4% (3)	5.4% (3)	32.1% (18)	25.0% (14)	32.1% (18)	3.73	56
						<i>answered question</i>	76
						<i>skipped question</i>	10



17. Do you use ICT and e-learning in any of the following tasks?

	1	Response Count
Lesson plans/training plans	100.0% (37)	37
Creating teaching/training resources	100.0% (32)	32
Researching your subject area	100.0% (48)	48
Researching for information generally	100.0% (56)	56
Communication with others	100.0% (65)	65
Marking and feedback	100.0% (21)	21
Retention and achievement	100.0% (15)	15
Managing your own workload	100.0% (49)	49
	<i>answered question</i>	76
	<i>skipped question</i>	10

18. Please complete the following table, indicating a) in which areas of your work you need to liaise through the use of ICT, b) how frequently you use ICT, and c) make comments as to whether you believe you are using it frequently enough

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Ad Hoc	Never	Response Count
Education	31.4% (16)	13.7% (7)	15.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	17.6% (9)	23.5% (12)	51
Offender Managers	9.5% (4)	11.9% (5)	11.9% (5)	4.8% (2)	0.0% (0)	38.1% (16)	23.8% (10)	42
Offender Supervisors	13.0% (6)	19.8% (9)	17.4% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	30.4% (14)	19.6% (9)	48
Industries/workshops	32.7% (16)	14.3% (7)	10.2% (5)	0.0% (0)	2.0% (1)	12.2% (6)	28.8% (14)	49
Other Prison staff	55.2% (32)	29.3% (17)	1.7% (1)	1.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	10.3% (6)	3.4% (2)	58
Line management	62.1% (36)	17.2% (10)	5.2% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	13.8% (8)	3.4% (2)	58
Other Prison Service	15.4% (8)	30.8% (16)	19.2% (10)	3.8% (2)	0.0% (0)	25.0% (13)	11.5% (6)	52



External contacts	16.0% (8)	30.0% (15)	14.0% (7)	2.0% (1)	2.0% (1)	14.0% (7)	22.0% (11)	50
Other establishments	17.3% (9)	15.4% (8)	26.9% (14)	5.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	23.1% (12)	11.5% (6)	52
Other	25.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (2)	25.0% (1)	4
What is your opinion of the frequency of use?								10
<b>answered question</b>								<b>73</b>
<b>skipped question</b>								<b>13</b>

19. To what extent do any of the following prevent effective use of ICT and e-learning?				
	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Response Count
Lack of training opportunities	33.8% (27)	55.0% (44)	11.3% (9)	80
Inadequate ICT and infrastructure	36.8% (28)	46.1% (35)	17.1% (13)	76
Inadequate e-learning resources	33.8% (25)	52.7% (39)	13.5% (10)	74
Security issues	45.2% (33)	32.9% (24)	21.9% (16)	73
Lack of commitment from senior managers	10.3% (7)	41.2% (28)	48.5% (33)	68
Lack of strategy and direction	21.4% (15)	45.7% (32)	32.9% (23)	70
Operational issues eg. increase in population	19.7% (14)	53.5% (36)	26.8% (19)	71
Lack of funding	36.1% (26)	43.1% (31)	20.8% (15)	72
Lack of physical environment eg. room	29.3% (22)	49.3% (37)	21.3% (16)	75
Prison Service approach to internet access	41.9% (31)	44.8% (33)	13.5% (10)	74
<b>answered question</b>				<b>84</b>
<b>skipped question</b>				<b>2</b>





20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following ICT and e-learning statements?						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion	Response Count
It encourages offenders to learn	26.2% (22)	63.1% (53)	6.0% (5)	0.0% (0)	4.8% (4)	84
It helps to reduce re-offending	8.5% (7)	45.1% (37)	20.7% (17)	8.5% (7)	17.1% (14)	82
It can motivate learners	21.4% (18)	70.2% (59)	4.8% (4)	0.0% (0)	3.6% (3)	84
It can engage hard to reach offenders	18.3% (15)	57.3% (47)	9.8% (8)	2.4% (2)	12.2% (10)	82
It is difficult to implement in a prison environment	15.7% (13)	38.6% (32)	31.3% (26)	3.6% (3)	10.8% (9)	83
It helps to encourage offenders to continue learning in the community on release	12.0% (10)	61.4% (51)	12.0% (10)	4.8% (4)	9.6% (8)	83
It enables learners to progress at their own pace	20.5% (17)	71.1% (59)	2.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	6.0% (5)	83
It creates individualised learning programs	20.5% (17)	62.7% (52)	8.4% (7)	0.0% (0)	8.4% (7)	83
It enables learners to learn more flexibly	23.8% (20)	65.5% (55)	4.8% (4)	0.0% (0)	6.0% (5)	84
It is necessary to effectively manage my workload	24.7% (20)	49.4% (40)	11.1% (9)	2.5% (2)	12.3% (10)	81
					<b>answered question</b>	<b>84</b>
					<b>skipped question</b>	<b>2</b>



**21. In your opinion, to what extent would the use of ICT and e-learning lead to any of the following in this prison establishment?**

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Response Count
Greater participation in learning	45.8% (38)	54.2% (45)	0.0% (0)	83
More effective teaching	44.4% (36)	48.1% (39)	7.4% (6)	81
More effective learning	46.9% (38)	49.4% (40)	3.7% (3)	81
Improved retention	26.6% (21)	60.8% (48)	12.7% (10)	79
Improved achievement	28.2% (22)	69.2% (54)	2.6% (2)	78
Help reduce re-offending	13.8% (11)	56.3% (45)	30.0% (24)	80
Improve learner motivation	26.9% (21)	71.8% (56)	1.3% (1)	78
Improve staff satisfaction	42.5% (34)	50.0% (40)	7.5% (8)	80
Save time in lesson/training preparation	41.0% (32)	53.8% (42)	5.1% (4)	78
Save time in assessment	37.7% (29)	54.5% (42)	7.8% (6)	77
Save time in record keeping	47.4% (37)	46.2% (36)	6.4% (5)	78
More efficient management of workload	41.3% (33)	55.0% (44)	3.8% (3)	80
Improve communication	53.8% (43)	41.3% (33)	5.0% (4)	80
			<i>answered question</i>	84
			<i>skipped question</i>	2

**22. Would you be prepared to take part in a follow-up interview as part of this research project?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	43.2%	35
No 	56.8%	46
	<i>If yes, contact details</i>	38
	<i>answered question</i>	81
	<i>skipped question</i>	5








Appendix 11 SurveyMonkey overall analysis offender

E-Learning




1. Which group do you consider best describes your ethnicity?		Response Percent	Response Count
Asian - Bangladeshi		0.0%	0
Asian - Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.2%	1
Asian - Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.2%	1
Any other Asian background	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.2%	1
Black - African	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.2%	1
Black - Caribbean	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.4%	2
Any other Black background	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.2%	1
Chinese		0.0%	0
Mixed Ethnic - Asian/White		0.0%	0
Mixed Ethnic - Black African/White		0.0%	0
Mixed Ethnic - Black Caribbean/White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.4%	2
Any other Mixed ethnic background		0.0%	0
White British	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	80.0%	68
White Irish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3.5%	3
Any other White background	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5.9%	5
Any other Ethnic background		0.0%	0
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>85</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>0</b>







**2. Age**

		Response Percent	Response Count
21 - 30		49.4%	42
31 - 40		17.6%	15
41 - 50		25.9%	22
51 - 60		2.4%	2
Over 60		4.7%	4
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>85</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>0</b>

**3. What is your sentence type?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Determinate		34.1%	29
IPP		32.9%	28
Life		32.9%	28
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>85</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>0</b>

**4. What is your length of sentence?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 4 years		22.6%	19
Between 4 and 10 years		29.8%	25
Between 10 and 15 years		27.4%	23
Over 15 years		20.2%	17
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>84</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>1</b>



5. How long have you been at this prison?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 6 months		23.5%	20
Less than a year		22.4%	19
Between 1 and 2 years		42.4%	36
Between 2 and 5 years		10.6%	9
5 to 10 years		1.2%	1
<b>answered question</b>			<b>85</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>0</b>

6. Which of the following schools have you attended and been excluded from in the past?

	Attended	Excluded	Response Count
None	3.2% (1)	96.8% (30)	31
Junior school	97.5% (78)	21.3% (17)	80
Secondary school	98.7% (78)	40.5% (32)	79
College	100.0% (26)	11.5% (3)	26
University	100.0% (5)	20.0% (1)	5
<b>answered question</b>			<b>85</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>0</b>



7. Do you have an ICT qualification?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes		54.1%	46	
No		45.9%	39	
		If yes, what is it?	44	
			<b>answered question</b>	<b>85</b>
			<b>skipped question</b>	<b>0</b>

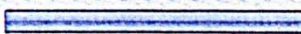

8. How would you rate your skills in using computers, with 1 being excellent and 5 poor?

	Excellent				Poor	Rating Average	Response Count	
1	8.3% (7)	16.7% (14)	48.4% (39)	19.0% (16)	9.5% (8)	3.05	84	
							<b>answered question</b>	<b>84</b>
							<b>skipped question</b>	<b>1</b>

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion	Rating Average	Response Count	
I would like to know more about using computers and e-learning for myself	18.8% (16)	50.6% (43)	10.6% (9)	3.5% (3)	16.5% (14)	2.48	85	
I think that computers can help you to learn more quickly	23.5% (20)	50.6% (43)	12.9% (11)	4.7% (4)	8.2% (7)	2.24	85	
I would like more use of computers and e-learning within a prison environment	25.0% (21)	47.5% (40)	9.5% (8)	3.6% (3)	14.3% (12)	2.35	84	
I do not know much about computers and e-learning	10.7% (9)	35.7% (30)	29.8% (25)	13.1% (11)	10.7% (9)	2.77	84	
							<b>answered question</b>	<b>85</b>
							<b>skipped question</b>	<b>0</b>



10. Have you had any training on computers and e-learning?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		52.4%	43
No		47.6%	39
		If yes, what is it?	29
		<i>answered question</i>	82
		<i>skipped question</i>	3



11. Which of the following would you find interesting to do?			
	1	Response Count	
Learn from a book	100.0% (36)	36	
Learn with a computer	100.0% (53)	53	
Use electronic resources such as CD-Rom and DVD	100.0% (50)	50	
Receive training/teaching using an interactive whiteboard	100.0% (30)	30	
Receive training/teaching in a classroom or workshop	100.0% (46)	46	
Learn by yourself	100.0% (49)	49	
Learn as part of a group	100.0% (42)	42	
Learn on a residential unit/wing	100.0% (28)	28	
		<i>answered question</i>	83
		<i>skipped question</i>	2



12. How would you rate computers and e-learning in enhancing your employment prospects, with 1 being excellent and 5 poor?

	Excellent				Poor	Rating Average	Response Count	
1	23.8% (19)	32.5% (26)	31.3% (25)	2.5% (2)	10.0% (8)	2.43	80	
							<i>answered question</i>	80
							<i>skipped question</i>	5

13. Do you have access to computer facilities?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes		68.4%	54	
No		31.6%	25	
			<i>answered question</i>	79
			<i>skipped question</i>	6

14. How would you rate the quality of computer facilities in the prison, with 1 being excellent and 5 poor?

	Excellent				Poor	Rating Average	Response Count	
1	9.1% (7)	20.8% (16)	49.4% (38)	5.2% (4)	15.6% (12)	2.97	77	
							<i>answered question</i>	77
							<i>skipped question</i>	8



15. What computer equipment and resources do you use now or would like to use in the future?

	Available now	Would like but currently not available	Response Count
Internet for distance learning	9.3% (5)	90.7% (49)	54
IT classrooms	74.1% (43)	25.9% (15)	58
Interactive whiteboards	34.3% (12)	65.7% (23)	35
Data projectors	19.2% (5)	80.8% (21)	26
Electronic learning materials	31.3% (10)	68.8% (22)	32
LearnDirect	34.2% (13)	65.8% (25)	38
Software on CD-Rom/DVD	43.5% (20)	56.5% (26)	46
Digital resources	20.0% (6)	80.0% (24)	30
Computers on residential unit/wing	15.9% (7)	86.4% (38)	44
IT in library	34.1% (14)	65.9% (27)	41
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>73</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>12</b>



16. How would you rate the extent to which the following are available to you, with 1 being excellent and 5 poor?

	Excellent				Poor	Rating Average	Response Count
Computers	15.6% (12)	26.0% (20)	35.1% (27)	7.8% (6)	15.6% (12)	2.82	77
Interactive whiteboards	6.9% (4)	12.1% (7)	25.9% (15)	13.8% (8)	41.4% (24)	3.71	58
Internet	4.5% (3)	1.5% (1)	10.6% (7)	4.5% (3)	78.8% (52)	4.52	66
DVDs	4.8% (3)	6.5% (4)	33.9% (21)	17.7% (11)	37.1% (23)	3.76	62
Software packages	5.0% (3)	8.3% (5)	23.3% (14)	15.0% (9)	48.3% (29)	3.93	60
Electronic interactive resources	3.4% (2)	5.2% (3)	19.0% (11)	19.0% (11)	53.4% (31)	4.14	58
Projectors	3.4% (2)	1.7% (1)	28.8% (17)	11.9% (7)	54.2% (32)	4.12	59
Dedicated computer areas	3.1% (2)	18.8% (12)	34.4% (22)	17.2% (11)	26.6% (17)	3.45	64
Digital resources	3.4% (2)	10.3% (6)	24.1% (14)	15.5% (9)	46.6% (27)	3.91	58
Television	44.3% (31)	28.6% (20)	12.9% (9)	5.7% (4)	8.6% (6)	2.06	70
	<b>answered question</b>						<b>78</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>						<b>7</b>



17. Do you use computers and e-learning in any of the following areas?			
	Yes	No	Response Count
Education	51.4% (38)	48.6% (36)	74
Workshops	34.8% (24)	65.2% (45)	69
Residential unit/wing	6.8% (4)	93.2% (55)	59
Gymnasium	0.0% (0)	100.0% (59)	59
Communication with others	1.7% (1)	98.3% (58)	59
Chapel	0.0% (0)	100.0% (59)	59
Care and separation unit	0.0% (0)	100.0% (59)	59
Healthcare	0.0% (0)	100.0% (59)	59
Visits	0.0% (0)	100.0% (59)	59
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>81</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>4</b>



18. How do you like to learn best?

	Best	Least	Not at all	Response Count
Listening	82.2% (60)	16.4% (12)	1.4% (1)	73
Viewing information	84.5% (60)	12.7% (9)	2.8% (2)	71
Watching demonstrations	84.3% (59)	14.3% (10)	1.4% (1)	70
Sharing	58.8% (40)	32.4% (22)	8.8% (6)	68
Participating in discussion	71.4% (50)	22.9% (16)	5.7% (4)	70
On computer	71.0% (49)	24.6% (17)	4.3% (3)	69
By yourself	73.2% (52)	23.9% (17)	2.8% (2)	71
With others	63.8% (44)	29.0% (20)	7.2% (5)	69
Using technology	85.5% (59)	11.6% (8)	2.9% (2)	69
Small groups	69.1% (47)	27.9% (19)	2.9% (2)	68
One to one tuition	69.4% (50)	23.6% (17)	6.9% (5)	72
			<b>answered question</b>	<b>81</b>
			<b>skipped question</b>	<b>4</b>



19. Would you like to use computers and e-learning to help you in any of the following topics?				
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Response Count
Literacy	51.4% (36)	42.9% (30)	5.7% (4)	70
Numeracy	55.1% (38)	37.7% (26)	7.2% (5)	69
Employment	67.1% (49)	23.3% (17)	9.6% (7)	73
Music	62.7% (42)	26.9% (18)	10.4% (7)	67
Video	57.4% (35)	32.8% (20)	9.8% (6)	61
Distance learning	68.1% (47)	15.9% (11)	15.9% (11)	69
Computer aided design	58.7% (37)	27.0% (17)	14.3% (9)	63
Spreadsheets/databases	58.5% (38)	32.3% (21)	9.2% (6)	65
Word processing	64.1% (41)	25.0% (16)	10.9% (7)	64
Web design	65.2% (43)	22.7% (15)	12.1% (8)	66
Personal study	71.4% (50)	20.0% (14)	8.6% (6)	70
Family learning	38.5% (25)	46.2% (30)	15.4% (10)	65
			<i>answered question</i>	79
			<i>skipped question</i>	6



20. To what extent do any of the following prevent effective use of computers and e-learning?				
	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Response Count
Lack of training opportunities and courses	48.6% (34)	37.1% (26)	14.3% (10)	70
Inadequate computers and infrastructure	37.3% (25)	47.8% (32)	14.9% (10)	67
Inadequate e-learning resources and materials	47.8% (32)	40.3% (27)	11.9% (8)	67
Security issues	62.0% (44)	26.8% (19)	11.3% (8)	71
Lack of commitment from staff in the prison	35.3% (24)	39.7% (27)	25.0% (17)	68
Lack of strategy and direction	36.4% (24)	48.5% (32)	15.2% (10)	66
Prison environment	50.7% (34)	41.8% (28)	7.5% (5)	67
Lack of funding	47.8% (32)	38.8% (26)	13.4% (9)	67
Lack of up-to-date equipment	43.3% (29)	32.8% (22)	23.9% (16)	67
Prison Service approach to internet access	75.0% (54)	20.8% (15)	4.2% (3)	72
			<i>answered question</i>	77
			<i>skipped question</i>	8



21. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following computer and e-learning statements?



	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Response Count
It encourages offenders to learn	56.0% (42)	28.0% (21)	12.0% (9)	4.0% (3)	75
It helps to reduce re-offending	23.0% (17)	36.5% (27)	24.3% (18)	16.2% (12)	74
It can motivate learners	39.2% (29)	45.9% (34)	10.8% (8)	4.1% (3)	74
It can engage hard to reach offenders	28.8% (19)	39.4% (26)	24.2% (16)	7.6% (5)	66
It is difficult to implement in a prison environment	20.9% (14)	35.8% (24)	32.8% (22)	10.4% (7)	67
It helps to encourage offenders to continue learning in the community on release	36.5% (27)	40.5% (30)	17.6% (13)	5.4% (4)	74
It enables learners to progress at their own pace	33.3% (25)	53.3% (40)	9.3% (7)	4.0% (3)	75
It creates individualised learning programs	37.1% (26)	48.6% (34)	11.4% (8)	2.9% (2)	70
It enables learners to learn more flexibly	38.0% (27)	46.5% (33)	9.9% (7)	5.6% (4)	71
It is necessary to effectively manage my workload	30.4% (21)	36.2% (25)	24.6% (17)	8.7% (6)	69
				<b>answered question</b>	<b>78</b>
				<b>skipped question</b>	<b>7</b>



**22. In your opinion, to what extent would the use of computers and e-learning lead to any of the following in this prison establishment?**

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Response Count
Greater participation in learning	52.8% (38)	40.3% (29)	6.9% (5)	72
More effective teaching	46.6% (34)	42.5% (31)	11.0% (8)	73
More effective learning	51.4% (36)	41.4% (29)	7.1% (5)	70
Improved retention	46.2% (30)	46.2% (30)	7.7% (5)	65
Improved achievement	58.8% (40)	33.8% (23)	7.4% (5)	68
Help reduce re-offending	24.6% (17)	50.7% (35)	24.6% (17)	69
Improve learner motivation	49.3% (34)	43.5% (30)	7.2% (5)	89
Improve staff satisfaction	40.3% (27)	47.8% (32)	11.9% (8)	67
Save time in lesson/training preparation	44.1% (30)	39.7% (27)	16.2% (11)	68
Save time in assessment	44.3% (31)	42.9% (30)	12.9% (9)	70
Save time in record keeping	53.7% (36)	37.3% (25)	9.0% (6)	67
More efficient management of workload	52.9% (37)	37.1% (26)	10.0% (7)	70
Improve communication	53.6% (37)	29.0% (20)	17.4% (12)	69
			<i>answered question</i>	76
			<i>skipped question</i>	9

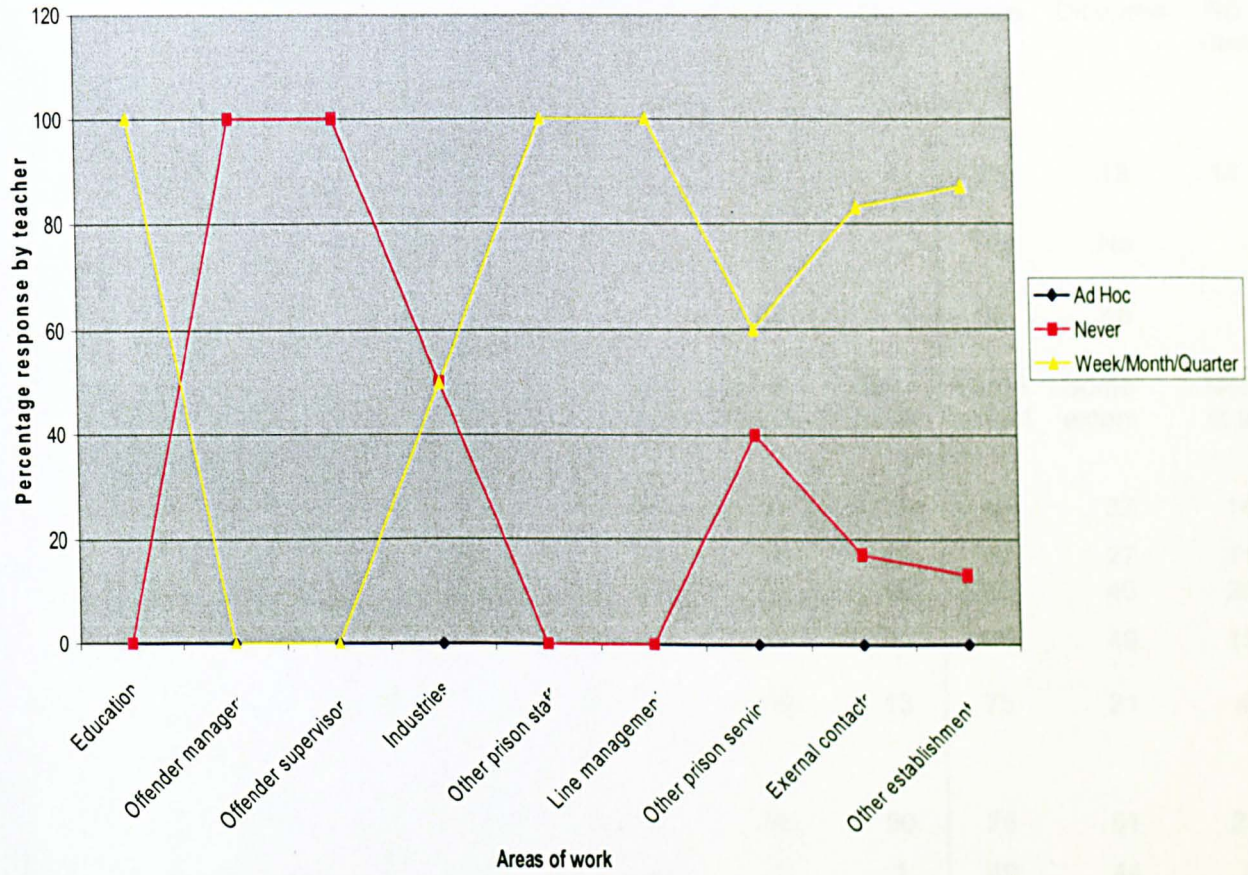
**23. Would you be prepared to take part in a follow-up interview as part of this research project?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	49.4%	38
No 	50.6%	39
	<i>If yes, contact details</i>	38
	<i>answered question</i>	77
	<i>skipped question</i>	8



Appendix 12

Survey data 03/08 - Teacher ICT use and frequency of use



Appendix 13

Comparison of staff and offender responses given to same questions on respective initial surveys

Section 1 question & statement	Confidence in ICT and e-learning: Staff Q9, Offender Q9	Staff Responses %			Offender Responses %		
		Agree	Disagree	No view	Agree	Disagree	No view
Staff S3, Offend S3	Positive and like more ICT and e-learning	92	4	4	73	13	14
	Staff Q10, Offender Q10 Had access to ICT and e-learning training	Yes	No		Yes	No	
		40	60		52	48	
Section 2 question & statement	Access and Use of ICT and e-learning: Staff Q19, Offender Q20	Large extent	Some extent	Not at all	Large extent	Some extent	Not at all
S1	Lack of training opportunities	34	55	11	49	37	14
S4	Security issues	45	33	22	62	27	11
S5	Lack of staff commitment	10	41	49	35	40	25
S6	Lack of strategy & direction	21	46	33	36	49	15
S10	Prison approach to internet	42	45	13	75	21	4
S2	Staff Q21, Offender Q22: Reducing re-offending	14	56	30	25	51	24
S3	Improving learner motivation	27	72	1	49	44	7
S3	Staff Q16, Offender Q16 Extent of internet access for offenders	Good	Average	Poor	Good	Average	Poor
		6	20	73	6	15	79
Section 3 question & statement	Impact of ICT and e-learning: Staff Q20, Offender Q21	Agree	Disagree	No View	Agree	Disagree	
S1	Encourages offenders to learn	89	6	5	84	16	
S2	Helps reduce re-offending	54	29	17	60	40	
S3	Motivates learners	92	5	3	85	15	
S4	Engages hard to reach	76	12	12	68	32	
S5	Difficult to implement - prison	54	35	11	57	33	
S6	Encourages learning - release	73	17	10	77	23	
S7	Progress at own pace	92	2	6	87	13	
S9	Learn more flexibly	89	5	6	84	16	

Appendix 13 shows the responses under the sections confidence, access and impact and identifies the relevant staff/offender question (Q) and some of the statements (S) as per the original questionnaires. For the purposes of this comparison I rounded the percentages from 0.5 upwards and 0.4 downwards to a whole percentage number. I also combined the strongly agree and agree responses together to provide an overall 'agree' response and the same for the 'disagree' response, in order to gain an overall picture for general agreement or disagreement. In addition, I have also combined the five point excellent to poor scales into three ratings of good (being scales one and two combined), average (being scale three) and poor (being scales four and five combined) as the data collected for points two and four were negligible and so combining the ratings for comparison and tabulation purposes appeared appropriate.