

Grundtvig Project : Effective Induction for Prison Teachers

Desk Research: France



Summary of training offered to newly appointed prison teachers

The framework

The Prison Administration Department (PAD, Ministry of Justice) and the School Education Department (Ministry of National Education) jointly offer initial and in-service training to help teachers to adapt to working in prison. This is governed by a convention between the two ministries and national education circulars relating to teaching in prison.(1)

Within this framework, training is provided to newly appointed prison teachers in order to build up teaching skills that correspond to the needs of offenders.

Newly appointed prison teachers undergo three separate weeks training during their first year at work. They may be elementary or secondary school teachers, some of whom may have specialist training.

The first week's course at the end of September takes place at the **National School of Prison Administration** (*ENAP: Ecole Nationale d'Administration Pénitentiaire*). The subsequent two weeks training is delivered at the **National Higher Institute for Training and Research for the Education of Young Disabled Persons and Adapted Teaching** (*INS HEA: Institut national supérieur de formation et de recherche pour l'éducation des jeunes handicapés et les enseignements adaptés*).

The trainee teachers will be working in various types of prison: remand or short-stay prisons, medium security prisons, high-security prisons, youth offenders establishments. These are all located in France and its overseas territories. Teachers are tied to RTUs, Regional Teaching Units (*UPR: Unités Pédagogiques Régionales*) nine in all, corresponding to the nine prison administration districts throughout mainland France, or to the Overseas Mission directly under the jurisdiction of the PAD.

Training at the National School of Prison Administration



(1) The current agreement was signed in 2002, and the circulars in force correspond to 2000-169 and 2002-091

The National School of Prison Administration is a public institution under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, and under the authority of the Prison Administration Department. It is located in Agen in South West France.

The School is the only establishment dispensing induction training for all prison employees, once they have passed the appropriate public examinations. These include prison officers, management, integration and probation staff, technical and administrative staff. It also provides in-service training for the executive corps, staff involved in training, and specialist staff in charge of computer applications, sports activities, etc.

The School is devoted to giving prison staff theoretical and practical professional training before starting work. It also offers back-up and in-service courses enabling staff to seek promotion - via work-oriented training - or to keep them up to date with changes in prison administration policies.

Specific training for newly appointed prison teachers takes place soon after their taking up post at the end of September or early October. The training - with courses both theoretical and practical - is designed to afford teachers knowledge of prisons, their administration and their everyday running, and with the public they will be called on to teach.

The training course does not deal with teaching as such; most trainees have already been working in various contexts. The aim of the course is to familiarise them with their new working environment as quickly and as extensively as possible.

The training, besides presenting the Prison Administration's main directions as seen in its rehabilitation and teaching policies, aims to impart in particular knowledge of the prison as an institution: how it is organized, who runs it, the pressures it undergoes, the public it deals with and the partners it works with.

Teachers in prison play a part in rehabilitation through the teaching they deliver to offenders and through their work at various levels by participating in commissions focussed on rehabilitation.

Training is mainly carried out by trainers from within the School itself, but equally by members of staff working in the prison system. The head of teaching at the PAD is present at these training courses, participating in the start-up session, outlining the framework for teaching in prison, the key issues and defining the appropriate approach involved in working as a teacher in prison.

A specific session run by two Regional Teaching Units managers enables debate on vital issues, and through ensuing open discussion, leads to a review of possible courses of action. The INS HEA coordinator is present during the week, ensuring continuity and with a view to presenting the future two weeks training in Suresnes.

The entire training course in Agen totals approximately 24 hours and is organized in eight half-day slots.

Contents of the course

The French Prison Administration's main directions regarding integration and teaching

PAD regulations and its stance on teaching and the fight against illiteracy, underline the need for awareness on this front in order to:

- favour setting up, developing and adapting programmes for offenders;
- identify objectives and issues linked to policies in these areas and the programmes they engender;
- appreciate the range of skills required by those working in this field;
- determine which working approaches are to be developed in relation to offenders' needs, and in close cooperation with policy-makers.

The History of Prisons

The aim here is to enable trainees to get their bearings in a professional environment by identifying the main stages in the history of prisons, the history of the school itself, and by assessing to what extent the school and the rights it exercises have been influenced by major trends in doctrine.

The various prison establishments and imprisonment systems

Imprisonment systems

- *Maison d'Arrêt (MA)*: **Short-stay prison**
- *Centre de Détention (CD)*: **Medium security prison**
- *Maison Centrale (MC)*: **High-security prison**
- *Centre des Jeunes Détenus (CJD)*: **Centre for Young Offenders**
- *Etablissement pour mineurs (EPM)*: **Youth Offenders Establishment**

Penal Centres

- with open prison conditions
- for reduced sentences
- procedures for channelling and assigning offenders

Based on knowledge of the above points, trainees at the end of this course are required to be able to:

- name the various prison establishments;
- understand the different prison systems that apply in each institution;
- know how offenders are channelled and assigned;
- identify categories of offenders in relation to the various establishments.

Prison officers: roles and responsibilities

By the end of the course, trainees are able to better orient themselves professionally thanks to their knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of prison officers. This in turn enables them to understand, anticipate and to rise above the constraints that prison imposes thanks to a sound awareness of:

- the chief tasks carried out by prison officers;
- the prison officers' standard work schedule and the key moments throughout a day in prison (timetables);
- the major constraints a prison environment engenders.

Role and mission of the Probation and Integration Counsellors (PICs)

The aim is to enable trainees to get their bearings professionally by familiarizing themselves with the roles and responsibilities of these members of staff. This includes knowledge of the French Prison Administration's lines on social and integration policy, and an understanding of those issues that probation and integration counsellors encounter.

Socio-psychological approach to offenders



This part of the course aims to acquaint trainees with the wide range of pathologies and personality disorders, types of behaviour and the repercussions of the sudden entry into prison in its many guises, that they will be facing. This training is necessary in order for them to identify the outward signs and chief characteristics of these pathologies and to enable them to adopt the appropriate interpersonal and professional stance required of teachers. Awareness of these basic elements in psychology also enables them

to distinguish better to what extent offenders' behaviour is related to the prison environment they find themselves in.

The offender's term in prison

The objectives of this aspect of the course are:

- a better understanding of the offender's overall term in prison;
- an appreciation of the various stages it entails;
- an understanding of how the offenders' behaviour is affected by the term in prison and the major turning points in that process: custody, sentencing, imprisonment, life in prison.

Management of juveniles in prison

The course deals with issues relating to offenders under 18 and their specific management within the Prison Administration system and the French Ministry of Justice's guidelines regarding the crime records and imprisonment of this category of offenders. It aims to highlight how juveniles are managed, in particular getting to know the members of the multidisciplinary team that work in juvenile wings. The course content also includes a presentation of the Youth Offenders Establishments project (EPM) and covers the legal and statutory framework for juvenile crime, the work of the Juvenile Legal Protection body (PJJ) and the latter's partnership with the French Prison Administration.

The European Prison Rules (EPR)

This is a short informative module set up in 2009 with an aim to pointing out the effect of the European Prison Rules on prison institutions and in particular on induction units. It also draws attention to the repercussions of these rules on teaching and in particular on the identification of illiteracy among offenders.

Training at INS HEA



The INS HEA is a higher education establishment under the twofold supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of National Education. It has close working ties with several scientific, cultural and professional institutions.

Located in Suresnes, on the outskirts of Paris, the INS HEA specialises in:

- training and research in the field of learning handicaps;
- schooling of children and teenagers with special needs due to serious learning difficulties;
- education and training of children, teenagers and adults with special learning needs due to disability or serious illness;
- teaching of persons under a court order, notably under 18-year-olds, and young offenders.

The trainees are divided into two groups:

Group A : teachers who will for the most part be working with juveniles - with one week's training in November and a second in February

Group B : teachers who for the most part be working with adults - with one week's training in December and a second in March.

Course Content

Some course content is common to both groups; while some content is specific to Group A or Group B.

A review is carried out after each of the initial sessions, to evaluate the training given and to work in close collaboration with the trainees, and along the lines of a framework put forward by the institution, to determine the content of the ensuing session.

Each week's training totals approximately 27 hours and is organized in eight half-day slots.

Learning Management System

A Learning Management System (LMS) run by the INS HEA, and designed specifically by the institute for this course, is at the trainees' disposal.

Teachers mostly work very much on their own in their prisons, and there is rarely more than one teacher from any one prison attending a training session. Opportunities for meeting up, outside of these sessions, are few and far between, except for work-oriented and in-service training organised by the Regional Teaching Units. Teachers in

prison rarely attend courses offered to teachers in general, notably those courses dealing with learners with learning difficulties. The LMS is therefore of great importance in this regard.

On an administrative level, the LMS offers easy management of the trainees, the training courses and course content, and enables direct communication with the trainees themselves. All this is carried out by the training coordinator.

The LMS is presented to trainees during their first week at the National School of Prison Administration.

In the **Resources** area of the LMS, trainees can access and search the training session database.

In the **Communications** area, trainees have an email account and mailing list. A collaborative area enables them to upload documents (resources, personal work). A forum is available, moderated by the training coordinator, with topics related to the main themes of the course.

The purpose of the LMS is:

- to offer resources for preparing delivery of talks, getting background material for the talks and working on summaries of them;
- to inform trainees (training schedules, requests for input during training sessions, current affairs watch)
- to enable two-way communication (document sharing, answers to work-related queries)

The LMS is also available, on request, to all teachers working in prison and to regional managers.

Resources

A librarian in the INS HEA resource centre is specialized in the field of prisons, the subject itself making up a specific part of the library collection. He is involved in drawing up the bibliography the trainees are offered and runs an open workshop in the resource centre during the first week at the INS HEA. The trainees can borrow works during their stay at the institute and book them in advance via the online database. A Netvibes site is being set up and will be operational for the coming sessions.

Course Speakers

Lectures are given by INS HEA trainers, by the Head or Assistant Head of education at the PAD and by visiting speakers, such as university professors and lecturers, professionals, and teachers working in prison.

Content common to both groups (juveniles and adults)

Education policy in prison

The aim is to clarify:

- the principles governing schooling in prison, the partnership and working relationship with the prison services, the integration and probation services, the outside professional bodies offering offenders employment in prison (for work

experience), the Juvenile Legal Protection body (PJJ) working in the juvenile wings;

- the mission associated with teaching in prison underlining what the priorities are within that mission;
- the issue of schooling whereby offenders are offered:
 - in the short term, a way out of their state of subordination caused by illiteracy;
 - in the medium term, an opportunity to engage effectively in a process of integration and return to society via training and certification;
 - in the long term, the means to equip themselves, culturally, socially, for their future lives.

Criminal Psychology



The speaker, who is both a psychologist working in the judicial field and a university professor, discusses with the trainees the issues related to working with offenders and the relationships teachers can build up with them. The first lecture takes the form of an overview, of a conceptual nature, highlighting the difficulties of working face-to-face with offenders. This may be tied into a second session during the second week in training at INS HEA, which aims to pool thinking around situations put forward by the trainees themselves.

Open debate on work context

These sessions enable trainees to put forward their personal experience of starting work, to see it objectively by comparing it with that of other trainees, to consider opposing points of view and to broaden their views and feelings. Based on these elements, the overall aim is to determine a professional stance and to lay the foundations of work-related skills.

The issue of late learning

One of the most common issues surrounding learners in prison, be they juvenile or adult, is that of late learning. Course content on this subject aims to help trainees to take stock of the differences between their previous experience (as specialist teachers for the most part) and their new area of practice.

Several theoretical models are presented, drawn from various approaches to teaching, teaching programmes and educational tools, all directed towards adult audiences lacking basic skills and suffering from cognitive dysfunction (or brain fog). These include:

- the model based on introspection, underlying the debriefing interview according to Vermersch, 1994;
- the model based on Piaget's theory, underlying the programme of Logical Reasoning Workshops (ARL: ateliers de raisonnement logique);
- the model based on mediation, underlying the Intellectual Enrichment Programme, IEP (Feuerstein, R), contributing to the definition of the teacher/mediator approach.

Presentation of reference material published by the PAD

- **EforE CD-ROM** (*Évaluer, Former, Remédier*):
Assess, Train, Remedy, contents and usage (available in every prison).
- **The MACeM** (*Module d'activation des compétences en mathématiques*):
Math Skills Activation Module.
- **Langagiciels program**
Creation of computer exercises in mathematics and language.
During the first week, the Langagiciels program is presented to all trainees. Trainees can go beyond this if they wish by implementing it in specific learning situations: in mathematics as well as in French. Through scenarios constructed from trainer-led sequences, they can test the program and its relevance to learning. This enables them to carry over use of the program into everyday situations in prison.
- **Reading Assessment for the Identification of Illiteracy** (*LPP: Lecture pour les Populations Pénales*, a test in six parts designed in 1995 by Professor Alain Bentolila and Jean-Philippe Rivière, Paris 5 University).

Computers in Custody

The course trainer, himself a teacher in prison, has developed, for the PAD, educational software fulfilling two aims:

- familiarizing trainees with the Tutoweb tool (2), designed for gaining the internet skills required to pass the computer skills certificate (B2i); in the absence of an internet connection in prison, the Tutoweb simulates an internet network environment;
- familiarizing trainees with open source programs chosen for their teaching relevance.

Writing workshops (3-hour introductory or 6-hour advanced courses)

The course offers the trainee the opportunity, on the one hand, to experiment with various modes of writing with differing results, and on the other, to consider the practical applications of such approaches in a prison context.

Content for specific audiences: teaching juveniles

Main areas of support in dealing with juveniles

The aim of this session is to enable trainees to construct support for teaching, with particular regard to recalcitrant juveniles. Conditions for this vary whatever the location - be it Youth Offenders Establishments or juvenile wings - according to the profile of the juveniles they host, the policies in force within prisons, and the way school is perceived in them.

The aim of the course is to determine how teaching can be efficiently organized. The reception and individual monitoring of juveniles along with the working partnership established with the PAD and the Juvenile Legal Protection body, are the linchpins in the education of this audience. Trainees are encouraged to debate openly on possible courses of action and relevant working attitudes.

(2) software developed for the PAD

Adolescent violence

Michel Botbol, a psychiatrist and advisor to the Central Directorate of the Juvenile Legal Protection body, lectures on the concept of violence, the problems attached to adolescence and adolescent behaviour, the impact of the law and its limits.

Reading comprehension

Juvenile learners are for the most part at ease in their reading skills. They do, however, have limited understanding of what they read. Certain elements enabling them to improve their understanding are dealt with in this course - such as inference and anaphora, treatment of the implicit, controlling the act of reading, - with a view to improving self-assessment and self-remediation.

Content for specific audiences: teaching adults

Management of low-skilled learners

The aim of the course is to determine the appropriate organisation and management of low-skilled learners. This initially means adjusting any such organization according to where and who the learners are, and then by identifying the various training courses on offer: Certificate of General Education, Basic Skills training, and French as a Foreign Language. (The latter solution proves complex, when dealing with a range of learners from highly qualified foreigners to inmates who are practically illiterate, reluctant to give their country of origin and having had little or no schooling in the country in question.)

The first issue on the agenda is to identify the three audiences according to the courses on offer. The second is dealing with the practical organization of teaching, such as the choices and challenges involved in making up groups with similar or differing levels of competence. It also entails determining suitable teaching methods and implementing effective learning contexts, with regard to both assessment and remediation.

The greater the importance trainees attach to this course the more they find themselves in a position to transfer what they have learnt, into the workplace.

Use of the Training Record Booklet

This Training Record Booklet system enables teachers to carry out a dynamic assessment of their learners. The concept of the system stems from an awareness of the need to formally recognize offenders' skills and experience of all types - intellectual, professional, social, cultural - in order to facilitate their future reintegration. It also responds to the findings that only 10% of offenders in schooling manage to pass an exam.

On average, the booklet system is in operation for one third of all adults in schooling. These are voluntary learners, openly committed to studying, and for a period of more than one month. It is worth noting that the booklet system has grown in use with audiences in the 5 and 5a (3) category and in cross-sectional actions.

National averages show 98% of juveniles in schooling participating in the Training Record Booklet system.

3 See Notes on following page

NOTES

INTERNATIONAL LEVELS OF EDUCATION

The International Standard Classification of Education 1997 (ISCED–97, UNESCO, 2006 [1997], 1999; OECD, 1999), is a multidimensional multi-purpose classification for harmonising national educational programmes into a cross-national framework for levels and fields of education.

ISCED level 0

Pre-primary education (early childhood education)

ISCED level 1

Primary education (usually the first six years of formal schooling)

ISCED level 2

Lower secondary education (usually coincides with the end of full-time compulsory schooling after around nine years of schooling)

ISCED level 3

Upper secondary education (where university entrance certificates and vocational qualifications which require completion of level 2 are awarded)

ISCED level 4

Post-secondary non-tertiary education (programmes that straddle the boundary between level 3 and 5, e.g. university entrance certificates for adults or non-tertiary vocational education after general upper secondary)

ISCED level 5

First stage of tertiary education (all university and vocational college education exclusive of PhD/doctorate and equivalent)

ISCED level 6

Second stage of tertiary education (leading to an advanced research qualification, i. e. PhD/doctorate and equivalent)