

Exploring the affective relations of prison
education space in England: Disentangling teacher
experience through postqualitative inquiry.

By Lucy Harding

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Abstract

Prison education stands at a critical juncture in England, caught between its recognised importance for rehabilitation and the realities of a system in crisis (Mahmood, 2025). Multiple reports emphasise both the vital role of prison education and its urgent need for reform (Coates, 2016; Ministry of Justice, 2021; Taylor, 2023). Research has documented prisoner-learner experiences, yet the voices of prison educators, those tasked with delivering education in these complex circumstances, have been systematically overlooked. This study addresses this critical gap by exploring the experiences of prison educators working in male institutions in England, considering how they navigate the emotional and relational complexities of teaching within prison environments.

The multiplicitous nature of this topic demands a multifaceted approach which moves beyond Cartesian ways of knowing and doing (Clough and Halley, 2007), where the body and mind are seen as separate and epistemology, ontology, and methodology as discreet. Therefore, the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari (1988), feminist (new) materialisms and postqualitative inquiry (St. Pierre, 2014) have been adopted to embrace the 'ethico-onto-epistemology' (Barad, 2007) of prison education spaces and teacher experiences. The research traverses several fields, including criminology, carceral geography, philosophy, art, and textiles, to explore the entanglement of my experiences with that of the participants working in prison education settings.

The concept of creativity is central to the research undertaking, as the inquiry is intertwined with arts-based practices to explore the phenomena differently. The prison educators participated in walking intra-views (after Barad's intra-action, 2007); these were conducted in the prison space, acknowledging more-than-human agents. Participants then took part in a 'visual matrix' (Froggett, Manley and Roy, 2015) group-based method, which utilised images and sounds from the walking intra-views as stimuli. Participants shared ideas about their experiences, eliciting visceral responses and visual 'imaginaries' (images in our mind) arising from the method. The analysis of these and further one-to-one interviews incorporated stitch and weaving to diffract with the data.

The inquiry provides unique insights into prison educator experiences; this new understanding can influence education, training and praxis for teachers working in complex or traumatic spaces. By bridging theory and practice, this research contributes to the literature by offering alternative approaches to explore the experiences of complex educational settings.

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List of abbreviations

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
CSU	Care and Separation Unit
EJP	Education Justice Project
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
HMPPS	His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service
IR	Intelligence Report
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NRC	National Research Committee

PES	Prison Education Service
PET	Prison Education Trust
PSD	Personal and Social Development
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
PLA	Prisoner Learner Alliance
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SPEAR	Spontaneous Protection Enabling Accelerated Response
TLA	Teaching and Learning Assistant
UCU	University and College Union
VP	Vulnerable Prisoner

Chapter 1: Becoming-thesis

1.1. Introduction

Within this study, I investigate prison educators' experiences within the space and place of prisons, specifically focusing on affectivities. The term 'affect' is used throughout this thesis to represent the vibrancy and intensity of experiences (further explained in chapter 4), differing from emotion and feeling (Massumi, 1995).

Despite the growing body of research on prison education, there exists a significant gap in understanding how prison educators experience and navigate the complex affective dimensions of carceral spaces. While prisoner perspectives have been extensively documented, the lived experiences of those who teach within prison walls remain largely unexplored. Liebling (1999) highlights, in relation to prison staff more broadly, that there exists a perception that 'outsiders only care about prisoners' (p. 155), leaving staff voices marginalised in research. This highlights the importance of specifically investigating prison educators' experiences, as they navigate complex institutional dynamics.

This thesis contends that prison educators' experiences are profoundly shaped by the affective forces circulating within carceral environments, impacting their professional identities and efficacy. By attending to these affective dimensions through transdisciplinary frameworks, I can develop more nuanced understandings of prison education that account for its embodied, material, and relational complexities.

This research makes a distinctive contribution by applying innovative theoretical and methodological approaches, drawn from postqualitative inquiry, feminist new materialism, affect theory, and Deleuzoguattarian philosophy, to the understudied domain of prison educators' experiences. It introduces affective considerations into discourses around prison education policy and practice, offering new conceptual tools for understanding the entanglements of human and more-than-human forces within carceral educational settings.

In this inquiry, prison teachers revealed the complexities of their experiences through diverse methodological approaches tailored to foreground affects. Walking intra-views, a visual matrix, one-to-one interviews, and personal memos collectively enabled the intricate entanglements of various

knots (challenges in practice) to come to the surface of the inquiry. The research approach incorporates creative elements alongside diffraction with Deleuzoguattarian concepts and new materialist philosophies of Barad and Haraway, among other affect-oriented theoretical frameworks, to forge new understandings. Methodological and conceptual foundations are elaborated in chapter 6.

My background in textiles shapes this inquiry's approach. Through dialogue enriched with imagery, I visualise and materialise thought processes both for my research journey and for the reader, weaving together disparate entities within this conceptual fold. The writing embodies a textured layering of affects, enmeshed throughout, like the complex knots on an embroidery's reverse side or the irreversible entanglements of felted fibres. I represent these theoretical impasses through textile pieces created during moments of creative and theoretical tension.

Rather than pursuing definitive answers, I invite readers to experience these conceptual knots alongside me, where our becomings diffract through our shared reading and entanglement, our becoming-together. These theoretical constructs receive fuller elaboration in chapter 4.

1.2. Inquiry Questions

My lived and witnessed realities have guided me toward exploring how educators navigate the affective prison environment, how postqualitative approaches create opportunities to understand these experiences, and how we might better prepare teachers for the complex emotional terrain they might encounter. The following questions will guide this inquiry:

1. What are the experiences of prison educators in relation to the prison environment, particularly in terms of affect?
2. How can postqualitative inquiry enable different understanding of prison educator experience?
3. How do we create a model of praxis that effectively supports and prepares teachers entering the prison environment?

The structure of the thesis will follow these research questions and the methodological approaches that underpin the gathering of data. In subsequent chapters, I will share the context of prison education to aid clarity of experience. I will then foreground my use of postqualitative inquiry to guide readers through the research and thesis approach. I will explain my theoretical framework and

differential textures, exploring these concepts further in the context of chosen methodologies, rationalising method choices, and explaining the processes undertaken.

In the analysis, I examine the outcomes of the walking intra-views which enable the affects of space and place to be noticed within the prison. Next, I analyse the visual matrix contributions and follow-up interviews with prison educators. I also incorporate my personal memos and textile work as part of this tapestry. After the analysis, readers will find two liminal chapters (XX & XY) which address my personal entanglements and are referenced throughout the thesis. They are positioned as liminal because they explore aspects that exist in the periphery of the core research yet remain enmeshed within it.

All elements will be synthesised in the 'Entanglements and Knots' discussion chapter 12, leading to unfoldings and recommendations in the conclusion.



[Link to Entanglement Video](#)

The QR code and link above lead to a video of me creating one of the textile weaves that have been created during this inquiry. The video captures the intentional entanglement of human and threads, showing how separate strands transform into a complex, layered structure. Weaving, stitching and textiles function as both methodology and metaphor in this thesis (further explained in Chapter 5). These practices materialise the entanglements within prison education, where elements influence each other much like the strands of this weave. This approach appreciates complexity rather than simplifying it, creating a textured representation that leads to the disentanglement of threads in Chapter 12.

1.3. Positionality

The field of criminology has evolved in its approach to researcher positioning over the last 15 years, developing more sophisticated understandings that move beyond binary conceptualisations (Jewkes, 2014, p. 388). These binary perceptions may have previously been inherent because the 'insider' or 'outsider' boundaries in the prison are exemplified by physical walls and gates. However, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argue the insider/outsider dichotomy is 'overly simplistic' (p. 60); researchers should be aware of their multiplicity being either both or one or the other at different times.

My position was implicated by my identity as an education manager but also multiple other identities as education activist, researcher, working-class feminist, policy implementor and mother, thus defying binary categorisation. My position was never static and was always in becoming (Østern *et al.*, 2021). I therefore propose that my position exists within a wider assemblage, balancing somewhere in the middle (Nordstrom, 2013) of these power relations.

The most significant ethical concern in relation to my positionality was due to my role as the participants' manager in the prison. The methods (as outlined further in Chapters 6 and 7) were specifically selected to mitigate this power imbalance. My approach to inclusive leadership in that management role, meant that my hierarchical position was somewhat lessened as I saw my identity as a teacher foremost, secondary to my leadership position. However, I was aware and reflexive of the impact this position may have had on both the participants' voluntary choice to partake in the research and the information they shared with me. My position in relation to methods and participant interaction is a reflexive and ongoing consideration, further navigated and discussed in Chapters 4, 6, 7, 11, XX and XY.

My positional power shifted during the research, as I resigned as a prison education manager, leaving the post one year into the inquiry, after phase one of the walking intra-views were completed. I therefore began my inquiry as a relative 'insider' but shifted to 'outsider' status as I left prison education, hence often navigating the inquiry via a liminal, middle position. Echoing Behan's (2014) recognition of how prior positioning can impact research access, my role as education manager at the start of the research proved instrumental in navigating the complex web of institutional gatekeepers that characterise prison environments, particularly in securing the necessary approvals for HMPPS NRC authorisation (See [Appendix 6](#)). This initial insider status facilitated what might otherwise have been a more challenging access negotiation process.

My liminal position as both caring teacher and prison education manager enabled effective advocacy for student needs while working within institutional constraints. This middle ground represented not a compromise but a strategic advantage within the assemblage. My relationship to prisoners and teachers was constantly shifting, sometimes as teacher, friend, mother, or researcher. While I may have identified primarily as a teacher during the research, the teacher-participants likely perceived these power dynamics differently.

Many prison employees and researchers describe a 'rite of passage', acknowledging newcomers' outsider status (Lunn, McNeil and Wermers, 2018, p. 68). I had to navigate this field initially as a 'prison tourist' before gaining legitimacy within the micro-community of prison teachers (discussed in Chapter 11). Furthermore, there is obvious tension from the perspective of the prisoner, that neither I, nor the teachers, can ever fully understand the affective impact of prison space as we have the freedom to leave. The recognition and constant flux of my position in the research will be under scrutiny and re-evaluation throughout my personal notes (Chapter 11) and diffractive practice (diffraction further explained in Chapter 5).

A key challenge of postqualitative inquiry (further explained in Chapter 3) is both accepting and questioning subjectivity. I must consider my positionality and the epistemic agency of the teacher-participants; particularly those who may be marginalised. Discomfort often emerges 'from a constellation of privilege' (Chadwick, 2021, p. 559); rather than avoiding this discomfort I attempted to confront it. Acknowledging power imbalances and recognising these feelings as 'resources' or 'affective textures' (Harding, 2023, p. 15) became essential to the research process. My departure from the managerial role during the inquiry shifted relational dynamics, reducing institutional authority while introducing a new dimension of transience and a furthering of my insider-outsider position. This transition itself became an analytical lens, highlighting how entanglements can be reconfigured (entanglements further explained in Chapter 4).

Though my methodology is not centred on auto-ethnography, I cannot ignore how my experiences in prison education influence this research (as further discussed in the methods Chapter 7 and evidenced in my personal memos in Chapter 11). Taguchi (2012) argues that researchers cannot maintain objectivity because they are inherently part of the spaces they study, affecting and being affected by them. She suggests that researchers must recognise that all humans and non-humans in that space become entangled participants, contributing to its complexities. Barad, as cited in Murriss (2022), explains that entanglements are not just intertwined entities but are so interconnected that

they lose their separate identities and form a single knot (further explained in Chapter 4). This perspective makes it impossible for me to separate myself from the research.

Ugelvik (in Crewe *et al.*, 2014) notes the professional responsibility to be transparent about the complexities as we 'traverse the threads of the prison society web' (p. 347). Consequently, I utilise my experiences, feelings and affectivities, alongside those of the participants. However, entanglements can be simultaneously positive and negative, productive and destructive; therefore, I must remain self-aware and avoid letting my entanglements result in self-absorption (Jewkes, 2014).

1.4. Context of prison education experiences.

This inquiry centres on the experiences of teachers in the prison in which I worked (referred to as Prison A). It is a male prison, classed as a category B or 'Cat B', which indicates the severity of the crimes (See further explanation in [Appendix 1](#)). There are over 1100 male prisoners in the facility; aged 19 and older. It is a prison that is used for remand (those not yet sentenced), and so the turnover, colloquially known as the 'churn', is high, with some prisoners there for only weeks, awaiting sentencing.

Prison A is a relatively new facility; it features clean and well-maintained spaces with outdoor 'green' space, although access to this is rigorously controlled. The education 'College' is at the centre of the prison estate. There are seven wings (separate accommodation buildings) surrounding this. Each wing has a different purpose, with focused support for diverse needs e.g., for men who are recovering from alcohol or drug dependency or for men who are getting ready for release. The wings are on the perimeter of the estate, with cell windows looking into the central space that has two football pitches. These are intersected by pathways used for the movement of prisoners, overlooked by the prisoner cells. Staff using the pathways often face heckling, providing a challenging environment particularly for women. It is here that I undertook the walking element of the research (walking method is further explained in Chapter 7).

The aerial image of the prison was a source of inspiration both for me as part of the creative and diffractive processes involved in the inquiry, and for the participants in the visual matrix (this is a group-based associative method utilised in phase two of the inquiry, further explained in Chapter 7).

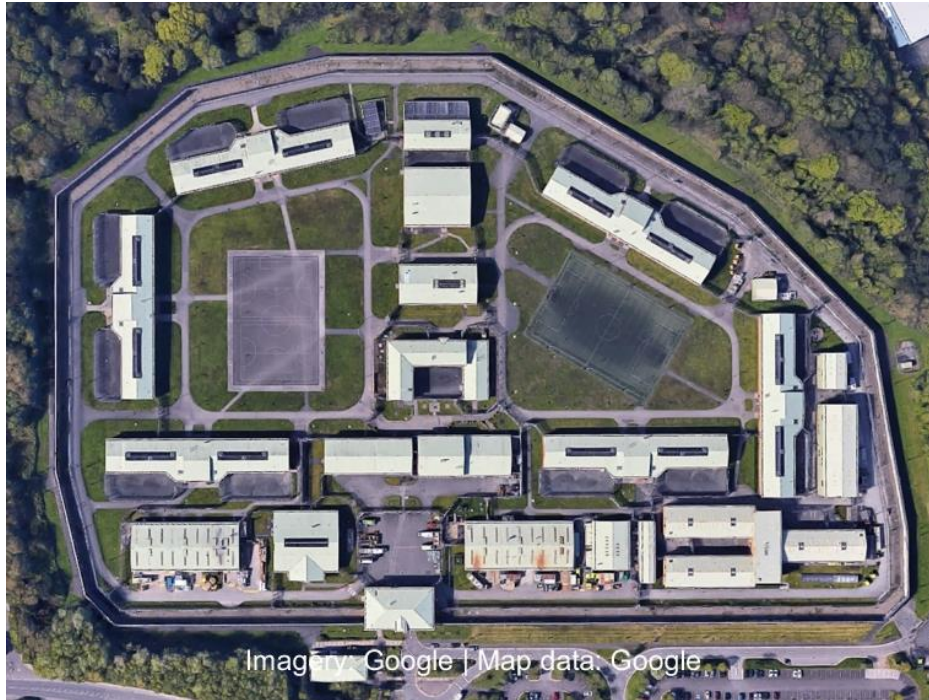


Figure 1: Prison A. Google Maps, 2023.

1.4.1. Competing priorities of ‘purposeful activity’ in education.

Prisoners in England must engage in twenty-four hours of weekly ‘purposeful activity’ through work or education, except those on remand who may participate voluntarily. Work options include cleaning roles or factory positions performing repetitive tasks such as filling sandbags or sorting recycling. Under the neoliberal prison model, prisoners receive payment for either work (typically £3 a day) or education (£2 a day). This pay disparity, which organisations like the Prisoner Learning Alliance seek to reform (Goodwin, 2022), often leads prisoners to choose work over education. Additional factors influencing this choice may include negative prior educational experiences (further discussed in Chapters 2 and XY) and the requirement for additional support due to learning difficulties, and or disabilities.

Institutional policy stipulates that prisoners should not be eligible for ‘employment’ unless they have evidence of maths and English qualifications at a minimum level one. Prisoners new to prison may have no formal qualifications and so will need to attend education to achieve these before being

eligible for work. Some prisoners may have gained these qualifications outside of prison but may not have evidential certificates and so will be sent to education against their preference. Many prison 'returners' will have gained qualifications during previous sentences, but the systems are not robust enough to record this detail from prison to prison, and so they will be made to undertake the same qualifications repeatedly.

This requirement to attend education creates tensions, not only among prisoners but also between education staff and prison officers. Officers frequently assign prisoners to work roles despite their lack of level one qualifications, diverting potential learners from educational programs. This situation was further complicated at Prison A by prisoners' inability to participate in both education and work on a part-time basis, which I was told was due to logistical constraints. The conflict between prison staff and education staff likely stems from the metric-centred approach to prison monitoring, where both sides compete for the same prisoners to fulfil their respective 'purposeful activity' statistics collected by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS).

Despite these systemic challenges, some prisoners positively sought educational opportunities, seeing it as a valued luxury (Wilson, 2004); a chance to obtain qualifications, improve their chances of employment and to gain support that they had perhaps not received in previous education. Once they had completed level one English and maths, prisoners could apply to study a range of different subjects at level two (GCSE equivalent) and some up to level three (A-level equivalent) although this was rare. The subject range varies across the different prisons but typically would include art, computing, business studies and vocational subjects such as hairdressing, welding, and bricklaying. The Prisoners' Education Trust and the Open University also enable access to a much wider array of qualifications that prisoner-learners can apply to undertake via distance learning, however, these opportunities were often hindered by sentence length and funding restrictions.

As education manager, I was tasked with engaging prisoners in full-time education to meet specific monthly enrolment targets. However, attendance competed with financially attractive work options, remanded prisoners not mandated to attend, and regular disruptions from appointments, lockdowns and staffing shortages. This tension contributed to my resignation; I had entered the role aspiring to develop meaningful learning opportunities and foster an education-valuing culture, but found my professional energy consumed by administrative pressures and statistical obligations. My days became dominated by data collection and avoiding financial penalties, overshadowing the transformational aspects that had drawn me to education. Despite implementing various initiatives

and building relationships with both prisoners and staff, I could not address the fundamental structural issues undermining educational progress (further discussed in Chapter 11: Personal Memos).

1.4.2. Teaching staff at Prison A

For teachers, this backdrop of structural complexity, security priorities, targets and contracts created tension-filled affective atmospheres (as highlighted in later chapters). The uncertain attendance combined with prisoners' varied motivations created a challenging environment. During the inquiry, prison regimes were further constrained by Covid-19 protocols that severely restricted prisoners' time outside cells. Despite national easing of restrictions on the 'outside', these protocols persisted well into 2022, due to officer shortages and rising prison populations.

Security in the education space of Prison A was maintained by two prison officers who stayed in the foyer of the college building. Most classes ran with eight to twelve prisoner-learners in a class. The classroom doors were normally closed to minimise noise and disruption, but teachers carried radios equipped with panic buttons which would alert officers if required. Prisoners would often use bathroom breaks as an excuse to leave the classroom, the toilet for prisoners was therefore a large room with clear windows that faced out into the education building corridor so that prison officers could monitor their activities (teachers also therefore were able to see into the men's toilet and education managers had to check the toilets each day for signs of illicit activities, such as exchange of drugs). Incidents of violence in the educational setting were rare, but the threat of violence was constant (further discussed in later chapters). All 'non-operational' prison staff (including teachers) undertook a week-long training programme which covered security awareness, self-defence training called SPEAR (Spontaneous Protection Enabling Accelerated Response), key handling and counter-corruption awareness, before they could work in the prison.

There were over thirty teachers working at Prison A, most were full-time and had worked there from one year to twenty-five years. Teachers were required to have, or be working towards a level three teaching qualification, with many holding higher degrees and postgraduate teaching certificates. The recruitment of teaching staff in prisons was made very difficult due to the security measures in place; after successful interviews, the vetting process to approve access for new staff could typically take anything from three to six months. Sickness and retention of teaching staff was also a major challenge in prison A and continues to be a challenge nationally (as further discussed in Chapter 2).

Prison educators have endured years of fluctuating and precarious contracts, organisational restructuring, and policy reforms (further outlined in Chapter 2). The prison regime does not have the traditional school holiday breaks, with a continuous all-year teaching schedule over the usual holiday periods. This is also compounded by a salary deficit of more than £5000 per annum compared to counterparts in further education and an even greater gap with mainstream secondary education (Bayliss and Hughes in Bennett, Crewe and Wahidin, 2008); thus, they are the lowest paid teachers in the education sector. Lacking pedagogical guidance for prison settings, educators struggle to navigate prison dynamics and support learners with complex difficulties such as prior trauma, negative educational experiences, self-harm, and mental health concerns. Despite these obstacles, many prison educators remain committed to their roles, driven by a belief in the transformative potential of education within this restrictive environment.

1.4.3. The Regime

Teaching in prison A starts at 8 a.m. with prisoners escorted from the wings to the college via the pathways across the yards and pitches; this is signalled by increased radio noise to indicate movement, as well as the sound of the men chatting and shouting as they walk across the estate. Classes often start late due to various security issues and staff shortages. Sessions last three hours at a time. When I initially started at the prison, this did not include a break, however this was quickly introduced by me as manager. A large proportion of prisoners have ADHD (in line with 25% of prisoners as reported in Takeda UK Ltd, 2021), the breaks were therefore a necessity to ensure learner and staff wellbeing.

Over lunch, the prisoners are escorted back to their wings and the teaching staff have ninety minutes for administrative duties and thirty minutes for a lunch break. Breaks for staff are confined to the prison site due to security restrictions, it would take too long for them to leave; therefore, contributing to a sense of incarceration for staff, a theme explored in the inquiry.

Afternoon sessions mirror the morning with a different set of prisoner-learners attending. For both the morning and afternoon sessions, there are approximately 100-150 prisoner-learners engaging with education in the college buildings and a further 50 learners via one-to-one support as teachers rotate around the wings. This includes the Vulnerable Prisoner (VP) wing which houses those who are at risk of violence from other prisoners e.g., those with severe learning difficulties, those who

have previously worked in law enforcement or those who have been sentenced for child sex offences. At 4.15 p.m. prisoners are escorted back to their wings and teachers finish for the day.

As with any educational setting, teachers are expected to plan and assess their learners to provide evidence of their progress; this creates difficulty for teachers as the 'churn' of learners can often be so quick, they may only have weeks to 'evidence' an impact. This is confounded by the complexity of learner backgrounds and situations, creating layered challenges that educators must continually navigate. The experiences of prison educators therefore are shown to be deeply entangled with institutional demands, temporal pressures, and learner circumstances; complexities that will be explored through the following rhizomatic-literature-entanglement (the rhizome is a non-hierarchical system of interconnected roots which create multiple entry points, the concept is inspired by the works of Deleuze and Guattari who utilise this as a powerful visual for understanding complex relational systems. This will be further explained in Chapter 4).

1.5. Unfoldings of Becoming-thesis

I have acknowledged my position as both researcher and former prison education manager and provided you with the context of the inquiry. This illuminates the entangled dynamics within prison education spaces, where regime protocols and surveillance create a uniquely challenging teaching environment. The prison classroom is shown as a site of tension between institutional control and educational liberation, where educators must constantly navigate between security requirements and pedagogical needs. I now turn to explore the literature through a rhizomatic lens, to enable better understanding of how teachers' experiences are shaped by multiple, entangled factors within these demanding spaces.

Chapter 2: Rhizomatic-literature-entanglement

2.1. Introduction

Taking influence from Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *minor literature*, their theory of writing that operates from a marginalised position within a major language, creating potential through its disruption and transformation of dominant linguistic structures, this rhizomatic-literature-entanglement acts in relation to *major* literature, the accepted dominant discourses of power in this field. My intention is to subvert hegemonic hierarchies through representing the influences of literature and beyond, in different and creative ways. I am therefore *becoming*-minor in my writing by interrupting the *major* expectations of logocentric terms such as 'literature review' (Honan and Bright, 2016). This approach acknowledges that the conventional literature review format, with its linear organisation and tendency to privilege established Western academic voices, reflects a particular epistemological tradition rather than a neutral or universal approach to knowledge synthesis. By challenging this format, I aim to create space for alternative ways of knowing and expressing, that might otherwise be marginalised within academic discourse.

As an alternative, I offer a rhizome of 'plateaus' presented in an experiential video. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988) this rhizomatic-literature-entanglement is a non-hierarchical network of interconnected elements. In contrast to a linear literature review, this creates an opportunity to experience the literature and other influences in a creative way. The experience will evoke *affects* using image, sound, space and text, becoming part of the thesis assemblage. This engagement will allow you to experience *becoming*-with the concepts; engaging with it in a dream-like state as you enter the space. Deleuze recognised that art is a 'vital force' (Deleuze, 2003, p. 91) to generate new modes of thought and to challenge conventions, which disrupt. When travelling through this space you will encounter multiple others, therefore becoming nomadic to enable and embrace chance encounters, allowing the *becoming* to happen (Manley, 2018).

In contrast to a literature review, this rhizomatic approach is aimed at exposing the power in collating particular voices over and above others (Braidotti, 2019b). This acknowledges the power I have as a researcher or writer to reject this process and to affirm voices via my agential cuts (Barad, 2014). There is discomfort in opening ourselves to a wider range of knowledges that do not follow the usual ways of knowing. The rhizomatic-literature-entanglement acknowledges that power shifts

and changes as I write, with-in the spacetimematterings that are still unfolding (Barad, 2010). It will therefore transform into rhizomatic thinking and doing, as I immerse myself in the literature and you, as reader, are invited to do the same.

2.2. Preface to engaging with the rhizomatic-literature-entanglement.

I encourage you to experience this chapter via the video below. Follow the instructions to engage with the video, have a device ready to scan the QR code and read the corresponding 'plateau'.

- In the first viewing of the video, I suggest you watch it through to the end without pausing. Allow yourself to be immersed in the flow of entangled influences, contemplating the questions posed and the imagery presented.

[Link to video](#)

- In the second viewing of the video, I invite you to pause at the statements, scan the corresponding QR codes and engage with the discussion and literature related to that plateau.
- You may want to read in the order of my pathway outlined in the video or use the interactive map below of the pause points, which enables you to select which plateau you would like to engage with in an uncategorised format.

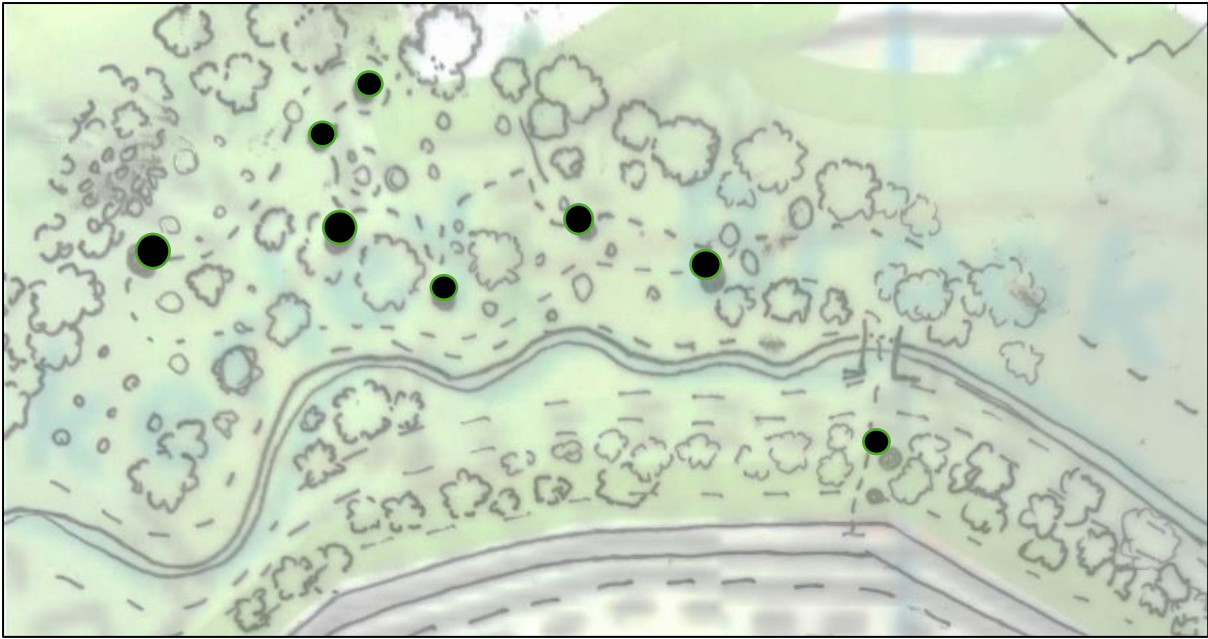


Figure 2: Interactive map. Select the 'plateaus' to engage with via the links indicated with a dot.

The walking featured in the video aligns with the rhythms of walking in the intra-views conducted inside the prison. The woodland environment is layered with meaning; connecting to rhizomatic thought, arboreal expectations, freedom and imprisonment. The choice of pathways is a metaphor for the exploration of the literature itself, as I traverse the undergrowth and make agential cuts (Barad, 2007) through my choices of what to include and what to omit.

The images overlaid in the video include examples of my textile pieces created during the inquiry (explained further in Chapter 5). Some of the drawn images were created by the participants, collected during the walking intra-views. Other images included, have relation to the prison and prison spaces.

The background music choice is intentional as it links to the posthuman influence on the inquiry; 'In the Anthropocene' song (Mulvey, 2019), is an integral part of the intra-active (Barad, 2007) experience, fostering a multi-sensory exploration of the inquiry's core themes. The song questions our freedom in a world in which the human is centred; this particularly resonates when considering the juxtaposition of the prison and the natural space the rhizomatic-literature-entanglement is situated.

For the purposes of thesis submission, the linear version of the literature review is available below. In each section, I draw out some of the key concepts discussed throughout the thesis; namely, critiques of prison education in England, the experiences of the prison education teachers, criminological perspectives, carceral geography, Foucauldian thought, the impact of prison space and place on teachers and pedagogical approaches. Whilst Deleuze and Guattari and feminist materialists feature as a strong influences throughout the thesis, their work is intentionally not discussed alongside the other literature influences as their concepts are 'put to work' (Lenz Taguchi, 2012, p. 265) differently. This is further discussed in Chapter 4.

2.3. Political and economic pressures of prison education

Prisons are unique places where humanity can hold up a mirror to the policies of society at the time (Mathiesen, 2005). Prison education is criticised from a political perspective in numerous strategy white papers across the last decade. The most notable of these is the Coates' Review (2016) which led to clear recommendations, calling for a reform in the way education was managed in prisons. The Coates' review offered some hope through its recommendation to grant governors greater control over educational budgets, potentially enabling more localised and targeted responses to prisoner needs. Coates advocated for a 'whole-prison approach... where education should be at the heart of the regime' (Coates, 2016, p. 62). However, this seemingly positive vision had significant shortcomings, positioning education as the primary driver of 'reform', without allocating additional funding or resources to support this expanded role. Additionally, the review's emphasis on accountability inadvertently transformed attendance metrics into a mechanism of control between prisons and education providers, shifting focus from educational outcomes to compliance measures.

The Coates Review, despite advocating for education's central role, cast prison teachers in a problematic light by characterising teaching practices as 'sub-standard' and suggesting higher salaries would attract 'better' teachers (p. 21). This critique failed to acknowledge the complex and challenging conditions prison educators face, including security constraints, limited resources, and the unique demands of teaching within a carceral environment. By focusing solely on teacher quality rather than systemic barriers, the review oversimplified the challenges of prison education delivery.

Despite Coates recommendations for improvement, prison education quality has continued to decline (MOJ, 2021), with Ofsted consistently reporting poor inspection results. While Ofsted's legitimacy as a measure of educational success remains contested (Foley and Goldstein, 2012), it continues to serve as the primary metric for assessing teacher effectiveness in prison education. This decline can be attributed to the broader metric-focused policy framework that emphasises accountability and privatisation (Garland, 2013), which has fundamentally reshaped prison education through market-driven approaches rather than pedagogical principles. The focus on measurable outcomes and competitive service provision has exacerbated rather than resolved the systemic issues in prison education.

The HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2020) found that budget cuts and staff shortages have had dire implications for prison education. He linked this to precarious provider contracts and real-time reductions in prison teacher pay, leading to a lack of motivation and retention. Inspectorate reports (2018-2020) consistently employed a deficit model of accountability, e.g., 'teachers failed to use the existing knowledge of prisoners' and 'teachers and trainers failed to record skills development' (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2019, p. 37) further exemplifying culpability.

The 2022 'Vision for Prison Education' (Association of Colleges, 2022) emphasises education provider frustrations over funding shortages and the urgent need for cultural change in prisons. The Education Select Committee's Report (House of Commons, Education Committee, 2022) noted limited progress from the Coates review (2016) particularly in recruiting and retaining 'high-quality' teachers. The 2022 report did recognise the unfavourable experiences of teachers, highlighting that they have, 'for too long had poor pay, lack of career opportunities and no respect' (House of Commons, Education Committee, 2022, n.p.).

Amanda Spielman, then chief inspector of Ofsted, stated: 'Unfortunately, good quality, well-run educational activities and programmes are alarmingly rare within the prison system' (Spielman, 2023, n.p.) she attributed much of this to the prison regime and lack of prison staff to mobilise prisoners to education. She also highlights the lack of support for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and the insufficient teacher training of prison educators.

Post-Covid, the picture of prison education has got increasingly worse; Ofsted Annual Report (2022) highlighted that it is 'the worst performing sector we inspect... if anything, it has become worse still' (p. 12). Between 2022-2024, almost half of all prison Ofsted inspections found education to be

‘inadequate’ and the remaining providers to be judged as ‘requires improvement’ (Hill and Carlin, 2024; Prison Education Trust, 2024).

Williams (2012) a reporter for The Guardian explored prison education efficacy, noting that there is often a positive rhetoric around prison education as the ‘saviour’ of offenders (n.p.). Her report argues that outsourcing education creates tensions between rehabilitation goals and profit-driven intentions. She interviewed Jason Warr, a former prisoner and criminology academic, who criticises the competitive tendering processes that have led to prison education being squeezed over the years:

‘In a lot of establishments, I found that targets were what was important. They used to get the bright lads to do the courses, so they got the pass rates and didn't get their budgets cut’ (Warr in Williams, 2012, n.p.).

Despite this article being published twelve years ago, ‘new’ measures to address prison education continue to follow a similar approach which emphasises metrics over individual needs and relations.

Taylor (2023) as chief inspector of prisons identifies four main reasons why he believes prison education is failing; noting that education is not a priority, and that the curriculum is not suitable. The proposed changes to prison education, with introduction of the ‘new’ Prison Education System (PES) seeks to give even greater power to governors. This aims to give ‘value for money’ but is still centred on the delivery of contracts rather than the quality of education. The University and College Union (UCU) Prison’s Official (Bridge in Hill and Carlin, 2024), states that the contracts between prison education providers and HMPPS (His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service) create more administration and less focus on education. From my experiences as a prison education manager, this is a claim I strongly agree with:

‘The purpose of education has been lost... Educators are tasked with managing the regime, instead of delivering a broader-based educational experience. There is gaming and perverse incentivisation... it’s fundamentally flawed’ (Bridge in Hill and Carlin, 2024, n.p.).

2.3.1. A Shifting Prison Education Strategy

The 'New Prison Education Service' (PES) initiative (2023), launched under the previous Conservative government, emphasised reducing recidivism and enhancing employability through a public safety lens rather than prisoner-centred support. While acknowledging concerns about prisoner literacy and numeracy levels, and proposing Neurodiversity Support Managers, the initiative lacked crucial implementation details. Its emphasis on 'tough targets' for education providers reflects a persistent metric-centred approach that fails to address systemic challenges like inter-prison transfers and disrupted learning.

'Our improved Prisoner Education Service with specialist staff, tougher targets and increased focus on employment will be more effective at cutting crime and keeping the public safe'
(Then Prison's Minister Damian Hinds 'New Prison Education Service (PES) to cut crime', 2023, n.p.).

The Prison Education Trust (PET) (2023) criticised the initiative's narrow curricular focus and its neglect of broader educational interests beyond basic skills and vocational training. Significantly, they highlighted the absence of teacher workforce considerations, advocating for improved recruitment, compensation, and retention strategies to create truly transformative prison education environments (Prison Education Trust, 2023).

A recent CLiNKS (2024) report reviews evidence on how prison education reduces recidivism, factors affecting its quality, prisoners' needs, and the current state of prison education. The report mentions teachers only in relation to Ofsted's expectations; focusing on teacher qualifications and their ability to enable, check, assess and deliver learning. It unfortunately overlooks teacher wellbeing, professional development and support. The report concludes that prison education is generally effective and urges policymakers to increase prisoner participation in education.

With a change of government in 2024, The Prisoners' Education Trust (PET) released a 'Priorities for new government' briefing related to prison education (2024). The briefing highlights that within prisons, 'Education is the engine of rehabilitation' (p. 4) and therefore urgently needs to be given government focus and investment to improve. It outlines ten recommendations for how prison education can be improved. There is consideration of teacher experience in recommendation six: 'Invest in prison education staff and prison education infrastructure' (p. 7). This acknowledges that

the prison authorities should develop a strategy in partnership with education providers to ‘recruit, retain and develop’ (p. 7) prison teachers to ensure high-quality provision. However, this does not go as far as recognising the impact of prison teaching on teacher wellbeing.

The PET briefing does acknowledge that the challenges in prison education are broad and implicated by wider prison problems ‘prison education is not delivered in a vacuum’ (p. 6). They implore government to work quickly in identifying the changes needed as ‘new’ prison education contracts are being drawn up in 2025. Taylor (Chief Inspector of prisons) has stated that ‘a radical solution’ is required (Taylor, 2023, n.p.). The briefing hints at the potential of these more radical solutions, such as a national approach with *all* prison education staff directly employed in the public sector (p. 32) or greater links with Further Education colleges instead of the current outsourcing model. The briefing concludes with recommendations that the new government should commission a full review of the current prison education delivery model.

The statement below sums up the approach to prison education in the last 30 years:

‘We are building and designing the next generation of prisons, which maximise opportunities for offenders to turn their lives around – getting them off drugs, rebuilding family ties and harnessing cutting-edge technology to put education, training, and jobs at the core. All these factors are proven to cut crime, reduce reoffending and protect the public’ (Atkins in Ministry of Justice, 2022, p. 3).

The statement is worrying for several reasons but largely for the framing of prisoners as ‘offenders’ that need to be rehabilitated to protect law-abiding citizens. This deficit model with collateral outcomes instils the notion of the prison and prison education as a saviour for the public. Seeing prison education in this way, as rehabilitative or corrective, can be a risk that suggests prisoners are ineffective, broken, or damaged (Liebling, 2016; Ginsburg, 2019). The statement ratifies that everyone in the prison is ‘bad’ or a ‘sub-species’ (Coyle, 2003, p. 27), with prisoners as subjects to be saved. If this is the purpose of education, it is my suggestion that teachers are under-prepared for this responsibility.

Prison education in England remains fraught with challenges. Despite numerous reviews and reform attempts, the system continues to grapple with issues of underfunding, unrealistic targets, and a focus on profit over prisoner needs. Without addressing these fundamental problems and supporting educators, the transformative potential of prison education will remain stifled.

2.4. Teachers in prisons

Prison education is a complex and challenging field that remains unexplored, particularly from the perspective of teachers. Despite its potential to transform lives and reduce recidivism, prison teaching faces numerous obstacles. These include lack of specific training and conflicting institutional demands. Studies of teachers in prisons highlight the paradoxical nature of promoting rehabilitation within a punitive system. This plateau of the rhizomatic-literature-entanglement explores the experiences of prison teachers, the challenges they face, and the gaps in current research.

2.4.1. Teacher education for prisons

The London Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (LONCETT), involved with the training of teachers in prison education, compiled a report (Simonot, 2008) to gain some insight into the needs of teachers in prison education. They recognised that there has been little investigation into the 'distinctive needs of those who teach in prisons' (p. 2).

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with thirteen teachers/trainers and managers in four London prisons and one case inquiry in an additional male Category B prison (see [Appendix 1](#) for table explaining categories of prisons). These were thematically analysed to unveil a huge array of emerging themes. These were organised under the headings of 'Organisational factors', 'Cultural factors', and 'Pedagogical factors' (Simonot, 2008, p. 6).

One of the salient themes that emerged in the LONCETT report (Simonot, 2008) was the impact of 'emotional load' on prison teachers. The researchers state that there is a need to investigate this further, specifically exploring the 'conditions and circumstances in which teachers are working' (Jeanes, McDonald and Simonot, 2009, p. 34). This is an element I hope to address in this inquiry.

This research of prison teacher experiences was furthered in the University and College Union (UCU) and Institute of Education report (Rogers, Simonot and Nartey, 2015). Rogers *et al.* utilise quantitative methods via questionnaires, reaching 278 members of the teaching union. Of those respondents, nearly 50% worked in Category C prisons and 35% in Category B (where this inquiry is situated). The report represented the demographic of prison teachers with 69% of participants being female. Shockingly, only 11% of the respondents felt that prison teaching was a good career, and this also included several 'but' clauses, including the emotional demand. The report concluded:

‘The way in which it [prison education] was currently organised was reducing the potential for its life-changing impacts and creating an extremely unhappy workforce’ (Rogers, Simonot and Nartey, 2015, p. 43).

The research above highlights a critical gap between the transformative potential of prison education and its operational reality. The emotional burden on teachers, lack of standardised training, and systemic organisational issues continue to hamper effective educational delivery in prisons. Most notably, despite these research findings highlighting clear areas for improvement, there has been minimal progress in developing a unified approach to prison teacher training or addressing the workforce's emotional wellbeing. Despite the findings from both these reports, there is still no unified approach to teacher training for prison work in England and Wales.

Katzenstein and Frank (2019) explore the motivations for teaching in American prisons, identifying themes like fostering prisoner potential, promoting racial solidarity, and dismantling the carceral state from within. They note that while some teachers aim to ‘transform’ prisoners as a moral duty, this can sometimes lead to egotism and self-affirmation, and teachers often shift between these motivations.

Patrie (2017, 2023) has explored the preparation of prison teachers in her study of teaching in unfamiliar places. Her Canadian-based study asks the questions: What are the main concerns for new teachers teaching in correctional spaces? And how do they mitigate them? (Patrie, 2023, p. 293). Patrie identifies many of the barriers related to the contradiction of prison education spaces. She proposes a juxtaposition between the ‘damaging and controlling confinement’ with the aims of adult education, which should be a ‘practice of freedom’ (Patrie, 2023, p. 291).

Patrie’s study is focused on the pragmatic support of prison teachers entering the profession, with the use of questionnaires and one-to-one interviews of eight teacher-participants. Patrie’s study focuses on the integration of teachers and not the affectivities they experience, despite participants mentioning related affects. When speaking about the prison’s impact on mental health, one teacher-participant explained:

‘There were certain stories that were told to me. I mean, I still remember them today, so I think that has an impact on your mental health. I think that can happen in any classroom it’s just going to happen more frequently [in corrections]’ (p. 299).

Patrie recognises that educators must work 'within and between' (Patrie, 2017, p. 52) various prison cultures, which can cause philosophical dilemmas for teachers. Yet this is as far as her study goes to address this dilemma. She acknowledges that 'trauma is ever present' (Patrie, 2023, p. 293) but does not expand on that or acknowledge the affect. Trauma in the context of this inquiry is discussed in Chapter 10; it is important to note that trauma is deeply personal and uniquely experienced by everyone, with prison educators and prisoner-learners potentially sharing similar yet distinct traumatic experiences that require sensitivity. Moreover, while some trauma may be event-specific with clear temporal boundaries, as Patrie notes, prison experiences manifest as ongoing, 'ever-present' traumas or what Berlant (2011) terms 'crisis-ordinariness', persistent states of distress that become embedded in the everyday fabric of institutional life, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

In 2021, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) appointed Ireland based criminologist and experienced prison educator Cormac Behan to undertake a literature review on 'global perspectives' of prison education (UNESCO: Institute for lifelong learning, 2021). The emphasis is on that of the prisoner experience and considers improvements of education through policy change. The review portrays classrooms as transformative spaces, distinct from the prison environment. However, it focuses on short-term educational initiatives like 'Philosophy in Prisons' and 'Walls to Bridges' run by external partners. These externally run initiatives offer valuable interventions, yet I argue differ significantly to everyday education experiences.

The UNESCO review assumes that prison education follows 'Mandela's rules' (UNESCO: Institute for lifelong learning, 2021, p. 36) which state that education should be voluntary and have equal pay to that of work. Prison education, however, is often used as a power tool by the prison (Milner and Bennett, 2022) e.g., education is paid less than work, but work cannot be gained unless prisoners first achieve a Level 1 in English and maths (as previously discussed in Chapter 1).

The conclusion of the UNESCO review identifies its limitations, admitting it does not consider literature on the training needs of teachers working in prisons. Yet, one of the recommendations highlighted that 'further attention should be paid to the training needs of teachers before they embark on a career in education in prisons' (UNESCO: Institute for lifelong learning, 2021, p. 91). The review offers little insight into teachers' experiences but acknowledges the complexities of teaching in coercive environments, noting that a career in prison education is far removed from typical teaching experiences.

Research on teacher education for prisons reveals significant gaps in preparation and support for educators in this unique environment. Despite efforts to understand the needs of prison teachers, there remains a lack of specialised training programmes and inconsistent approaches across institutions. The UNESCO review, while comprehensive in its global perspective on prisoner experiences, highlights the need for further research and attention to the specific training needs and experiences of prison educators.

2.4.2. Hidden voices of prison teachers

The 'Hidden Voices' report (UCU & PLA, 2021) has attempted to advocate for prison teachers by gathering questionnaire responses regarding their experiences. Of those teachers surveyed (412 responses), 70% stated that they intended to leave the profession in the next five years (p. 22). The findings highlighted the complexities of prison teaching, taking on board the need to understand 'jail craft' (p. 8); this is a term that is multi-layered, linked to dialogue, body language and other discourse practices. Jail craft is mentioned frequently by teachers (and officers) as a tacit practice that utilises empathy and affective approaches to 'deal' with the changing and complex demands of working in a prison setting (Peacock, Turner and Varey, 2018); yet it is not taught or spoken of explicitly in teacher preparation. The prisons' representative at UCU (2024), has recently stated that 'Younger, less experienced educators do not have jail craft. They are not aware that some prisoners are well versed in forms of subconscious behavioural control' (in Hill and Carlin, 2024, n.p.) thus the importance of specific training to prepare for working in carceral settings is vital.

The 'Hidden Voices' report (UCU & PLA, 2021) recommends that the MOJ work with teacher education providers to create specific modules or courses for teachers preparing to work in prisons. This inquiry will contribute to this discussion and aligns with the MOJ (Ministry of Justice, 2020) area of research interest which distinguishes 'Space and place'; as key themes through which to understand affective interactions within the prison (p. 230).

The Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA) working group reports on professional development for prison educators (PLA, 2022). The group, compiled of education managers, teaching staff and teacher educators was formed in response to the above previously discussed Hidden Voices report (2021). The group acknowledged that more training is needed to support teachers to develop trauma-informed approaches (discussed later in this chapter); to work with learners who have had prior poor experiences of education. The group also agreed that teachers need to develop their jail craft to sustain

and endure the conditions within the prison but has not yet envisaged how that can be done within the current budget and regime constraints.

UCU's (2024) manifesto aimed at the new labour government, asks that they put an end to the 'commissioning cycle' in prison education. From a union perspective, they focus on teacher wellbeing, asking that the current outsourcing model delivered by private providers on a 'for-profit' basis be scrapped.

'New contracts are commissioned every four to five years, resulting in unstable employment for teachers, while the provision itself is more focused on retaining the contract than on delivering high-quality education in a safe and supportive environment' (p. 10).

These aspects of contractual obligations were discussed with prison educator participants in this inquiry, and the affective impact is discussed later in the thesis.

2.4.3. Teacher experiences

Whilst there have been many studies exploring the experiences of prisoners in prison education and the impact of prison space on prisoners, the consideration of teacher experience is limited. Where research has included some mention of prison education and teaching (Reuss, 1999; Wilson and Reuss, 2000; Wright, 2005; Irwin, 2008; Beauchamp, 2010; Nichols, 2017, 2021), there is little consideration of the *affective* impact the prison space may have on teachers.

Beauchamp (2010) in her insider teacher account of the female prison, Holloway, shares the effect the prison had on her as an *outsider* on the inside. She writes this as a 'survivor story', where she was having to negotiate the 'rigid demands of a regime steeped in security, control, regulation, and obeying orders' (p. ix). This account from a teacher in the field is honest and raw, highlighting the affects that were present in her experiences, although she does not refer to affect theory specifically. An element of Beauchamp's writing that resonated with my own experiences, was the sense of feeling guilty despite being innocent when entering the prison; 'such are the security checks, monitoring, surveillance, power imbalances and air of suspicion' (Beauchamp, 2010, p. x). Beauchamp also discusses the impact of the gates and doors as physical and metaphorical barriers within that space. As an art teacher she would lock herself into the classroom, using the door to keep the feeling of the prison space out, noting that 'sometimes I benefitted from my isolated position' (p.

184). The materiality of prison spaces will be further explored with the teacher-participants of this inquiry.

Irwin's (2008) study 'The 'Inside' Story: Practitioner Perspectives on Teaching in Prison' shares experiences of being both insider and outsider as a teacher-researcher within a prison. Irwin shares teacher experiences alongside her ethnographic study of working within a Northern Irish, male, maximum security prison. She explains that her experiences included conflict, between her teacher desire to be creative and the enforcement of security. She argues that security will always take precedence in a prison education space, therefore causing conflict with the aims and values of teachers.

She also highlighted the conflict between prison officer agendas and that of teachers; highlighting a deep-seated resentment from some officers as they see education as an extension of association time (social engagement which can lead to coercion and rule-breaking) with teachers facilitating this in the classroom (therefore being perceived as working against the rules). She felt the officers did not value education and this led to the education space feeling on the periphery (Irwin, 2008). The study highlights the practical inconveniences which teachers face daily, and she intimates some consideration of *affect* for teachers, particularly when teaching on the wings: 'There was no doubt this was often an intense and emotional experience for any tutor' (p. 520) but does not explore this any further.

Irwin (2008) draws on Reuss's writings (Reuss, 1999; Wilson and Reuss, 2000) of 'Prison(er) education' from teacher and learner perspectives. Reuss highlights prison education as outside of the typical education domain, recognising, that education in the prison context can be a form of power and a 'weapon for control in the hands of the prison authorities' (p. 69). Considering the implications of privatisation, I witnessed first-hand the use of prisoners as 'docile bodies', (further discussed later in this chapter) (Foucault, 1991) to be allocated to education as assigned 'purposeful activity' (previously explained in Chapter 1) to draw down funds and avoid inflated fines.

Condirston's (2023) thesis explores the relationship between wellbeing and prison education, focusing on the emotional connections formed in the classroom and the positive effect education has on prisoners. Her work as a criminologist sheds light on the relations between prison educators and prisoners and although it was not the focus, she does highlight the wellbeing of teachers as a factor alongside that of prisoners' wellbeing.

Condirston's participants came from a variety of experiences including those who were visiting lecturers as well as long-standing educators employed by one of the four large education providers in England and Wales. Educators emphasised a sense of shared enjoyment and connectedness with learners, contributing to both student and teacher wellbeing. However, the teachers also highlighted several obstacles that hindered their ability to perform their roles effectively. They revealed frustrations with the rigid, employability-focused structure of prison education, which often prioritises institutional targets over the personal needs of learners.

'...the pressure to keep people on the courses can be really really tough because some people just aren't ready to be in education and that should be okay, but it's not... (Kelly, prison educator)'
(Condirston, 2023, p. 220).

Condirston noted that this pressure to push learners through courses, even when they are not ready, limits opportunities for more flexible, interest-driven learning. Additionally, disruptions such as prison transfers and lockdowns, along with a lack of institutional support, hindered the continuity of education and negatively affected the learning environment.

The findings from Condirston's (2023) study indicate that the educational environment within prisons, combined with the personal histories, traumas, and prior educational experiences of both prison learners and educators, significantly influences the potential impact of prison education on wellbeing (p. 263). For some, education in prison serves as a vital resource that fosters positive wellbeing by providing structure and a sense of accomplishment. For others, she found, it can exacerbate previous negative experiences or institutional traumas, potentially contributing to a detrimental impact on both learners' and educators' wellbeing.

Criminologist Helen Nichols (2017, 2021) has explored the impact of prisons on prison staff. Her study on the 'Role of Relationships' (Nichols, 2017) in prison settings included semi-structured interviews with both prisoners and prison teachers. She concluded that educational spaces within prisons can evoke a distinct atmosphere compared to the rest of the prison environment and that teachers were perceived differently to other prison staff:

'Although teachers in prison carry keys, which are a significant symbol of power, authority and discipline, their presence as an educator allowed them to overcome this power dynamic and they were often seen as non-threatening' (Nichols, 2017, p. 7).

Nichols (2017) recognises the entanglements of prison teachers with their learners. One teacher-participant in her study describes their own poor experiences in education, being labelled as 'thick' (p. 6) but uses her experience of transformation in education as a tool with prison students, who may have had similar experiences. Nichols (2017) acknowledges the challenge of navigating the 'complex realm of personal moral negotiation' (p. 7) inherent in professional teacher-student relationships with prisoners, a factor I have considered while designing my research methodology.

Meyer's recent chapter (in Corbett, 2024) 'Top Ten Things I've Learned Not to Do by Mistakenly Doing Them' offers practical guidance for prison educators based on her two decades of experience teaching law in U.S. prisons. While providing valuable cautionary advice, Meyer's focus remains primarily on student impact rather than teachers.

Meyer does identify the moral complexity of the prison teachers' position: 'We teach; we leave. It's always jarring to leave your students behind and return to your regular life' (p. 92) yet noticeably avoids exploring this affective burden. Her pragmatic approach emphasises awareness of surroundings and potential consequences of 'caring' actions: 'If you hug a student, they may get strip-searched' (p. 93), without acknowledging the emotional strain of maintaining such heightened vigilance within carceral spaces.

Perhaps most compelling is Meyer's caution against the teacher-saviour mentality in her directive: 'Don't get off on gratitude' (p. 92). She contextualises student gratitude as stemming from systemic deprivation rather than exceptional teaching, noting classes are 'disrupted by lockdowns, lockouts, and all kinds of prison restrictions' (a significant aspect on which I will focus). Her perspective is that teachers are 'simply a vehicle for access to novel ideas' rather than 'the vehicle of transformation' (p. 92). This aligns to prisoner perceptions discussed in the next section of this chapter and challenges the saviour narratives of teachers and deficit models of incarcerated students.

Meyer's pragmatic framing overlooks how teachers process their complicity within the carceral system. Her guidance lacks consideration of how teachers navigate their own emotional responses to witnessing injustice while maintaining professional boundaries. Despite advocating for continued support after leaving the classroom, she provides little insight into managing the psychological impact of navigating the peripheral zones between the institution and freedom, or the emotional cost of the constant awareness required to deliver meaningful education amid prison restrictions. This gap leaves unaddressed questions about sustainable practice and teacher wellbeing which I aim to address in this inquiry.

This gap in Meyer's analysis invites comparison with alternative frameworks for understanding the complex positioning of prison educators. In contrast to current practices in England and Wales, of outsourcing to specific prison education providers, Norwegian prisons utilise established adult education colleges where teachers work in both spaces simultaneously. Baer and Ravneberg (2008) as researchers and college tutors compare and share their experiences of visiting prisons for the first time, one within a Norwegian prison and the other a prison in England. Referring to the work of Goffman (1961) they prepared themselves for the binary distinctions of inside/outside but instead found a multiplicity of feeling that was better aligned to Foucault's conception of 'Heterotopia' (Foucault and Miskowiec, 1986) where the space is somehow *other*, in a state of betweenness 'the entanglements of inside and outside weave an ever-tightening, confining web' (Baer and Ravneberg, 2008, p. 207).

The teachers discussed in Baer and Ravneberg's (2008) paper observed glimpses of the outside world from within the confines of the prison, such as relaxed rules allowing activities like listening to the radio in the classroom. However, they were abruptly reminded of their surroundings by sounds like the clinking of locks and gates, leading them to believe that those who perceive the space differently are naïve. Baer and Ravneberg did not discuss this in terms of 'affect', but these affective aspects of prison experience are components I explore with participants.

Baer and Ravneberg's (2008) experiences align to my own when they identify the transient nature of the prison, especially the 'high churn' of prisoners coming in and out, on release or awaiting sentence. They therefore recognise a 'constant re-framing' for teachers (p. 208), a persistent disruption or interruption to the *flow*, creating disjunctive moments for teachers which can be emotionally exhausting to manage. They highlight the often-disregarded influence of 'spatial effects' on teachers operating within these environments. This encompasses the markers of incarceration; such as fences, gates, barbed wire, lights, security cameras and prison officers (p. 207), echoing Foucault's (1991) concept of the panoptical gaze. I am intrigued by the agency of these non-human elements and will further explore in this inquiry how they shape the experience of prison spaces. Baer and Ravneberg (2008) go on to question their own understanding of what is inside and what is out, acknowledging blurred lines and deception. This can be linked to Bhabha's (2004) and Soja's (1989, 1998) concept of a third space and Foucault's 'Heterotopia' (Foucault and Miskowiec, 1986) which are discussed elsewhere in this rhizomatic-literature-entanglement.

Wright (2005) has written the most comprehensive literature on prison teacher experience. Using standard focus group interviews with twenty-two Canadian prison teachers, Wright draws on his insider experiences as a seasoned prison educator. He analyses the social-psychological aspects of teaching in prisons; acknowledging the inherent conflict for educators in a helping or caring profession within an environment designed for objectification and punishment (Wright, 2005). He focuses on the 'culture shock' encountered by new teachers entering prison education spaces, perceiving them as 'foreign places' (p. 19). Although Wright's paper predates the emergence of 'carceral geography' as a field, he hints at its relevance by acknowledging the profound impact of prison architecture on individuals' sense of place (p. 21).

Wright's (2005) research proposes that teachers undergo an 'acculturation' process, transitioning through stages of 'visitor, tourist, stranger, settler' (p. 21). He notes that not all teachers may progress through all stages, especially during periods of instability like changes in management or regime, which are common in contracted providers and exacerbated by recent events such as Covid-19. He concludes that prison teachers perpetually inhabit a 'space of liminality' in which they are 'straddling opposing realms' (p. 22). He further explores how teachers may *transgress* the system, acknowledging both positive and negative elements of their work, eventually erasing the 'traces' of their previous cultures that 'inhibit their integration' into prison education (p. 30). This disaffectedness is an area I will explore further in this inquiry.

Wright has identified the element of 'physical space' as a defining feature of prison teacher experience (Wright, 2005, p. 24). He maintains that some teachers might have a sense of '*paranoiac*' space due to the constant threat of violence, and use of control when inside the institution to constrain movement; thus, leading to 'assimilation rather than acculturation' (Wright, 2005, p. 24), linking to Foucault's (1991) concept of docile bodies. Teachers may also feel marginal in relation to previous spaces they have navigated in educational fields (p. 28); this is compounded in my experience by lower wages and less satisfactory contractual arrangements than in mainstream education.

All the above accounts highlight the complexity of teacher experiences, recognising the need for teachers to become accustomed to the prison space, leading them to re-frame their teacher identity but realising that without remembering the traces of themselves outside of those spaces, they will forever be within the 'borderlands' (Wright, 2005, p. 36).

2.4.4. Prisoners' perspectives in this fold

Drake and Henley (2014) highlight the complexity of prisoners' experiences, often marked by abuse, neglect, and racial discrimination. They suggest that prisons curtail prisoners' freedom of speech and learning, striving for education without granting agency or perceived enjoyment. This approach to prison education further marginalises prisoners as 'law-breaking denizens' (p. 143). This perspective on prisons can also stigmatise prison teaching, 'othering' teachers in the profession, as they align with prisoner rehabilitation efforts.

The sincerest account I have read of teacher entanglement in prisoner experience comes from an open penned letter to prison educators by the U.S. prisoner Malakki currently serving his 27th year of a life sentence. Malakki (in Ginsburg, 2019) recognises, as others have (Warr, 2016; Ginsburg, 2019; Meyer in Corbett, 2024), that teachers must divorce themselves from trying to 'transform' or 'save' prisoners as this is just not possible. He writes:

'For to be an educator is like being a needle and thread, while the students are the fabric. When people remark on an exquisitely designed quilt, no one asks about the needle. Although most crucial for the finished product, it's just not about you' (Malakki in Ginsburg, 2019, p. 17).

This statement resonates profoundly with my research on teacher experience and my use of textiles to explore it. The entanglement of material metaphors both captivates and unsettles me. I have responded to this through a textiles piece below (see figure 3); my use of textiles in the inquiry is further explained in Chapter 5. Just as the fabric layers create unexpected textures when pressed together in this quilt, the teacher-as-needle metaphor from Malakki reveals a knotty contradiction: teachers are integral to prison education, yet their experiences remain largely invisible. When Malakki suggests 'it's just not about you' (p. 17), another fold appears in this complex fabric.

While many educators don't seek recognition, this inquiry explores the affective impact of this erasure. I use the materiality of weaving and stitching to bring these hidden experiences to the surface (Hancock, 2020); combining his words with images of my personal memos of affective experiences whilst working in the prison (shared in Chapter 11). Malakki's words resonate precisely

because they create tension with my research aims; a tension I've embodied through quilting, where layers of fabric, both woven and felted, materialise the entanglement of affects.



Figure 3: Quilt created by the author. Materials: cotton, muslin, printed personal memos, thread. 2025.

This reflects not only the tension between teacher visibility and erasure but also points toward the spatial dimensions of prison education that Malakki (in Ginsburg, 2019) further explores. He acknowledges the links to space and place, highlighting education spaces as 'sacred' and a 'loophole' (p. 18) within prisons, distinct environments that allow those incarcerated to experience themselves differently than they do in cells, food halls, or yards. This spatial liminality creates another layer in the complex fabric of prison education, where teachers navigate institutional constraints while attempting to create transformative learning spaces, their efforts essential yet often obscured.

The spatial understanding of prison education that Malakki describes finds a critical counterpoint in Slater's (2014) perspective as a prisoner in the U.S. engaged in the Education Justice Project (EJP).

Through his involvement with this critical pedagogy initiative in prison higher education, he problematises the 'wow' factor that many prison educators experience when they first teach in prisons. This 'wow' is in relation to teachers being surprised by the intellect and ability of prisoners. Slater (2014) argues that this reaction highlights the assumptions of educators that prisoners have low levels of intellect. He believes these assumptions are aligned to teachers' prior 'social imaginaries' of prisons, perpetuated by media portrayals and 'Eurocentric' perceptions of class and race. Considering the key tenets of Slater's perspective is important in my reflexive process. As a white, privileged researcher who has had experience of prisons but not 'lived experience' of incarceration, it is key that I recognise my ignorance and challenge my assumptions.

To mitigate potential biases, I have actively sought the perspectives of formerly incarcerated scholars to engage with my inquiry. I have received invaluable support from Lucy Campbell (2024), a current PhD candidate whose work explores the haunting effects of incarceration. Campbell has written about her experiences of incarceration-related trauma, delving into the complex nature of post-incarceration freedom, conceptualising the prison as a 'haunting' presence. She describes her current state as existing in 'a liminal space between freedom and captivity' (Campbell, 2024, p. 325). We have discussed together the affects as experienced by teachers in prison settings; Campbell's insights have been instrumental in refining my understanding and ensuring that my interpretations are grounded in lived experiences.

Earle (2014) and Warr (2016), academics in criminology who have both served time in prisons, highlight the importance of researchers to have lived experiences in prison spaces and recognise the deep impact of incarceration on the soul (Earle, 2014, p. 433). While I have professional experience as a teacher and manager within a prison setting, it is crucial to acknowledge that this differs significantly from the lived experience of incarceration. My role, although providing valuable insights, was that of both a privileged outsider, able to leave the prison environment at will, whilst also being an insider, therefore an insider-outsider, liminal position. This distinction represents a fundamental difference in perspective, power dynamics, and affective impact. Recognising this limitation in my experiential knowledge is essential for maintaining research integrity; ensuring prisoner realities are accurately represented and respected within the context of this inquiry.

2.5. Criminological ethnographic research

Prison researchers (Liebling, 1999, 2001; Jewkes, 2002; Wilson, 2004; Behan, 2014; Earle, 2014; Lumsden and Winter, 2014; Reiter, 2014; Carrigan, 2015; Rainbow, 2024) acknowledge the complexities inherent in their criminological fieldwork. This is in relation to the red tape that hinders entry into prison spaces but also the importance of ethical sensitivities, power relations, reflexivity, and the emotional impact on the researcher. In a carceral context where the 'powerful meet the powerless' (Lumsden and Winter, 2014), there are a myriad of juxtaposed affects.

In a co-authored paper on 'The emotional geography of prison life' (Crewe *et al.*, 2014), the authors emphasise the structured emotional rules in the prison as an emotional map, where staff are expected to suppress and regulate emotions, both positive and negative. They share excerpts from prisoners who perceive education spaces as 'intermediate zones', offering 'release [from] the behaviour bullshit, the language bullshit and the stories bullshit' (p. 60). Behan (2014) concurs that the prison classroom atmosphere fosters a sense of detachment from the prison, creating an 'oasis' (p. 24) where trust replaces control and students feel safe to express their individuality. Crewe *et al.* (2014) recognise that these zones require 'cultivation' from staff (p. 69), placing the responsibility therefore on teachers to create atmospheres distinct from the rest of the prison.

Crewe *et al.* (2014), explain that prison education spaces embody a distinct 'philosophy', where the expected power dynamics are momentarily suspended. For teachers, enabling this atmosphere requires a form of activism or resistance; often for those that control the prisoners, the use of kindness and care can be seen as a form of weakness (p. 65). The challenge lies in sustaining balance between activism and pedagogy, while teachers navigate the dynamics between the institution and prisoners. Crewe *et al.* (2014) suggest that prison staff (including teachers) can subvert these powers by embodying 'care' (p. 69). However, this therefore lays significant responsibility on teachers. The authors' exploration of emotional connection and the complexity of prison space challenges the notion of prisons as mere settings, but as a place which determines the social practices and therefore *affects* individual experiences (Moran, 2016). Prison research is therefore inherently intertwined with the researchers' emotions, permeating their daily lives, and influencing their perceptions (Schlosser, 2021). Despite the expectation of objectivity, researchers may struggle in this sensitive topic to separate their own agency.

Liebling (1999, 2001, 2016) established the Prison Research Centre at the University of Cambridge, offering insiders' perspectives within prison research and advocating for innovative approaches. Liebling (2001), emphasises that researchers must be 'affectively present as well as physically present' (p. 474) in carceral environments to truly understand the situated meanings and emotions at play. She contends that these *affects* should be central to the analysis rather than in the background, thus encouraging productive knots in the research process, challenging the notion of complete objectivity. Liebling (2001) recognises that researchers need to draw on their 'personal, artistic, emotional, human resources' (p. 474) on bodies of knowledge which lie beyond 'traditional' research approaches, an aim of this inquiry through my use of creative methods (explained in Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

However, this emotional investment by researchers in prisons, should be undertaken with caution as Rainbow (2024) notes, the affective impact of criminological research has historically been ignored, due to the risk of the researcher focusing too much on their own mental health (p. 73). To address this, she has developed advice that I have taken on board to ensure my own wellbeing alongside that of my participants:

'Be prepared that deeply personal interviews can raise difficult ethical and emotional responses, some of which may be linked to your own personal experiences in ways that can be challenging... Understand the signs of vicarious trauma and seek out support if needed' (Rainbow, 2024, p. 73-74).

Jewkes (2014) highlights that prison spaces are 'spatially and temporally defined' (p. 388) making prison research unique in that it is impossible to detach oneself from the experiences. Autoethnography therefore emerges as a crucial tool to complement the research data, enriching analysis (Jewkes, 2014). The inclusion of personal memos documenting my affective experiences within the prison will therefore be key in disentangling the outcomes of the inquiry (chapter 11). Jewkes argues that women researchers in men's prisons are more adept at recognising and documenting the oppression caused by masculinity in these environments (Jewkes, 2002). This consideration of being a woman in a prison space brings to the foreground issues of power dynamics, particularly through awareness of clothing choice and perceptions of vulnerability or safety. See liminal Chapter XX for further complexity related to my own experiences of a female researcher in the prison space.

Female prison researchers, Fransson and Johnsen (2015) emphasise the importance of considering emotional experiences when conducting ethnographic research in prisons. Their Deleuzian lens highlights the impact of affect and sensations on female researchers' bodies, particularly in male prison settings: 'I'm seldom as aware of my gender as when I am in male prisons' (Fransson and Johnsen, 2015, p. 187). They share their experiences of what can be *felt* in the body: 'When we enter the prisons, we notice anxiousness in our tensed muscles... these feelings tell us something about the context and about us as prison researchers' (p. 189) thus, the bodily sensations one experiences provide insight into the environment.

Anita Wilson (2004), in her influential work on literacy practices in prison education, shares her experiences of ethnographic research in male prison spaces. She highlights the difficulties and intricacies of prison education spaces which often contradict those of the outside world: 'practitioners may not always be well prepared for the transference of their educentric moves to an unfamiliar and complex learning environment' (p. 195).

Wilson (2004) introduces the concept of 'third space' as a model for understanding the unique educational environment. She explains that the third space in prison education emerges as a distinct realm where the institutional norms of the prison, the cultural influences of outside and the pedagogical practices of traditional education intersect and transform (Wilson, 2004). The third space facilitates a fluid learning environment that challenges the rigid boundaries typically associated with both prison and educational settings.

'Practitioners are caught in the no-man's-land between policy and people. On the one hand they are obliged to conform to government initiatives- on the other they are in daily conflict with people for whom such initiatives may hold less weight... they are servants to two masters' (Wilson, 2004, p. 194).

Wilson in her discussion of third space draws upon the seminal works of Bhabha (2004). Bhabha's postcolonial theory of third space as an ambivalent site of cultural hybridity resonates with Wilson's observations, suggesting that the prison classroom becomes a place where conflicting identities, those of prisoner-learner and in my context teachers, are negotiated and reimagined.

In this light, the prison education third space can be understood as a space where the experiences of incarcerated learners and teachers interact with the perceived restrictions of the prison

environment and the conceived notions of education, creating a unique spatial practice that fosters both resistance and opportunity.

2.6. Carceral Geography

The geographical sub-discipline of 'carceral geography' explores socially constructed places and spaces of incarceration (Moran, 2013, 2016; Moran, Gill and Conlon, 2016; Turner, 2016; Jewkes and Laws, 2021). It investigates the architectural and spatial features of carceral spaces (not exclusive to prisons), as well as the social constructions surrounding them, questioning their impact. This field acknowledges the variability of boundaries and borders, exploring the liminal spaces between them.

'The prison, put simply, is a technique of bordering - of creating a defined pocket of space - set out by the state' (Turner, 2016, p. 31).

In Turner's quote above, she recognises the liminality of stratified spaces such as classrooms within prisons. Education spaces have multiple characteristics and feelings attached to these, but they are governed by the prison regime. By looking at these through a geographical lens, researchers are making visible that which is normally cloaked, questioning the notion of binaries such as inside/outside. This helps one to recognise that carceral spaces have boundary traffic (Moran, 2013) including teachers and prison officers who can transgress the space.

The field of carceral geography acknowledges the distinct nature of prison as a 'space that differs – physically, temporally, and emotionally' (Jewkes and Laws, 2021, p. 395). The impact of this prison space on prisoners has been recognised in carceral geography literature but the impact on teachers and their practice remains understudied.

Lunn, McNeil and Wermers (2018) describe prisons as something unimaginable to those who have not experienced it. They acknowledge that for those working inside prisons, the affect of constant 'acts of waiting' and 'the hyperpresence of violence and systematic incompetence, corruption and intimidation' (p. 271) must impact prisoner as well as teacher experience. Further perpetuating the notion of the previously discussed third space (Soja, 1998; Bhabha, 2004; Wilson, 2004). Lunn *et. al's* work explores how those incarcerated negotiate their identities and aspirations within a 'queer third space of radical possibility at the blurred margins of our shared humanity' (p. 277). They encourage further research to explore how one transcends the confines of incarceration 'while enduring the

constant barrage of dehumanisation and indoctrination of normativity' so that their experiences do not lead to a 'paralysis of hope' (Lunn, McNeil and Wermers, 2018, p. 285).

While Lunn, McNeil and Wermers (2018) work focuses primarily on prisoner experience, my inquiry extends their conceptualisation of prison's third space to examine how teachers navigate similar tensions of dehumanisation and hope. Through investigating the material-affective entanglements of prison education, this research reveals how teachers both resist and are shaped by the institutional forces Lunn *et al.* (2018) describe, while striving to maintain educational possibilities within these constraints.

Recent work by Turner, Moran and Jewkes (2022) emphasises the significance of atmosphere in shaping experiences. They stress the need to consider how tangible and intangible factors influence sensory and emotional engagement. This includes social interactions, temperatures, colours, physical space, sounds, and material structures. For prison teachers the *affects* of these are inescapable, and the impact on their efficacy and wellbeing may not be immediately obvious.

Turner *et al.* (2022) draw on the work of Shefer and Liebling (2008) who look at the specific business-like atmosphere of private prisons (from where my research is drawn) with implications for staff-prisoner relationships. Turner *et al.* (2022) recognise that prison spaces, whether designed for punishment or transformation, are equally used as power tools to maintain order within prisons; 'There is a sensory politics to space, where atmospheres harness a multitude of senses to govern or induce behaviours' (p. 8). They conclude that further study of the impact atmosphere may have, can further 'stretch the ontologies that foreground much of prison scholarship' (p. 15).

Educational spaces provide sanctuary for many prisoners, offering respite from the stresses of incarceration. While prisons prioritise security over education, these spaces offer a refuge free from the hierarchical structures enforced by prison officers, as consistently documented by multiple researchers and prisoners themselves (Behan, 2014; Crewe *et al.*, 2014; Malakki in Ginsburg, 2019).

Turner, Moran, and Jewkes (2022) concur that these educational spaces may offer a distinct atmosphere compared to other areas within the prison. Through investigating teachers' material-affective experiences, my research reveals the complex ways in which they simultaneously create these spaces of sanctuary while negotiating the ever-present tensions between education and security, demonstrating how the refuge of education is continuously produced through daily practices.

Cohen and Dalke (2019), writing as teachers with experience in prison spaces, recall how those on the 'outside' are curious about that 'queer space', asking 'What is it like in jail? What do you do there?' They poignantly share how they 'tell, but don't tell' (p. 41), recognising that outsiders can never fully comprehend the insider experience. How could outsiders understand that 'Here a spoon is a spoon is a spoon. There, a spoon is a weapon. You need to think about things you would have no reason to think about anywhere else' (Cohen and Dalke, 2019, p. 51). They also identify prison classrooms as 'some of the hardest, most unanswerable, and vulnerable places' (p. 247). They weave within their chapters the confrontation of vulnerability and trauma within the spaces as 'a shared precarity' (Cohen and Dalke, 2019, p. 263) between prisoners and staff, a concept I will explore further in this inquiry.

This shared precarity extends beyond human interactions to encompass the physical and more-than-human elements of the prison environment. Cohen and Dalke's (2019) observations of birds as transgressors of prison geography offer an illustration of how boundaries are both enforced and breached:

'We are in a medium-security facility... it's a transitional space. Though transitional does not necessarily feel transitory, even for those of us who arrive at 1 pm and leave at 3:30 pm... the jail itself feels like a kind of limbo, a state of in-between, as during shift change when everyone freezes in place. You wonder how the birds skittering at the edges of hallways enter and exit these windowless spaces' (Cohen and Dalke, 2019, p. 48).

Their observation of how non-human actors traverse and transgress prison boundaries helps frame how this inquiry considers the material-affective entanglements that challenge traditional conceptualisations of prison space.

Marti (2023) urges a departure from traditional power-resistance frameworks in prison studies, focusing instead on space, time, and embodiment; shifting from humans as being central *in* a space, instead to consider non-human actors that structure embodied experiences *with* a space. Education, a crucial component of the prison space, operates within prisoners' spatio-temporal framework, shaping the carceral ambiance (Marti, 2023). Sibley and van Hoven (2009) similarly characterise the prison regime as a rigid spatial-temporal routine. Marti (2023) recognises that the mundane aspects of prison life should be considered equally within research of these spaces. This will enable a broader

understanding of the materiality of prisons and the ‘ambiance’ that is produced by its everyday regimes and rhythms (Marti, 2023, p. 95).

Beauchamp (2010) when drawing on her experiences as an art teacher in prisons, shared examples of the prison entering her mind in the evening; causing her to dream of the space. The prison therefore permeates its boundaries through its presence in dreams or nightmares. The permeation can be linked to the concept of hauntings (Ahmed, 2004; Gordon, 2008; Derrida, 2011) as explained by formerly incarcerated academic Campbell (2024), further highlighting the shared precarity of experiences between teachers and prisoners. I will explore the concept of hauntings and permeation in relation to how prison teachers may carry experiences home, reflecting on the lingering impact of carceral environments beyond their professional roles.

Stuit, Turner and Weegels (2024) look specifically at the *textures* of carceral worlds, importantly highlighting that carcerality is multiplicitous:

‘Both an infrastructure *and* an experience, both a material *and* immaterial manifestation, both a lived reality *and* a metaphor for feelings of entrapment’ (p. 3).

Using these entanglements of space, time and matter in the appreciation of the carceral experiences of teachers will be vital in my understanding of the affective impact it can have on them.

Weegels in Stuit et. al. (2024) recognise the lasting effect on people who engage within carceral settings; ‘carcerality reverberates sensorially and diffracts across peoples’ relations’ (p. 8) naming these ‘carceral reverberations’ as affects of being in that space. The reverberations of violence may extend well beyond its ‘situated enactment’ (p. 79), embedding into the minds and bodies of those subjected to them. Weegels argues that these affects stay in the ‘memories, joints and ligaments, nightmares and pits of churning stomachs.... permeating people’s bodies and decisions by way of the fear, paranoia and stress’ (p. 79). Whilst their focus is on the impact on those incarcerated, I will discuss throughout this inquiry that these affects are comparable to the experiences of teachers in that space, who have endured similar impacts despite them not being the intended receivers of these penal punishments.

Carceral geography offers a crucial lens for understanding the complex, multifaceted nature of prison spaces and the impact on all those engaging with them, including teachers. This field highlights the liminal, atmospheric, and affective dimensions of these environments, emphasising how they shape experiences beyond physical confinement. For educators in prisons, these spaces present unique challenges, furthering the need for my research into teacher experiences in carceral spaces.

2.6.1. Soundscapes in prisons

Attention is increasingly being paid to the acoustics in prison spaces, as the noises and loud sounds of prisons become recognised as agents in the experiences of those incarcerated or entering prisons for work. Prisons are inherently noisy environments (Jewkes, Crewe and Bennett, 2016) characterised by routine sounds such as announcing mealtimes, locking of cells and gates, keys jangling, radio call outs, shouts, screams, singing and whispers. Wener (2012) emphasises how the sounds reverberate within a prison environment, amplifying the inescapability. While scholars have explored the effects of prison sounds on prisoners and prison officers (Wener, 2012; Jewkes, Crewe and Bennett, 2016; Rice, 2016; Turner, 2016; Herrity, 2019; Herrity, Schmidt and Warr, 2021; Marti, 2023) there has been limited consideration of the impact on teachers working in these spaces.

Herrity (2019) in her research with prison officers found soundscapes deeply affected the prison officers' ability to work effectively. She found that the noise of the radios was particularly contentious when they were trying to focus and talk with prisoners: 'the stream of information coming through the radio communications constituted a sensory overload making it more, rather than less difficult for staff to effectively operate' (p. 133). The use of the radios is bound up with processes of security and surveillance and is therefore a marker of power. Teachers must wear a radio for their own safety as they are often alone with prisoners and as I found first hand, the constant distraction of the radio traffic impeded my ability to concentrate in the moment. Herrity (2019) noted that some people working in the prison may be able to acclimatise but were 'far from immune' (p. 114) to the sound environment and rhythms of the institution, with some feeling it was a danger if you acclimatise too much as it was a sign of acculturation.

Rice (2016) explores how music can hold significant importance for incarcerated individuals, aiding emotional transitions and serving as a means of escape from prison noises. However, the use of music in prisons also reflects power dynamics, with radios playing music stations often used as an

incentive for good behaviour in classrooms. Yet, loud music from cells can be perceived as aggressive, particularly when the lyrics express misogyny, intimidating female staff. Despite this, officers and teachers may permit music to play to aid control, allowing prisoners to assert dominance and compliance through music (Rice, 2016). Sounds reiterate the permeability of prison spaces, recognising that they are perhaps not as boundaried as their visual appearance suggests (Rice, 2016). I will explore the resonance of the prison soundscape, that might stay as affects with teachers, as they traverse the prison spaces.

2.7. Foucault's influence

Foucault's discussions of prisons (Foucault, 1982, 1991, 2015) are crucial to any study of carceral space. As a post-structuralist, Foucault found resonance with the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari, which are foundational to this inquiry. His affinity is evident in the prelude to *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983) where he acknowledges their 'abstract notions of multiplicities, flows, arrangements, and connections, yield answers to concrete questions' (p. xii). Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari's work is not extensively reviewed in this rhizomatic-literature-entanglement but is instead operationalised throughout the research process as an analytical tool. While Foucault's work influences the diffractive analysis, his concepts are discussed here to allow better understanding of how power circulates carceral spaces in subtle yet pervasive ways.

2.7.1. Panopticism

Foucault's analysis (1991) of Bentham's panopticon explores power dynamics in surveillance, relevant both within prisons and society. However, the oversimplification of the panopticon can obscure the intricacies of carceral relationships; particularly the power relations between those who work in carceral spaces, and those on the 'outside' which are far more complex than the panopticon can portray (Lambert, 2006; Moran, 2016). Foucault suggests that even staff are confined by its rules (1991); he likens the prison to 'a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power as well as those subject to it' (p. 14). Teachers in prisons may feel a constant surveillance, overtly through security measures and subtly through educational expectations like Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This complexity, and the challenges of surveillance for teachers, will be further explored in participant interviews.

2.7.2. Power and resistance

Foucault's concept of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1990, 2015) explores how power *shapes* knowledge, making individuals subjects of power. Foucault's insights on power and resistance provide a critical framework for analysing power dynamics in prisons. Understanding how teachers resist and challenge power, sheds light on the complexities of their roles in navigating carceral environments.

Foucault's concept of biopower (Foucault, 2015) is also particularly relevant to the context of prison education. Biopower refers to the ways in which power is exercised over populations through the regulation and control of bodies, health, and life itself. In prison education, biopower manifests in the ways that education is used to shape and manage the prisoner population. For instance, educational initiatives may be framed as rehabilitation efforts, aimed at employability and reintegration into 'normal society' upon release. This approach aligns with biopower's focus on optimising the capabilities of the population. Teachers in this context become agents of biopower, tasked with implementing curricula that aims to 'reform' prisoners. However, this role can create tension for educators who may see their purpose as empowering prisoner-learners rather than controlling them, highlighting the complex interplay between education, power, and resistance in the prison system.

Crewe (2009) identifies education as a form of power within prisons. He argues that completion of mandatory courses such as English and maths is an additional power the prison holds through the need for compliance and prisoner records, affecting probation reviews and release dates. Teachers are therefore arbiters of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1982), yet themselves are affected by their own immobility within prisons; which potentially hinders career progression and innovation in their educational practice. However, as explored in Chapter 1, this power dynamic is multidirectional. While education functions as institutional control, it simultaneously offers prisoners a vehicle to gain relative freedom and agency. The completion of specific qualifications enables access to work opportunities, shifting the power balance somewhat in prisoners' favour. Education thus embodies a paradoxical role, reinforcing institutional power whilst providing tools for prisoners to navigate and potentially transform their circumstances.

Warr (2016) as a criminologist with lived experience of incarceration, believes that all prison spaces, regardless of their intended interactivity, are fundamentally charged with power relations. He argues

this is influenced by the 'disciplinary discourses that permeate the prison' (Warr, 2016, p. 19). I am interested in this inquiry to know how teachers might feel affected by this power, and what they might do to perpetuate or resist this.

Foucault's comments on power and resistance are vast and varied throughout his writing years, and with diverse interpretations of his work, it is difficult to give one definition of these terms as they shift and morph over time. In a post-structuralist view, Foucault sees power and resistance as inseparable from one another, explaining, 'where there is resistance, there is power' (Foucault, 1990, p. 95), yet in the same passage, Foucault explains that resistance is 'never in a position of exteriority to power'. Therefore, the two are intertwined within the same relational mix; resistance is an element of power itself. This intricate interplay between power and resistance provides a useful framework to explore the complex dynamics in prison education settings, where teachers navigate their inherent power and the powerful structures of the carceral environment while simultaneously trying to enact a transformative educational praxis.

According to Foucault, resistance can be seen not as a singular major act but an ongoing process which is constantly present within a set of minor power relations or subtle fabrications (Foucault, 1991). Foucault's ideas around resistance emphasise the importance of a collective agency, rather than singular agency in shaping power relations to enact change. This may be through small, everyday acts of resistance that teachers enact to challenge existing power structures.

Allred and Fox (2017) concur that power and resistance are 'dual fluxes' that are evident in all assemblages and encounters but that one should not be so interested in how power or resistance is presented as an affect, but that one should be concentrating on 'the capacities that these affects produce' (Allred and Fox, 2017, p. 16). In other words, how do these concepts impact the everyday engagements between people, things, and social materialisations in the prison?

In prison education, resistance involves teachers challenging control of the prison officers, making lessons enjoyable, and transforming the prison environment through care. This could also include challenging policies and practices that limit the autonomy of teachers in their advocacy of education as a freedom. Foucault's (1991, 1998) concept of resistance highlights the importance of teachers as part of the multiple power relations in prisons, furthering the visualisation of this as a complex knot of relations.

However, this can also be viewed through Foucault's (1991) perspectives on punishment, where prison activities themselves become instruments of punishment rather than relying on direct corporal punishment. Foucault articulates this transformation:

'As a result of this new restraint, a whole army of technicians took over from the executioner, the immediate anatomist of pain: warders, doctors, chaplains, psychiatrists, psychologists, educationalists; by their very presence near the prisoner' (Foucault, 1991, p. 11).

This quote demonstrates how prison education exists within a disciplinary framework where various professionals, including teachers, have replaced direct physical punishment with more subtle forms of control. Within the prison system, teachers become part of what Foucault identifies as a dispersed network of 'technicians of power'. While historical punishment was enacted by a single figure (the executioner), modern prisons distribute this power across multiple professional roles, with education itself becoming part of the disciplinary apparatus. Foucault shows how this array of experts (Foucault, 1991) collectively diminishes individual responsibility while enhancing systemic control.

2.7.3. Docile bodies and mobilities

Foucault's concept of docile bodies is instrumental in understanding power dynamics within carceral environments, including the experiences of both prisoners and teachers. Foucault (1991) examines how disciplinary mechanisms, such as surveillance and regimentation, shape individuals into docile bodies; obedient to authority. Within prisons, prisoners are obviously subjected to strict routines and surveillance, conditioning them to conform to institutional norms and become 'docile'. Similarly, teachers working in prisons are subject to these disciplinary mechanisms, with their movements and actions regulated by institutional protocols. Foucault's analysis reveals how power operates on all those in prisons through the 'normalisation' of behaviours (further discussed in the analysis chapters and Chapter XX) and the control of bodies within carceral spaces.

Foucault's (1991) analysis of mobility and immobility in prisons informs my walking methodological approach (further explained in Chapters 7 and 8) which captures participant experiences and the significance of movement within carceral spaces. Considering teachers' perceived freedom of movement, Foucault's concept of docile bodies and mobilities (1991) highlights how confinement extends beyond physical boundaries, affecting individuals socially, culturally, and psychologically.

2.7.4. Goffman's total institutions

Goffman's interpretation of prison space as a 'total institution' (Goffman, 1961) is equally worth noting in relation to this inquiry. The 'total institution' can be defined as a place where like-situated individuals are cut off from the outside world and society for a length of time. A prison is often assumed to be a total institution as the people within it cannot escape the force and structure of the prison regime. Goffman (1961) wrote of prison cultures as authoritarian, relying on power and a strict chain of command which enforces the rules, adhered by everyone within the total institution. He proposes that this culture seeps into the walls, the spaces, the policies, procedures, and enactments of prison staff. This therefore enforces the feeling of 'us' and 'them' meaning the teachers, in this context can also be othered and fall between this schema. The total incorporation of rules within the walls institutionalises the prisoners and staff through its rigorous administration; for the sake of order (Goffman, 1961). However, as Baer and Ravneberg, (2008) have discussed, this idea suggests a binary view of prisons as merely inside or outside, when the reality is far more complex.

2.7.5. Porous institutions

Crewe (2009) and Ellis (2021) both challenge Goffman's characterisation of prisons as total institutions, arguing that prisons are not as isolated and rigid as implied. Ellis (2021) instead, proposes the concept of 'porous institutions' (p. 175), suggesting that influences from the outside can permeate prison spaces. This is a useful concept through which to view prison education space. As permeation of the prison structure, prison teachers might often feel in-between prison and the outside, avoiding binary perceptions. This inquiry will explore how prison educators can disrupt the routine and regime of the prison, by enacting *care* despite institutional restrictions that might hinder this. For example, bringing in biscuits for the prisoners to celebrate their birthday; these 'minor' acts may have affective impacts that challenge the notion of a 'total institution' and bring some of the outside, in.

Despite the walls, gates and surveillance, the prison education space can be open; it is not 'impenetrable from society' (Ellis, 2021, p. 178) but teachers, new prisoners, and researchers might bring their cultural beliefs into the prison world, disrupting the flow of the space. Ellis (2021) also discusses the concept of frontstage and backstage identities in prison spaces, where prisoners and teachers may comply with rules on the surface, but behind the scenes they are privately rejecting the prison rules. This concept resonates with my positional navigation of the prison, permeating the

borders, complying on the surface as an education manager but pushing against the system, resisting from within (further discussed in Chapter 11).

2.8. Pedagogical approaches in prison education spaces

Prison pedagogy remains an under-researched concept demanding urgent attention (Castro *et al.*, 2018); while this inquiry does not directly explore pedagogical or andragogical practices with participants, understanding key frameworks like critical pedagogy, pedagogy of care, and trauma-informed approaches is crucial for contextualising how teachers experience and make meaning of their work in prison settings. These approaches influence not just teaching methods, but shape teachers' understanding of their role, their relationships with students, and their professional identity, all key aspects of teacher experience and praxis.

Szifris, Fox and Bradbury (2018) were commissioned by Novus (the largest prison education provider in England) to undertake research on the 'general theory' (p. 41) of prison education. The paper which summarises their proposed theories of prison education and findings of a literature review was written by academics with a criminological background. Their own conclusions identify that the lack of an educational perspective in the research was a 'problem':

'Education in prison is rarely on the agenda at educational conferences and rarely features in educational journals. Without the assistance of educational theorists, any theory of prison education will remain narrow and incomplete' (Szifris, Fox and Bradbury, 2018, p. 58).

Teachers' perspectives are not explicitly discussed in the paper, although they have consulted with 'Novus staff' and educational practitioners to develop their grounded theories. The three proposed theories of prison education were based on the 'hook' of education for prisoners, education as a 'safe space' and the importance of 'qualifications' (p. 41). The authors are considerate of prisoner education complexity and sympathetic to a more holistic approach beyond accredited qualifications. They highlight that the 'desired outcome [of education] can differ depending on the stakeholder' (p. 43). They suggest that the prison is focused on 'behaviour outcomes', the

government on 'recidivism' and the prisoners (and I would argue teachers also), are focused on 'personal development and growth' (p. 43).

The paper proposes that education provides 'a potential break from overarching prison culture' for prisoners (p. 50). However, it offers little detail on how teachers contribute to, or maintain this atmosphere, overlooking the effort required to create such an affectively 'safe space'. The paper concludes that 'with careful facilitation by appropriate staff' (p. 57), education can 'cultivate' a positive environment for prisoners. This finding highlights the significant impact educator 'care' can have on the affective atmosphere within prison education spaces. It also highlights the considerable responsibility placed on teachers, who are often tasked with fostering these environments without specific training on navigating or enhancing the emotional and relational dynamics involved.

Smith (in Lockard and Rankins-Robertson, 2018) when discussing 'Prison Pedagogies', shares that there is a prevailing belief that prison education facilitates rehabilitation and decreases recidivism rates. While this proposition holds some merit from a social scientific standpoint, framing education within this rehabilitative framework overlooks its potential for resistance. Instead, educators within the prison system are often co-opted into the role of agents of social control; tasked with making the institution more efficient in its objective of recidivism.

This tension between educational ideals and prison realities prompts questions about prison educators' motivations. Bayliss and Hughes (in Bennett, Crewe and Wahidin, 2008) explored this paradox in 'Understanding Prison Staff', finding that most student teachers became 'hooked' (p. 249) despite challenges like resource limitations and short-term contracts. Intrigued by teachers' commitment, they conducted focus groups to investigate if making a difference drove their enthusiasm. Their research revealed several motivational factors that sustained educators' dedication to teaching within these constrained environments, challenging conventional assumptions about prison education.

'I am highly motivated knowing that what I do can make a vast difference to someone's life, not all, but if what I do can make a difference to one, it is worthwhile' (Anne).

'But he thanked me and that made it all worthwhile ... Will I carry on? I've started now so I'd better finish! There is a very important job to be done. Who else would be crazy enough to do it?' (Sue).

(Bayliss and Hughes, 2008, p. 249).

It is clear in this small study that the motivation to transform student lives enables teachers to maintain enthusiasm despite the difficulties of teaching in prisons. The authors recognise that effective prison teaching approaches must move beyond passive knowledge transmission and instead embrace pedagogical methods that position prisoners as active participants in their own learning. With this approach, prisoners can engage in the learning process, constructing their own knowledge and reflective practices to assist with transformation.

2.8.1. Critical pedagogy

Rooted in the work of Freire (1986) and hooks (1994), critical pedagogy rejects the 'banking model' of education in favour of a dialogic approach that empowers learners to actively construct knowledge and critically reflect on their circumstances. This pedagogy aims to develop 'conscientization' (Freire, 1986), a critical consciousness that can lead to personal and social transformation. In the prison context, however, critical pedagogy presents a fundamental paradox: educators attempt to implement liberatory practices while navigating the inherent power imbalances, institutional constraints, and complex dynamics of the carceral environment.

Novek (2017) critiques current pedagogical approaches in prison education, noting their inability to address these complexities. She argues that transformative models such as critical pedagogy rely heavily on trust and equality; sentiments challenging to establish in carceral settings. Through autoethnography, Novek delineates the dual nature of prison education as both a burden and a gift, unravelling the paradox of rehabilitation within punitive systems. While Novek utilises Flores' (2012) neo-Freirean approach to jail pedagogy to facilitate greater human connection, her focus on practical guidelines overlooks the profound affective impact of the prison environment on educators themselves. This affective dimension is crucial because it reveals the emotional labour required of teachers who must reconcile their transformative ideals with institutional realities. The dissonance between the rhetoric of rehabilitation and the practice of incarceration may create not only pedagogical challenges but also personal ones for educators who enter these spaces with hopes of making meaningful change.

Milner and Bennett (2022) critique Novek's (2017) focus on reducing recidivism, arguing that prison education must address 'democratic ideals and contradictions' (p. 241) to disrupt reincarceration patterns. Through interviews with prison education decision-makers, they found that teacher-prisoner connections were crucial; humanising incarcerated individuals and recognising their need

for meaningful relationships is essential for effective prison pedagogy. One participant poignantly described this dynamic:

'...part of what's really important about working in a prison is constantly having the curiosity to investigate what you're [the teacher] doing there—why you're in the setting, you as the free world person. Because the students have seen a million of you come and go over the years, right? ... they don't see a lot of people come, show up, keep showing up, [and] keep showing up' (Milner and Bennett, 2022, p. 253).

This reflection highlights the emotional investment required of prison educators who must consistently show up, not just physically but emotionally, in a space where transience and abandonment are common experiences. Milner and Bennett emphasise that teachers in prisons are constant learners, confronting biases, misconceptions, privileges, and prejudices; they advocate for reflexivity, questioning the system and fostering curiosity about student needs. Rejecting the notion of context-neutrality; the authors advocate for 'disruption' instead (p. 259).

Castro and Brawn (2017) deepen this understanding by warning educators about the complexity of attempting critical pedagogies in prison spaces. They recognise the paradox of emancipatory education within institutions designed for confinement and punishment. The authors critique prison education providers who obsess over the 'faulty logic of reduced recidivism' (p. 101), arguing that this creates an environment where teachers are positioned in power dynamics that 'perpetuate relations of domination' (p. 103). This tension between emancipatory ideals and structural realities creates significant strain for educators who must navigate their own positionality while attempting to create authentic learning experiences. Castro and Brawn's conversation, between an educator and a prison learner, highlights the importance of reflexivity for prison teachers. They emphasise that challenges extend 'far beyond spatial constraints' (p. 115) to include the affective dimensions of how teachers and students relate within these spaces. Their concept of 'emplaced praxis' (p. 117) recognises that teaching in prisons is not just about adapting pedagogical approaches but about understanding how the 'emotional geography' (Crewe *et al.*, 2014) of the prison shapes all interactions within it.

The affective experiences of prison educators are further complicated by systemic pressures and institutional constraints. Scott (2013) emphasises the courage required to resist these pressures

while operating within them. Drawing on Freire (1986) and hooks (1994), Scott warns against objectifying prisoners in liberation efforts and highlights the constraints imposed by contractual obligations. These structural obligations often lead to the adoption of a 'banking model' (Freire, 1986) of education focused on an employability rhetoric, directly contradicting the transformative approaches many educators hope to realise. This loss of teacher autonomy, as Liebling (2016) notes, undermines the profession's integrity and renders teachers' efforts unrecognised. Beauchamp (2010) articulates the emotional toll this takes on educators:

'Whilst the more worthwhile things we tried to do, but which didn't count, went unrecognised, making a nonsense out of our professional lives... so the job became somehow fraudulent, a 'con', sterile, and soulless' (p. 274).

Beauchamp's language above, 'fraudulent', 'sterile', 'soulless', reveals the affective impact of working within a system that devalues the very practices educators believe are most meaningful. This dissonance between values and reality creates a form of emotional labour that can lead to disillusionment and burnout.

Fasching-Varner *et al.* (2014) extend this critique by emphasising how the monetisation of prison education has transformed the system, making financial considerations the 'central driving force' for decisions (p. 421). They acknowledge that within the 'oppressor-oppressed' paradigm, even well-intentioned educators must grapple with their complicity: 'You'll think of the good you mean to bring... and worry about the harm you might also cause as actors in the system who contribute to and benefit from the oppression' (p. 412). This echoes Foucault's (1982, 1997) concept of 'biopower', where positive social benefits are subject to precise controls and regulations that ultimately reinforce existing power structures.

The specialist issue of *Radical Teacher* (2013) further explores how prison educators battle with feelings of 'subversiveness' merely by entering carceral spaces: 'They, after all do not share the malign intent of the system and do not participate in its violence. They are benevolent ministers of opportunity' (Rafay, 2013, p. 14). This tension between seeing oneself as separate from the carceral system while simultaneously operating within it creates significant affective dissonance for educators who must reconcile their self-perception with their institutional role.

One of the most profoundly affective challenges for prison educators comes from confronting their own motivations and positionality. Ginsburg (2019), a professor in U.S. education policy and director of the Education Justice Project (EJP), critiques prison pedagogy from a critical perspective, warning against transformation discourses that risk exploiting prisoner-learners. She highlights the danger of 'exoticizing' incarcerated individuals' experiences, drawing parallels with the power imbalances inherent in Freirean critical pedagogy. Ginsburg's work brought forward the crucial insight from Mallaki (as discussed previously in this chapter), who asserted 'it's just not about you' to well-intentioned educators. This statement encapsulates the affective challenge at the heart of prison education: educators must confront the possibility that their desire to transform, help, or liberate may centre their own needs and narratives rather than those of their students. This realisation may be destabilising for educators who have built professional identities around making a difference.

The implementation of critical pedagogy in prisons thus reveals complex affective challenges at the intersection of education and incarceration. Educators must navigate not only institutional constraints and power imbalances but also their own emotional responses to the paradox of promoting transformation within a restrictive system. The concept of 'emplaced praxis' (Castro and Brawn, 2017, p. 99) emphasises the importance of recognising how the unique context of prison classrooms shapes the lived experiences and emotional responses of both teachers and students.

While the existing literature, predominantly from the U.S. context, provides valuable insights into the tensions prison educators face, there remains a significant gap in understanding the specific affective experiences of prison educators in England and Wales. This research aims to address this gap by exploring how prison educators navigate the emotional landscape of their work. By focusing on the affective dimensions of their experiences, this inquiry will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how educators respond to the contradictions inherent in their role. Rather than positioning prison education solely in terms of pedagogical approaches or outcomes, this inquiry centres the experiences of educators; exploring how they negotiate their ideals, identities, and emotions within the complex affective geography of the prison classroom.

2.8.2. Pedagogy of care

A pedagogy of care shares similarities with critical pedagogy in prison settings, as both emphasise relational and emotional engagement with students. However, while critical pedagogy focuses on

empowerment and challenging oppressive structures, a pedagogy of care centres on relations which are developed on trust. In carceral environments, the tension between care and control complicates both approaches, as teachers must navigate emotional engagement within the strict rules of the prison system.

The juxtaposition of security and care has been noted by Hamilton (2013) when exploring the etymology of the word *securitas*:

‘The word is transparent enough, featuring three distinct components: the prefix *sē-* (apart, aside, away from); the noun *cura* (care, concern, attention, worry); and the suffix-*tas* (denoting a condition or state of being). *Securitas*, therefore, denotes a condition of being separated from care, a state wherein concerns, and worries have been put off to the side’ (Hamilton, 2013, p. 5).

The focus on security often contradicts care principles, creating tension between prison educators’ ethical commitment to nurturing student development and the institution’s prioritisation of control and containment. A key aspect of this study is recognising the emotional labour teachers endure in resisting this tension; risking their livelihoods and potentially their freedom if found breaking the rules. This tension, created by strict governmental policies and laws, forces teachers to suppress their natural caring responses, contributing to what Morris (2021, p. 132) describes as the marginalisation of alternative ways of knowing:

‘The subversive tactics constructed as ethical subversion are necessarily relational and individualistic, supporting a pedagogy of care to challenge imperfect policy which conflicts with practitioner wellbeing and the care needs of children’ (Prisoners in this context) (Morris, 2021, p. 136).

Utilising a pedagogy of care, as proposed by Morris (2021), can support both prisoners and teachers in carceral settings. Drawing on Goffman’s (1961) ‘Total Institution’ theory, Wolf (2020) emphasises the dehumanising impact of prison environments and advocates for a pedagogy that fosters a sense of community and individual identity among students: ‘a total institution makes a person a number, void of self-identity’ (p. 214). She proposes a pedagogy of care to counteract this impact, exploring how teachers can elevate from being facilitators of knowledge to ‘human constituents of a learning community’ (p. 209). Wolf highlights the transformative potential of care in education to provide a

refuge from the harsh realities of prison life, concluding that education spaces provide refuge for prisoners via the care enacted by teachers, as has previously been found by criminologists (Crewe *et al.*, 2014; Liebling, 2016).

‘In the classroom, the students were able to leave the institution of prison behind for the two or three-hour block and were transported to another place. A place where they wanted to create a better life, and a place where the professor was able to show compassion and admiration, and know them personally, not just as a number in a cold harsh space... Instead of dwelling on the professors and teachers that don’t or won’t care, we must change the climate into one that is a warm, safe, and loving place’ (Wolf, 2020, p. 214).

The exploration of how care is enacted will be explored with participants in this inquiry, alongside consideration of why, as Wolf (2020) above suggests, some teachers and prison staff may care less. This will involve investigating the factors that inhibit care, such as institutional pressures, emotional burnout, or the influence of a disciplinary environments which prioritise control over compassion. Liebling critiques the ‘banking model’ (Freire, 1986) of prison education as it elevates compliance over the love of learning. Liebling (2016) draws our attention to the links between love and knowledge as a pedagogy to embrace within prison education, with a hope for vision and change.

Higgins *et. al.* (2024) in their study on ‘(Dis)compassion and Emotive Dissonance in Prison Work’ conducted focus groups with prison officers to emphasise their operational need to suppress and hide true emotions (as also found within the Crewe *et. al.* 2014 study). They found that the complexity of feeling and paradox between care and incarceration, can be linked to affect, leading prison workers to ‘experience estrangement or alienation regarding their emotional selves’ (p. 4). This may also align to the teacher experience, as they navigate the carceral terrain and maintain professionalism. Interestingly the participants in Higgins *et al.* (2024) study, framed their emotional labour as ‘mechanical’ (p. 1218); linked to additional paperwork and protocols that had to be adhered to in the instance of a violent occurrence such as self-harm or death in custody. A paradox occurs as this leads staff to feel guilty both when they *do* care (because it goes against institutional and structural expectations) and when they do not care (because it goes against social expectations). This contradictory affect is therefore difficult to work through and led to prison officers in the Higgins study to experience an ‘emotional conundrum’ (p. 1223); a disconnect between how they feel and how they *should* feel, leading to a dissonance that I will explore with teacher-participants.

The concept of 'care ethics' as explored by Hutchinson (1990), who was writing in the context of nursing, is important to consider from a pedagogical stance in prisons. Hutchinson (1990) saw that nurses often 'bend the rules' (p. 3) slightly to meet what is perceived as the greater care needs of the patient, above any hospital policy or rules. Morris (2021) takes this further in her exploration of 'Love as resistance' in early years teaching practice. Using Foucauldian theories and analytical approaches, Morris recognises the risk involved, when an Early Years teacher chooses to break the rules for the sake of the child. Some examples of this 'subversion' may be giving a child more than expected physical contact, through hugging or carrying. I am interested in exploring how similar forms of 'subversion' might manifest in my research with prison teachers, particularly in the ways they may bend the rules to prioritise care for their students, despite institutional constraints (further explored in Chapter 11).

The moral expectations placed on teachers to navigate these pedagogical complexities are immense; I aim to examine how these intersect with institutional demands. While suitable pedagogies will not be the focus of the inquiry, they will be explored as essential components of the teacher experience and praxis.

2.8.3. Staff approaches to care in prisons

Tait's (2011) typology of prison officer approaches to care illuminates the conflict experienced by all prison staff, including teachers. Her framework identifies care as central to staff-prisoner relations while highlighting gender's influence on care approaches. Citing Zimmer (1986), Tait notes that stereotypical female traits of nurture may be unnecessary or detrimental, particularly in male prisons. Through fieldwork with prison staff, she developed a typology of caring styles: 'true carer, limited carer, old school, conflicted, and damaged' (Tait, 2011, p. 442).

These caring styles could equally be applied to prison teachers. The titles fit well with educator experiences, particularly the distinctions between those who might appear to care and those who genuinely care. Tait's description of 'conflicted' particularly resonated with my experiences; she explains that for this group of staff, care was all-encompassing and 'they possessed an unrealistic ideal of transforming individuals through their influence' (p. 447). This in turn had negative impacts personally on the staff, leading to their care responsibilities in the prison impacting their home life and them feeling 'demoralised' that they were not making the difference they expected to.

Paradoxically, Tait highlights that other styles of caring such as ‘old school’ in which staff saw care as a transaction between them and prisoners, enabled a safer prison. These caring approaches seemed more successful in enabling staff to maintain boundaries and ensuring they supported prisoners whilst also maintaining their wellbeing. This conflict of expectation and paradox of care and security is further discussed in the analysis chapters and highlights (as Tait states) that care is not simple in prison settings: ‘caring is a malleable concept shaped by personality, experience and the working environment’ (Tait, 2011, p. 449).

2.8.4. Trauma and Trauma-informed approaches

There has been a recent rise in trauma-informed approaches in educational settings as well as in prison officer training (Auty *et al.*, 2023), representing a well-intentioned shift toward prioritising care and support for students who may have experienced trauma. While there is widespread recognition of trauma-informed approaches in theory, there sometimes exists a gap between this understanding and its full implementation in everyday practice

‘While many staff used trauma-informed language, trauma-informed *practice* was limited. Many staff felt that they lacked the training and support to engage fully with the concepts they had been taught. Often, staff expressed a view that the prison was addressing trauma only superficially or was producing additional problems: We teach them how to build a bike [in a cycle workshop], but we don’t help them deal with their underlying issues. There is nothing therapeutic here. (Staff member)’ (Auty *et al.*, 2023, p. 727).

In prison education specifically, this approach signals a potential transformation in how institutions balance care with security concerns. Dutro (2019), a key author on centring trauma in pedagogy, however, argues this framework risks reinforcing a problematic saviour narrative, positioning ‘teachers as healers... while children [prisoners in this context] are the wounded’ (p. 30). This dynamic becomes particularly complex in prison settings, where it fails to acknowledge the collective and shared traumas that permeate these spaces. Van der Kolk (2015) explains how trauma is not just a psychological phenomenon but is also a physiological one, experienced in the body; it is associated with the nervous system. Often our bodies will hold onto the memory of trauma as an ever-present, lingering threat, and it is this affect that can be seen in the bodies of prisoners and felt in the atmosphere, when they enter a classroom for the first time since their schooling. Perhaps this trauma-affect is also present for prison teachers, a concept which I will unravel as part of this inquiry.

To better understand these dynamics, I turn to Lauren Berlant's (2011) critical examination of trauma as a concept. Berlant suggests that many experiences labelled as trauma might be better understood through the lens of 'systemic crisis' or 'crisis-ordinariness' (p. 10). Whilst trauma may be attached to an event or series of events which have a conclusion, crisis-ordinariness in contrast suggests an impasse or becoming-with (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988); the crisis that has no definitive ending in sight. Berlant observes that trauma 'holds you. It locates you at the knot that joins the personal and impersonal... You become like a small animal that, when picked up never stops moving its legs' (Berlant, 2011, p. 126). This visceral metaphor resonates powerfully with educators' experiences, particularly in challenging institutional settings.

Thompson and Jones (2021) apply Berlant's theoretical framework to contemporary education, describing how teachers operate within a metric-focused environment (which they term 'neoliberalism') which creates 'everyday, ordinary trauma' (p. 3). They paint a vivid picture of this reality: 'We have all been under a metaphorical table... with our bodies convulsing in response to traumas we do not even always understand because they are so intertwined with our everyday experiences' (p. 10). This description captures the embodied affect of educators' experiences within educational systems, where intensive surveillance, assessment, and evaluation can create a persistent state of 'crisis-ordinariness'.

The authors argue that this affect manifests particularly in women teachers' bodies, leading to anxiety and burnout. While their singular focus on neoliberalism might oversimplify complex systemic issues into binary logic, their insights parallel the challenges faced in prison education, where contractual obligations often prioritise assessment completion and metric-data, over meaningful student connections.

For prison educators, these challenges are amplified by what Thompson and Jones (2021) identify as a system that 'positions the teacher to focus on the *future* as a place where her value will be confirmed' rather than in present interactions with students (p. 90). This becomes particularly problematic in prison settings, where the constant 'churn' of the student population makes such future-oriented validation and the rhetoric of transformation with prison-learners nearly impossible. As Berlant (2011) notes, 'to interfere with the work of trauma means to refuse its temporality, its insistence on saturating the present' (p. 158). This insight suggests that prison educators must navigate not only the immediate challenges of their environment but also the temporal disruption that institutional constraints impose on their work.

Understanding these experiences through Berlant's framework of crisis-ordinariness rather than trauma offers a potentially more productive lens. While trauma suggests an inability to function, crisis acknowledges the possibility of persistence and resilience. This distinction becomes crucial in prison education settings, where educators must maintain hope and optimism despite challenging daily experiences. It suggests that while one must acknowledge the very real impacts of working within these constrained systems, one also needs to recognise prison educators' capacity for resilience and adaptation within the 'crisis-ordinariness' of a prison education setting.

2.9. Emotional Labour

Teaching in prisons can only be effective if it is accompanied by support for and recognition of the emotional labour, moral distress and trauma that teachers may experience in an environment that inherently challenges their praxis.

Moral distress arises when individuals feel constrained from acting in accordance with their ethical values due to external constraints or institutional barriers (Jameton, 1984). In the context of prison education, teachers may experience moral distress when faced with situations that conflict with their beliefs about justice, rehabilitation, or their obligations to students (Phillips, 2020). This aspect of the prison education experience will be explored in this inquiry, aiming to develop a pedagogical praxis that prepares teachers for these challenges.

Emotional labour involves managing emotions, both one's own and others', to meet job demands (Phillips, 2020). In a prison setting, this includes handling stresses, triggers, and prisoners' emotions, which can significantly impact teacher wellbeing and job satisfaction. Conforming to emotional labour expectations may lead to burnout (Phillips, 2020) and emotional dissonance. Hochschild (2012) explains that emotional dissonance occurs when workers are required to display emotions regardless of whether these correspond with their true feelings. Over time, she explains that this may lead to workers developing a sense of distress which can impact their sense of self and psychological wellbeing (Hochschild, 2012).

Higgins, Smith and Swartz (2024) recently explored emotional dissonance in prison work, focusing specifically on prison officers (yet arguably transferable to teachers). They highlighted the contradictory roles that require both care and control, leading to the manifestation of emotional

dissonance. The authors explain this term as a feeling that occurs where there are competing structures that lead to the need to suppress emotion. They identify the cause of this to be emotive paradoxes 'where contradictory feeling rules in prison work, shape conflicting emotional labour on feelings of (dis)compassion towards the incarcerated' (p. 2). The underpinning theory for the analysis relies on the work of Hochschild (2012) and her explanations of emotional labour and 'feeling rules'. The paper draws on a range of criminological studies that explore prison officer experiences which are distinct from teacher experiences yet have some similarities in relation to the emotional labour involved, for example the witnessing of self-harm scars. The authors share that the prison landscape is complex, and the emotional labour of staff is influenced by the institutional attitudes and practices as well as social expectations.

2.10. Unfoldings of rhizomatic-literature-entanglement

The range of complexities entangled with prison teacher experience is vast; the rhizomatic-literature-entanglement has shown the diversity of fields this doctoral inquiry touches upon. By crossing boundaries of carceral geography, prison politics, education and criminology, this inquiry creates opportunities to explore prison educator experiences in new ways. The use of a posthuman, postqualitative and a feminist (new) materialist lens discussed in the next chapter may assist in unravelling the complex knots and will be sympathetic to the ethical intricacies important to these experiences.

Chapter 3: Why postqualitative inquiry?

3.1. Introduction

The complex nature of affect within prison education demanded an approach that could capture its nuances and multiplicities. While working in the prison, I recognised the entanglement between participants' experiences, my own positionality, and the institutional structures that shaped our interactions. It became clear that traditional qualitative methods alone would not capture the embodied, relational, and spatially embedded nature of affect within the prison education context, where affects exist as dynamic flows between bodies, spaces, and structures rather than discrete entities that can be isolated and measured through conventional research approaches.

Postqualitative inquiry unfolded as a responsive methodological necessity rather than a predetermined choice; this approach evolved organically through my lived experience of the research context, adapting to the complexities I witnessed rather than being imposed as a pre-existing framework. The experience revealed the need for an approach that could honour the messy, entangled nature of affects, in ways that grounded theory, with its emphasis on systematic categorisation and theory building from data, would have artificially constrained or oversimplified.

3.2. What might postqualitative inquiry be?

Scholars may reject postqualitative inquiry because the question of 'what', in a Posthumanist and Poststructuralist paradigm (from which postqualitative inquiry gains its basis) suggests it can be pinned down as a fixed 'thing' and explained within the frames of reference that already exist; it is therefore not *what* it is that is the question in postqualitative inquiry but what it 'might' be. As St. Pierre states:

'The "what is" question, Plato's question, is essentialist and not poststructural. It assumes something already exists, that something "is," is stable, and so can be identified and represented. The "what is" question denies immanence, the not yet, the what is "to come" of poststructuralism' (St. Pierre, 2021, p. 6).

Unlike Plato, and arguably 'normative' ways of approaching research, the postqualitative approach is about the possibilities that 'might' become during the process. Postqualitative inquiry is centred on uniqueness, with each inquiry being actively different from the last. It may even be unrecognisable as 'research' established in the existing structures of social science (St. Pierre, 2021). There is difficulty in the labelling of any inquiry as 'postqualitative' as to do so is to agree with binary classifications of what research is, which is antithetical to its poststructuralist approach. In this chapter I will give an overview of criticism towards postqualitative inquiry, and argue my justification for adopting this approach, explaining how I will put it to work. I will therefore share my understandings of what postqualitative inquiry *might* be, and how this inquiry *might* be postqualitative.

There have been long held expectations of what social science research should be. An evolution of these methods has, more recently, enabled greater recognition of the hidden 'philosophical assumptions' (Creswell, 2013, p. 16) guiding the research to become more diverse and creative in its application. The emergence of postqualitative approaches particularly in education in the last twenty years (Mazzei and Jackson, 2012; Lather and Pierre, 2013; St. Pierre, 2014; Taylor and Hughes, 2016; Strom, 2018; Benozzo *et al.*, 2019; Braidotti, 2019) has been driven by feelings of restriction in qualitative studies, and a desire to critically challenge the limitations and the assumptions of what qualitative research *should* be. Thus, the critical response is a paradigmatic shift which acknowledges the limitation of social science research and seeks alternative ways to represent social realities (Hart and White, 2022).

Postqualitative inquiry has been led by a broader, cultural shift or 'ontological turn' fronted by the philosophies of Latour (Latour, 2005, 2009), the concepts of Foucault (Foucault, 1982, 1990, 1991, 2010, 2018), Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 1986, 1988, 2015), and more recent feminist theorists and philosophers including Braidotti (Braidotti, 2019a, 2019b), Haraway (Haraway, 2016) and Barad (Barad, 2003, 2007, 2014). This 'turn' leans towards poststructuralist philosophies that challenge fixed notions of boundaries in academia. Foucault specifically addressed this when questioning the use of linear and structural models that use methodology to 'tame the wild profusion of existing things' (Foucault, 2018, p. xvi). Foucault was thus arguing that the ordering of things, which is often overly complex, reduces our understanding of what they might be.

The foundation of postqualitative inquiry is to explore the wonderment of a phenomenon; the approach recognises the complex multiplicities that are encountered in social sciences and

emphasises a greater need for flexibility in research approaches. Postqualitative inquiry, therefore, avoids fixed categories and systematic methods to open new possibilities for understanding and engaging with this complex world; thus, being the right approach for this context.

3.2.1. St. Pierre

This chapter is heavily supported by the writing of St. Pierre (Lather and St. Pierre, 2013; St. Pierre, 2014; St. Pierre, 2018, 2021) from whom the term 'postqualitative inquiry' originally surfaced in the early 2000s. The approach was born out of her PhD, where she struggled to articulate methodological approaches influenced by poststructuralism. Following St. Pierre, I deliberately use the term 'inquiry' rather than 'study' to signal a philosophical mode of exploration unconstrained by conventional methodological structures and prescribed steps. In later years when discussing what might be next for the 'ontological turn' in qualitative research, she created the term postqualitative, which has, over the last twenty years, been 'put to use' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2013, p. 261) in a variety of guises. St. Pierre argues strongly that postqualitative inquiry is quite different to qualitative research, stating:

'A study that uses qualitative methodology cannot be postqualitative—the two approaches are incommensurable... So postqualitative inquiry is not another version of qualitative methodology, and it's not qualitative methodology with a twist' (St. Pierre, 2021, p. 4).

While I respect St. Pierre's influential stance on methodological purity, I disagree with her position of absolute incommensurability between qualitative and postqualitative approaches. Where St. Pierre insists on a fundamental ontological break, I propose instead a qualitative~postqualitative continuum that acknowledges their shared concerns with meaning-making while allowing for methodological fluidity. This perspective emerges from my prison education inquiry, where rigid methodological boundaries proved inadequate for capturing the messy realities of affective experiences. St. Pierre's insistence on complete methodological rupture, overlooks how researchers navigate complex research contexts where quantitative, qualitative and postqualitative approaches often blur and intermingle. My position acknowledges that research practices can embody postqualitative sensibilities while still employing aspects of qualitative inquiry; not as contradiction but as productive tension that generates new methodological possibilities.

This conflict of opinion is a natural progression of postqualitative inquiry as it is always in a state of *becoming* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988) (this concept is further explained in Chapter 4). It is *becoming* in relation to each inquirer that enacts it, as well as the concepts chosen, the philosophy drawn on, the theoretical perspectives, the methods, the research participants (both human and non) and the apparatus chosen (Gunnarsson and Bodén, 2021).

3.2.2. Deleuze-Guattarian influence on postqualitative inquiry

Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) *A Thousand Plateaus* is a catalyst for much of the thinking behind postqualitative approaches. The authors critique a conventional approach to research methods, instead suggesting researchers should create new ways of doing things rather than replicate old ways. This is referred to as 'mapping' rather than 'tracing':

'What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in on itself; it constructs the unconscious' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 13).

As a postqualitative inquirer and through a Deleuzian lens, I respect that one cannot always be sure in research, one cannot know what is real and what is not. I sit in a place of uncertainty where postqualitative inquiry allows the uncomfortable questions to be asked, for philosophising to occur, and the acceptance of not having definitive answers.

'What is being termed as *postqualitative research*, is an attention to methodology that returns to the question of what it would mean to use the uncertainty of qualitative research practices as a platform to explore the philosophical value of not being sure' (Snaza *et al.*, 2016, p. xxiv).

Utilising Deleuze and Guattarian philosophy in this inquiry has enabled me to recognise the complexity and instability of prison education settings. In seeing these multiplicities, I have realised the methods of both quantitative and qualitative research do not cater for these nuances. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari suggest alternative concepts such as assemblages and rhizomatic thinking which enable the multiplicity of knowledge, with new nodes appearing, as 'lines of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 9), terms which will be discussed in the next chapter.

My role is not to 'collect data', as that assumes that the phenomena, the social world, and environment of the prison can be refined, coded, and operationalised (Carlson, Vasquez, Anani and Romera, 2023). Instead, I do not focus on the subject (participants, human and non) as the 'truth', but that the encounter with the subjects creates new possibilities and potentialities, always *becoming* in a 'plane of immanence' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 266), further explained in Chapter 4.

There are many Deleuze and Guattarian terms used within postqualitative inquiry such as becoming and the plane of immanence, which may seem complex; this is because the nature of Deleuze and Guattari's work leads to multiple understandings and possibilities. The reader can engage with these words and the affects they might have, 'plugging' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 8) them into prior or immanent readings, encounters, thinking, and affects. The writers themselves suggest below that we should not read into these words too deeply but, instead, only let through what needs to permeate your thoughts in that moment:

'Something comes through, or it doesn't. There is nothing to explain, nothing to understand, nothing to interpret. It is like plugging into an electric circuit' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 8).

Deleuze and Guattari intentionally resist definitive explanations of their concepts, embracing ambiguity and multiplicity, however, the context of prison education requires articulating how these philosophical tools operate within this inquiry. Chapter 4, therefore, provides essential terminological grounding. Strom (2018) notes, that such definitional boundaries are helpful but are 'not very Deleuzian' (p. 104) therefore representing a tension with Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical approach, which recognises that meaning always remains fluid and context-dependent. This tension between conceptual openness and methodological clarity becomes a productive site of inquiry rather than a limitation.

3.2.3. The entanglement of feminist (new) materialisms

Feminist (new) materialisms are significantly entangled with postqualitative approaches as they provide a valuable framework for thinking beyond accepted truths and traditional representational logic (St. Pierre and Jackson, 2014). There is a growing interest in exploring how language and materiality can be understood and engaged with in ways that go beyond representation (Snaza et

al., 2016, p. xxiv). By adopting a feminist (new) materialist perspective, I can challenge and question the assumptions that have dominated the field of social studies and education. This approach recognises the intricate relationship between researcher and data within an assemblage, acknowledging that they are entangled and inseparable.

One key concept that feminist (new) materialisms bring forth is the spatiality of feeling (Thrift, 2008). This notion emphasises the importance of affect and the affective responses when entering unfamiliar territories, be that the classroom, an encounter with someone new or in the case of this inquiry, the daily unknowns of the prison education space. Materialist theory places significance on how affect becomes part of the researcher-data assemblage through the process of movement and intra-action (Barad, 2007) thus creating new relational fields in pedagogical spaces which appreciate the impact of humans and more-than-humans in that space. Further concepts from both Barad and Haraway will be explained in the context of this inquiry in Chapter 4.

While labelled 'new' in academia, feminist materialism echoes Indigenous knowledge systems that have existed for millennia. Indigenous wisdom across cultures has long recognised the relational qualities and agency of all beings. For example, Māori understanding of entities having qualities 'by virtue of their relational context' (Te Kawehau Hoskins in Taylor and Hughes, 2016, p. 79) predates and aligns with Barad's (2007) 'agential realism'. Contemporary theorists like Barad and Haraway build upon Indigenous ways of knowing, historically marginalised in Western academic discourse (Rosiek, Snyder and Pratt, 2020). I acknowledge these Indigenous roots respectfully and will further incorporate these wisdoms in my methodology (Chapter 6). By integrating Indigenous perspectives, we become more attentive to injustices in marginalised communities and the significance of materiality, recognising the importance of all matter, mattering (Barad, 2007). This approach serves as activism emphasising care, relations, and social justice.

3.2.4. Posthumanism as part of the assemblage

The posthuman is 'a work in progress. It is a working hypothesis about the kind of subjects we are becoming' (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 2). Posthumanism contributes to postqualitative inquiry, challenging human-centric approaches and embracing creativity, through *other* types of knowing. It questions boundaries between humans and more-than-humans, emphasising non-hierarchical relationality.

Drawing on Braidotti's (2019b) critical posthumanism, my stance rejects fixed ontological categories and embraces decentralised subjectivity. This theoretical orientation questions human

exceptionalism while acknowledging the agency and significance of more-than-human entities; the land, animals, material environments, and technological systems, as active participants rather than passive backgrounds in the research assemblage.

My use of *critical* posthumanism allows me to question the privileging of humans without rejecting human importance in this research. This stance reconfigures what ‘the human’ means, recognising humans as part of the wider intra-connected network of socio-political, material-discursive, nature-culture, human-non-human relations. I acknowledge humans’ entanglement with more-than-human agents such as space, sounds, birds, linguistics, policies, gates, and keys. This furthers qualitative research, ‘on a continuum that takes important insights from qualitative methodologies but slightly shifts the focus to include both human and nonhuman agency’ (Bodén, 2016, p. 49).

I utilise both posthumanism and feminist (new) materialisms as method, enabling a conceptual approach which allows ethics, ontology, and knowledge (epistemology) to be inextricably interwoven (Murriss, 2021) leading to Barad’s (2007) concept of ‘ethico-onto-episteme-ology’ (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4). Braidotti (2019b) calls this immanent research approach ‘conceptual creativity’ (p. 33), suggesting greater theorising and questioning of research endeavours to find possible solutions.

3.3. Critical engagement with postqualitative inquiry

There are many criticisms of postqualitative inquiry; I will acknowledge some of those arguments here and share how I will alleviate those concerns. Some critics of postqualitative approaches suggest that this approach is too vague, and it dismisses systematic rules (Greene, 2013) in favour of gut-feeling, but postqualitative scholars argue it does not mean an anything-goes approach (Gunnarsson and Bodén, 2021; St. Pierre, 2021).

Therefore, whilst postqualitative inquiry has been described as an ‘(un)methodology or anti-methodology’ (Gunnarsson and Bodén, 2021, p. 18), I prefer to see it as a ‘methodology-to-come’ (Lather, 2013, p. 635) where it is accepted that it will always be in motion. This invites the reader to think, feel and act differently with this inquiry to enable new transformative potentials.

‘A methodology that performs a “post” ontology is a matter of questioning while being in the midst, a matter of producing questions

out of entanglements, questions that are affirmative, experimental, ethical, and insistent' (Snaza *et al.*, 2016, p. xxiv).

Postqualitative inquiry invites the researcher to think differently about processes, recognising that the 'data' is not static but always moving and entangled with the self and other things. There is a turn away from thematic analysis, instead, the researcher can be uncomfortable *inside* the data, materialising with it, becoming-with it and thinking with it from differing subject positions (Lather, 2013). These interactions, or as Barad terms 'intra-actions' (Barad, 2007) with the data are the important aspects to focus on in the analysis (explained further in Chapter 4). It is the amalgamation of the methods (apparatus), methodologies, ethics and philosophies that enables a difference.

Postqualitative inquiry embraces 'lines of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 9) and resists systematic approaches, yet this poses challenges for researchers working within traditional academic frameworks. The departure from empirical methods can complicate the perceived legitimacy of the research in conventional academic discourse. The tension between postqualitative inquiry's resistance to systematisation and academia's expectations for methodological justification requires careful navigation. While this approach creates space for new ways of thinking and knowing, researchers must still address questions of credibility when working outside established empirical traditions. This tension invites researchers to reimagine what constitutes valuable scholarship rather than merely conforming to conventional notions of scholarly merit.

'The problem with this abandonment of empirical fieldwork is that Post Qualitative Inquiry (PQI) risks becoming a closed circle, an endless loop of philosophical exegesis that never breaks out itself to address the real world' (Aagaard, 2022, p. 316).

There is a growing body of educational researchers (Strom, 2018; Le Grange, 2019; Murriss and Osgood, 2022; Fox and Alldred, 2023) who feel aligned with the postqualitative field, desiring something new and creative but do not fully dismiss quantitative or qualitative research approaches. Lather (2013), drawing on Deleuzeguattarian thinking, describes postqualitative inquiry as 'a thousand tiny methodologies' (Lather, 2013, p. 635), it is here that I am aligned, in the acceptance of the unknown, yet not fully dismissing what is already known. Law's (2004) recognition that research phenomena are inherently complex and disordered supports this stance, suggesting that conventional methodologies, focused on order, risk missing experiential richness, particularly

regarding affect. By embracing methodological multiplicity, I create space for innovation while maintaining connections to established traditions, thus allowing me to engage with the affective dimensions of prison education phenomena that may resist understanding through singular methodological frames.

It is arguable that postqualitative inquiry must follow academic rules and norms for the protection of the participants and researchers, with rationale of the methodological processes and ethical rigour (Kuntz, 2021). My approaches do not therefore reject qualitative research protocols; if anything, postqualitative must forefront ethics and embrace a more-than qualitative approach, with greater theoretical and philosophical framing to justify the creative methodology. Thus, I disagree with some of the original postqualitative stances of rejecting conventional humanist approaches in qualitative research (St. Pierre, 2014). I believe re-framing postqualitative to have 'new' rules creates further boundaries and therefore reaffirms some of the perceived problems of quantitative or qualitative studies. It can also be argued that many of the approaches undertaken by self-proclaimed postqualitative researchers are not in fact 'new' but have been used in prior studies or in other Indigenous cultures.

As shared earlier, postqualitative approaches are entangled with posthumanism and feminist (new) materialisms, which by their nature should foreground *other* ways of knowing, but a criticism of postqualitative inquiry is that there is little recognition of philosophies that have existed for millennia in the global south. For example, the concept of taking the human out of the centre, aligns with many other philosophies including Ubuntu in South Africa, Taoism in China and Māori in Aotearoa (New Zealand) yet there is no clear homage to this in postqualitative writing (Le Grange, 2019). This therefore problematises the notion of seeking a 'new methodology for new times' (Lather, 2013, p. 638) as it fails to acknowledge that many of the approaches embraced, are not new (Greene, 2013).

Feminist writer Sara Ahmed (2008) criticises the postqualitative approach for enabling matter to have agency. She refuses to turn matter into an 'object or theoretical category' (Ahmed, 2008, p. 35). This critique of the feminist (new) materialism approaches used within postqualitative inquiry, shows that there are differing perspectives within the multiple strands of the field. Bhattacharya (2021) furthers this discussion and critique of postqualitative inquiry when it decentres the human, to argue that white, global-west scholars should be more concerned with the decentring, devaluing, and erasing of human life that has happened and continues to happen in academic research. She

also points out an apparent contradiction in postqualitative research: these scholars advocate for multidimensionality and reject methodology, yet simultaneously gather under a collective label, which is an act of categorisation. This creates an inconsistency since postqualitative researchers criticise traditional qualitative approaches precisely for their limiting and rigid practices of coding and categorising data (Bhattacharya, 2021, p. 183).

Ahmed (2008) furthers her criticism of feminist (new) materialisms by acknowledging that many of the key scholars in this field are white, hetero, cis, able-bodied women in academia (me included), who are privileging the theories and philosophies of white, dead men e.g., Foucault and Deleuze & Guattari. Foucault's overt discussions of being a gay man, perhaps alleviates some of this awkward feeling but his alleged and much argued sexual involvement with under-aged boys returns us to great discomfort. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge this position and to call out when it is uncomfortable, discriminatory and exclusionary of others.

Strom argues (2018) that the term 'postqualitative' and the literature that surrounds it is already exclusionary through the complicated jargon and sometimes convoluted language used; this is in antithesis to the original postqualitative stance which posits that language is insufficient (Aagaard, 2022). Thus, I have tried to ensure the language used is explanatory, sharing my explanations as new terms and concepts are encountered. However, it must also be understood that part of the journey, is to feel unsure, to squirm in the discomfort and to 'stay with the trouble' (Haraway, 2016). I would argue that many of the scholars who write and publish postqualitative approaches are at the high end of academia, in professorships and are therefore in a *safe* position to 'trouble' and push boundaries to try new things. But as a new researcher in academia, it is more difficult to justify the approach without having the backing of vast, prior experience in qualitative research to reject. I therefore lean on some safe spaces, and work within my limits as an early career researcher to create some minor-activism. I am 'becoming-earthworm' (Benozzo *et al.*, 2019, p. 91), to compost, agitate and aerate the soil for myself, and others who come after me, in a re-turning (Barad, 2014) to disrupt what is accepted as the norm.

Finally, a further criticism of postqualitative inquiry is that it does not focus on what contribution it might give to society, e.g., for the public good (Greene, 2013). This may well be due to the decentring of the human in the philosophical foundation, yet the premise of postqualitative inquiry

as discussed earlier, has been argued that one should ask what the research is *doing*, and what it can make possible, therefore I see this as an important aspect of the philosophy. This also aligns with my personal values of social justice and my responsibility as an educator. I will therefore consider the implication of praxis for prison educators, but in keeping with the postqualitative stance, the outcomes will be rhizomatic and immanent, with room to grow, change and develop according to whom and what encounters them.

‘The [post]qualitative inquirer who has prepared herself must trust herself and do the next thing, whatever it is—to experiment—and to keep moving’ (St. Pierre, 2018, p. 605).

Having critically engaged with postqualitative inquiry, acknowledging both its limitations and possibilities, I position my research within this evolving methodological landscape. I embrace the 'methodology-to-come' (Lather, 2013, p. 635) that allows for creativity and responsiveness to prison education phenomena.

3.4. Unfoldings of postqualitative inquiry

Postqualitative thinking shapes this inquiry; it is not used as a rigid methodological framework but as a responsive necessity born from the complex, entangled nature of prison education. While acknowledging criticisms of postqualitative approaches, including concerns about methodological rigour, exclusionary language, and Western-centric perspectives, I position my work within a qualitative~postqualitative continuum that resists absolute methodological ruptures. This stance embraces theoretical multiplicity through Deleuze-Guattarian concepts, feminist new materialisms, and critical posthumanism while respecting Indigenous ways of knowing that preceded these 'new' academic framings. By navigating these tensions productively rather than attempting to resolve them, this methodology creates space for the messy, rhizomatic nature of prison education affects to unfold in ways that honour their complexity. The approach allows for creative responsiveness to phenomena that resist conventional research frames, opening possibilities for transformation while maintaining ethical commitments to participant wellbeing and social justice in education.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Multiplicities: A Becoming-Framework

This chapter creates a theoretical plane that shapes this inquiry. I have chosen not to situate these philosophical contributions within the Rhizomatic-literature-entanglement, as these concepts actively create the conceptual framework through which this research is enacted. These ideas do not simply inform but are in becoming-with the inquiry, creating new assemblages of understanding. I will share here my understanding of Deleuze and Guattari's terms, as well as affect theory and the ideas of Haraway and Barad. These function as vital underpinning concepts for understanding the intensities and textures of prison education spaces.

4.1. Deleuze & Guattarian concepts:

Several of the concepts that underpin this inquiry, are drawn from the multiplicitous ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 1986, 1988). In the following section, I will introduce these in the context of this inquiry; they will be further iterated in the diffraction of the participants' experiences later in the thesis. The inquiry is therefore becoming-Deleuze-Guattarian as the reader moves through the chapters.

Many Deleuze-Guattarian ideas cannot be defined or categorised in a literal or linear fashion. They are formed within post-structural thinking; hence the idea is to avoid categorisation entirely. I therefore share the ideas in the orientation of the problem, to use the terms within an assemblage allowing for movements and relations; recognising that the philosophy can create the plane itself (Colebrook, 2010).

4.1.1. Plane of Immanence

Deleuze and Guattari's 'plane of immanence' (1988, p. 265), when applied to prison education spaces, offers a way to understand the field of possibilities that exist before structured thinking imposes limitations. In this context, a 'plane' refers to a conceptual field where forces, affects, and possibilities exist and interact before being organised into structured systems or categories. Unlike a physical plane, it's a conceptual space of pure potentiality where thought and experience exist in an unformed state before becoming actualised. In prison education, this plane represents the *pure*

potential before institutional constraints, curriculum requirements, and behavioural expectations shape teaching and learning practices. It is the space where affects flow freely between prison teachers, learners, and the environment without predetermined pathways or hierarchies.

For prison teachers, the plane of immanence exists beneath conscious thought, where pre-personal affects operate before becoming recognisable patterns or strategies, connecting to the concept of jail craft (Peacock, Turner and Varey, 2018) when staff working in prisons ‘craft’ their interactions with the people and space, responding through embodied understanding rather than deliberation. Understanding this tension between pure potential and institutional constraint explains why teachers may feel restricted despite sensing transformative possibilities.

4.1.2. Rhizome/rhizomatics

The rhizome concept in Deleuze-Guattarian philosophy provides a non-hierarchical alternative to tree-like structures. While trees grow centrally from a trunk, rhizomes spread horizontally with nodes emerging at various points, creating multiplicities and new pathways (see figure 4).



Figure 4: Rhizome drawing by the author, 2021.

In prison education research, this rhizomatic approach recognises interconnections between seemingly disparate elements, embracing complexity rather than pursuing linear truths (Colebrook, 2021). Burnard (2022) expresses that rhizomatic systems in educational contexts can continually intertwine 'to do something, to produce something rebellious' (p. 20), offshoots can develop 'lines of flight' in unpredictable directions, breaking old habits and generating new possibilities.

Hickey-Moody and Page (2016) describe rhizomatics adopted in a research context, as a practical approach that generates change, enables questions, notices happenings, and is always reinventing. They note that in arts practices, 'engagements with chance, accident, error, can enable material agency to shape work in ways that are explicit' (p. 170). This approach has been embraced in this inquiry through the entanglement of my textiles pieces, used in a rhizomatic way to inspire my thinking and writing.

A rhizome has asignifying ruptures (having the ability to continue because of local ruptures). This is replicated via the experiences of prison educators when they encounter institutional resistance to innovative ideas, they still create ruptures, despite these institutional blocks (as is evidenced in the analysis chapters). An example of this is teachers ensuring prisoners gain some form of access to education despite 'lock downs' in the prison, where prisoners are not able to leave their cells, teachers will visit them to 'check in' and provide them with work, 'through the cell doors'. Each of the teachers and the associated matter make small lines of flight, rupturing through the structures of prisons, contracts, and education policy.

This rhizomatic approach enables one to view prison education outside formalised hierarchies (Colebrook, 2021), highlighting how teacher experiences are not isolated phenomena. The rhizome represents educators who persistently resist through adaptability and interconnection. Approaching prison spaces rhizomatically reveals the multiple pathways and relations that exist beneath apparent institutional rigidity. Recognising these multiplicities can help to identify possibilities for practice that might otherwise remain hidden.

4.1.3. Becoming-

The Deleuze-Guattarian term '*becoming*', refers to a process of change or transformation that is immanent; it is therefore emergent, in contrast to 'being' which is static. The concept of becoming is

crucial to this inquiry as I am *becoming*-with the research, the participants (human and non), my writing and textiles.

In an educational setting the term *becoming* emphasises the transformational potential of teaching and learning. It challenges the notion of teaching as an individual task, instead seeing it as an assemblage that incorporates more-than the bodies of students and teachers but also the affective flows, and forces of the becoming-teacher (Strom and Martin, 2022) who are constantly in flux with the space around them.

The material world of the prison education space is in relation to many different things, which means that it is always in this process of *becoming*. This is particularly significant when delineating postqualitative from qualitative approaches, as the 'data' in a postqualitative view can never be static but is always *becoming*. It is emergent with other material-discursive elements such as textual words, theories, sounds and affects (St. Pierre and Jackson, 2014).

The term *becoming* is often hyphenated with other entities (becoming-animal, becoming-machine, becoming-prisoner). This hyphen isn't merely connecting stable identities but marking a zone of indiscernibility between them. In Deleuzian thought (1988), the hyphen represents transformation where fixed boundaries dissolve. 'Becoming-animal' does not mean mimicking animals but entering a state where human/animal distinctions blur, challenging stable categories and highlighting the fluidity of material-discursive encounters. The concept of becoming-prisoner, when discussing teachers' experiences, is therefore vital in understanding the entanglement of their experiences within the space.

4.1.4. **Becoming-imperceptible**

In the term 'becoming-imperceptible' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 279), the boundaries are dissolved between the self and the surrounding environment; for teachers in the prison space, this contributes to their affective experiences, lessening the impact as they are in-becoming with the prison space. Importantly, becoming-imperceptible cannot be described as a binary negative or positive experience, instead it is actively productive, generating new assemblages, relations, and possibilities that were not accessible within rigid identity structures. Prison teachers' becomings may enable affectivities that transcend the institutional constraints, creating spaces of potential, even within highly regulated environments.

The term 'imperceptible' draws from the Latin 'percept' from 'percipere', meaning 'capable of coming under the cognisance of the senses' (*Perceptible*, no date). The terms 'percept' and 'perception' are discussed by Deleuze and Guattari's in '*What is Philosophy?*' they explain: 'Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2015, p. 164). Meaning that perceptions represent our subjective experience of sensing the world, whilst percepts exist independently of those who experience them. Therefore, 'imperceptible' can be determined as the antonym of this. Deleuze and Guattari further express that the very purpose of art is to make 'perceptible the imperceptible forces that populate the world, affect us, and make us become' (p. 182). Therefore, justifying the arts-based methods that have been utilised for this inquiry to recognise the affects and imperceptible forces in the prison space. The use of drawings in the walking intra-views, and visual matrix, allow for 'image-affects' (Manley, 2018, p. 100) creating affective sensations that are beyond linguistics. The process evokes analytical discussion around the experiences of prison education, thus enabling teachers becoming-imperceptible to materialise.

As a teacher in a prison space, one is confronted with a population that is deemed by many in society as 'deviant' or 'criminal'. It is often considered the teacher's role to facilitate this process of learning and personal growth that aims to transform the human into a law-abiding, good citizen (Liebling, 2016; Ginsburg, 2019). Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of becoming-imperceptible suggests in this context, that teachers and prisoners create new subjectivities, detaching from the established norms and transcending societal expectations. The prison teacher is working on the periphery of conventional expectations in education, facilitating processes of becoming-imperceptible for prisoners as well as themselves.

This becoming-imperceptible also manifests in teachers having no form of communication whilst within the prison; lack of internet access means they become-imperceptible to the outside world. This includes friends, family, and the wider public but also educational networks (explored further in the analysis and discussions chapters).

4.1.5. Deterritorialisation

Deterritorialisation describes the process by which fixed relations are destabilised and new possibilities are created; it is inherently tied to the creation of new territories (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 508). Deterritorialisation breaks down established institutional patterns, hierarchies, and

structures to create new configurations, in this case, of teaching and learning. In Deleuze and Guattari's work, this concept goes beyond simple change; it represents a disruption that frees elements from their normalised contexts, allowing new assemblages to form. For example, when prison teachers find ways to work beyond rigid institutional constraints or when education creates spaces that transcend typical prisoner-teacher dynamics. Lines of flight are the pathways through which this destabilisation occurs, creating ruptures in seemingly fixed systems of control and punishment. These off-shoots create asignifying ruptures (explained above) when they leave the territory (Hickey-Moody and Page, 2016).

Through first becoming-imperceptible, prison teachers are challenging the status quo, hence pushing the boundaries, and creating a movement of change (Parr, 2010). This therefore destabilises the established territories within the prison spaces, where teachers and others in the prison education system move away from fixed expectations and prescribed identities. Becoming-imperceptible and deterritorialised does not mean the erasure of these identities; instead, it creates a state of flux or transformation where these identities and structures are eluding categorisation, in a state of becoming. This disruption is also felt in the doing of the inquiry, in which I am deterritorialising through using creative methodologies (further explained in Chapter 5).

4.1.6. Smooth & striated spaces

Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of 'smooth spaces' can be seen as spaces that have more freedom, fluidity, and interconnection. These are spaces that have been deterritorialised. In contrast, 'striated spaces' can be seen as those with divisions and delineations (Conley in Parr, 2010) that are imposed by structural norms influenced by historical and political factors (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 494). Yet, Deleuze and Guattari caution over simplification, as they explain that whilst new trajectories can form in smooth spaces, it is not a 'panacea for societal change' for example in a prison space (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 494).

One should recognise that forces are always in constant interplay, creating contrasting spatial paradigms within the same physical space that teachers will need to constantly negotiate. Teachers navigating these striated spaces within carceral settings may encounter, for example, institutional barriers and defined roles. However, they can also find ways to circumnavigate these, creating new lines of flight to interject with spaces, even if momentarily. Understanding this is key to the inquiry; recognising how the teachers re-territorialise within these complex spaces.

4.1.7. Assemblages

An 'assemblage', as conceptualised by Deleuze and Guattari (1988), is not a static entity but rather a process of 'making and unmaking' (Mazzei and Jackson, 2012, p. 745). While both entanglements and assemblages can be a collection of things, people, concepts, matter, spaces in one single concept (Hickey-Moody and Page, 2016) they differ in fundamental ways.

Assemblage emphasises the temporary, fluid nature of connections; elements can be 'plugged in' and 'unplugged' from the assemblage as circumstances change. This reflects the dynamic and fluctuating nature of prison education spaces, where components may still have a degree of autonomy while participating in the collective arrangement. An example of this assemblage is in a prison classroom, where a teacher, prisoner-learners, institutional rules, educational materials, spatial arrangements, and affective atmospheres come together to create the environment. Teaching and learning are co-constituted through both human participants and more-than-human material elements: walls, doors, papers, resources, as well as immaterial, social, discursive, cultural, psychological, historical and affective elements (Strom and Martin, 2022). Unlike an entanglement, the components of the assemblage maintain their distinct identities while contributing to the whole. If a prisoner-learner were to leave, or there was a policy which restricts access to a learning resource, those elements would be 'unplugged' from the assemblage, prompting some reconfigurations but the classroom would continue to function through that constant rearrangement.

This differs from entanglement (further discussed later in this chapter) which, through the lens of Barad's (2007) agential realism, would suggest that the teacher, prisoner-learners, materials, and spaces have become so fundamentally intertwined that they cannot be separated without fundamentally altering each element's nature. There are times when the entanglements may exist within the assemblages, for example when a teacher is becoming-prisoner in that space, but they may not be aware of that affect.

The use of the term assemblage throughout this inquiry reflects the fluid nature of teaching experiences in prisons, where teacher experience is continually shaped by various 'machines' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 378) which synthesise and unite disparate elements. As Deleuze and Guattari (1988) suggest, there is no fixed beginning or end to the process of thinking and knowledge-making; instead, it occurs through the formation of assemblages. The prison itself exemplifies this

concept; a dynamic interplay of surveillance systems, daily routines, power relationships and institutional regulations that constantly reshape teacher experiences.

Along with the concepts of becoming and deterritorialisation, assemblage is key to forming a framework which explores the dynamism of subjectivity and identity, structures, and hierarchies. As Burnard and Köbli (2024) note, 'to think with assemblages is to let go of predetermined boundaries that separate entities - a difficult task in a bounded world' (p. 13). This concept is particularly relevant in the prison environment, where rigid physical and social boundaries are deliberately imposed, yet complex intra-actions (further explained below) persist between prisoners, staff, policies, physical spaces, and institutional practices.

4.1.8. Machinic assemblages

For Deleuze and Guattari, 'machines' are productive connections that synthesise flows and create possibilities, not merely mechanical devices. As Colebrook (2002) explains:

'They insist that the word "machine" is not a metaphor... A machine operates by the connection of parts. Unlike an organism or mechanism, it has no final or bounded form; it is pure production in and for itself without governing intention' (p. 122).

These machinic assemblages function as rhizomatic networks rather than hierarchical structures, disrupting binary thinking and enabling multiplicity and becoming. The becoming-teacher identity continuously forms through these assemblages that unite disparate elements, though not without ambiguity. Machines can lapse into reproduction that produces 'a scribble effacing all lines, a scramble effacing all sounds' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 379). Bussoti's musical score in *A Thousand Plateaus* exemplifies this concept, using music with unconventional notation that remains recognisable within established frameworks, demonstrating how creativity emerges through structured disruption of the norm.

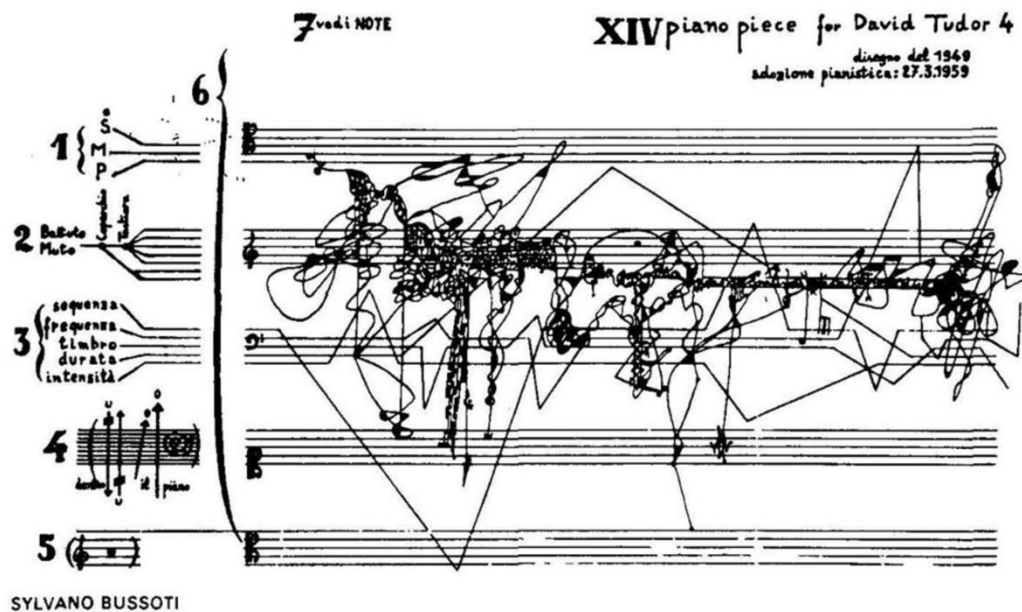


Figure 5: Sylvano Bussoti XIV piano piece for David Tudor 4. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1988, p. 3).

The 'scribble' and 'scramble' metaphors as applied to prison education could describe how, with unique lines of flight, teachers can disrupt the institutional machinery. These deviations however are still within the 'striated' structures of the prison space. To erase the expected boundaries of security and institutional power completely would not work within that context; yet some diversion from routine practices, such as enacting 'care' where it is not expected (as discussed in later chapters), may lead to something unique as expressed in Bussoti's score. Recognising the prison education system as a machine, can enable opportunities for creativity and innovation; where teachers might challenge linear, predetermined paths of thought and behaviour. Carving out spaces for meaningful engagement and growth despite systemic restraints or striation within the machine.

4.1.9. Multiplicity

Multiplicity in conjunction with assemblage, describes reality as composed of diverse elements that are interconnected; 'we are all multiplicities living within and among multiplicities' (Roffe, 2010, p. 181). In a multiplicity, the elements can no longer be seen as separate entities but exist in a state of constant interaction and becoming, 'a multiplicity has neither subject nor object' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 9). This emphasises the non-hierarchical nature of relations between humans and more-than-humans (Haraway, 2016). For prison teachers, this manifests in their complex roles as educators and agents of rehabilitation within the constraints of the prison system.

Hickey-Moody and Page (2016) emphasise multiplicity's recognition of politics as 'the presence of politics of intimate spaces, formal spaces, bodily politics, politics of praxis and the politics of ideas' (p. 182). These politics will influence the assemblage by their presence, evident in how teachers navigate their intersecting roles. Multiplicity therefore challenges singularities through intra-active relationships ('intra', replacing 'inter' is explained later in this chapter), developing new perspectives, a process prison teachers engage in daily as they adapt to the unique demands of their environment.

4.1.10. And, and, and

For Deleuze and Guattari (1988), 'and, and, and' (p. 25) represents their rhizomatic logic that challenges traditional hierarchical thinking. Unlike binary logic (either/or), the rhizome operates through the conjunction of 'AND' as something *between* the elements (Deleuze and Parnet, 2007). This creates and defines the multiplicities, forming assemblages of heterogeneous elements that resist reduction to a single organising principle. I use this repetition of 'and' (or as knotted ampersands: &. &. &, as used in the conclusion, Chapter 13) in the inquiry, to generate the understanding that a situation in prison education experience may have more entanglements or multiplicities than can be listed.

'And, and, and' embodies complexity; it doesn't resolve contradictions but proliferates connections, creating new pathways and possibilities in-between things. This repetitive syntax disrupts linear thought, opening spaces for creativity, emergence and transformation, a philosophical approach that produces difference rather than sameness.

4.1.11. Unfoldings of Deleuze-Guattarian concepts

These Deleuze-Guattarian concepts entangle with prison education spaces, creating new patterns of understanding rather than describing what already exists. Through them, I think-with, rather than think-about, the complexity of prison educator experience. The concepts themselves become active participants in the materialisation of knowledge, not separate tools from the phenomenon they uncover. This theoretical assemblage enables me to think beyond what prison educator experience is but to consider what it might also be in becoming-with in that space.

Within this conceptual framework, the binaries dissolve into multiplicities of affective potential. As you read about Barad and Haraway in the next section, these concepts will diffract through material-discursive practices and situated knowledges, further unsettling assumptions about agency and knowledge production in prison education research.

4.2. Barad and Haraway: new materialism perspectives.

This theoretical multiplicity is also informed by the posthumanist and new materialist perspectives of Karen Barad and Donna Haraway, whose work disrupts traditional humanist assumptions about research, knowledge, and being. While Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of assemblage and becoming provide a foundation for understanding non-linear, multiplicitous relations, Haraway and Barad extend and reconfigure these ideas through their respective feminist frameworks of situated knowledges and agential realism, emphasising the material entanglements and intra-active nature of meaning-making practices.

Barad's (2007) concept of intra-action frames this inquiry; moving beyond simple interaction to recognise the inseparability of 'observed object' and 'observing subject' (elaborated further below). This inseparability aligns with Barad's ethico-onto-epistemology (further explained below), which recognises that ethical, ontological, and epistemological concerns are fundamentally entangled. Drawing on Haraway's (1988) situated knowledges, I recognise that the inquiry practices are not mere observations but active interventions that carry ethical responsibilities. These theoretical orientations, coupled with new materialist attention to the agency of matter and the entangled nature of all phenomena, guide my diffractive methodological choices and analytical approach throughout this inquiry.

4.2.1. Diffraction and Diffractive Analysis

Central to my analysis approach (described in chapter 7) is the idea of 'diffraction' first theorised by Haraway (1992) and extended by Barad (2007), which describes an inquiry into the material effects of difference through embodied engagement with research data. This concept exemplifies how Barad and Haraway's theoretical contributions bridge both my theoretical framework and methodological approach, creating a coherent research assemblage. Many concepts in this work

function simultaneously as both method and theory, demonstrating the entangled nature of this inquiry.

The concept of diffraction derives from quantum physics' understanding of wave behaviour. When waves (e.g. sound, light, water) encounter an aperture, they demonstrate properties of both particles and waves, depending on the observational apparatus. This quantum phenomenon provides a theoretical framework for understanding how research reality is inherently entangled with methodological choices.

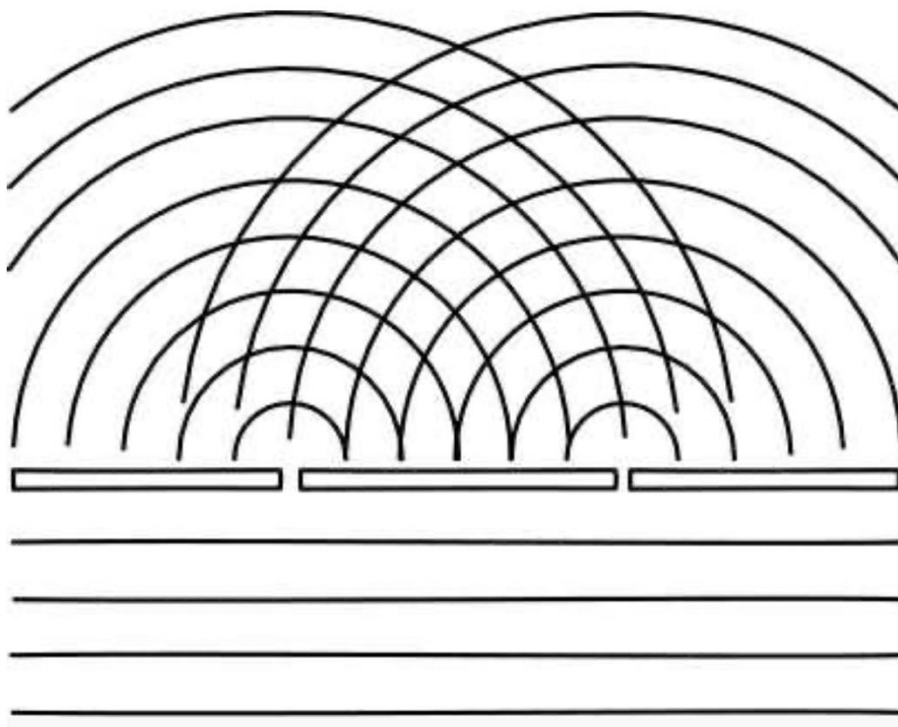


Figure 6: Diffraction diagram, published in 'The Quantum Theory of Waves and Particles' (Norton, 2021).

Diffraction in a research context enables a thinking of data through 'difference rather than sameness' (Truman, 2020, n.p), using embodied engagement with materiality. Barad (2007) agrees that this interference is good; diffractive methodology breaks the pattern of self-reflection, and the epistemological 'grounding' found in social science research, which can be reductionist. This links to Barad's notion of 'cutting together-apart' (Barad, 2014), recognising the power of the researcher when deciding what goes in the research analysis and what stays out via an 'agential cut' (Barad, 2007).

A researcher using diffractive analysis may select particular theories or theorists to diffract with. In this inquiry, I utilise Deleuze and Guattarian theories, the concepts of Barad and Haraway, and affect (and, and, and), to diffract-with during the analysis phase. The nature of diffractive analysis involves 'plugging into' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 8) other sources of inspiration such as theories, philosophies, art, and literacy. This links to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome (1988); it does not follow a linear path but connects and reproduces, multiplying and trusting what comes next, therefore following the 'and' (Adkins, 2015).

Diffraction is a call to try something new or do something differently; I therefore also materially diffract using threads to weave with the participant experiences (see Chapter 5). I use matter to diffract-with during the analysis, recognising the affective nature of more-than-human objects, or 'thing power' (Bennett, 2004) in an onto-epistemology 'where neither matter nor meaning is ontologically prior, but mutually constitutive and entangled' (Thomson & Linnell, 2020, p. 2).

Gunnarsson and Bodén (2021) have expressed that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to diffractive analysis; it is not only about reading philosophical texts through each other but also about how different theories, methodologies, and empirical materials can be diffracted through each other. I have therefore included the creation of textile objects as part of the diffraction in a trans-corporeal act whilst thinking and feeling-with my theoretical framework and my personal experiences (see further explanation in Chapter 5).

Instead of themes, I will be seeking the 'glow' moments (MacLure, 2013b). Considering the philosophical underpinning of the inquiry, the analysis will seek knowledge rather than truth, recognising perceptions of experiences that are 'Interesting', 'Remarkable', or 'Important' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2015, p. 111). Diffraction, as a method of analysis, reveals emerging differences while simultaneously highlighting what is excluded. This approach enables me to explore why these exclusions matter and to acknowledge elements that exist in the margins.

4.2.2. Intra-action

While interaction refers to separate entities engaging with each other, intra-action (Barad, 2007) proposes that entities are not separate or pre-existing but are created through their relations.

Barad's concept of intra-action reframes encounters in the prison space. This inquiry does not present researcher and participant as separate, pre-existing entities who interact through

interviews. Instead, through the lens of intra-action, neither the teacher-participant nor me as researcher, exists as a bounded, separate individual prior to the research encounter. Instead, we are both in-becoming and created through the 'intra-views' and subsequent research methods (further explained in Chapter 7) where meaning, knowledge, and understanding materialises through our mutual entanglement.

This perspective means participants' experiences are not pre-existing data awaiting collection but materialise *through* specific research practices, reflecting Barad and Haraway's scientific insights on how particles behave differently under various apparatus. In this inquiry, outcomes are shaped by the prison's institutional space, educational expectations and my biases (detailed in Chapter 7). Rather than positioning myself as an outside observer gathering objective data, I acknowledge my entanglement in the phenomena studied (further exemplified in Chapter 11). The emerging stories are co-constituted through specific material-discursive practices and how one makes 'agential cuts' (Barad, 2007, p. 148) in research encounters.

4.2.3. Entanglement

Entanglement, as conceptualised by Barad, describes the fundamental interconnectedness of all phenomena, where entities lack independent, self-contained existence. As Barad observes: 'To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair' (Barad, 2007, p. preface). This perspective extends beyond just connection to suggest that entities are co-constituted through their relationships with one another.

In prison education, entanglement manifests in how teaching experiences, institutional structures, and relationships become thoroughly enmeshed. This concept is central to this inquiry's title '*Disentangling teacher experience*', acknowledging both the theoretical framework and the methodological use of textiles to explore these complex entanglements, recognising that many of the knots cannot and should not be disentangled. The title also connects to my own personal entanglements as a mother (see Chapter XY) and my experiences as a female working in the prison (see Chapter XX).

Barad argues that researchers must carefully consider entanglements when designing their research apparatus, as these tools must be precisely calibrated to study 'highly specific configurations' that transform with each 'intra-action' (Barad, 2007, p. 74). Hence, using transdisciplinary methods in this

inquiry that are attuned to the requirements of the entanglements. These enable me to uncover the affectivities that may also be entangled in the assemblage. As Barad (2007) explains, 'it is not so much that they change from one moment to the next or from one place to another, but that space, time, and matter do not exist prior to the intra-actions that reconstitute entanglements' (p. 74).

In prison contexts, the physical space is continuously reconfigured by different entanglements in a series of moments coming together. The intra-agentic human and more-than-human elements combine in dynamic and surprising ways (Barad, 2014), creating and disrupting various configurations of 'carcerality' that produce relations and identities that are dynamic and ever-changing (Van Daal, 2023). Affective encounters, such as those experienced by prison educators, are created from specific material entanglements within ever-changing assemblages 'of both material and immaterial, human and nonhuman forces' (Dernikos *et al.*, 2021, p. 19). It is crucial to recognise what these relational entanglements 'do' (Smith, 2024) in shaping the lived experiences of prison educators.

4.2.4. Agential Realism and Agential Cuts

Barad's (2012) agential realism transforms research by rejecting pre-existing boundaries between researcher and researched. Instead, these distinctions are created through 'agential cuts', temporary separations actively produced through research practices. These cuts don't simply divide existing entities but participate in creating what they separate, building on Haraway's (1988) notion that knowledge is situated and the knowing subject inseparable from what is known.

In this inquiry of prison educator experiences, these agential cuts manifest when my selected research practices create momentary distinctions between 'researcher' and 'participants'. Unlike traditional approaches, these cuts aren't permanent or natural but are actively *produced*-through the inquiry itself (Barad and Kleinmann, 2012). This shifts research from uncovering truth to responsibly participating in making particular realities matter, reflecting Haraway's concept of 'response-ability' (Haraway, 2016, p. 2). This understanding informed my methodology through the inclusion of liminal chapters (Chapters XX & XY) sharing my personal entanglements with-in the inquiry and incorporating my reflexive personal memos (Chapter 11) as analysable data, acknowledging that my experiences cannot be separated from the entanglement of the inquiry.

4.2.5. The Material-discursive

The notion of 'material-discursive' or 'discursive-material knot' (Carpentier, 2017) emphasises an ontological entanglement of discourse and materiality that is inseparable. This feminist (new) materialism concept recognises that one assigns meaning to objects and things, based on the limitations of the language used. This is a crucial idea in this inquiry as I explore through analysis, the interplay between language, discourse, the physical world, and agency within the prison space. Foucault's notion of the 'micro-physics of power' (Foucault, 1991, p. 183) also aligns with the concept of material-discursive. According to Foucault, power permeates the minutia of society, therefore shaping all our social interactions. Barad (2003) drawing on the work of Foucault (1991) explains:

'The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither is articulated/articulate in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other' (Barad, 2003, p. 822).

Thus, the concept of material-discursivity highlights the intricate entanglement between language and materiality in specific and context-dependent ways (Carpentier, 2017) which shapes structures such as academia and prisons, influencing the everyday practices of the teacher-participants in this inquiry.

Feminist (new) materialism, in contrast to post humanism, emphasises the role of material conditions in shaping social and cultural phenomena. Inspired by environmental concerns, science, race, gender, and affect, amongst other aspects, feminist (new) materialists might argue that the world is not passive but actively shapes and is shaped by human activity. This perspective recognises the importance of considering ways in which power and inequality are embedded in the systems and practices we enact every day. These approaches are therefore speculative, appreciating that these ideas, concepts, theories, peoples, and objects as 'matter' are 'a dynamic and shifting entanglement of relations' (Barad, 2007, p. 224).

4.2.6. Ethico-onto-epistemology

The term 'ethico-onto-epistemology' originating from Barad (2007, p. 185) has been used by several postqualitative writers who move beyond epistemology to include ethics and ontology in their work (Taylor and Hughes, 2016; Van der Tuin and Geerts, 2016; Murriss, 2022). The concept is not simply a play on words, but a way of challenging the status quo, manifesting difference. The term gives appreciation to the intertwining of ethics, knowing, and being (Barad, 2007, p. 185). This builds on Haraway's (1988) insistence that knowledge practices are never innocent but always politically and ethically charged, especially significant when investigating marginalised educational spaces.

This inseparability manifests in my inquiry as I navigate the complex boundaries between prison classrooms, institutional policies, and educators' lived experiences. As Deleuze and Guattari stated (2015) prior to Barad and Haraway, it is important not to limit agency to humans but extend to non-humans, material objects, and environments. I accept my entanglement as researcher, prison education manager, teacher and mother; noticing my impact on the research and the power I have as researcher. Haraway (1988) might call this my 'positioned rationality' (p. 590); I elaborate on these entanglements in the methods chapter and in the liminal Chapters XX and XY, where I reflexively examine how my various roles influence my understanding of prison education realities.

4.2.7. Subject~Object

Both Barad's agential realism and Haraway's situated knowledges reject the Cartesian subject-object bifurcation, aligning with Deleuze and Guattari's conception of multiplicity. Through this diffractive lens, I understand my research phenomena not as pre-existing entities awaiting discovery, but as emerging through intra-actions and agential cuts. These temporarily delineate 'subject' from 'object', while acknowledging their onto-epistemological inseparability in the knowledge-making apparatus.

The inquiry seeks to give importance to what has not been said, considering a holistic view of the experiences in a context of 'spacetime-mattering' (Barad, 2010, p. 264) that already has a history. I am therefore recognising that the unsaid elements of prison teacher experience are already inherently entangled with, and constitutive of the whole phenomenon.

4.3. Entanglement of Affect

Affect weaves through spaces and bodies like an invisible thread; operating 'beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010, p. 1). Unlike emotion or feeling, affect represents an intensity or vibrancy of an experience, giving the experience significance and meaning (Massumi, 1995). This inquiry attends to the affective flows and intensities that are created through personal encounters and entangled becomings with prison teachers, recognising that we are all part of the same affective assemblage.

Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualisation of affect (adopted from Spinoza's *affectus*), I understand affect through its relation to 'becoming' or what they term 'nonhuman becomings of man' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2015, p. 169). Their understanding of affect as movement and intensity is crucial to the methodological choices, particularly in perceiving the dynamic intra-actions within the prison environment. The emphasis on movement materialises throughout the inquiry, in the walking intra-views within prison spaces, and in the embodied analytical processes of walking, weaving, and stitching. It is fundamental to consider the multifaceted nature of this affective 'data' which acknowledges the complexity which is still becoming (Manley, 2018).

Berlant's (2011) work on 'cruel optimism' adds another dimension to understanding affect, particularly in institutional spaces. She describes how affect operates through attachments that sustain us while simultaneously undermining our capacity to thrive. This concept becomes relevant when exploring how prison teachers maintain hope and optimism in spaces that often work against their pedagogical aims. As Berlant (2011) argues, these affective attachments can create a form of 'crisis-ordinariness' (p. 10) where individuals persist despite experiencing daily challenges (previously explained in chapter 1). The methods have been chosen specifically to compliment this interest in affect. The aim is to understand the affective impact of the prison space as a technology of manipulation and control, and to challenge these dominant forces; finding ways for teachers to improve their relationship with the space (Vogler, 2021).

Warr (2024), a criminologist with lived experience of prison life who writes about the sensorial impact of prison spaces, presents a perspective on the relationship between 'Sensory > Emotion <> Context' (Warr, 2024, n.p.) that aligns with aspects of my theoretical framework. While acknowledging that sensations evoke emotional and cognitive responses contingent on contextual factors, I extend this understanding through the work of Deleuze & Guattari, Barad, and Haraway.

Rather than viewing context as a fixed backdrop, I explore how sensorial experiences in prison education spaces are entangled with and co-constitute the wider power structures of prison experience. This approach recognises that contexts themselves are emergent, fluid, and transformed through the very encounters they help shape.

4.3.1. Affectivities in prison spaces

The prison space vibrates with affective forces between humans and more-than-humans, materialising in moments such as the bodily resonance and reverberation when a security gate clangs shut, or as prison teachers encounter affects in their daily movements, from the subtle tension induced by surveillance cameras to the discomfort of hearing prisoners shouting through cell windows. These affects move 'with, on, through and across us in divergent ways' (Dernikos *et al.* 2021, p. 8). More intense affective experiences may develop through witnessing self-harm and violence or receiving disclosures of trauma from prisoners. Attending to these affects opens affirmative possibilities for change (Mitchell, 2016). Feminist (new) materialism recognises these assemblages of affective atmosphere and relations as agential matter: 'where things and matter usually perceived as passive and immutable, are instead granted agency' (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 539).

The affectivities flowing through prison spaces intertwine with notions of hope; manifesting as shifts in our capacity to acknowledge and embrace affective experiences, our ability to affect and be affected (Massumi, 2015b). These bodily sensations, experienced before conscious recognition, become immanent social forces (Stewart, 2007), shaping the collective experience of prison education.

Ettinger's (2001) concept of 'wit(h)nessing' (p. 89) illuminates these complex affective dimensions, combining 'witnessing' and being or becoming- 'with', to understand how prison educators engage with traumatic experiences prevalent in carceral settings. This concept provides a theoretical lens through which to examine the subjective nature of emotional labour and trauma in prison education. By employing 'wit(h)nessing', I can explore how teachers not only observe but intra-actively participate in and are transformed by the affective landscape of the prison education space.

Ahmed (2010, 2023) explains the notion of being an 'affect alien'; when one is feeling affect as alienation: 'feeling at odds with the world or that the world is odd' (Ahmed, 2010, p. 168). This

contradictory affect may manifest when, for example, a prisoner needs to be removed from the education space because they are being aggressive. A teacher may feel at odds with this removal; removing them, would be the 'right' thing to do, to avoid harm to others. Yet, the complexity of this situation, the past traumas they may have had, the injustice and potential learning needs, lead to feeling affective alienation (further explored in chapter 11).

4.3.2. Criticism of affect theory

The 'affective turn' in philosophy, social theory and methodology seeks to disrupt Cartesian ways of knowing and doing (Clough and Halley, 2007). However, a criticism of the 'turn' is that it ignores affect's presence in Indigenous ontologies for millennia (Todd, 2016; Rosiek, Snyder and Pratt, 2020). The reason for renewed interest is due to discontent with imposed poststructuralist notions of power, which are framed by societal structures and not through personal relations with others (Albuquerque and Pischetola, 2022). The re-noticing of affect has enabled researchers to see and *feel* inquiry differently, in encompassing this affective matter as 'data'.

Leys (2011) critiques affect theory for creating a false dichotomy between conscious emotion and unconscious bodily affects, arguing it misinterprets neuroscience by overemphasising automatic processes. However, this critique itself may oversimplify both affect theory and contemporary neuroscience. Rather than dismissing scientific insights, affect theory offers an alternative framework that challenges purely mechanistic explanations. Its focus on bodily sensations and pre-personal forces provides a valuable perspective on embodied experiences like those in prisons, resisting reductive explanations while acknowledging the complex interplay between consciousness and physical sensation.

Massumi's (2002) concept of 'thinking-feeling', bridges affect theory and science, recognising embodied affect's relationship to cognition. This affective attunement (Massumi, 2016) manifests when prison teachers react instinctively in disruptive environments, using embodied responses like jail craft (Peacock, Turner and Varey, 2018) which is developed by experienced staff. These pre-personal, unconscious affects often go unrecognised by teachers, making their impact difficult to measure. As Manning (2016) notes, we attempt to rationalise affect despite its inherently ineffable nature: 'We want to feel the ineffable yet deceive ourselves into thinking we can sideline the ineffable and leave the bubbling ground of the welling event when it suits us' (Manning, 2016, p. 31).

This tension highlights the paradox of trying to analyse experiences that fundamentally resist rational explanation.

4.3.3. Affect as microshocks

For prison teachers, these unconscious affects manifest as 'microshocks' (Massumi, 2015b); constant interruptions from institutional sounds and movements that create an underlying sense of threat-potential. Though teachers may not consciously register these disruptions, they gradually unfold over time, creating an unresolved concern that may shadow their present experience. Microshocks create a shift of focus or 'subtle peripheral stimuli' (Massumi, 2015b, p. 52) might divert attention from their main objectives as educators.

Berlant's (2011) concept of 'systemic crisis' provides a useful framework for understanding how these microshocks accumulate into what she calls an 'impasse'; a temporal experience where people find themselves 'adapting to a loss of a fantasy of the good life' (p. 11). For prison teachers, this manifests in the constant negotiation between their pedagogical ideals and institutional constraints. The microshocks Massumi describes can be understood as manifestations of what Berlant terms the 'wearing out of the subject' (2011, p. 28), where the accumulation of small disruptions gradually reshapes one's capacity to maintain optimism. Deleuze (1993) relates to this as 'a microperception' (p. 95); a qualitatively distinct mode of perception that is only felt through its unconscious effects. Therefore, analysing the experiences of teachers in the prison space through the concepts of affective microshocks, assists in gaining deeper understanding of how teachers respond to the disruptions inherent to the work in prison education. This is further discussed in the analysis chapters.

Prison education classrooms form complex assemblages where microshocks materialise through learners' prior experiences, institutional histories, the threat of violence and the material conditions. The physical environment itself embodies historical and political neglect through inadequate resources and facilities. Drawing on Ahmed's (2004) 'sticky' affects, these conditions cling to both intellectual and corporeal experiences, reinforcing institutional disregard. The structural prison spaces bring with them connections of violence and oppression, 'literally, materially built into the rooms' (Snaza in Dernikos *et al.*, 2021, p. 114). For example, there will be a lack of trust when a new group of prisoners, who may not know each other are put together in a space, the atmosphere may be affected. Teachers are having to navigate these affectivities created in a complex space; building

an environment where learning can happen, and trust can be built, is difficult: 'Not everyone is in the same place even when they're in the same space... what makes one feel safe may generate feelings of fear or anxiety in another' (Snaza in Dernikos *et al.*, 2021, p. 113).

Albuquerque and Pischetola (2022) conceptualise affect as 'future-pedagogy'; however, persistent affective microshocks in prison environments severely hinder teachers' abilities to establish this transformative approach. These constant disruptions undermine the emotional teacher-learner connections essential for pedagogical transformation. Ahmed's (2023) vision of pedagogy, echoing Freire's critical approach, as revealing embedded power structures and unlocking institutional possibilities becomes difficult to realise amid such interruptions. Despite Bozalek *et al.*'s (2018) emphasis on affective and relational co-production for transformative change, teachers struggle to navigate these unpredictable affective entanglements while maintaining necessary boundaries, creating tension between pedagogical aspirations and institutional constraints.

4.4. Unfoldings of Theoretical Multiplicities

In drawing together Deleuze and Guattari's ideas, Barad and Haraway's concepts, and affect theory, this theoretical entanglement offers a powerful lens for examining prison education spaces. The rhizomatic interconnection of these perspectives transcends traditional hierarchies, while affect theory and new materialisms illuminate the subtle forces shaping teachers' experiences. Concepts of becoming-imperceptible and multiplicity, when integrated with intra-action, agential realism, and affective intensities, reveal how teachers navigate and resist within striated prison environments. This framework highlights potential lines of flight, through which teachers create transformative pedagogical moments despite institutional constraints, opening new possibilities for understanding resistance and agency within highly regulated educational contexts.

Chapter 5: Differential textures

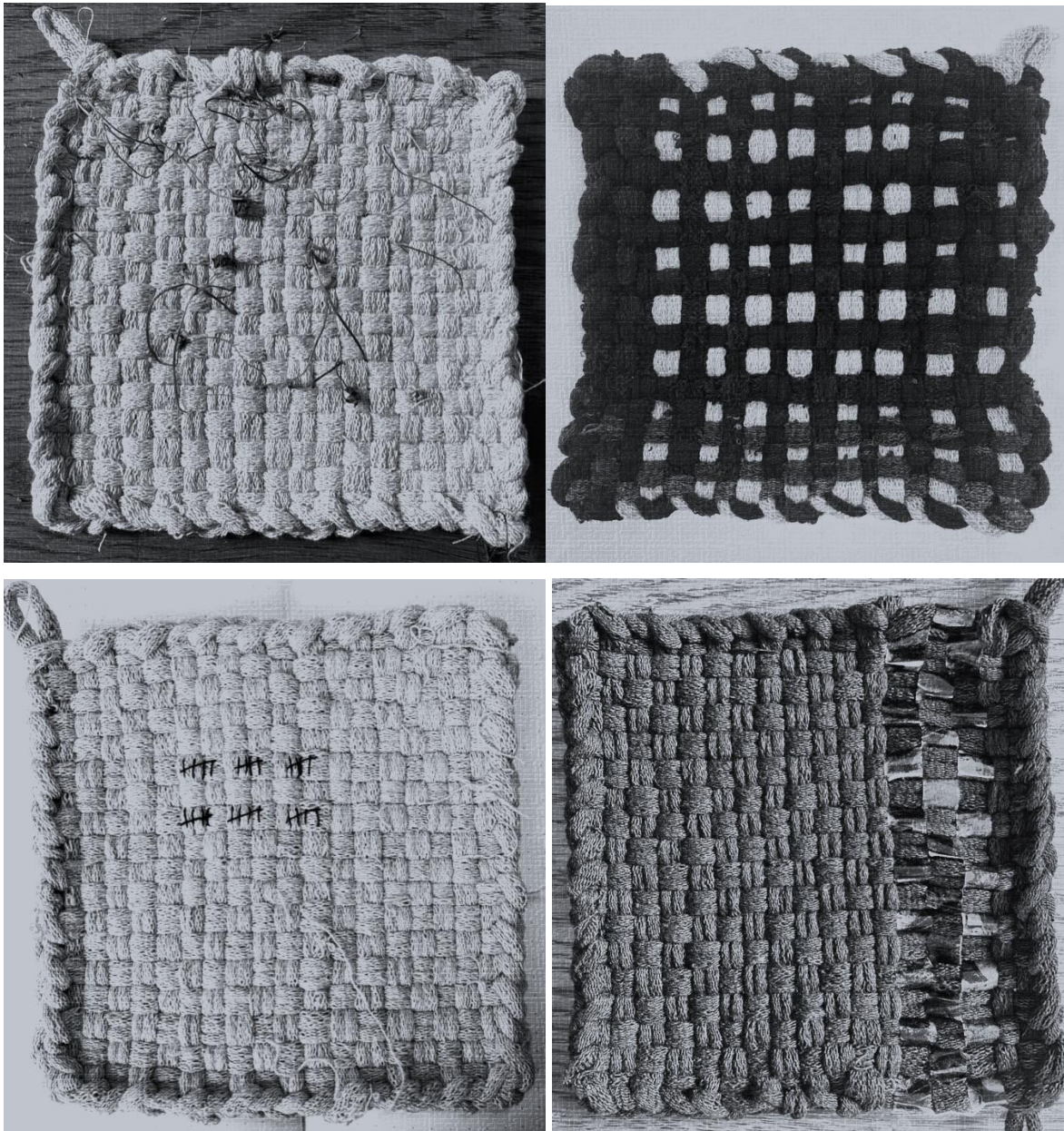


Figure 7: Weavings created by the author during the analysis process. Material: woollen sock remnants found ephemera and threads.

5.1. Introduction to differential textures

In this chapter, I use the term 'differential textures' to consider the entanglement of philosophical, theoretical, and textile influences which create both deliberate and accidental knots in the research fabric. Drawing on Mitchell's (2016) work, I explore how textile tactility impacts wider perception, transforming textiles from matter to a 'material of thought' (p. 325-326).

The chapter title acknowledges materiality's importance and *difference's* centrality (Deleuze and Patton, 2004). Difference, as a Deleuzian ontological principle, emphasises continuous 'becoming' (as explained in Chapter 4) promoting change beyond static representation. My use of textiles is integral to this inquiry, used as a force that can create *difference*. Stitching and weaving has been a process undertaken in moments of uncertainty; enabling me to explore the complexity through a material-discursive process.



Figure 8: Author's process of weaving-with the data and entanglements of plant material found in the prison estate.

5.2. Theoretical Foundations

Deleuze and Guattari's work on 'striated and smooth' spaces (1988) discussed in the previous chapter, provides a philosophical grounding for understanding textile practice in research. While they characterise traditional production-oriented weaving as striated spaces through the 'necessity of a back-and-forth motion' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 524), *my* creative textile practice operates differently. Rather than producing functional objects, my weaving (see figures 7 and 8) is a generative artistic process that creates smooth space: a realm of thought and affect that emerges through the creative engagement with materials. This aligns with their assertion that smooth and striated spaces constantly transform and merge into one another. With my creative textile practice, I worked through the microshocks I experienced during the inquiry, using weaving not as a striated production process but as a smooth space-creating activity; it served as both metaphor and material process for meaning-making.

5.3. Creative practice as research methodology

Creative practice entwines the threads of this inquiry through methods of weaving, stitching, and drawing. Such creative methods can be represented in postqualitative inquiry through 'research-creation' (Manning and Massumi, 2014a; Manning, 2016; Loveless, 2020). These approaches foster creative research as a process always 'in becoming' within the research assemblage (as previously explained in Chapter 4).

Creative practices embrace the researcher's embodied subjectivity, which Leigh and Brown (2021) describe as knowledge created through and *with* the body, foregrounding material agency and the generative potential of practice itself. Springgay (2009) argues that creative approaches reveal affects by creating spaces where knowledge is generated through engagement with the process. Creative practice becomes a mode of inquiry that actively produces understanding, transforming research from outcome-focused analysis to generative exploration. Researchers using creative methods such as textiles can see knowledge emerging through visual and physical engagement rather than being extracted through conventional data analysis (Kara *et al.*, 2021).

Creative methods in prison spaces are helpful for exploring complex carceral problems. Baybutt and Kelly-Corless (2022) have utilised theatre and photographic elicitation to research in prisons, stating that embracing creative methods depends on a culture shift that must be embedded in the institutions' systems and practices. My experiences in prison education spaces have found expression through textile pieces, creating rhythms of sensations which are constantly changing through intra-actions with others. The dynamic nature of creativity and creative processes therefore hold the potential for becoming-with and in-relation-with others, impacting the culture.

Following Burnard (2022), this transdisciplinary creative practice challenges the false binary between traditional academic writing and creative approaches. Burnard emphasises that writing itself is a creative act but should not hold a privileged position over other forms of meaning-making, noting that 'disruption and rebelliousness here is about breaking away from our habitual ways of responding and our siloed disciplinary assumptions' (p. 21). Textiles practices materially embody the tensions between structure and agency, regulation and resistance, that characterise the teachers' and my own navigation of institutional spaces.

Springgay and Manning (in Loveless, 2020) warn against reducing research-creation to the superficial application of creative activities onto traditional qualitative research. In my work, weaving and stitching are integral modes of inquiry rather than decorative additions. Through the materiality and active 'doing', creative practice becomes a generative site, transforming how knowledge is conceived and understood. This manifests in the research through the ways textile-making helped me process the affective dimensions of prison education; the physical act of weaving and stitching became a way to work through the tensions, constraints, and possibilities experienced (further analysis *with* the weaving in chapter 8). The rhythmic process of interlacing threads parallels how teachers navigate institutional boundaries, while the emergent textile surfaces materialise the complex emotional landscapes of prison teaching. Thus, the creative practice is not merely illustrative but fundamentally shapes how I conceptualise and analyse the research outcomes.

This creative approach helps elucidate complex affective dimensions of experiences within institutional entanglements. As Land (2023) notes, we think better alongside what we love, and textile materials provide comfort for me, while exploring these difficult and sometimes traumatic concepts. This approach emphasises how different matter shapes research; where materials and ideas generate together, respecting their differences and rhizomatic interconnections (Ettinger, 2005).

5.4. Materiality, temporality and meaning-making

The repetitive quality of stitching becomes a methodology; a temporal practice of thinking and feeling-through embodied material meaning-making. When 'stuck' during the analysis process, I used weaving to materially aid my thinking process. The image in Figure 9, created after my first week of working in the prison; utilises the overhead view of 'Prison A' to track my movement via stitch. The reverse, shown here, is used to show the entangled threads, these are both a material representation and metaphor of navigating complex rules and expectations; thus, articulating the affective intensities of the confined environment. The loose threads emphasise the prison's porosity rather than its perceived impenetrable boundaries (Ellis, 2021).

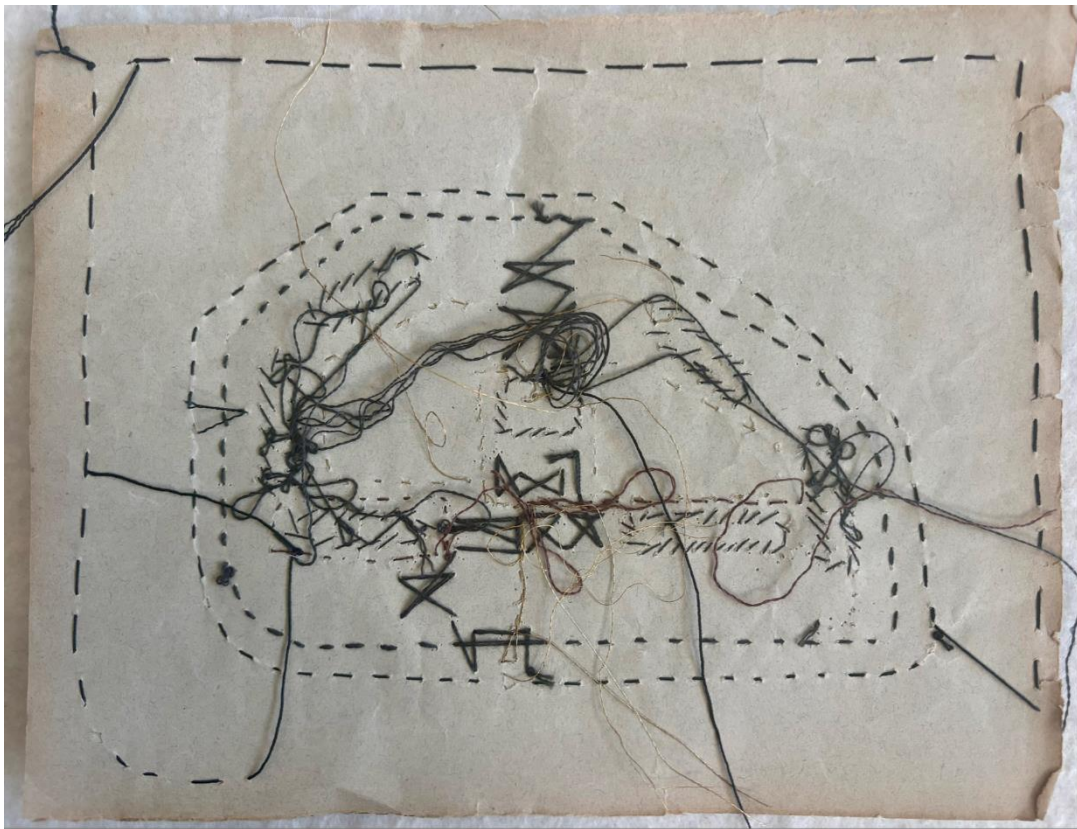


Figure 9: Example of creative process, Feb 2022, mixed media: cotton threads, vintage paper.

Contemporary theorists highlight the philosophical connection between time and textiles. Dormor (2020) considers, the 'notion of thinking or thought as kinetic, temporal and dynamic dimension is

key' (p. 21). This resonates with Barad's (2007) understanding that meaning is 'an ongoing performance of the world in its differential dance of intelligibility and unintelligibility' (p. 149). This dance creates space where meaning, through material engagement, is in-becoming rather than fixed. My textile creations reflect material intra-activity contributing to space-time-matter(ing) (Barad, 2007). Textiles as meaning-making are deeply rooted in Indigenous cultures, such as Māori weaving practices which embody knowledge and spiritual connection (Te Kanawa, 2008). As a non-Indigenous researcher, I acknowledge these traditions as inspirational while being mindful not to appropriate them, recognising Western research can learn from these approaches (further discussed in chapter 7).

5.5. Material Embodiment as method

I utilised textiles throughout each research stage, initially as a personal response to being in the prison, then as an intentional aid to work-through concepts alongside Deleuze and Guattari's theories. The textiles embody my discomfort and uncertainty about which textures should remain in the research, and which should be lost through my 'agential-cuts' (Barad, 2007, p. 148).

The emphasis on layers and hidden aspects speaks to the relationship between the virtual and actual in my research. Just as threads conceal and reveal through manipulation, prison experiences contain visible dimensions (formal educational outcomes, architectural boundaries) and invisible affects (trauma, hope, and resistance). The physical act of manipulating thread creates a unique sensory-conceptual space where these hidden dimensions can be explored and understood. As Ettinger *et. al.* (2015) note, art serves as 'the transport-station of trauma' (p. 270), creating a space for encounters that facilitate borderlinking and borderspacing in a matrixial trans-subjective space.

5.5.1. Repetition as Method and Metaphor

The prison environment manifests what Deleuze might identify as mechanical repetition through enforced regimes and regulated behaviours. I used stitching in the textile work (see figure 10 below),

to materialise these monotonous, enforced repetitions by replicating that monotony in thread. The piece emerged during a conceptual impasse when grappling with the study's theoretical framework and the haunting effects of the prison space. The messiness highlights institutional restraints while revealing the layered moments of possibility. The repetitive nature of these textile creations embodies Deleuze's concept of 'difference and repetition' (Deleuze and Patton, 2004). Each repeated action creates something new, while I was processing the complex experiences of institutional space; embodying 'difference in itself' (Deleuze and Patton, 2004, p. 28) each repetition carried subtle variations and affective intensities.



Figure 10: Textile artefact created by the author when considering the theoretical and methodical framework.

Through recording my thoughts while stitching (see personal memo below), these material engagements evolved from the personal reflections into theoretical insights, where the physical act of threading and knotting materialised emerging concepts about constraint, resistance, and transformation in prison education.

'As I work with it, I start to add more and feel entangled with it. I am becoming-with the materiality, the textures, part of me is in the knot. Wrap, repeat, wrap, knot, weave, repeat, wrap...

Knotting, Thickness, Layers, Multiple perspectives, Hidden aspects, pulling threads, Re-working, Re-knotting, connecting threads, Surprises, Found objects – debris, the forgotten, Text-ures, Intuitive, knot either this or that but and, and, and, Material, Affective'

Personal memo, June 2023.

These words, emerging through the material engagement with thread, form a conceptual bridge between the tactile process and the theoretical underpinning of my research. The word 'Text-ures' plays with the dual nature of my methodology; textual analysis interwoven with textural exploration. These words perform with the textiles; emerging from physical practice but extending beyond it (Barad, 2007) creating new material-discursive territories that grasp intangible aspects of prison educator experiences.



Figure 11: Textile artefact created by the author when considering the theoretical and methodical framework.

The making of my textile pieces involves both methodical and disrupted movements; areas of even, controlled stitching depict moments of clarity and understanding, while more densely worked,

irregular sections represent the intensity of wrestling with challenging thoughts. The intra-play of textures reflects the paradoxical landscape of prison space and illustrate my experiences during research-creation. The physical process oscillates between rhythmic, contemplative making and moments of tension, just as theoretical engagement moves between obscurity and clarity.



Figure 12: Textile artefact created by the author when considering the theoretical framework.

5.5.2. Unravelling power

This textile piece created an unintentional phallic silhouette, which becomes significant when situated within the prison's intensely patriarchal and hyper-masculine environment. In carceral spaces, phallic symbolism operates as the dominant power; physical dominance, rigid hierarchies, and aggression become mechanisms of survival and control. The phallic shape has manifested perhaps to embody that masculinity and systemic authority enforced by the institutional boundaries I experienced.

By inadvertently creating this phallic form, I am simultaneously undermining its structural integrity, the piece engages directly with Ettinger's (2001) theoretical challenge to phallogentrism. The work

doesn't reject the phallic structure outright, acknowledging its inescapable presence within prison power dynamics but instead transforms it through what Ettinger terms 'metramorphosis' (p. 92).

The controlled upper portion of the textiles piece gradually unravels into a network of interconnected fibres, visualising the potential for alternative modes of being, even within oppressive systems. This transformation also aligns with Ettinger's matrixial borderspace (2001, 2006) where rigid separations dissolve into permeable thresholds, as the borders of prison boundaries and structures are permeated by educational disruptions. The piece therefore performs a subtle subversion, as Audre Lorde (1984) reminds us, 'The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house' (p. 112). Yet, I do this unconsciously by subverting a symbol of hierarchical power into an expression of connection, uncertainty, and becoming-together that resists the isolated subject position enforced by both prison architecture and its structural frameworks.

5.5.3. Speculative Fabulation and String Figuring

Drawing on Haraway's (2016) concept of Speculative Fabulation (SF) the textile practice becomes a way to 'think other matters with' (p. 12). The acronym SF interchangeably represents Speculative Fabulation as well as Science Fiction, So Far and String Figuring; the latter drawing on the Indigenous use of textiles to hold shapes between spaces, humans and more, in 'cats cradle' entanglements (see figure 13). In my practice, manipulating threads as Speculative Fabulation, encompassing all the above possibilities, reveals intricate relations between disparate ideas, creating complex entanglements in prison education experiences.

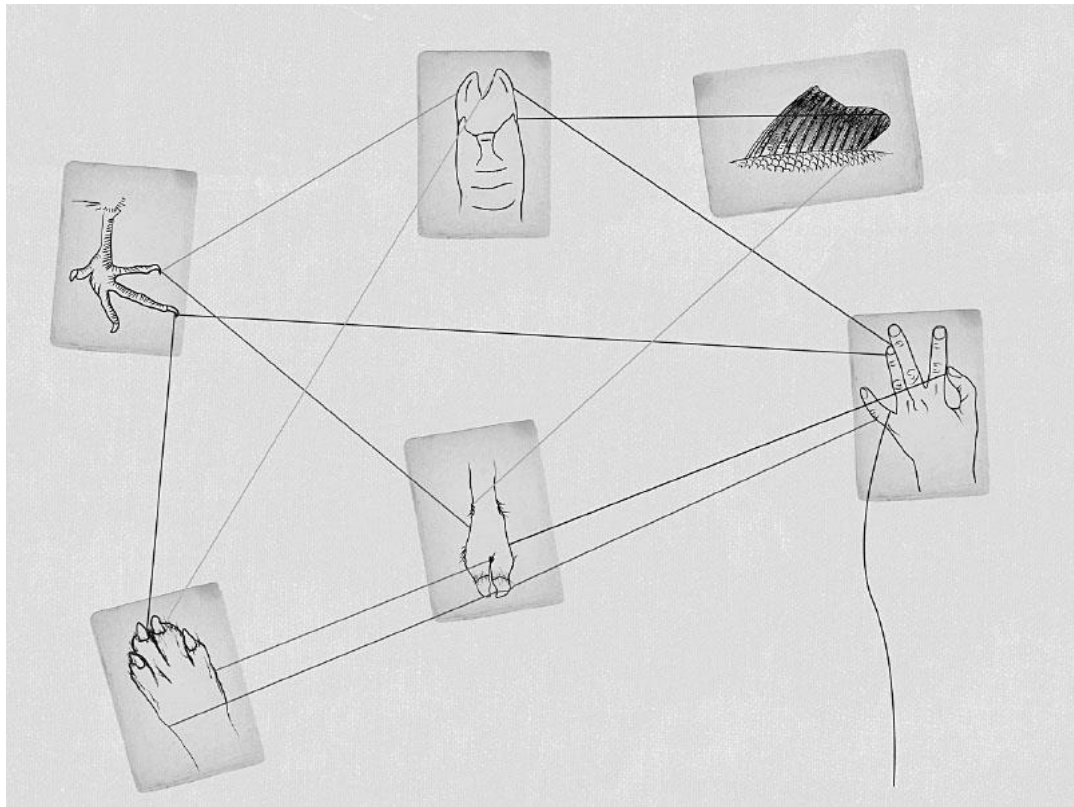


Figure 13: *Multispecies Cat's Cradle*. (Mufti, 2011).

As with Deleuze's concept of *becoming*, this Speculative Fabulation is both real and [k]not: 'There is a reality of becoming- animal, even though one does not in reality become animal' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 273). The threads facilitate conceptual emergence rather than fully describing the philosophical framework. Through knotting and re-knotting, I bring into being 'the unconceivable into representation' (Colebrook and Buchanan, 2000, p. 170); the affective tensions and institutional dynamics that resist articulation. This recognises the 'material-discursive knots' (Carpentier, 2017, p. 4) embodying interconnections between thought and matter.

5.5.4. Weaving together creative approaches and Minor Gestures

Manning's concept of the 'minor gesture' (2016), provides another crucial texture in this assemblage. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's (1983, 1988) 'schizoanalysis', her concept of the 'minor gesture', recognises 'the gestural force that opens experience to its potential variation' (Manning, 2016, p. 1). Manning as a philosopher and textile artist draws together these complex concepts through her material undertakings. Her removal of threads (as seen in the figure 14) becomes a minor gesture that opens new possibilities within the work, creating spaces where institutional patterns can be disrupted and reimaged through the physical act of unravelling.



Figure 14: 'The Minor Gesture', Erin Manning, 2016.

In prison education, minor gestures manifest as barely perceptible acts of resistance, for example, showing care towards prisoner-learners (further discussed in the walking intra-views) creates subtle

ripples in the institutional fabric. These minor gestures interweave with Foucault's (2015) understanding of major and minor power relations, where dominant institutional forces (the major) are entangled with subtle, often invisible powers (the minor). Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) concept of 'minor literature' further demonstrates how these gestures operate within, yet subvert established systems, creating what Manning (2016) describes as openings for variation within rigid structures.

Teachers' 'minor gestures' can be *felt* as affective responses to power or embodiments of resistance. Manning emphasises that creativity and imagination drive becoming in the 'minor', demonstrated through her own textile practice, mirroring this inquiry's approach. In post-structuralist, posthuman and feminist (new) materialism ontology resistance isn't binary to power; it exists within an assemblage as dynamic heterogeneous compositions, producing new possibilities. Power and resistance remains in constant flux (Barad, 2007), intra-acting with surroundings, affects and relations (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988).

5.6. Unfoldings of differential textures

This chapter has explored the differential textures that underpin the methodology of this inquiry; the inclusion of research-creation, difference, and repetition, and the minor gesture. These varying textures, both physical and affective, create a complex fabric of experience that cannot be understood through single theoretical approaches alone. By weaving together Deleuze and Guattarian concepts, I trace how these differential textures, rough and smooth, visible, and invisible, major, and minor, shape teachers' experiences. Like a textile piece that reveals its complexity through both its surface and underlying structure. These textures alongside the theoretical and methodological underpinnings demonstrate how multiple textures create the fabric of this prison education inquiry.

Chapter 6: Methodology

Preceding this chapter, I have explained some of the key concepts that underpin this inquiry. This chapter will rationalise the theory behind my method choices, explaining how the assemblage of concepts and philosophies meet. This can be seen as the space 'between *what is* and *what might be*' (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013, p. 7). I will discuss the theoretical underpinnings and justification of the methodological approaches before sharing the methods in detail.

6.1. Reflexivity to diffraction

Building on Chapter 4's concept of diffraction as an analytical approach that reads insights through one another, this section explains how diffraction moves beyond reflexivity's limitations. While reflexivity supports researchers through 'the unfamiliar, the uncomfortable, the messy' (Pillow, 2003, p. 178), it can oversimplify by presenting neutrality as achievable through straightforward procedures.

Research within the carceral context, where the 'powerful meet the powerless' (Lumsden and Winter, 2014, p. 8), demands an approach engaging with juxtaposed emotions, experiences, and complexities inherent in prison spaces. Though Alexander's (2011) framing of reflexivity as political self-awareness and Warin's (2011) ethical mindfulness offer more nuanced approaches, they still centre the researcher in what can become a self-fulfilling process to eliminate discomfort.

As both prison education manager and researcher, I needed to practice response-ability (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 2016), moving beyond reflexivity's focus on the researcher as independent subject. Diffraction recognises that subjects and objects are 'always already entangled' (Bozalek and Zembylas, 2017, p. 116), requiring care-full enactment with all research participants.

6.2. Ethics approach

Prison research presents distinct ethical and methodological challenges (Earle, 2014), navigating emotionally charged environments filled with risks, and aspects that are 'barely tolerable' (Liebling, 1999, p. 163). Researchers risk becoming overly affected when immersed in prison life, particularly

when navigating gender dynamics as female researchers in male facilities (as further discussed in Chapter XX). Yet this immersion generates authentic research insights. As Schlosser (2021) notes:

‘For the prison researcher, navigating the mundanity of her daily life is not separate from her work, because within her daily life is prison research—woven into her thoughts, her dreams, her emotions, and her everyday experiences. As researchers, prison gets inside us—it takes up space, it makes itself known’ (Schlosser, 2021, p. 8).

Drawing from this growing attention to researcher subjectivity in criminology and education (Liebling, 2001; Jewkes, 2014; Milligan, 2016; Schlosser, 2021), my inquiry embraces these affects as particularly enriching understanding (Earle, 2014). Guided by social justice principles, my chosen methods prioritise experiences of those directly affected by prison environments while incorporating my own perspective. My approach builds on Chappell’s (2024) concept of creating ‘care-ful’ (p. 4) spaces that open possibilities for curiosity and relational activism.

Crewe *et al.* (2014) recognised that emotions influence research interests and shape discovery. They acknowledged that emotions or *affects* are inseparable from data collection. Building on this approach, I will incorporate my experiences and their emotional dimensions as integral elements of the research process. This will include personal memos (Chapter 11) documenting the affective textures of my work; utilising my responses to the prison environment and feelings of discomfort as ‘affective praxis’ (Chadwick, 2021, p. 3).

My approach embraces response-ability (Haraway, 2016) through feminist practices that consider the power I have when citing others. By care-fully citing diverse influences, I aim to dismantle academia’s ‘patriarchal whiteness’ (Ahmed, 2017, p. 17). As a white cis woman, I recognise my citational practice must be balanced, engaging conscientiously with the work of Indigenous scholars and people of colour (Mott and Cockayne, 2017). This feminist, ethico-onto-epistemological response-ability weaves through my citations and wraps around my writing (Ringrose, Warfield and Zarabadi, 2020).

6.2.1. Procedural Ethics and Positionality Considerations

Ethical approval of the study was granted by the University of Central Lancashire ethics board ([Appendix 7](#): Approval number BAHSS2 0323) prior to commencement of data collection with

guidance taken from the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2021). Caution was taken with regards to participant safety, both with the implications of Covid-19 and the risk of harm due to the potential sensitive nature of the discussions. An additional level of approval was granted from HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) National Research Committee (NRC) (See [Appendix 6](#)) to enable the walking intra-views and one to one interviews to be conducted onsite of Prison A. This also included security clearance from Prison A's gatekeepers for permission to bring a prohibited item (Dictaphone) inside the prison for this purpose.

My dual role as education manager and researcher created significant ethical complexities around informed consent. Despite providing detailed information sheets, the hierarchical relationship meant participants might feel obligated to participate or provide responses they perceived as expected. To mitigate this, I explicitly emphasised voluntary participation, offered multiple opportunities to withdraw, and conducted interviews away from the office space to minimise institutional power markers. I made it explicit to all those involved directly or indirectly, when I was collecting data for different purposes e.g., for teacher evaluation or for doctoral research. To alleviate any confusion, data collection activities for this study were conducted on a nominated 'research day' on Thursdays, when no other evaluation activities related to their job roles (e.g. observations of teaching) took place.

Despite these precautions, I acknowledge that voluntary consent remained somewhat compromised by our existing professional relationship. Participants may have self-censored critical views about the prison education experience or felt pressure to present positive accounts. The power dynamics inherent in my positionality as line manager therefore fundamentally shaped the research encounter in an intra-active way. The nature of my research methodology is such that I take a feminist ethical approach; seeking reciprocity in the experience of the walking intra-views and Visual Matrix (as further explained in Chapter 7). I attempted to address the power imbalances through reflexive memos and by sharing my own vulnerabilities and uncertainties with participants, yet recognise the limitation that my institutional authority could never be fully bracketed and my subjectivity is entangled.

Participant wellbeing was prioritised throughout, recognising that discussing their experiences could evoke distressing emotions or memories. I ensured participants were aware of support available through the institution. Interviews were designed with natural breaks, and participants were

reminded they could pause or stop at any time. As their line manager, I was particularly attuned to any signs of distress and followed established safeguarding protocols when necessary.

Participant details and geographical locations of the institutions have been anonymised to maintain both participant and institutional privacy and confidentiality (Grix, 2010). All collected data, consent forms and associated notes, transcripts and analysis have been kept securely for the agreed timescale on the university networked OneDrive which is password protected with two factor authentication. Any paper-based items are kept in locked filing cabinets that only I have access to and will be destroyed within the agreed timescales.

6.2.2. Ethical inclusion of prisoners

While this research focuses on teachers' experiences within the prison space, I acknowledge that not including incarcerated individuals as direct participants represents an ethical dilemma and potential limitation. I have however, attempted to maintain ethical awareness of prisoners' agency through my methodological choices. Prisoners are ever-present throughout the research, in teachers' accounts of classroom interactions, in the ambient backgrounds during interviews, and through citations of formerly incarcerated authors. However, this inquiry intentionally focuses on the experiences of teachers, an alternative study directly incorporating prisoner voices and experiences would produce different insights.

6.2.3. Shifting ethical considerations

My approach acknowledges that ethical considerations emerge and shift throughout the research journey, particularly when exploring the complex environment of a prison. By incorporating participant involvement through transcript review and collaborative analysis of the Visual Matrix method, I embrace what MacCormack (2012) describes as an activist, adaptive and creative interaction approach to ethics. While not fully participatory research, these methods recognise participants' agency and align with principles of pluriversality, fostering co-existence and collaboration (Hutchings, 2019). This moves beyond traditional approaches that may prioritise expertise over moral considerations, instead emphasising an ethics of care that actively engages with participants throughout the research process.

6.2.4. Da-nœuds-ta

I have struggled calling the information I gather as 'data'. This word is bound in positivist explorations and objectifies participant experiences. Therefore, I felt an alternative term was required. Ringrose, Warfield and Zarabadi (2020) reference the knot when discussing a shift in educational research to a philosophical and feminist new material perspective, which they term *Phematerialism*: 'Each article is not a unit but rather a knot or a partial exploration, which unearths a unique entanglement' (p. 2). Entanglement as described by Barad (in Murris, 2022) is not merely when two separate entities are intertwined together but in being entangled they lose their separate identities and become part of the same knot. *Data* in this inquiry can therefore be viewed as a knot, entangled, or unravelled.

The French word *nœud* (knot) exemplifies how language embodies thought, demonstrating meaning through both its written and spoken form. The œ ligature, of the two letters linked together substantiates denotation. The French pronunciation also mimics the English word 'new'; reemphasising the approach which attempts to create newness. Philosophers often use language to create *neologisms* to re-present known terms, I have therefore created the term *da-nœuds-ta*, putting the knot in the centre, where I can find agency through the messiness (St. Pierre, 1997). My inclusion of the hyphen interrupts the flow to create new perspective, questioning 'data's' meaning while maintaining a liminal boundary between the knot and what we might perceive as data. From this point forward I will use the term 'da-nœuds-ta' (Harding, 2023, p. 15) instead of data, to cut into the centre (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012).

6.2.5. The 'wonder' and difficulty of diffractive methodologies

MacLure (2013b) explores the 'wonder' of data, particularly in educational settings, using the term 'glow' to describe the affect, the wonder, excitement, and energy when engaging with data in creative, open-minded ways. This openness to curiosity when intra-acting with *da-nœuds-ta* enables new insights and perspectives into complex phenomena. Similarly, Bennett's (2004, 2010) concept of 'thing power' suggests researchers should consult non-humans more closely, an approach practised for millennia in Indigenous ontologies. This perspective appreciates the relational context with matter.

This methodological approach embraces these 'glow' moments and 'thing power' of the *da-næuds-ta* while maintaining responsiveness to ethical considerations throughout the research process. MacLure (2013a) acknowledges the difficulty in using diffractive approaches, noting it's problematic to find methods in these 'new debates' because 'method, in itself, is always already a human-centred activity when we are being asked to centre the object-that-would-have-been-called-data' (p. 167). Following this provocation, I centre the experience between 'matter' and the researcher, participants, prison space, and affects, reinforcing the term *da-næuds-ta*. Nordstrom's (2015) concept of 'spectral data' (p. 167), interruptions or materialisations entering analysis, further supports this approach. The *da-næuds-ta*, affects, and, and, and, become participants in the intra-action, creating material arrangements of different liveliness in the text, knotting together ideas like Haraway's (2016) 'String Figures' (as discussed in Chapter 5).

6.3. Methods of the assemblage

The methodological assemblage described above is enacted through a phased, multi-method, transdisciplinary approach designed to engage with the prison education entanglements. Each method has been selected for its ability to access different aspects of experience; embodied, affective, conscious, and unconscious to enable diffractive analysis across these dimensions. My entangled participation with these methods creates a complex intra-weaving that moves beyond an objective approach, becoming a materialising apparatus of knowing (Lenz Taguchi, 2012). Each method explained briefly below (table 1) will be further detailed and justified in Chapter 7, aligning to the previously discussed theoretical and philosophical frameworks.

Phase One: Walking Intra-views (5 participants from Prison A)
Walking intra-views reveal how teachers' bodies navigate and respond to prison spaces, showing how the material environment shapes their experiences in ways that may escape conscious awareness. This method recognises the entanglement of bodies with space, allowing affects to emerge through movement rather than solely through verbal articulation.
Phase Two: Visual Matrix (9 participants from Prison A and other male prisons)
The visual matrix method elicits affective and intuitive responses to visual and auditory stimuli related to the prison space. This enables teachers to articulate affects in ways that traditional methods may not enable. The visual matrix creates a collective space where meaning surfaces through association rather than through direct questioning.
Phase Three: One-to-one Interviews (6 participants from Prison A and other male prisons)
Follow-up conversations with participants after the visual matrix sessions, provide opportunities to expand on their initial reflections and clarify their contributions. These interviews enable a space for participants to engage diffractively with their own contributions, furthering the collaborative and ethical approach described earlier.
Personal Memos:
Situated writings and reflections recorded during my time working in the prison capture embodied experiences, affects, and observations as they are created within the carceral space. These memos provide additional insights into the lived reality of prison education from a practitioner perspective and acknowledge my own entanglement in the research assemblage.
Diffractive Analysis:
Creative analysis through textile work and weaving makes visible the affects through a material meaning-making approach. This trans-corporeal engagement with the <i>da-næuds-ta</i> embodies Barad's (2007) concept of intra-action, where meaning is created through the entanglement of researcher, theory, and matter. The textile work is both method and analysis, making tangible the complex relations between bodies, materials, affects, and spaces in prison education.

Table 1: Phases and methods of the inquiry.

6.4. Human Participant Selection and Sample Size

For phase one, the call for participants was sent out via email to the thirty teachers working at Prison A: five consented to participate. This was a convenience sample, as all participants were from the same institution where I was employed (Luborsky and Rubinstein, 1995). This location was necessary for the walking intra-views due to security clearance restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic, thus limiting the research to that one prison space. The sample size was small because of

the time-intensive nature of the walking intra-views and the focus being on complexity of relations and intra-actions. I was not seeking to generalise the outcomes to a larger population but instead ensuring fair representation and avoidance of bias when exploring this phenomena (Johansson, 2016).

When selecting participants, I considered potential recruitment biases. While my language and creative approaches may have inadvertently discouraged certain groups, particularly male teachers, the gender distribution ultimately mirrored the teaching profession's demographics, with more female participants (see Table 2). As Reybold, Lammert and Stribling (2013) note, one's understanding of research issues shapes who is viewed as central to the investigation, reflecting my feminist commitment to acknowledging researcher positionality. This aligns with Bentz and Shapiro's (2001) mindful inquiry principles, which emphasise awareness throughout the research process.

Phase two of the research: the visual matrix, was held online, reducing the need for security clearance at the prison. Therefore, the call for participants was opened to other employees of the same prison education body, increasing the number of participants to include three additional teachers who worked in other male prisons based in the north of England. The visual matrix comprised nine participants, including myself. Phase three, the one-to-one interviews, were conducted with voluntarily elected participants from both previous phases. The engagement with participants at each phase is indicated in the table below:

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender	Prison Setting	Subject	Length of service	Phase 1: Walking intra-view	Phase 2: Visual Matrix	Phase 3: 1:1 interviews
A	Alice	F	A	PSD	8 yrs	X	-*	-
B	Brian	M	A	Engineering	16 yrs	X	X	X
C	Claire	F	A	ESOL	2 yrs	X	X	-
D	Donald	M	A	Eng/maths	21 yrs	X	X	X
E	Evelyn	F	A	PSD	<1 yr	X	X	X
G	Kevan	M	B & Various	Maths	6 yrs	-	X	X
H	Hannah	F	A & Various	Art/PSD	17 yrs	-	X	X
I	Ingrid	F	C & Various	ESOL/Eng	4 yrs	-	X	X
J	Justine	F	A	Art	2 yrs	-	X	-

Table 2: Human Participant information for all phases of the inquiry.

*Participant A withdrew from the inquiry after phase one due to personal reasons. They agreed that the data from phase one could still be used.

The teachers were from a variety of subjects as evident in the Table 1, this included mandatory subjects of English and maths, as well as ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), PSD (Personal and Social Development), Art and Engineering. They also had varied lengths of service from one to twenty-one years. Both factors, along with their gender were considered as potential influences on experience in the analysis chapters.

6.5. More-than-Human Participants

The prison environment, with its imposing architecture, restricted materials, and controlled spaces, profoundly shapes the daily experiences of those who teach and work within it. This physical reality demanded research methods that acknowledge the complex interplay between humans, more-than-humans and their surroundings. In conceptualising the research environment, I distinguish between two categories of more-than-human participants. First, material objects, such as photocopiers, computers, security cameras, gates, keys, and high walls, function as what Bennett (2010) terms 'vibrant matter', possessing a thing-power that actively constrains and shapes human behaviour. Second, living more-than-human entities: captured birds of prey, wild birds who choose to visit, flowers growing in prison green spaces, cockroaches in the staffroom, and rats living amongst the prison estate, create alternative cartographies that exist alongside institutional frameworks.

The inclusion of more-than-human participants challenges human exceptionalism and acknowledges diverse agencies shaping research environments (Price and Chao, 2023). This approach aligns with Haraway's (2016) understanding that knowledge emerges through entanglements of multiple actors. As Tsing (2015) argues, communities are never produced solely by human intention but through collaborative intra-actions between diverse forms of agency.

Chapter 7: Methods in detail

The inquiry design unfolds through multiple interconnected methods; each selected to create and reveal different aspects of prison teacher experience. This chapter outlines these choices and their implementation. Walking methodologies capture embodied experiences within prison spaces, revealing how teachers intra-act with and are affected by the carceral environment. The visual matrix explores collective affective responses through imagery and sound, while one-to-one interviews validate insights. Personal memos document my reflexive processes and experiences throughout the inquiry. A distinctive diffractive analytical approach integrates material practices through textile work, drawing on Indigenous methodologies and Deleuzeguattarian concepts. This methodological assemblage acknowledges the complex entanglements between researcher, participants, and the prison environment, enabling deeper understanding of the affective dimensions for teachers working in prison spaces.

7.1. Access to undertake the enquiry in Prison A

Securing access to conduct research within the prison environment required navigation of multiple levels of approval and gatekeeping processes. Initial approval was sought and granted from HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) National Research Committee (NRC), which provided the overarching authorisation to conduct research within the prison estate (see [Appendix 6](#)). Following this national-level approval, site-specific permissions were negotiated with Prison A's senior management team, who acted as institutional gatekeepers controlling researcher access to both the physical space and potential participants. These gatekeepers included the Prison Director and Head of Reducing Reoffending, who collectively assessed the research alignment with institutional priorities and operational requirements. My established positionality as education manager proved instrumental in facilitating this access, as existing professional relationships and institutional knowledge enabled more straightforward negotiations around practical arrangements, including security clearance protocols and permissions to bring recording equipment into the secure environment. This insider status provided credibility and trust that would have been considerably more challenging for an external researcher to establish, though it simultaneously created the ethical complexities around consent and power dynamics discussed in Section 6.2.1.

7.1. Method One: Walking methodologies

This inquiry employed walking as a mobile methodology that combined semi-structured interviews with physical movement through the prison space. By conducting interviews while walking alongside participants, this approach captured both verbal responses and embodied experiences, revealing how teachers intra-act (Barad, 2007) with and are affected by the prison environment. The complete interview protocol is provided in [Appendix 2](#).

Walking methodologies have been used within a variety of subject specialties and disciplines including sociology, anthropology, geography, healthcare and criminology. The physical act of walking alongside participants can enable empathy and understanding of experience, helping to shift any power imbalances between the researcher and participant. Existing literature (Anderson, 2004; O'Neill and Hubbard, 2010; Evans and Jones, 2011; Kuntz and Presnall, 2012; Springgay and Truman, 2019; Leigh and Brown, 2021) demonstrates that this method enables a more egalitarian, reciprocal experience for the participant; in my case this was crucial as the line manager of the teacher-participants in the inquiry.

The walking methodology revealed how teachers' bodies responded to prison spaces. The physical act of walking through security boundaries elicited immediate bodily responses from participants, while institutional sounds prompted visceral reactions that participants might not have recalled in traditional interviews. The embodied experience of walking in the prison space revealed complex power dynamics; aspects of prison teaching that participants might struggle to articulate if it had not been in-situ of the experiences.

The action of walking through the space, encourages affective participant responses, prompted by environmental situations, allowing a researcher to unlock 'attitudes and knowledge about the surrounding environment' (Evans and Jones, 2011, p. 850). This was particularly the case in the internal prison grounds, which is boundaried by prisoners' residential wings, thus, expecting the 'gaze' of the prisoners to be on us. The affective impact of the prisoner gaze is explored further in the analysis, as the transcripts recorded the prisoners shouting comments from their cells; notably more frequent when accompanying female participants (further discussed in Chapter XX).

I asked the participants to map the route they wanted to take beforehand. This allowed them to choose their own route to further empower them and enable them to relax in a less formal, pre-determined arrangement. The chosen routes revealed participants' spatial preferences, highlighting

areas of heightened affect and their decisions to either avoid exposed routes, or confront the prisoner 'gaze' and shouting from the cells. An example of this can be seen below (Figure 15), as a participant stops their route part way on the path towards the Vulnerable Prisoner (VP) wing, which houses prisoners convicted of child sex offences.

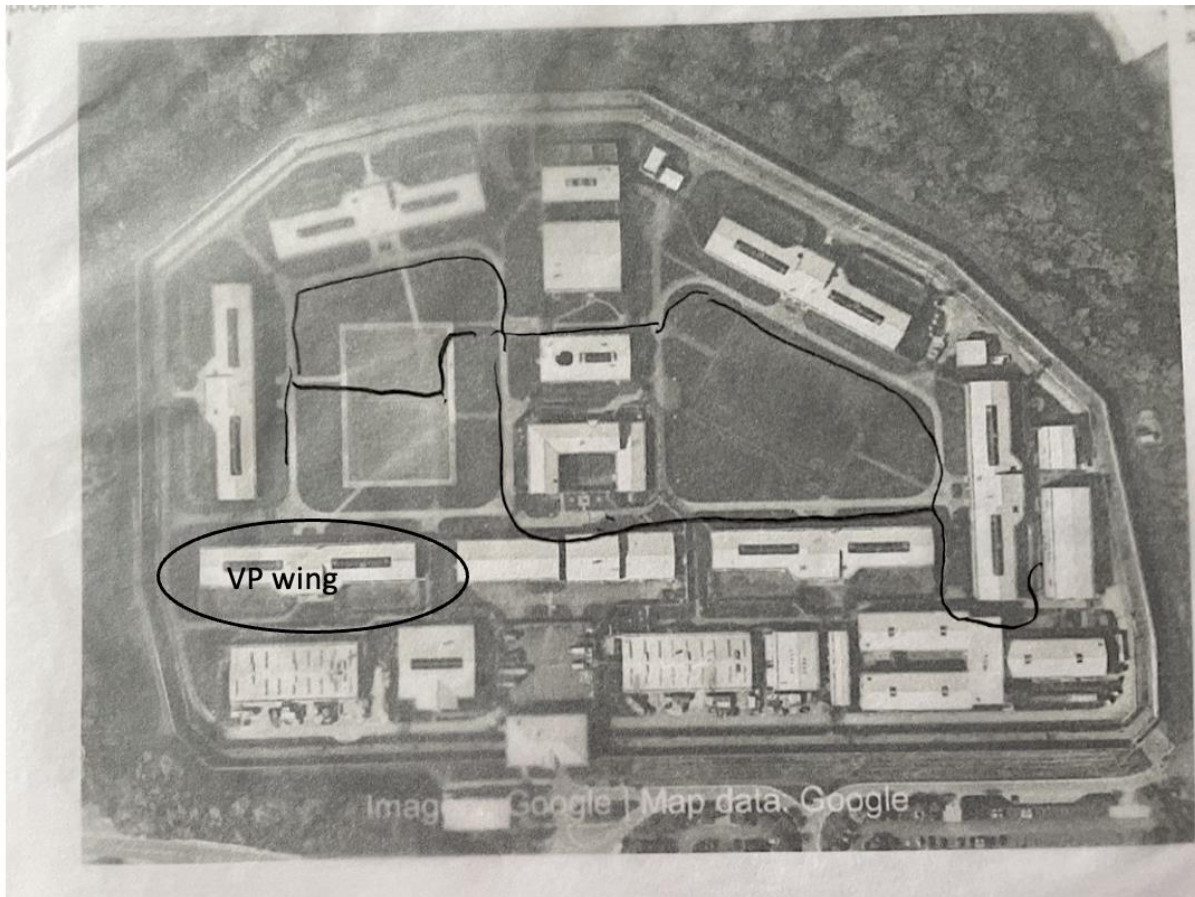


Figure 15: Participant mapped route for the walking intra-view that shows hesitation and avoidance of the Vulnerable Prisoner (VP) wing.

I also invited participants to pause during the walk to engage in drawing more-than-human agents. These drawings were used later in the visual matrix (discussed later in this chapter). The created images were a reminder of the walk and enabled discussion of any shared affective responses. Integrated thoughtfully into research, artistic practice provides a vital means of stepping outside normative frames of thinking towards more critical insight; the imaginary and intuitive dimensions of creation, opens doors to alternate perspectives. As Springgay (2009) argues, incorporating artistic

practice into research inquiry can generate new insights through the reflexive process triggered by creative acts, enabling us to develop more critical perspectives (p. 242).

7.1.1. From interview to intra-view

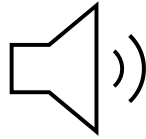
Walking with participants allowed me to explore the physical and figurative impact of experience within the prison space. I was interested in how the carceral geography, including the buildings, walls, green spaces, and gates may impact on the teacher experiences. Therefore, conducting the interview in-situ elicited affective responses through experiencing the space or between spaces, therefore becoming an 'intra-view'. This inquiry foregrounds the distinction between 'intra-' and 'inter-' action (after Barad, 2007), as discussed in Chapter 4; while 'inter-' implies interaction between distinct entities, 'intra-' promotes the entanglement of entities within the prison context.

This approach recognises that the experiences of teacher-participants are not isolated but develop within a complex web of relationships, structures, and power dynamics inherent to the prison system. The concept of the intra-view is therefore a valuable framework that emphasises the embodied nature of intra-action (Kuntz and Presnall, 2012) and the significance of the physical, prison context in shaping the experiences of participants.

The transcripts of the walking intra-views captured more than words, including ambient sounds, spatial intra-actions, and more-than-human participants as affective agents. Incorporating these elements challenges artificial separations between humans and environment (Lenz Taguchi, 2012). The inquiry documented this inclusivity through soundscapes, drawings, and collected materials to de-centre human dominance. As Manley (2009) notes, Spinozian or Deleuzian frameworks require incorporating images and affect to reveal societal patterns that words alone cannot convey.

Background sounds form a crucial part of the analysis, providing insight into the prison's acoustic environment. Even in the quietest moments of the intra-views, such as when participants were drawing and thinking, the prison's soundscape remained an ever-present force. The combination of institutional sounds: mechanical, metallic, and human, formed what might be described as the prison's distinctive acoustic, affective atmosphere (Herrity, Schmidt and Warr, 2021), one that never truly fades into silence. The link below will take you to a section of the intra-view recording. This was taken from one of the quietest parts of the intra-views, captured whilst the participant was drawing and

thinking, it highlights that even when there was relative quiet, the constant background noises still permeated the space.



[Sound-file](#)

7.1.2. Rhythmic qualities of walking intra-views

As Roy and Froggett (2023) note, walking in research creates synchronised movements between researcher and participant, fostering a shared spatial experience. The prison is full of sonic interruptions, for example: radio chatter, banging gates, shouts and heckling, alongside the natural rhythms, like birdsong and wind. Thus, creating multiple rhythms coexisting within the same space. Roy and Froggett (2023) recognise the potential to include analysis of the temporal qualities of an interview, attuning to the ‘fluctuating emotional tones’ (p. 15) revealing shifting affects which rise over time and in movement.

This walking method attunes to the temporal rhythms of the prison, as the footsteps and conversations fell in-line with the background noises of the space. This rhythmic interplay connects to Lefebvre's (1991) concept of ‘rhythmanalysis’, where social spaces are understood through their temporal and bodily rhythms. The sonic disruptions of the space might spark unexpected ‘lines of flight’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 9), opening new pathways for understanding how institutional and natural rhythms shape the prison teachers’ experiences. In this inquiry ‘lines of flight’ refers to divergent trajectories of thought and affect, that are initiated by the various sensory interruptions or disruptions described.

7.1.3. Place-making

An additional rationale for the walking intra-view method was to enable the material influence of the prison as a ‘place’ that is transitional and boundaried. Walking methodologies have previously been linked with mapping, in human geography, healthcare, and other social sciences; connecting human experience with place (Anderson, 2004; Carpiano, 2009; Springgay and Truman, 2019;

Kusenbach, 2020). Drawing again on Lefebvre's (1991) spatial theory, the walking intra-views reveal how prison architecture produces and governs movement, while simultaneously shaping how space is lived and experienced by those within it.

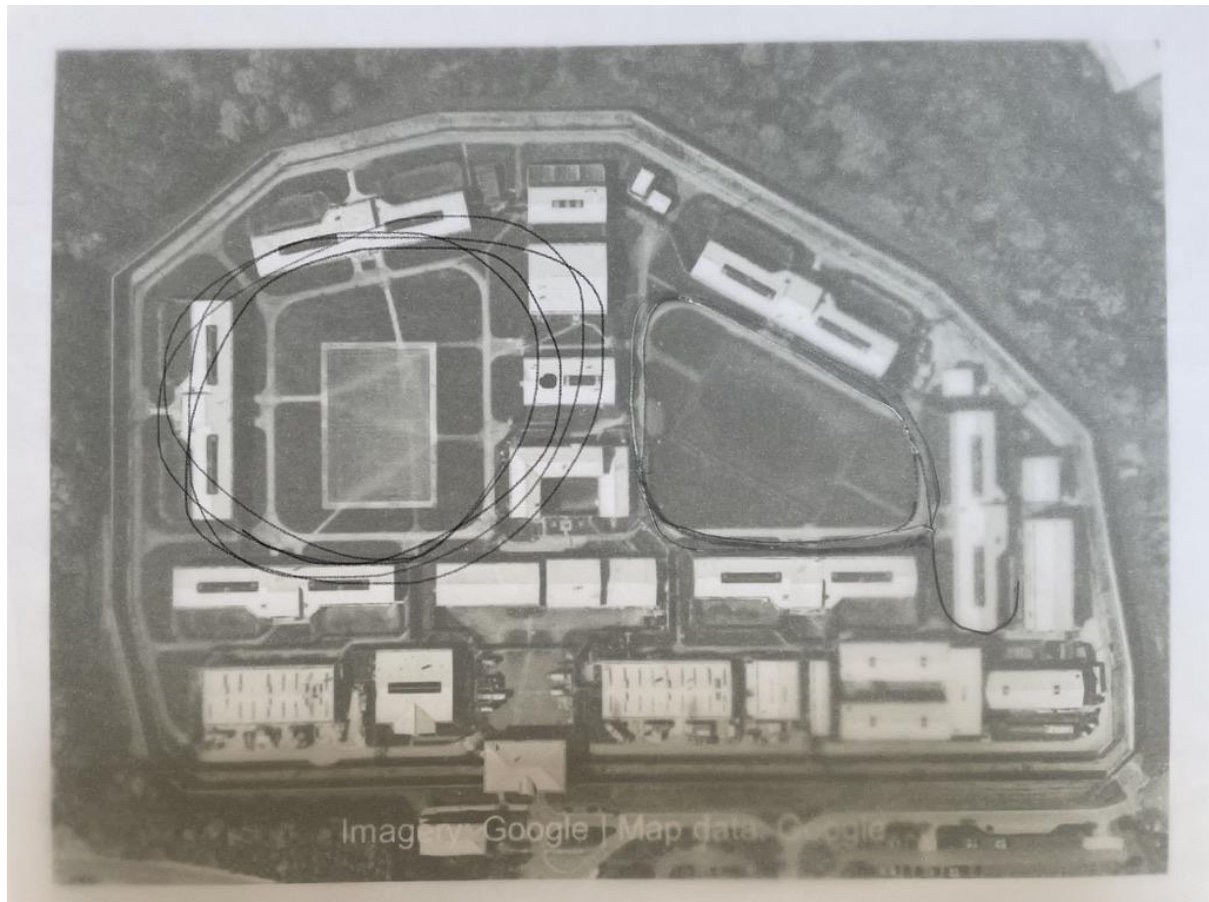


Figure 16: Aerial view of Prison A, with participant mapping of route. Google Map data (2021).

The shared sensorial, sociality of walking together with the researcher can be a productive way to create 'place-making' (Pink, 2008, p. 178). The maps created by participants (as seen in figures 15 and 16) demonstrate how individuals navigate institutional environments through embodied movement. Drawing on the work of Ingold (2007), the pathways of the prison space, which can be seen in the aerial image, highlight the place of the prison that can be constituted by its entangled routes, giving meaning to the place (Ingold, 2007). These routes are never static but evoke a sense of movement and flow throughout the prison, despite the restrictions put in place by walls, gates, and security staff. Pink (2008) suggests that the walking of these, invites the researcher to further

conceptualise 'the human as a situated, embodied being' (p. 179), recognising that we cannot disentangle our own routes or reasons for being in that space.

Utilising walking methodology as place-making, assigns additional understanding to the inquiry method. The walking itself assigns significance to the spatial surroundings and the teachers' daily practices. By physically moving through the prison space with the participants, I aimed to unravel the complex interplay between lived realities of the prison teachers and the spatial dynamics that might impact that (Fendler, 2013).

7.1.4. Layered Routes: An Artistic Interpretation

The layered tracings of participants' walking routes creates a rich visual tapestry (Figure 17). Inspired by the arts works of psychoanalyst and artist Bracha Ettinger (previously discussed in Chapter 5), I have layered the tracings of the walking routes created by participants. This captures the affective intensity of the walking intra-views creating a rhizomatic mapping of the space. The image creates an ethereal and transcendental haunting of the temporal assemblage. As Ettinger (1985) reflects on the nature of such visual traces:

'Traces from the interior and traces from sight change places and are changed. Even if nothing were connected, there would at least be these remains: visual traces over the traces of an anterior visibility; the influence of anterior traces on the seeing to come; an aftersight different from the first' (Ettinger, 1985, p. 71).

This understanding of layered traces and their temporal relationships helps illuminate how the walking routes create meaning through their overlapping paths and intersections.

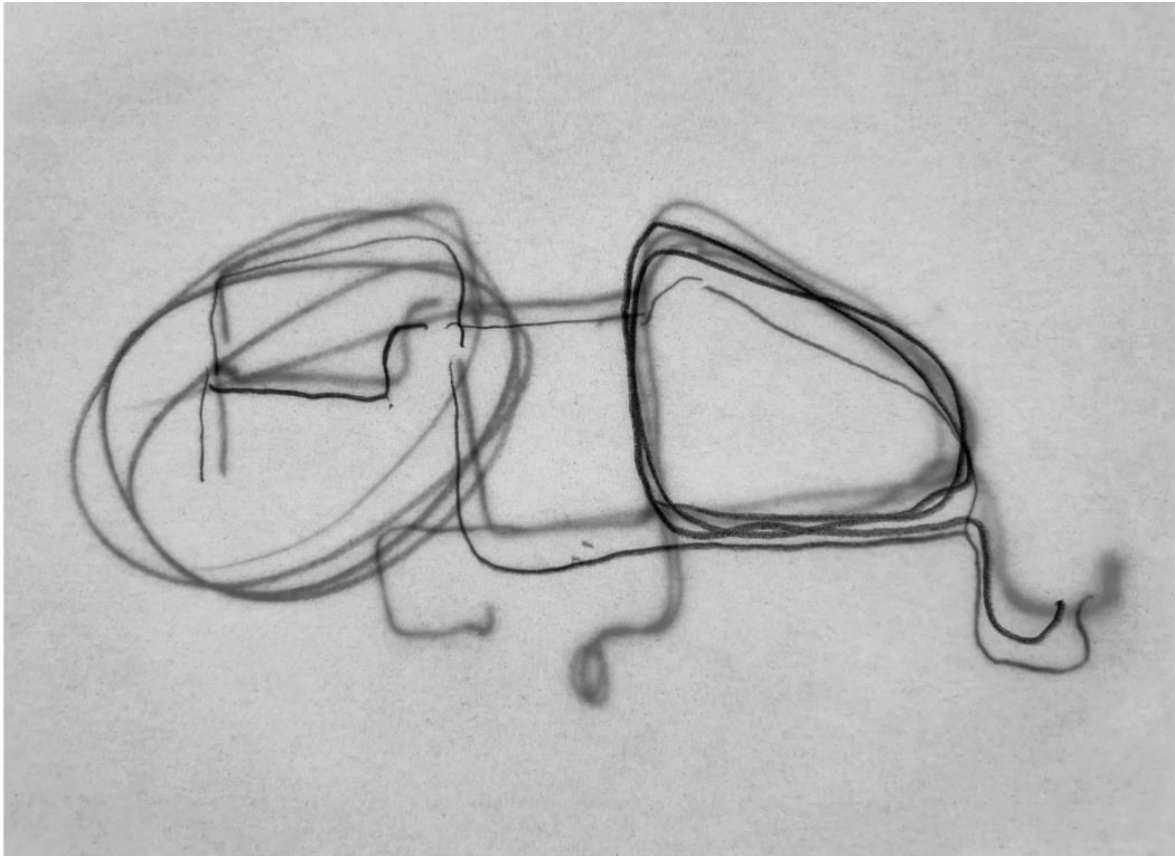


Figure 17: Overlaid participant drawn routes for walking intra-views.

With these creations on paper, I am re-materialising moments as a trace of that affective experience, along with other entangled experiences of walking in the prison space. As with Ettinger's work, this includes traces of violence and trauma which 'co-inhabit' the walking intra-view experiences in an 'out-of-time' presence (Pollock in Ettinger *et al.*, 2015, p. 261). The image creates a new borderspace between the past and the present, using artwork to elicit sensation. As Deleuze (2003) states when discussing the artwork of Francis Bacon; art is nothing but pure affects or sensations (p. 39).

This mapping connects unexpectedly to Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) discussion of Deligny's 'wander lines' of autistic children. As a researcher and mother of an autistic son (further discussed in Chapter XY), this intersection between disability and institutional spaces carries personal resonance, particularly given the high proportion of learning disabilities in prison populations. This embodied understanding deepens the theoretical connection to Ettinger's 'matrixial borderspaces' (2006), where boundaries between researcher, subject, and space become permeable.

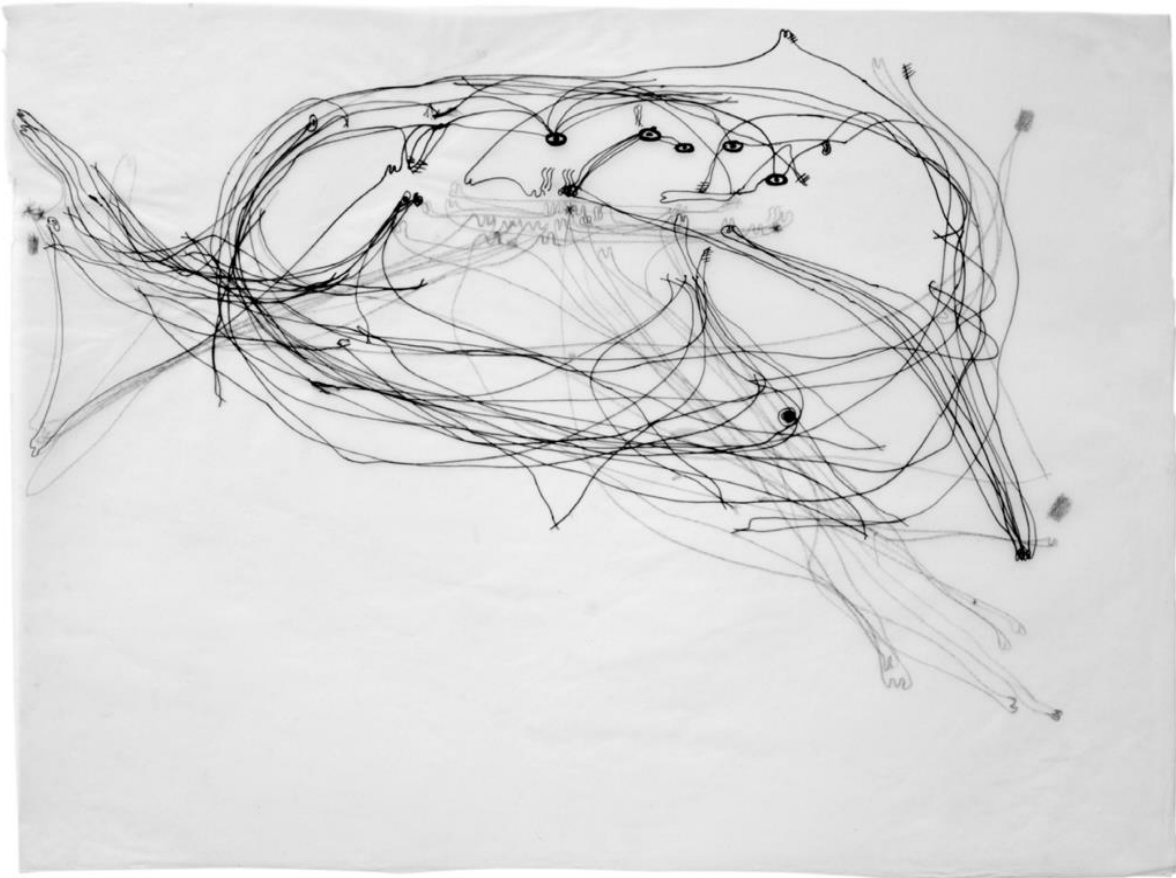


Figure 18: Fernand Deligny, *Lignes d'erre* [Wander Lines]. Maison d'édition l'Arachnéen, Paris

The intersections between personal experience, participant mappings, and theoretical frameworks create meaningful resonance. As Pollock notes in Ettinger *et al.* 'We are led to affectivity through the psychological strings that the materials themselves set vibrating' (2015, p. 262), the materials themselves evoke affective responses, enabling understanding of this complexity through the convergence of lived experience, artistic expression, and theory.

7.1.5. Inclusion of drawing and found objects.

During the walking intra-views, participants were invited to draw more-than-human elements within the prison grounds. The act of drawing enabled the opportunity to think creatively and more

reflectively about their experiences. As Colebrook (2002) argues, 'Art is not about representation, concepts or judgement; art is the power to think in terms that are not so much cognitive and intellectual as affective' (p. 12). This understanding of art's affective potential highlights how the drawing activities facilitated affective engagement with the prison space.

The pauses, whilst drawing, fostered deeper spatial engagement, aligning to a 'slow ontology' (Ulmer, 2017, p. 201); an approach that resists rushed research practices in favour of organic rhythms. The institutional time constraints initially created pressure for me as researcher, as I had to complete the intra-views during prisoner lockdown periods; the drawing activities therefore provided an opportunity to momentarily transcend these temporal boundaries. In this pause, the participants and I fell into open conversational dialogue, eliciting affective responses that would not have been captured otherwise. This was particularly evident with one participant, Evelyn, who verbalised the following question to herself in the quiet of the drawing activity (unexpectedly and unprompted by me):

<quiet, noise of pencil on paper>

Evelyn: 'Is there a kind of underlying tension here? I think there is'.

Drawing opened possibilities to explore the material-discursivity of what mattered and was mattering within the intra-view (Mitchell, 2016). The images generated (See figure 19 for examples and [Appendix 3](#) for all images) therefore became part of the *da-naeuds-ta* (previously conceptualised in Chapter 6), visually showing the affects connected to that time and space. The drawings and collected items during the walking, documented the intra-view experience, materialising it through creative outcomes that were later used in phase two: visual matrix (explained later in this chapter). From a Deleuze-Guattarian perspective, drawings and artefacts don't merely represent experiences but generate new sensations, experiences, and assemblages. According to Massumi (2015b), they produce an 'aesthetic yield' through expression. As 'percepts' (previously discussed in Chapter 4), they make the invisible visible by modulating perception through change (Rousell, 2019). These images combine percepts and affects, transforming aesthetic relations and enabling more-than-human modes of perception and articulation of prison life. Functioning as an 'abstract machine' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 511), they challenge traditional understandings of human experience

while revealing the human and posthuman complexities of prison space through differential forces and intensities.



Figure 19: Examples of drawings from during the walking intra-views.

7.1.6. Limitations of walking intra-views

Roy and Froggett (2023) explore how the temporal experience of mobile methodologies influences inquiry outcomes, with the rhythm of steps allowing for participant attunement. This suggests that if walking is rushed within time constraints, participants' contributions may also be hastened and less attuned compared with when the pace remains natural. They suggest that 'keeping time' may be the most important task of the mobile interviewer (p. 17). In this regard, time itself became an agent and part of the assemblage.

As I only had clearance to conduct the interviews whilst the prisoners were locked up over lunch, there was a requirement for me to complete the task quickly, meaning at some points I *was* rushing. The rushed pace was therefore representative of the context, highlighting the impact of the regime

in a panoptic space which imposes rules on us, despite not being prisoners. However, as discussed above, the drawing activity provided a counterbalance, creating a space where both participant and I could physically and cognitively slow down despite the temporal pressures of the environment.

There were some instances during the walking intra-view where the formal powers of the prison, in hindsight, impacted on the way I behaved in that space. This is particularly evident with Donald, where he had suggested a more complicated route that went beyond my normal territory as a teacher, into areas of the prison I had not been to before. Whilst the spaces in the route were accessible to all staff, they were clearly occupied by prison officers rather than non-uniformed staff. When I listen back to the recording I realise now that I purposefully took control to avoid returning there, instead suggesting an easier route. When we tried to return to the mapped route later in the interview, I diverted, and we turned back as I saw several prison officers there. I used the on-set of rain as an excuse:

LH: Oh, it is raining. Let's go back. <laugh> I don't want to get wet, I've not brought my coat, that's strange, there's loads of people in there now, isn't that funny that I've never seen anyone in there. And now...

<noise of keys>

We'll walk back.

This deviation was partly due to the ethical implications of having non-participants potentially audio recorded. It was, however, also because I felt intimidated by the officers' presence. Despite having proper clearance for the voice recorder, I felt vulnerable as non-uniformed staff, carrying prohibited equipment, anticipating potential challenge from prison officers. Avoiding this interaction, thus highlighted my own becoming-prisoner affects. Despite efforts to minimise power dynamics, the inquiry process inadvertently reinforced institutional hierarchies, as I went against the participant's wishes and took control of the walk. This experience reminded me of my inherent authority and the need to actively alleviate it. Even as a female manager navigating prison officers' power, I inadvertently reproduced hierarchical control. This gendered dimension of researcher positionality and its research implications are explored further in chapters 11 and XX.

7.2. Method Two: The Visual Matrix

The second phase of the research utilised the group-based associative method, termed visual matrix, originally developed by Froggett, Manley and Roy (2015), from the practice of social dreaming. In a comparable way to a focus group, a visual matrix has interest in the shared experience rather than individual experience (Froggett, 2021). However, the specific arrangement of a visual matrix, helps to avoid some of the power plays that may occur in a standard focus group. The term 'matrix' in this method, signifies a structured yet interconnected framework. This framework enables analysis of the visual images that participants share in response to visual stimuli, capturing the complex interplay of meanings. This aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of the rhizome, which emphasises non-hierarchical connections. The visual matrix therefore facilitates a holistic analysis, where interpretations are dynamically interconnected with participants' input, reflecting the decentralised, collective, and emergent nature of the inquiry.

The visual matrix method explores participant experiences through affective responses, produced in response to sensory material (Roy and Froggett, 2023). The stimuli shown in this visual matrix were chosen by me as facilitator, recognising my entanglement in the inquiry. I chose a range of images and sounds collated during phase one; this included the walking intra-view maps, participant drawings, found artefacts from within the prison and sounds of the prison. I also included textiles I had created as part of the analysis process (see all images in [Appendix 3](#)).

The visual matrix method enables participants to 'express experiences they find difficult to put into words' (Froggett, 2015, p. 1), particularly useful for sensitive situations where traditional dialogue-based methods might fall short. This aligns with Bollas' (1987) concept of 'unthought knowns' (p. 272); experiences not readily accessible to conscious awareness but manifesting through dreams or embodied responses. The method allows researchers and participants to reach an understanding of 'hidden, complex and difficult to express emotions related to their work' (Manley and Roy, 2017, p. 134), making it particularly suited to exploring the multifaceted nature of prison teachers' shared experiences.

The method aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's ontology by privileging process, becoming, and multiplicity; embracing the rhizomatic nature of thought and affect through non-linear connections and emergent meanings. The method serves as practical application of Deleuze and Guattari's (2015) previously discussed concept of 'percept' through the subjective imagery experienced within the

matrix; mental images are perceived uniquely by each participant rather than represented as objective understandings. The intensity of these 'image-affects' (Manley, 2018, p. 194) influences participants' experiences and intra-actions within the matrix, contributing to their continuous process of becoming through associative thinking.

7.2.1. The visual matrix process

The visual matrix method requires careful facilitation. To prepare myself as facilitator for this method, I attended an online workshop with one of the co-creators Lynn Froggett. I also had multiple supervisory discussions and guidance from co-creator Julian Manley, prior to undertaking facilitation. The method's careful guidelines ensure the necessary conditions to maintain the safety of participants, minimising risk. Participants and gatekeepers were informed of the potential for emotional responses in the information sheet prior to consent (see [Appendix 4](#)).

I both facilitated and participated in the visual matrix. While facilitating, I consciously created space for diverse perspectives to emerge, inviting everyone to contribute equally. Employing a diffractive approach, I embraced how my position as manager and researcher created interferences and entanglements within the inquiry assemblage which could not be ignored. I continued to use my personal memos to explore the intra-actions produced throughout the inquiry process (see personal memos, Chapter 11). By sharing my experiences and engaging in the visual matrix as an equal participant, I prioritised relational dynamics and multiple perspectives.

The visual matrix process has three parts; firstly, the participants were presented with images on the digital screen (see Figure 20), if in a physical space, these would be displayed on the wall. They were then invited to share their 'imaginaries' (images in their mind) that the stimuli had evoked in them. The term 'imaginaries' has flexible and evolving meaning; it has been used in social sciences to depict that society is not a given but exists because it is collectively imagined in that way (Nerlich, 2015). The sharing of imaginaries in the visual matrix is akin to sharing daydreams, a state of 'reverie' (Bion, 2023), sharing one's immediate visual responses, rather than analysed thoughts or discussions (Froggett, Manley and Roy, 2015).

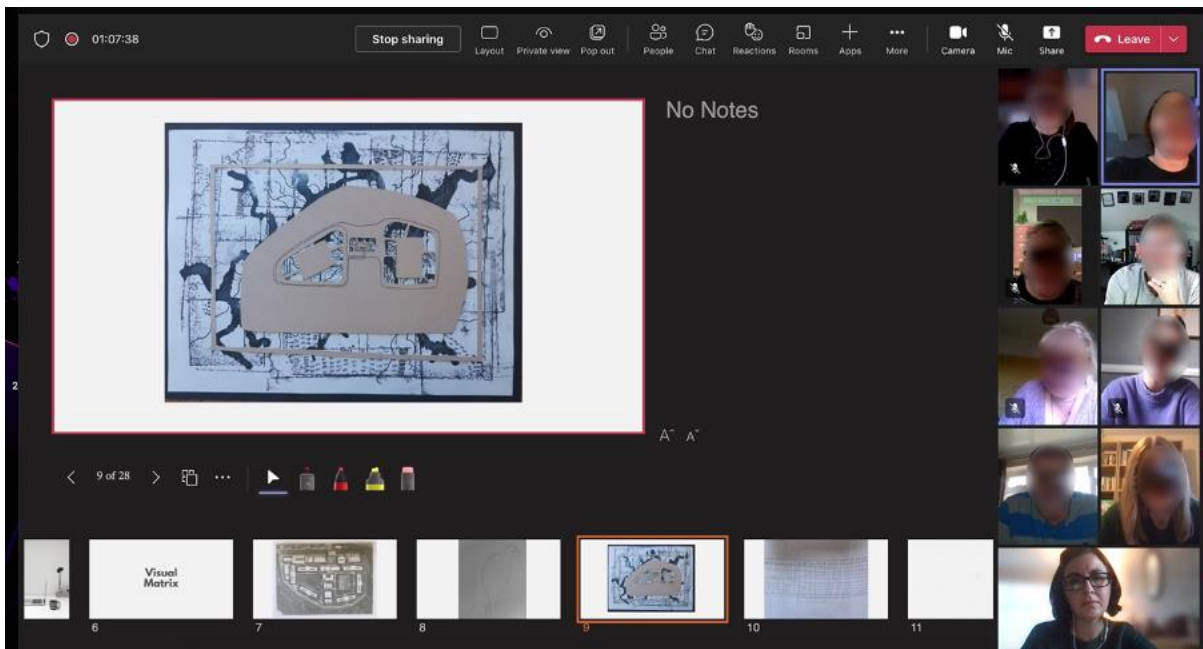


Figure 20: Screen shot of the visual matrix conducted online, with participant created imagery being shared.

The visual matrix lasted sixty minutes, during which time, participants shared their associations as a group, developing clusters of imagery (Froggett, 2021). Rules were shared with participants before they attend, and they were reminded of these again at the start (see table 3 below). These rules create a dialogic space, where all voices carry equal weight. Participants can therefore build upon each other's associations without hierarchy or judgement.

Rules of the Visual Matrix
While the images are initially being shown please remain silent on mute, just be with your thoughts and imagination.
I will invite everyone to contribute if they wish to. I will also participate. As facilitator, if I feel there is not equal contribution, I may ask individuals if they would like to share their ideas.
There should be no interruptions when someone else is speaking, there is no time limit for each image or person, but we only have 45 minutes for this section.
Please listen attentively, cameras on, no mobiles or other distractions, if possible. You do not need to take notes.
You may recognise some of the images as your own or may want to compliment others. However, in the matrix, the images belong to the whole group, not individuals, therefore, please refrain from 'discussing' the images themselves, instead you should be sharing what comes to your imagination in response.

Table 3: Rules of the visual matrix shared before the session.

The imagery was presented randomly without revealing authorship, with captured prison sounds interspersed between visuals. Each image was displayed for thirty seconds while participants

remained silent on mute, allowing time to form their imaginaries' before voluntary sharing. No turn-taking was enforced, enabling spontaneous contributions. Participants were instructed to avoid interpreting meanings during the matrix itself; instead, images and feelings were developed into meaning during subsequent interpretation and analysis sessions.

Once the images and sounds had been shared, I asked the question: 'Would anyone like to share their imaginaries, or images in their mind, in response to this image/sound?' The important aspect is that participants were not asked what they thought *about* the stimuli, neither were they asked about their prison experiences but instead, they were asked what the image/sound *produced* in them (Froggett, 2021). I then waited for participants to speak, meaning on occasion there was silence before anyone contributed. Following the visual matrix, participants engaged in a post-matrix discussion and analysis sessions where the collective imaginaries were further explored, interpreted, and developed into insights about their prison experience (results of which are in chapter 9).

7.2.2. Post-matrix discussion.

Immediately after the visual matrix, the participants and I had a post-matrix discussion of the associations as we recorded them visually on an analysis map (shown in figure 33, chapter 9). Through collaborative engagement in the post-matrix discussion, participants are encouraged to analyse together, contributing their perspectives to shape the research outcomes; in this way the participants themselves established the frame of analysis (Liveng *et al.*, 2017). This shared dialogue attempts to both respect the individual contributions while also coming to an agreement about possible meaning (Manley and Roy, 2017). The sharing and reflecting of their 'unthought knows' (Bollas, 1987) in the matrix, may bring them into conscious awareness, leading to better understanding of their personal and collective experiences; the relational dynamics of the prison and the affective impact. The method in this way promotes a participatory approach by actively involving the prison educators in the co-construction of knowledge. This promotes a rhizomatic enfolding (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988) of experience between researcher and participants aiming to 'acentre' and question subjectivity (Lenz Taguchi, 2012).

7.2.3. Further interpretation and analysis

The analysis of the visual matrix is repeated via an interpretation panel soon after the initial event. In this case, it was with me and a prison art teacher, invited as she had also recently left prison work, enabling an insider/outsider perspective and the ability to interpret imagery through her skills in art. In accordance with the guidelines (Froggett, Manley and Roy, 2015), we each initially spent five minutes uninterrupted to share our strongest impressions from the matrix. We then discussed the different potential meanings, sharing interpretations in relation to what was on the analysis map and our lived experiences. Further interpretations were undertaken with participants one-to-one in phase three, during semi-structured interviews, before my own analysis considering all the above.

7.2.4. Limitations of the Visual Matrix

The visual matrix method, while offering valuable insights into affective experiences in complex spaces, does present some limitations. The method can evoke unanticipated emotional consequences. Whilst bringing the unconscious affects to the fore for the research is important, for the participants, this may lead to distressing revelations. The information sheet and consent form therefore reminded participants of this potential risk.

The visual matrix method when delivered face-to-face requires a setup of chairs in a snowflake formation so that participants cannot make eye contact. This ensures that they are not addressing each other directly but instead speaking to the images. For practical reasons, as some of the participants did not live geographically close, and the research was undertaken during Covid-19 restrictions, the visual matrix for this inquiry was conducted online, via Microsoft Teams (See figure 20). This was in part a benefit as it enabled participants to be in their own personal space, in contrast to the walking intra-view that was situated in the prison space. The online platform naturally prevented direct eye contact so the focus could be on the images and ensured participants were not interrupted through the ability to mute. However, one limitation of this was that the embodied affects of being in a physical matrix were diminished online, as the sensory acuity was lessened.

Another challenge lies in the inherent subjective nature of outcomes elicited by the visual stimuli, which can introduce bias into data analysis if approached normatively. However, as this inquiry adopts a postqualitative framework, these subjective dimensions of the matrix are embraced rather than minimised. This stance aligns with the earlier-mentioned acentering, through rhizomatic

enfolding (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988); not eliminating personal perspectives but deliberately destabilising them. This positions subjectivity as fluid, multiple, and co-constructed rather than fixed and singular, acknowledging interpretive diversity while preventing any single viewpoint from dominating the research process.

Furthermore, the varied responses to visual artefacts may lead to disparate conclusions, or 'wild analysis' (Froggett, Manley and Roy, 2015; Hollway and Jefferson, 2023), adding complexity to interpretation. The multiple levels of the analysis process aim to address this challenge but result in a more time-intensive approach. Despite these limitations, the method remains a valuable tool for exploring complex phenomena and understanding human experiences. The visual matrix accesses layers of experience that may remain hidden in traditional focus groups. It creates a space where affective responses to visual stimuli can emerge through the group's collective association, allowing participants to move beyond purely cognitive reflections toward embodied understandings. This proved particularly valuable in exploring the complex, often unspoken dimensions of prison education spaces.

7.3. Method Three: One-to-one interviews

In phase three, follow-up conversations with participants took place after both the walking intra-views and visual matrix were completed. These discussions allowed participants to expand on their experiences from the first two phases and to explore analysis together. The semi-structured questions (see [Appendix 5](#)) were developed in response to ideas that surfaced during the prior methods.

7.3.1. Process of the one-to-one interviews

The interviews were conducted with six of the participants who had taken part in the visual matrix; participants were given the choice of location for the interviews, either to be online, in a neutral location face to face or in Prison A. Three of the interviews were therefore conducted in Prison A, and three were conducted online (via Microsoft Teams). Each interview was proposed to last 45-60 minutes; the first 15 minutes was dedicated to discussion of the visual matrix analysis map, allowing participants to share thoughts on the themes developed in the post-matrix discussion (approximately six weeks prior). The interview continued with the use of semi-structured questions on the themes of the prison environment, power, pedagogy, and praxis.

At this stage, I was no longer employed at the prison, having resigned, and I therefore needed to gain additional access to return to conduct the interviews as a non-key holder. The power dynamic inherent with the one-to-one approach was therefore lessened, although remained with my position as researcher. Returning to the prison space also enabled me to reflect on my experiences and notice different affects. Below, the personal memo (further analysed in Chapter 11) documents that return:

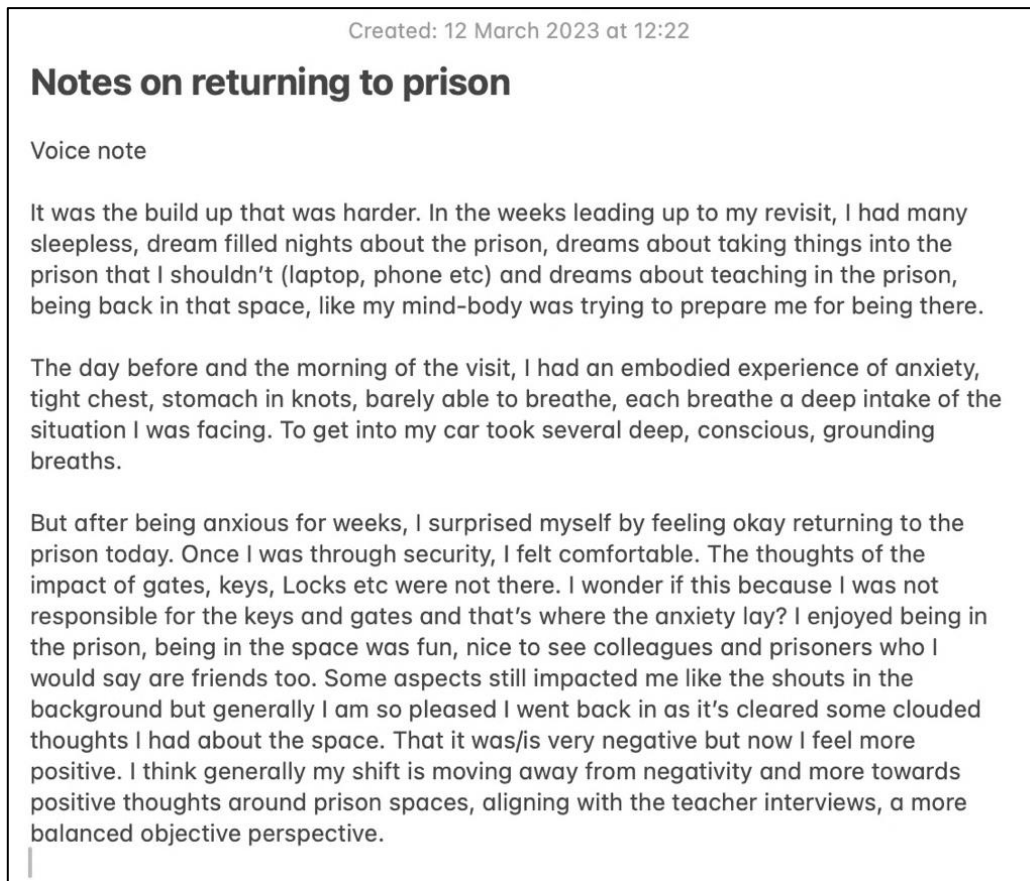


Figure 21: Personal Memo, transcribed voice note, March 2023.

7.3.2. Justification and complications of the interview method

The inclusion of one-to-one interviews was important to 'sense-check' with the participants, giving them added opportunity to think-with and respond to the visual matrix outcomes, enriching the collective insights before undertaking further analysis. This approach aimed to foster participant collaboration while acknowledging the inherent complexities and tensions in methodological

decisions. The participatory nature of these interviews carries its own implications, recognising that inviting participant contribution can create productive tensions, particularly when their thinking differs from the researcher's initial engagements with the data (Caretta and Pérez, 2019).

While participant validation was incorporated, this process differed from what is sometimes characterised as formal 'member checking' (Caretta and Pérez, 2019, p. 360). Traditional member checking often involves participants reviewing findings after analysis is complete, whereas my approach involved validation during data collection but before comprehensive analysis. The aim was not to come to an agreed consensus about the inquiry analysis but to ensure that I had listened to their thinking, giving participants a chance to expand on points should they wish to. As the researcher, I still held 'epistemic authority' (Caretta and Pérez, 2019, p. 360) over the inquiry analysis, drawing on my broader perspective across multiple responses. This position allowed me to consider both participant and researcher thoughts with equal weight, rather than privileging either viewpoint.

During transcript validation, one participant challenged several of my initial notes, leading to an extended dialogue through comments in the document, where they shared deeper insights from their perspective. While this exchange enriched my understanding, it initially provoked feelings of discomfort and vulnerability as it appeared to challenge my interpretive legitimacy. However, I consciously embraced this tension as it aligned with the rhizomatic theoretical framework. This experience proved invaluable in highlighting how participant involvement in analysis inevitably produces heterogeneous rather than homogeneous outcomes.

7.4. Personal Memos

Throughout my time working in the prison environment, I maintained personal memos to capture my immediate responses, observations, and reflections. These memos served multiple purposes in the analytical process. Following Jewkes (2014) approach to autoethnographic documentation in prison work, I recorded both descriptive observations of the physical space and my embodied responses to it, paying particular attention to the material elements of the prison environment and the impact on teacher experience. The memos were written both in-situ of the prison space but most often in my car immediately after leaving the space. This ensured the experiences were fresh,

capturing not only what happened but also the affective intensities of these encounters. This immediate recollection proved invaluable during the analysis phase, as it allowed me to return to these moments with their full affective detail intact, comparing my experiences to that of the participants’.

*Always rushed.
Not giving generative attention.
background noise of the birds.
I noticed the orange and red flowers [Birds foot trefoil]
these were new since last week,
the bees love them, I must have seen a dozen or more.
Thinking about the weight of the belt and now I’m out,
the end of the day, the feeling: like I am free.
Feeling of being released.
The clothes I wear.
The worry of work.
No real summer holidays.
I say it doesn’t matter, that the space and place
of a prison doesn’t impact me,
but the restrictions that impact my life do.*

Figure 22: Personal memo, phone note, July 2022.

The memos included observations about the prison's material environment, the impact of bars, the sound of shouting, the weight of security belt and keys, as well as my bodily responses to these elements. This approach aligns with what Pink (2008) describes as sensory ethnography, recognising that research insights are created not just through observation but through the researcher's full sensory engagement with the research environment. These personal accounts became part of the *da-næuds-ta* analysed in Chapter 11.

7.5. Creative methods: diffractive analysis

Through material-creative practice and embodied engagement, the use of creative methods, specifically the use of textiles in the analysis process, revealed the affective nuances that may have been missed with other methods of inquiry. Building upon ‘differential textures’ outlined in Chapter 5, here I detail the practical implementation of diffractive analysis through material engagement.

7.5.1. Material analysis processes

Haraway (2008) recognises that diffraction as a research method allows a 'mapping of interference' (p. 70), to diffract is to disrupt; in the context of prison education research, the disruptions are needed in order to notice that which has not been noticed before. The diffraction creates something different; but the approach does not solely focus on differences themselves but instead on the outcomes produced by those differences. Through diffractive and material-creative practice, I imagine new potentialities; making the 'matter intelligible in new ways' (Lenz Taguchi, 2012, p. 267). The use of textiles *with* the analysis has created a diffractive difference; the artefacts thus become entangled in the research, serving as prompts for further analysis (see figure 23 for the weaving in progress). Including these material objects as additional *da-næuds-ta*, I have re-presented, re-framed, and embodied the outcomes as material affective textures of diffractive knots. These textures became visual outcomes and part of the inquiry as more-than-human agents, therefore 'thinking with matter' (Sayal-Bennett, 2018, n.p.).



Figure 23: Weaving with the *da-næuds-ta*.

7.5.2. Developing a new material-analytical method

The implementation of diffractive methodology requires careful consideration of how theoretical principles translate into analytical practice; those who have engaged with this methodology (Lenz Taguchi, 2012; Mazzei, 2014; Mitchell, 2016; Van der Tuin and Geerts, 2016; Daniels, 2017; Sayal-Bennett, 2018; Fox and Alldred, 2022, 2023; Flockhart, 2023) demonstrate its flexibility, from philosophical engagement to creative practices like photography and dance.

To honour both the emergent qualities and performative elements essential to diffractive analysis, I created an analytical process centred on engagement with the *da-nœuds-ta*. This approach was developed through careful consideration of diffractive analysis alongside Indigenous practices of material engagement. Rather than adopting software-based analytical approaches that might constrain the embodied aspects of affects, I turned to Indigenous methodologies that demonstrate how physical intra-action with materials can foster rich, responsive, and ethically attentive analytical processes.

7.5.3. The integration of Indigenous material practices

Indigenous material practices provided both practical techniques and methodological validation for this approach. Tachine *et al.* (2022) demonstrate through their work with story rugs in Diné traditions how the practise of weaving can create a heightened mental state conducive to effective analysis. The practical implementation in this inquiry took specific material forms through weaving and stitching with the analysis, engaging with more-than-human wisdom through threads, tensions, and textures. This approach enables recognition of patterns and understanding through the continuous transfer of energy, matter, and information. Weaving diffractively with the analysis created pause moments to reconnect with the prison space, rhythms and affectivities that might otherwise be lost between data collection and analysis.

Diffractive methods demand responsible engagement with the world (Van der Tuin and Geerts, 2016), avoiding hierarchical approaches that separate different theories and philosophies. Instead, it engages with ideas 'through one another' (Barad, 2007, p. 30), creating new ways of becoming in the world. As Tachine *et al.* (2022) argue, this requires being generative, not for production's sake, but as a form of capaciousness and responsibility that acknowledges duty, while refusing to overdetermine the future. As mentioned in Chapter 5, these approaches to knowledge creation are

not 'new' as Indigenous methodologies have embodied these principles for millennia (McKenna, Moodie and Onesta, 2021). I therefore honour and respect the distinct cultural traditions of Indigenous people and appreciate the history behind these research paradigms when utilising the methodology in this inquiry.

7.5.4. The doing of diffractive analysis.

Drawing together multiple methodological threads, I have developed an analytical approach that weaves diffractive methodology and Indigenous ontologies, particularly the 'Thought Ritual' (Yunkaporta and Moodie, 2019), which shares commitment to engagement with material-discursive phenomena. Their synthesis has enabled me to develop a unique six-stage analysis process that can be re-turned to and repeated as necessary. This structure provides both the flexibility required for diffractive analysis and the methodical framework needed to engage thoroughly with each phase.

The 'slow' approach in this diffractive analysis process honours the deliberate temporal engagement advocated in Ulmer's (2017) 'slow ontology' while embracing Indigenous knowledge systems that prioritise reflection and recursive thinking over linear efficiency; a methodological patience that allows insights to materialise through sustained engagement with each phase.

7.5.5. The stages of the diffractive analysis process:

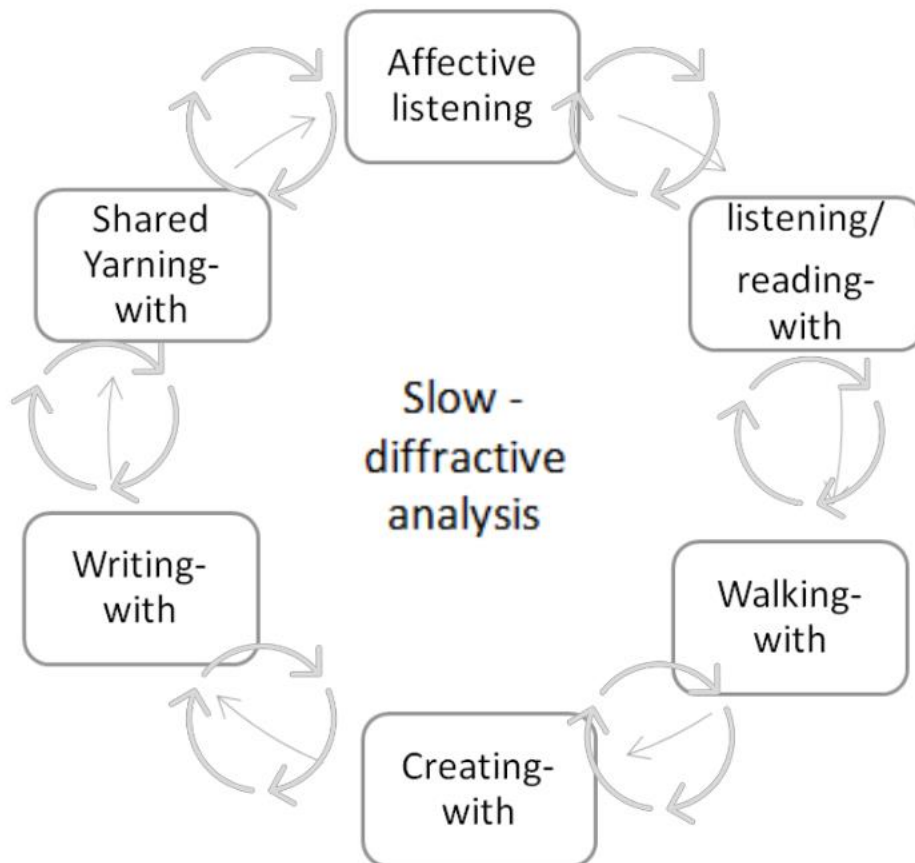


Figure 24: Stages of the Slow diffractive analysis approach used.

Stages of the slow diffractive analysis approach in greater detail

Affective listening: this initial first listen is close to the event, recognising the ‘wow’ (Gilligan, 2015) or ‘glow moments’ (MacLure, 2013b). I highlight what the participants say that *affects* me or resonates with my own experiences. I make a note of these affects in the margins of the transcript. Here I also note interruptions, pauses, more-than-human agents and how their presence might evoke affects *within* the participant and/or me.

Diffractive listening/reading: Listening/reading in relation to the research question, drawing in the concepts of the differential textures in this context the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari, Barad, and Haraway as well as other authors from the rhizomatic-literature-entanglement.

Walking-with: Listening and thinking in movement, walking with the recording of the interviews. Allowing the rhythms of the walking to align to the rhythms of the walking intra-view. Hear the sounds on the recording entangle with the sounds of the present space. Enable thinking-with the *da-nœuds-ta*.

Slow listening, creating-with: Engaging with *da-nœuds-ta* through textile work enables recognition of patterns and connections that might remain hidden in purely textual analysis. Through slow, meditative engagement with textiles, via stitching or weaving that resists rushed analysis in favour of material engagement.

Writing-with: Writing as a process of meaning-making, discussing the in-between, pulling together the connections and relating back to the concepts, philosophies and theoretical multiplicities.

Shared Yarning-with: to avoid ‘wild analysis’ (Froggett, Manley and Roy, 2015; Hollway and Jefferson, 2023) and drawing on Indigenous ontologies of ‘yarning’ - a relational knowledge-building practice described by Yunkaporta and Moodie (2019) as conversational meaning-making that honours collective wisdom and dialectical engagement. This shared process brings in other ‘experts’ to consider what might be missing. I discuss what has been created by the *da-nœuds-ta* with a group of others (participants or other experts) before writing up the final discussion.

Table 4: Stages of the analysis approach.

The method of analysis as described above, is not a 'how to' of diffractive analysis. To do so would be prescriptive and revert to the 'off the shelf' approaches of qualitative research. This method evolved as I analysed and tweaked in response to the process each time; doing what felt right in response to the assemblage of recordings and this unique inquiry. Whilst it may be useful as a guide for others to take influence from, it should not be utilised as a structured approach to any diffractive analysis.

7.6. Unfolding of methods

The methods chosen for this inquiry honour the sensitivities of prison teacher experiences. Walking intra-views provided embodied insights into the prison space, revealing power dynamics and affects in real-time. The visual matrix complemented this by enabling collaborative visual expression of complex experiences. One-to-one interviews were intended to validate insights, and clarify participant perspectives, yet enabled further affectivities to surface, particularly with those participants who had engaged with the two previous phases. Personal memos documented my reflexive thoughts throughout the research process, capturing my insights and experiences while preserving affective nuances of the intra-actions.

Weaving and stitching alongside *da-nœuds-ta* allowed me to slow down and connect with prison space rhythms, heightening awareness of affective intensities. This methodological assemblage highlights the interconnectedness of researcher, participant, and environment, shaping knowledge through material-discursive entanglements. Embracing these complexities contributes to a holistic understanding of prison teacher experiences.

Chapter 8: Walking Intra-view Analysis

The walking intra-views undertaken with five participants: Alice, Brian, Claire, Donald and Evelyn (names are pseudonyms, further participant details shared previously in Chapter 6, Table 2), offer unique insights into how carceral spaces are experienced and navigated by prison teachers. This chapter explores these embodied encounters, highlighting the complex temporal and spatial dynamics that shape teaching practices. The analysis examines key aspects of experiences elicited from the mobile intra-views, investigating how movement within the institution exposed the intricate relationship between educational practice and institutional control.

8.1. Institutional Power Dynamics

Institutional power permeates the educational experience, manifesting through complex regulatory frameworks. I asked Claire if the rules and regime of the prison inform her day-to-day teaching more than she would like it to: *'Um, prison rules stress me out a lot of the time. Coz some of them don't seem very fair... But the behaviour rules in the college do make sense if everyone follows them'*. Her acknowledgment of feeling stressed suggests the affective dimension of power imposed by the institution. The prison environment serves as a liminal space where teachers experience conflicting affects, as the shifting regulations create a persistent feeling of instability and disorientation, a 'sense of being off-balance in the space' (Fox, in Schlosser, 2021, p. 3). Her observation is that the behavioural rules *'make sense'* if everyone adheres, but the inconsistency creates discomfort, reflecting the paradoxical nature of the prison as a transitional space. The contradictory feelings are created from the tension between the prescribed rules, maintaining order, and the observed deviations from these rules.

Brian, when talking about working in different prison settings, noted: *'it was like a broken prison... How can I describe it? It's a case of... it felt, in a lot of ways, like the prisoners ruled the prison, there was no discipline'*. The lack of officer discipline disrupted expected power hierarchies which Brian relied on to feel secure, therefore affecting his teacher efficacy. This reveals how power operates through multiple layers in the prison, from explicit rules to expectations of teacher behaviour. Brian has developed strategies for navigating the institutional hierarchies while maintaining his teacher effectiveness. The teachers understandably can become institutionalised in prisons; as Foucault

(1991) suggests, this may occur in all educational establishments. However, participants share that prison spaces hold different affective resonances, shaping teacher behaviours and practices, as Alice states: *'it was hard to adapt from being in mainstream obviously to coming into a prison setting'*.

Claire exemplifies this adaptation by noting how prison teachers feel powerless amid apparent racist behaviour from officers toward foreign national prisoners: *'I think it's very hard to stay professional sometimes when the men are saying things, you know are completely true, but you can't go, yes, they are being racist towards you, because, it's not appropriate, but it probably is what has happened... and I feel very protective of them and maybe it's not my place'*. This complex dynamic reveals how prison educators occupy a challenging liminal position in the institution, caught between their duty to maintain professionalism and their moral instinct to advocate for prisoners facing discrimination.

While institutional power operates through formal structures, the intra-views show how it manifests differently across genders. Claire's statement *'it's not my place'*, carries dual meaning, indicating both her lack of power and authority to challenge officer behaviour and her *'place'* as an outsider and insider simultaneously. She explains her discord with many prison rules, but recognises she is *'part of that conversation'* she acknowledges the conflict of her entanglement in maintaining the prison rules, enforcing a power hierarchy between prisoner-learners and teachers. This highlights a tension between teachers' personal values and the institutional frameworks they work within. Like a cog in Deleuze and Guattari's *'machine'* (1988), her role as teacher remains entangled with broader mechanisms of control despite her efforts at resistance.

8.2. Forms of Resistance

The inquiry showed that a range of resistance strategies were employed by teachers, from subtle environmental changes to direct challenges of institutional procedures. An example was shared by Claire as she introduced plants into her classroom. House plants are not allowed in prisoner used spaces; this is largely due to the potential to hide restricted items in the soil of the plant, rather than the restriction of the plant itself. Claire defied this rule by keeping plants in the small office at the back of her classroom to make it feel *'homely'*. This small cupboard sized room, with a window, was technically a *'staff'* area but she kept the door open, enabling transgression through the open door:

'It is easy to forget when you look around in that little room that it is a prison classroom... they've got the house plants in there. That's really important to me to have house plants in like the little back office and one of the lads looks after them and it's like a really important little thing for him, but it also breaks the room up a little bit. Um, it makes you feel a little bit less, I dunno when there's bars on the window. I think having plants in front of them just really, really softens it. And that's the conscious choice I've made'.

The plants also become more-than-human agents in making the prisoner-learners feel welcome, while Claire enacts subtle acts of resistance against institutional rules. She expresses a feeling of responsibility for making a welcoming space, recognising that she may be the *'only friendly face they are gonna see all day, all week'*. Drawing on the discussion in Chapter 2 about pedagogies of care and Chapter 5 related to 'minor gestures' (Manning, 2016), Claire 'consciously' counteracts the negativity of a prison space through this minor gesture. These small gestures may be equally if not *more* impactful than the educational qualifications in the goal for transformation.

As part of the diffractive analysis, I created a weave in response to the walking intra-view with Claire which incorporates rhizomatic plants. I have trapped the delicate plants in the woven structure to represent Claire's feelings of being *'part of'* the prison as she tries to navigate the smooth and striated spaces (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988).



Figure 25: Material: Woollen sock remnants. Potholder weaving created by the author in response to Claire's walking intra-view.

More overt forms of resistance are evident through teachers' strategic use of institutional relationships. Alice shows resistance to institutional powers by enabling a visit to the prison kitchens for her 'lads' to make a cooked breakfast as part of their PSD lesson. While prison officers are officially required to facilitate educational activities, Alice's successful arrangement of this unscheduled activity during a prison lockdown demonstrates her skilled navigation of informal power structures. She shares *'I've had the wing ring me up since eight o'clock this morning, the lads were on the doors'*. Although officers could have easily prevented this activity by claiming security concerns or staffing issues; (a common practice that teachers must typically accept due to officers'

'striated' authority) they ultimately allowed it to proceed. This intra-action reveals how education can be a site of subtle power negotiation within the prison system, where official policies and day-to-day practices don't always align.

Alice's navigation of carceral constraints shows that minor re-workings of power can create alternative possibilities. Through the teachers' minor gestures, there is a glimpse of how small resistances from within the striated space can create alternative potentialities, intertwining care, control, and resistance. The weaving I have created as part of the research-creation has reflected these subtle textures and intertwining of multiple threads in the complex weave of prison education.

8.3. Gender and Power Relations

Fox (2021) noted that the principle aspect to prepare for, when entering male prisons as a female, is the heckling from prisoners and the subsequent objectification of the female body: 'My gender affected how I moved within the space and influenced how I interacted' (Fox in Schlosser, 2021, p. 32). Claire as a female teacher, also felt like this, to the extent that she would regularly change her route when navigating the prison to avoid the powerful male gaze (Mulvey, 1975). When asked if it affected her, she responded with:

'Yeah, massively. I know that we're walking past this one [wing C]. I hadn't thought about it when I drew it [drawing of the planned route], but all of my main learners are on this wing... <wolf whistle directed at us comes from one of the cells in that wing> And there you go <both laugh> and then, that's why I don't like, that's why I've gone round the back. Coz walking around the front of wing B is my least favourite. And that's why I always walk that way. Coz they're the naughty boy wing and they will shout at you something horrendous'.

The excerpt above has a multitude of affects within it; the spatial experience of walking past the wings during the intra-view creates an embodied affect where the body feels shamed. The wolf-whistling that happens almost on cue, highlights the visceral reaction through our laughter. Despite it making us both feel very uncomfortable; the laughter masks the affective impact of that demeaning act of objectification (further discussed in Chapter XX).

Claire, in previous aspects of the intra-view demonstrated her care for her learners in the classroom space. Yet in the cells and wings, territories that are 'owned' by prisoners rather than teachers, there is an accepted expectation of negative behaviours. Her choice to change her route to avoid wing B, the '*naughty boy wing*' demonstrates how spatial configurations within the prison can contribute to these gendered affective experiences. Her reference to them being '*naughty boys*' is a way to diminish their threat. It is interesting that we laughed off the harassment, in an acceptance or inevitability of prison work. The expectation to mask discomfort through laughter reveals how gender-based harassment becomes normalised within this institutionalised male culture. Thus, we are unconsciously participating in institutional practices that normalise gender-based harassment and maintain patriarchal power structures. This was similarly experienced during the walking intra-view with Evelyn:

'Um, they've always been very polite <wolf whistle and shouts in the background>. The only problem I don't like is actually this bit. You know, when you're walking past... that's kind of off putting in terms of place... But when you're teaching a class, I find, you know, the prisoners to be very respectful... I've passed windows and it's the lewd comments, um, some really risky and really inappropriate. So, you find people try and cut across the pitch because they want to avoid that scenario. Just coz it makes you feel uncomfortable <radio noise>. You're kind of, you know, looking this way and trying to ignore it'.

The background noises captured men shouting and wolf-whistling as we walk past their cell windows. This affects Evelyn as she states she does not like '*this bit*' in reference to the heckling. In contrast, in the classroom, where Evelyn had control, learners had always been '*very respectful*'. Yet, whilst they were in their own cell, the derogatory whistles could be performed anonymously, from a bounded space that teachers had no access to. Reinforcing the spatial dynamics of the prison as power shifts between those distinct locations. While the male prisoners can assert dominance via harassment in uncontrolled spaces via cell windows, this gendered power diminishes in intimate classroom settings where female teachers maintain professional authority. The closer proximity and structured environment may evoke maternal associations, fostering respectful intra-actions that contrast sharply with the anonymous, performative masculine behaviour displayed, where physical distance enables male intimidation without personal accountability or connection.

Male teachers exhibited markedly different patterns of power negotiation, often downplaying affective impacts while emphasising control, reflecting broader masculine norms within the prison environment. Donald shares: *'Coming into the prison doesn't affect me at all <keys jangling> I've got no, you know, no, I trust the er <gate being unlocked> the students will never hurt a teacher, unless, you know, they are always capable, aren't they?'* Throughout the intra-view, Donald continues the rhetoric that the prison does not affect him; he insists that he had *'never been bothered'* by working in prison and how he was *'not fazed by it at all'*. However, this contrasts sharply with his later admission of taking extended absence from work following a teacher hostage incident he witnessed three years prior. His discourse markers of *'you know'*, repeated in the above excerpt, do not appear frequently throughout the rest of his transcript, suggesting he is seeking shared experience here, or permission to think otherwise to what the narrative 'should' be that teachers are not affected by that space.

He contradicts his point about a student never hurting a teacher when he asks rhetorically *'they are always capable, aren't they?'* While he claims prisoners would protect teachers during violent incidents, his hesitation and uncertainty undermines this assertion, indicating the ever-present threat potential. This ambivalent narrative, where words don't match feelings, within an assemblage of prison masculinity, complicates the analysis of his experience. The potential for violence always exists alongside caring relationships, highlighting how these forces simultaneously flow through prison education encounters.

Brian describes how, when working in the masculine prison workshops, away from the usual education classrooms, the teachers were *'on our own in there'*, even though the procedure is always to have an officer in the workspace with them. The implication here is for Brian to be on-guard whilst teaching. Male teachers may therefore feel as endangered as female teachers in a different way. This acknowledgement of risk suggests a constant embodied concern for safety that would be carried whilst teaching. These gendered power dynamics shape how teachers resist and adapt within the prison system.

I spent significantly less time with Brian, in comparison to other walking intra-views; just twenty-two minutes. This was because his responses did not lead to further questions as with other participants. In the analysis process of weaving, I considered my position and his; listening to the audio recording over and over, trying to hear something more, the resoluteness of his answers led to the weave being uncomplicated. Through weaving, I was able to situate his experience within a broader

framework of gender complexity. This revealed layers of emotional resonance in his answers that were not immediately apparent during the initial intra-view, as the complexity of affect emerged gradually through the analysis.



Figure 26: Material: Woollen sock remnants and photographic image woven through. Potholder weaving created by the author in response to Brian's walking intra-view.

8.4. Spatial and Sensory Experiences

Teachers' relationships with different prison spaces revealed complex patterns of territorial negotiation and control. The analysis creates clear distinctions between how teachers experience classroom spaces versus prison workshop and wing spaces, with these experiences often gendered. Claire felt distinctly uncomfortable on the wings, viewing them as prisoner territory:

'It's interesting because you feel like, <background jangle of keys> especially with wing-based... it feels different <creaking metal door opening> coz it feels like... you go into peoples', it feels a little bit like you're in their home when you're on the wing... you can't challenge behaviour in the same way, well you can, but you can't really coz it's where they spend <laughs> it's where they spend their entire day'.

Her laughter when acknowledging disruption to prisoners' daily routines suggests awareness of her status as an intruder in their space. This awkwardness can impact her efficacy as a teacher to maintain boundaries and behaviours. This emphasises the emotional and relational aspects of the prison educators' experiences in comparison to that of a teacher outside of prison spaces.

Claire also shared how particular spaces in the prison had different affective impacts on her and others. This was particularly notable in the route that she took to avoid heckles from prisoners and in teachers' avoidance of wing B and the Vulnerable Prisoners' (VP) wing (see figure 15). The VP wing is where prisoners associated with child sexual abuse were housed: *'It's like when you walk out of the VP wing, you get horrible things shouted at you for teaching them, as if, as if it's, we've chosen to go over there coz we like them. We get shouted at and it's, it's not very nice. You feel like you're being watched <laughs nervously>'.*

Claire's reflection on teaching in the VP wing highlights the discomfort of navigating prison education. This spatial stigma extends beyond prisoners to affect the teachers who work with them. Claire's nervous laughter above, shows how educators become marked by association; their professional duty to teach all prisoners, regardless of their crime, is reinterpreted as moral corruption by other prisoners. This spatial dynamic highlights how teachers must navigate not just the physical geography of the prison, but also its moral topography through constant border-crossing between spaces. These acts of border-crossing expose them to a form of becoming-prisoner themselves.

The experience of being shouted at upon entering and leaving the VP wing also reveals how surveillance permeates every corner of the prison space; a haunting presence emanating from both official control mechanisms and prisoners. In contrast, Donald and Evelyn reported feeling more secure on the wings due to increased officer presence. Donald's comment that he feels *'at ease on the wing'* is connected to the prior hostage experience he witnessed in the classroom spaces. This past trauma haunts his spatial experience and highlights how prison spaces can connect to perceived

security and control rather than purely physical characteristics. Participants' contrasting experiences of spaces demonstrates how individual histories and gender, influence teachers' navigation and the affective impacts of different prison spaces.

8.4.1. Acoustic agency

The prison's acoustic environment materialises as a significant factor in shaping teacher experiences, with sound functioning as both an agent of control and resistance. Evelyn's detailed observations of prison soundscapes, influenced by her background as a musician, reveal how sonic elements profoundly impact teaching practice: *'The sound was deafening, for me. I found it was really deafening, quite scary'*. During this intra-view the background beat of music could be heard playing from cell windows. This was synonymous with the everyday experiences of the jail; voices were sometimes drowned out by the deep musical base, and I wonder, now, how I had previously ignored it. As discussed in Chapter 2, prison officers have reported radio chatter impacting their ability to think and perform their duties (Herrity, 2019); the two-way radios, as agential interruptions (noted as *<radio chatter>* in the intra-view transcripts) provided security reassurance, but imposed constant interruptions that affected teachers' ability to focus.

I had not fully appreciated just how varied the soundscape of the prison was until I came to re-listen to the intra-views. The recordings incorporated a vast array of sounds and noisy interruptions. For example, the intra-view with Alice was interrupted by the agential power of background noise *<officer whistling joyfully>*; this disruption represented the officer's striated power over the space. During the analysis and re-listening of the recordings, these disruptions felt invasive and disturbing to me, resonating with Evelyn's earliest experiences of walking onto the prison wings and experiencing the noises of men screaming and shouting: *'It's just all the sound literally ricochets off the walls and bounces the acoustics. It's quite a harsh sound, the shouting and screaming. And if something is going on, the environment itself was quite scary, and the noise was overwhelming'*.

These sounds of the prison mentioned by Evelyn and recorded in the intra-view embody the harsh realities of incarceration (Turner, 2016) and reiterate how prison spaces can be unpredictable. Prison environments are punctuated by shouts and screams which can be unsettling, disturbing, and unnerving (Rice, 2016) especially to someone new to that space; this contributed to Evelyn's feeling of disorientation. Evelyn's term *'deafening'* suggests a profound, debilitating reaction to the sounds, particularly from the intensity of shouting and screams that she cannot escape. Yet, she explains that

now, she is not affected as much: *'I'd say a couple of months and it lessened, whereas now there can be all hell going off and I don't really hear it... I think I just turn down the volume on it... I must literally tune in just to the learner, so I've adapted'*. Her learned ability to *'turn down the volume'* on the prison noise represents a form of embodied acculturation to the carceral environment. What was once affectively overwhelming has become normalised through conscious dampening of sensory experience, suggesting both adaptation and concerning desensitisation to these conditions.



Figure 27: Material: Woollen sock remnants. Potholder weaving created by the author in response to Evelyn's walking intra-view.

I diffractively weaved with Evelyn's discussion of her sound-based experiences in the prison. The distorted warp and weft of the weave echoes the affective tensions and transitions Evelyn describes in acclimatising to the prison environment. Just as the tensions shift across the weave, Evelyn portrays the tensions of negotiating and adapting to the carceral space. The looped construction evokes her depictions of the reverberating sounds which impacted her senses, whilst the distortions of the weave aim to materially embody negotiations and acts of deterritorialisation she undertakes to open spaces for education.

8.5. Emotional Labour

The spatial confinement of prison classrooms can create unique emotional demands on teachers; Alice recognised that three-hour sessions in the classroom took their toll on both learners and prisoners: *'That, that's a massive thing to get used to, when you're with learners, you're with them for three hours. And there's not, there's no, like you can't go anywhere... being based for six hours a day in one space takes a lot to get used to... you can't take them anywhere or change the scenery. So, your mood and your environment all in one room'*. Alice emphasises that although it is obvious that movement is restricted for prisoners, for a teacher this is something unexpected to get used to. Thus, highlighting the nuance of restricted spaces, within the more easily accepted prison boundaries. Alice's feeling of the enclosed space of the classroom resonates with Marti's (2023) assertion in Chapter 2, that the spatio-temporality of the classroom acts as a place without escape. Donald also highlighted the impact of extended teaching sessions without breaks:

'When I first come, the classes were ninety minutes, which was beneficial for staff and uh, students. Three hours is far too long... that is a big problem. It was stopped because, uh, it'll reduce the workload of the wing staff, having to send people out, bring them back, and send them out for the second session. But we all got fifteen minutes in the staffroom to chill and have a cup of tea'.

Donald's words: *'chill and have a cup of tea'* highlight how shorter sessions enabled essential respite for teachers. The removal of these breaks exemplifies how prison education decisions often prioritise operational efficiency, over pedagogical needs and teacher wellbeing. This restructuring of teaching time illustrates institutional control over teachers' bodies and professional autonomy, limiting their ability to structure teaching sessions effectively. This restriction of teachers' time and

space in the prison education environment contrasts with some prisoners' experiences, as the classroom can function as an 'oasis' (Behan, 2014, p. 24). This aligns with Beauchamp's (2010) observation that the locked classroom creates isolation from the rest of the prison which can be beneficial for teachers as well as students (previously discussed in Chapter 2).

Donald explains how he adapts lessons to meet the needs of the learner *'to keep him in the room, keep them calm'* whilst other teachers worry about taking the learner *'off track'*, meaning off target. If prisoners do not achieve their courses in the specified time (often four-six weeks) the education establishment will incur a monetary penalty as part of the agreed contract with HMPPS. The teachers and managers, therefore, have a fear of retribution and will do what they can to ensure targets are met. This emphasis on targets and performance metrics adds to the assemblage, increasing pressure on teachers.

The emotional labour required in prison teaching is presented as both intense and often unacknowledged. While Donald initially claimed he was impervious to the emotional impact, the analysis makes visible the significant emotional (and affective) impact he and other participants experienced. Claire's admission that she loses sleep worrying about her learners demonstrates how teacher-student relations in prison settings carry unique emotional burdens:

'It's very draining. It is very, very draining, but <pause> I don't really, I don't really mind most of the time because they like, they haven't got anyone else. I think that's why you get into this job most of the time. That's why I enjoy this job... but you do go home, and it's on your mind, and you wake in the night... you just have to hold it in your head until you get back in <laughs>'

Claire's concern about her learners, when she is away from the prison, suggest that the prison experience encroaches on her personal life and wellbeing, as a haunting (Gordon, 2008). She dismisses some of these feelings *'I don't really mind'*, even laughing at the end of the point, to lessen its severity. This is the case for most of the teachers in the intra-views; despite them experiencing these feelings, they did not make direct correlation between the affects and their mental health.

The analysis functions to demonstrate how teachers acknowledge and manage emotional impacts. Some teachers more readily acknowledged emotional challenges, while others often minimised or denied emotional impacts even while describing significant traumatic events. Donald's avoidance of certain classroom spaces due to trauma, while maintaining he was *'never bothered'* by prison work,

exemplifies this pattern. However, he does later state 'Well, you can have, uh, the stuffing knocked out of you by certain situations'. His description of the experience feeling like a bodily blow, contradicts his narrative of emotional detachment. I was unable to create a weave when listening to Donald's intra-view as I felt 'stuck' by the barriers created with his contradictory responses. I therefore instead used his words to inspire the textile piece below (see figure 28). The physicality of the blows knocking the stuffing out, highlights the distortion in the fabric which represents the embodied affective intensity of trauma on him.

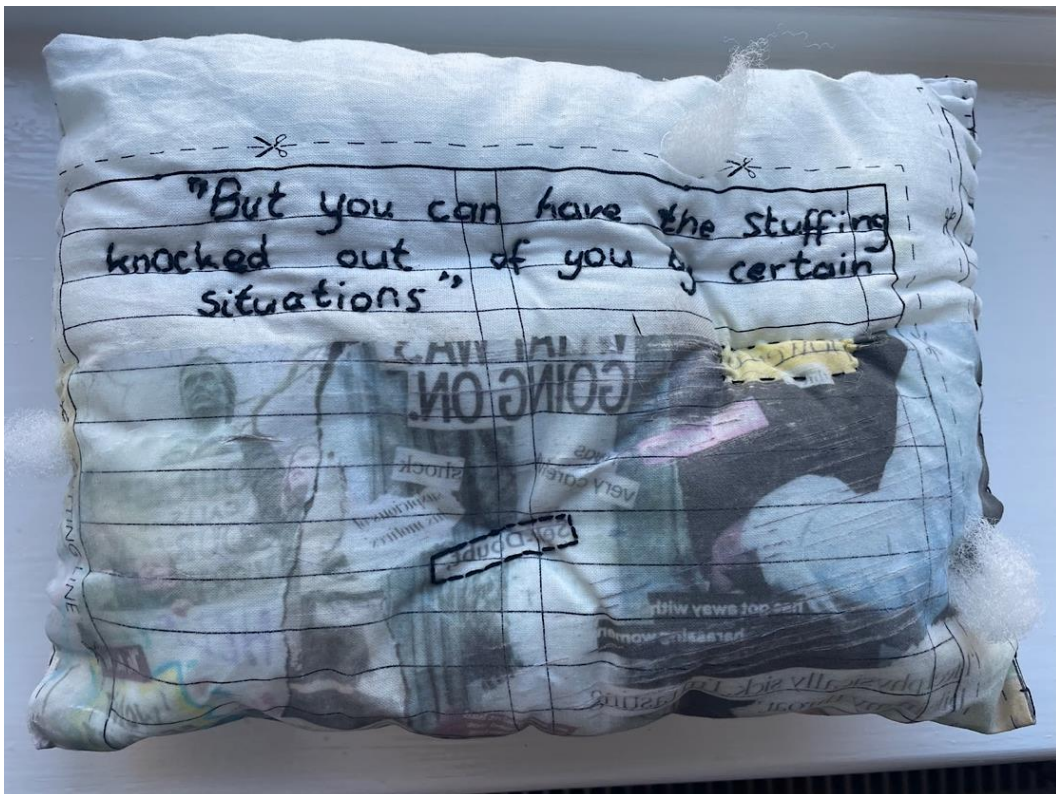


Figure 28: Pillow created by the author in response to Donald's experiences in the prison.

I was frustrated with Donald's responses as he was masking many of his experiences; unaware, or unwilling to admit the affects the prison had on him over the years of service. He did, however, demonstrate affects through some word choices, that he was perhaps unaware of. For example, whilst we were drawing, I asked him if he was able to be his 'true self' in the prison; his response was: 'Uh, <pause> you've gotta be professional. And it's, you know, I use humour through pain'. This suggests a masking of his emotions, with humour to disguise a 'pain' he is going through.

Interestingly the image that he drew, which was later used in the visual matrix (Chapter 9) suggests a mask-like figure. The image is eerily unfamiliar and curious in its presentation, reflective of his experiences as a prison teacher (see figure 29). The drawing becomes *da-næuds-ta*, creating affective dimensions of prison experience that transcend his masking in dialogue. Though the drawing was intended to depict a bird of prey; the distinctive features such as heavily shaded areas beneath the eyes, suggest a weariness and an ambiguous feeling. The beak-like nose creates an unsettling human-animal hybrid. The head appears cube-like, perhaps revealing the containment contrasted with the freedom associated with captive birds of prey in the prison. The drawing's affective potency is created within the assemblage of the prison space but shows a disconnect with reality; it captures not what was consciously intended but instead Donald's unconscious affects of prison work. The mask-like quality suggests professional detachment and self-protection, while its eerie unfamiliarity points to the complex ways in which institutional affects circulate and reshape perceptions. This visual *da-næuds-ta* offers insight into the embodied, affective landscape of prison work that remained largely unarticulated in his verbal account.



Figure 29: Donald's drawing of the captive birds completed during the walking intra-view and later used in the Visual matrix. Material: pencil on paper.

Teachers developed various strategies for managing the emotional labour. Evelyn's description of 'acclimatising' to 'zone out' of certain sounds and experiences demonstrates how teachers adapt to maintain functionality. She recognises that the prison has changed her, as she recalls working in the Care and Separation Unit (CSU):

***Evelyn:** It's strange because I go there most weeks now <loud music in the background> and you know, I've even like... I've done some marking <laughs> while I've been there. And I could literally zone out because I've got used to, I think it's to do with threat, what you perceive as threatening... I think you just acclimatise to the sounds, and you start to pick up the ones to be worried about and the ones you can ignore.*

***Interviewer:** And do you think that that's a positive thing, that you have got used to it?*

***Evelyn:** Well, I think it's the only way to work in a prison <laughs> Um, has it made me more street wise on the outside? Yeah, I kind of know now because I've experienced people trying to manipulate me a little bit, um, which I used to be so naïve about things like that... So, it's changed my personality in a way'.*

Evelyn's changed personality signifies a moment of rupture, a pivotal emotional shift. These adaptations, while necessary for survival in the carceral environment, carry their own costs in terms of emotional authenticity and wellbeing. Her phrase '*the only way to work in a prison*' highlights her view of these adaptations as non-negotiable survival mechanisms rather than choices. In stating she is no longer '*naïve*' she suggests a loss of innocence through her experiences of the prison. Her ambiguous reference to '*people trying to manipulate me*' suggests manipulation stems from multiple sources across the porous boundaries of the prison. This could be prisoners, prison officers, teachers or managers. As a teacher, Evelyn occupies a liminal position neither fully aligned with prison staff nor prisoners, potentially making her vulnerable to manipulation from various directions. Her development of '*street-wise*' sensibilities represents a necessary defensive adaptation to navigate these multidirectional power dynamics, suggesting that recognising manipulation becomes an essential survival skill regardless of its source, fundamentally transforming her personality.

I asked Evelyn if the emotional labour of working with prisoners had an impact on her mental health: '*I'd say no. Um, I'm not saying it doesn't come with difficulties sometimes, but not enough, I don't think to impact how I do my job... um, maybe you could argue that maybe you're just carrying it*

around with you and don't know... mm-hmm <radio chatter> that could be true <laughs>'. Evelyn's statement that it is not impactful, contrasts with the hesitancy in her voice and the laugh at the end of sentence; this cue reveals what her words attempt to conceal. The intra-view uncovered unrecognised affects that she was now starting to consider. Her use of *'carrying it around'* metaphor implies a physical burden, this embodied affect contrasts with her initial denial of mental health impacts. Anderson (2016) states that emotions accumulate in ways not always perceptible but still materially impactful. This aligns with Manning and Massumi's (2014) notion that affect is invisible in its visibility. Thus, these affects operate beyond teachers' conscious awareness, even as they exert material forces to bear on the body. While Evelyn does not consciously feel impacted, the prison's affect is evident in her statement, revealing how these affects manifest in hard to detect ways.

Alice shares how the oppressive power of the prison was felt by the teachers as well as the prisoners; *'it's hard, it's really, really hard coz you feel it, you sense it, you can see, it is written all over the body language... and then you feel it, but you are not allowed to show it'*. Her remark highlights the impact of the regulatory mechanisms of the prison space, particularly for women. In the context of the prison where emotions may often be suppressed or regulated, the body becomes a site of negotiation and power, reflecting the interplay between institutional control and individual agency. For teachers this might lead to them masking their true emotions through their body or resisting the restrictions through, for example, giving a student a touch on the shoulder, to express empathy. Alice particularly felt challenged in developing an authentic professional identity within the constraints of the prison environment:

'I didn't think I'd be able to be me, my personality, how I am with the learners. So, at first, I was tryin' to be someone who I wasn't and following protocol, what I'd been told, obviously we follow rules and regulations, but I would try to be, quieter and a more smaller version of me, and I wasn't happy, and I felt like the lads didn't get it... I just thought, I'm just gonna have to try this my way and be me and be who I am, be my true self'.

Alice's narrative reveals not a binary shift to complete authenticity, but rather a negotiated balance between institutional constraints and personal expression. Her movement from a *'smaller version'* of herself to a more comfortable professional identity illustrates how prison educators navigate degrees of authenticity within strict institutional boundaries. Teachers' *'true self'* expression remains impossible in an environment where manipulation concerns necessitate constant vigilance. Instead,

Alice found a more sustainable middle ground, integrating enough of her personality to create meaningful connections, while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. This negotiated authenticity represents emotional labour inherent to prison teaching, where identity performance must balance personal integrity and institutional demands.

Emotional complexity is different in Claire's experience, where familiarity with the prison environment provides some relief but doesn't eliminate the underlying emotional strain. Claire believes emotional labour is unavoidable in prison teaching, describing how she gets *'used to it'* while still experiencing moments of apprehension, particularly after time away from the space. This suggests the prison's affective intensity persists even in absence, growing stronger during periods away: *'like when I've been off for a week, I'm like, what am I going back to? And then I get here, and I'm like, oh no, it's fine. It's not that scary'*. This emotional complexity extends beyond managing the prison environment to encompass relations with prisoner-learners.

When discussing her ESOL learners, Claire describes feeling a sister-like protection towards them: *'I feel a lot like they're all my little brothers, my little brothers. And I'm like, come on, just do your homework. It's worth it. I promise... and I feel very protective of them when there are things like racist issues. I get very, very protective of them'*. She expresses that she finds it especially *'draining'* due to their reliance on her. This deep emotional investment reveals an often-unspoken aspect of prison teaching, the teacher's role as a rare source of care and support for prisoners.

Claire expresses that she is a caring teacher, but she felt this was not particularly stereotypical for prison teachers in general. She uses the example in the excerpt below of taking more time than others to plan and prepare lessons. She claims to care *more* by putting greater effort into being creative in her resources and working beyond her assigned working hours to produce them:

'Um, unfortunately, I don't think I'm a stereotypical teacher in here. I would like for people to, to care that much. But I think most people in here, and not just in here actually, from other prisons that I've spoken to, it's kind of a, do what you can while you're here and then drop it. But I dunno if that's because you can't take things physically out... where in a school, you take things home and that's where you carry on working through the evening, rightly or wrongly to get everything done, but in a prison it's just 4.15pm, drop everything and go'.

In an ironic paradox, the prison can be perceived as liberating for this reason, in comparison to other educational settings; the inability to take material objects such as student marking or digital files outside the prison means that the work-life balance can be better managed. This is often one of the draws of prison education. Although teachers can still prepare resources beyond their working hours, many choose not to, due to this demarcation. Claire interprets this as the other teachers not caring; reflecting the outcomes-driven expectations prevalent in mainstream education, where teacher dedication is often measured by willingness to work beyond their contracted hours. Yet the constraints of not working beyond assigned hours can also represent a form of teacher self-care.

Her comment '*4.15pm, drop everything and go*' suggests a dual meaning: both the physical inability to take work home and the mental/emotional separation from work. While she frames this negatively, the ability to '*drop*' both practical and emotional burdens at the end of the workday could be seen as a healthy professional practice in an emotionally demanding environment like prison education. Her criticism implies she may struggle with this separation herself, viewing the ability to mentally disconnect as another form of insufficient care, rather than recognising it as important for teacher wellbeing and sustained effectiveness. These emotional negotiations are deeply influenced by the prison's material conditions and resource constraints.

8.6. More-than-human Agency

The assemblage of the prison education space, created by multiple relations between both human and more-than-human agents, became more visible through walking intra-views. The method highlighted the 'Thing Power' (Bennett, 2004) of these non-human elements such as photographs, plants, birds, uniform and even photocopiers, producing shifting spatial and affective forces.

The teachers demonstrated ways they used more-than-human artefacts to maintain authentic connections with prisoner-learners within the security constraints of the prison. For example, Brian shared a personal photograph with prisoner-learners of an incident in his life that affected his mental health. In sharing the photograph that related to his personal experiences, he was challenging the institutional mandate to maintain professional detachment. He recognised the photograph's material power to connect with others and their experiences. In an era where education increasingly shifts toward digital formats, it is notable that prisons remain reliant on

physical materials due to restrictions and limited digital access (Fackler, 2019). Brian's practice of printing, laminating, and carrying the photograph produces connections with historical educational materialities, maintaining these physical processes while digital technologies have transformed practices in other educational spaces. In the weave produced in response to Brian's experience (figure 26), I added remnants of a photograph like that which he had described, recognising its ability to disrupt the weave with its rigid texture thus replicating the expectation of regularity in the male-dominated prison spaces. The photograph becomes part of the assemblage of Brian as a teacher. As a subject-object relation, he is sharing himself with the prisoners; the image-affects of his photograph impacted the teacher-student relation, by bringing together collective experiences of mental health (Manley, 2018).

Brian noted that prisoners will often open up more to teachers due to their lack of uniform, in comparison to officers, whose uniform indicates their position. The material agency of the uniform is noted for its affective impact on prisoners as a signifier of power. In contrast, teachers who do not wear uniform, lack this specific marker of power; altering the dynamics and expectations (Van der Leeuw, 2008). The absence of uniform indicates that teachers are there in a supportive manner rather than a punitive one. Brian states *'They do open up to you. A lot, um, which is because we've not got the uniforms, which is the big thing they'll actually say to you because you've not got uniform. You don't work; you're not a prison officer'*. This means that the uniform is not just a piece of clothing; it is symbolic and contributes to the construction of power dynamics within the prison education assemblage.

The analysis generates understanding of how material conditions and resource limitations significantly impact teaching practice and teacher wellbeing. Limited access to basic resources creates additional challenges as most prisons do not have Wi-Fi, only highly restricted internet in the offices and classrooms, and extremely limited physical resource. These constraints require teachers to develop creative solutions while managing the frustration of restricted access to basic teaching tools. The constraints also highlight the teachers' feelings of becoming-prisoners.

Alice below, recognises that the resource limitations create some resonance between the prisoner feelings of not being in control, along with the teachers. This highlights the complexities of entanglement as a teacher in a prison setting, evoking a 'jointness-in-separateness' (Ettinger, 2006, p. 84).

'I think when something goes wrong for the lads in prison, it's big. But I think equally for us as prison educators, I think that rule applies to us as well. So, for example, you're plodding along, you know, you're working in a prison... you're really enjoying it. And then the photocopier breaks and then there's no other photocopier that you can use. And it's the only resource that you've got and then you go 'oh'; working in a prison is so hard and then it brings it home to you how difficult it is for you to do your job, just because the photocopier doesn't work, or the systems are down'.

When Alice describes the photocopier breaking, she reveals how prison educators depend on basic equipment that most teachers take for granted. The phrase *'it's the only resource that you've got'*, suggests a teaching environment stripped to essentials. Her use of *'plodding along'* contrasts sharply with the sudden *'oh'* moment when the photocopier fails, capturing the jarring transition from managing to feeling helpless. The affective trajectory she describes is significant: from *'really enjoying it'* to the realisation that *'working in prison is so hard'*. This shift hinges entirely on a single piece of equipment failing. When she says it *'brings it home to you'*, she is describing a moment of realisation about her professional precarity. The broken photocopier becomes a catalyst for *'big'* affects of frustration and a disruption to the teacher efforts at transformation.

Her use of *'and then... and then...'* creates a domino effect in her narrative, showing how one material failure can trigger a cascade of realisations about the inherent difficulties of prison education. The photocopier isn't just a broken machine; it's a symbol of the broader material constraints that shape and sometimes limit their ability to teach effectively. Alice also alludes to the importance of other more-than-human elements that impact the affective atmosphere of the space:

'It's been a really challenging experience but positive and a massive learning curve, learning to adapt... and also, the background of where we are, if that makes any sense?... Like the setup of having gates, keys, not... the lads'.

Alice's use of the term *'background'* articulates more than just physical location; it conveys how the material components (gates, keys) are active forces shaping the atmosphere of the space. She points to an entangled web of human and more-than-human relations that constitute the prison experience. Her emphasis that it's *'not... the lads'* produces a tension between institutional security requirements and her desire to maintain humanising educational relations, suggesting that these material constraints create distinct challenges from the intra-personal aspects of prison teaching.

This intra-action between material and human elements extends beyond the immediate educational space, into broader prison-environment relations.

Claire's observations of seagulls and captive birds further demonstrates the impact of more-than-human entities related to what Haraway (2008) terms a 'natureculture' assemblage (p. 4). Claire's language shifts between viewing seagulls in the prison's open space as mere animals to attributing human qualities: *'they choose to be here... bringing their children up on the pitch'*, revealing fluid boundaries between multispecies sharing the prison. This illustrates the intra-actions with the prison space; the family of seagulls may evoke complex emotions in the incarcerated population who are separated from their own families and communities. The seagulls become symbolic carriers of the outside world, creating a liminal space where prisoners can emotionally connect with what they have lost.

Claire shifted her tone when discussing the captive birds of prey in the prison: *'they are slightly different'*, followed by her sigh, reveals how the prison creates differential mobilities across species. Like the parallel between teachers and prisoners, this comparison between species highlights how power relations materialise across human and more-than-human bodies, a key focus of posthumanist ethics. An image of a bird of prey in situ of Prison A is shown below (figure 30), produced as part of an art and educational project entitled 'A Machine to Unmake You' (Crean, 2024), which is entangled with this inquiry.



Figure 30: Photograph of birds of prey, Prison A. Melanie Crean (2024), reproduced with permission of the artist.

The intra-views reveal how more-than-human entities emerge as crucial participants in the prison education assemblage. The prison's materiality, its architecture, uniforms, security devices, and

more-than-human agents function as omnipresent forces that are always perceptible. This aligns directly with posthuman approaches that reject the centrality of human experience alone and instead examine how meaning is generated through the intra-action of multiple agents.

8.7. Language and Power

I recognised how language choice in the prison often reflected or reinforced power relations within that environment. For example, teachers often used the term '*lads*' when referring to prisoners; this is key when viewing the importance of language as a hidden power tool which shapes the environment. Maturana and Varela (2008) argue, language is not only a tool for describing our external reality, but it actively constructs our social world through behavioural coordination and shared meaning-making. Interestingly, the only teacher not to use the term '*lads*' in the intra-view was Evelyn (who had only worked in the prison for five months at the time) but in her one-to-one interview, one year later, she also used the term '*lads*' repeatedly; showing her assimilation to the space.

The teachers may utilise '*lads*' as a term of endearment, a way to soften the experience for both them and the prisoners. The term could suggest a more equal, non-hierarchical informal space. However, viewing this from a genealogical or archaeological sense through Foucault's analysis of discourse (Foucault, Howard and Cooper, 2001), the etymology of the word brings a different understanding:

'Lad: c. 1300 Middle English *ladde* "foot soldier" also "young male servant", "one who is led" by a Lord. Derived from Old Norse *ladd* "hose; woollen stockings" used to refer to "foolish youth of inferior status", words for socks seem to have been terms of abuse for and nicknames of fools, meaning "boy, youth, young man" from mid-15th century' (Harper, no date).

This can be understood as having numerous layers of discourse-object meaning; for example, the connection of '*lad*' as a servant, one who answers to a master or lord explained above, can be perceived as prisoners serving time; answering to the judicial system, prison governors, officers, and the teachers.

Teachers may specifically refer to the prisoners as 'lads' to balance power; to make the men seem 'smaller' or potentially less frightening, this may be in a form of infantilisation, reaffirming a teacher-child power dynamic. It not only psychologically reduces the perceived threat of adult men in a prison environment but also reinforces the institutional hierarchy, by linguistically positioning them as a subordinate. I do not feel that Alice, or the other teachers were consciously doing this, but as vulnerable teachers who are often working with groups of at least eight male prisoners on their own, this subconscious use of language may be a way to exist without fear in the space; equally for male teachers the term 'lads' may make it feel more like they are 'mates', in a way to soften the affect of threat-potential. The linguistic choices observed in prison education both reflect and reinforce broader power dynamics.



Figure 31: Weaving created by author, in response to Alice's intra-view. Material: old woollen socks with stitched tallies using black cotton thread.

I created a weave whilst thinking-with the teachers' use of this term, using remnant loops of woollen socks as a gesture to the etymology of the word 'lad'. The weaving technique is related to the making of 'potholders' which a domestic servant might use in their role to handle something which is hot. The texture of the fabric, as I was weaving, felt harsh and yet the overall finished item was soft, warm, and malleable; a metaphor for the prison education experience, having to be both harsh and soft. The softness here also embodies Alice's intra-actions with the learners. The malleability links to her ability to soften the learners' experiences, allowing them to be '*less harsh*' in her classroom space. This may bring out their softness via their collective joy in her sessions such as the cookery activity discussed earlier. Despite this, she must maintain the carceral, structural power expected in that role within the 'striated' space (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988). The threads of the weave are messy and escape the warp and weft, like a rhizome, trying to find a new path. I considered this in contrast to the static space of the prison and the hard, cold feeling of the more-than-human agents: the gates and keys. Recognising these 'things' as part of the powers that infiltrate the everyday of the prison experience, I then stitched the recording of days, weeks, months, or years into the woven structure using tally marks to emphasise the concept of carceral time and the bars on the windows.

Despite the term 'lads' initially seeming soft and imbued with care, it could be entangled with derogatory meaning; suggesting that the men in the prison are immature, or further still acting as young fools (as described in the etymology of the word), therefore infantilising them. This infantilisation through language is further evident in how prisoners address teaching staff. While male teachers are typically referred to by name, female staff (teachers, officers, and governors) are uniformly called 'Miss'; a sign of respect from prisoners which acknowledges the power differential. However, the term 'Miss' maintains gender-based power dynamics and can be perceived as demeaning.

This linguistic pattern may also come from prisoners' memories of childhood educational experiences, where their teachers were quite likely to be women. The echoes of school relationships, where prisoners (many of whom have learning difficulties or disabilities) may have been labelled 'naughty boys' controlled by female authority figures (linking back to Claire's earlier comment about the '*naughty boy wing*'). This may potentially resurface in the prison context, with the terms 'Miss', 'lads' and 'naughty boys' unconsciously recreating these formative power

structures. Female staff might leverage this dynamic, consciously or unconsciously employing familiar patterns of control, reminiscent of classroom management. This linguistic pattern creates a complex web of power relations where both teachers and prisoners are positioned in varying hierarchies based on gender, authority, institutional roles, and prior experiences (further discussed in Chapter XX).

8.8. Forgetting where you are

I was interested in how the physical space of the prison impacted on teacher experience; as previously mentioned, the impact of the bars was noted by Claire as she tried to *'soften'* it with the situating of house plants on the classroom windowsill. Alice, below also noted the impact of the bars, but recognised that she more easily forgot about them than the prisoners were able to:

'Now that we are walking around on a nice day and we're talking about it, you see them [bars on the window], but ordinarily coz you're that used to it, you don't even look at them. So, you're in the family room, it's got colourful chairs, you can have a cup of tea or coffee. And you know [she pretends to speak to prisoners] 'Let's forget about prison. Let's leave prison at the door'. And it was the lads that said, 'apart from the bars on the windows Miss'. And that's when I realised that I'd stopped looking at the bars. It took the lads to take me back to where I was'.

This temporary shift of the space allows Alice to re-focus her energy as a teacher. In this process, she experiences a form of scotomisation, where the bars psychologically evade her perception, enabling her to engage more fully in her role. Through her teaching approach, she endeavours to also divert prisoners' attention from the constraints of their environment. However, they find it more difficult to ignore the bars, as they are unable to leave. This highlights the stark contrast in their experiences within the confined space. Her revelation that it *'took the lads to take me back to where I was'*, uncovers the affective resonance of the prison as somewhere spatially disruptive. She had attempted to mask its reality, maintaining a protective distance from the carceral environment until this moment of recognition. Evelyn, in a similar experience states that she too forgets where she is:

'It's usually in the throes of a classroom. And then you hear stories of things that have happened, where people have been "swilled" [a term

used when faeces and urine are thrown at prison staff]. *Um, and they, and they've described it to me, in front of them in the classroom. And... you know, then it was a big wake-up call. I think if nothing happens for a period of time, you can kind of go into the false sense of security. And then all of a sudden you remember where you are <laughs>'*

Evelyn and Alice act to preserve themselves in their ontological drive as becoming-prison teachers. Evelyn who is new to the space is constantly negotiating between her values and the expectations of the role. It appears to me that Evelyn is self-aware of her becoming as a process, in which she recognises the boundaries within the assemblage and the affects of the prison space on her efficacy as a teacher. Brian additionally highlighted how the boundaries set in prison enabled him to often forget where he was:

'There's a lot of times you forget. Because everything, because you've set your boundaries and the lads know what you, you are like, and if you can get respect off the lads, you're usually fine. There are no problems at all. I think there's only been two occasions I've been, uh, concerned... not worried or frightened more concerned about what, say this lad could do, or that lad could possibly do'.

Brian's statement '*you're usually fine*' could be disconcerting for someone new to prisons. Notably, he chooses to describe his affective state as '*concerned*', rather than '*worried or frightened*'. As a male working in the isolated workshops, the threat of physical danger could be more prominent than for other teachers. Brian recognises the potential vulnerabilities of becoming too comfortable in the space, and so maintaining a heightened sense of awareness is crucial for his safety, without constantly being in a state of fear or hypervigilance:

'I try to point this out to new members of staff that've never worked in prison before. You've got to, I mean, everyone slips up and you just go, 'I shouldn't have said that', no... but there is always that element, you've got to think, yeah, I'm still in the prison. You can get too relaxed, you know, and I've been in that situation, and you go, I'll learn from that'.

This resonates with Evelyn and Alice's earlier statements of remembering '*where you are*', which could have an impact on teachers as they constantly remain in an affected state of '*concern*', despite

getting used to the space. In contrast Claire, despite working in the prison for nearly two years, believes she will always be reminded of the space and its affects:

'I think over a long time you become used to it. I don't feel very used to it. Like when I have a week off, I come back and it's weird. It's weird to be choosing to go into a, a place that is designed for punishment... and you're choosing to spend your day in there and it is very strange coming through and being searched to go teach, and it is very strange going home and panicking, especially in the first six months, I used to go home and panic that I'd left a gate open'.

The physical gates and security checks are a reminder that she is neither prisoner (who belongs) or prison officer (who is also accepted as belonging in that space). As education staff, teachers sit in the margins of the space and Claire therefore, feels 'weird' or 'strange' in relation to both the prison officers and the prisoners. The visceral panic Claire describes about potentially leaving a gate open, emphasises how the more-than-human elements of gates and prison security become internalised by teaching staff. This anxiety extends beyond the physical space of the prison, following her home and manifesting in affectively different ways, from repeatedly checking if she remembered to hand in her keys, to intrusive thoughts about security during everyday activities.

The gates and keys become more than just security mechanisms; they transform into sources of psychological burden that teachers carry, representing the teachers' responsibilities within the carceral system, where they must constantly prove their trustworthiness. The temporal aspect Claire notes: '*especially in the first six months*', suggests that, while this anxiety may reduce over time, it shows how teachers come to embody their complex position. This affective response to gate security becomes part of the process through which teachers learn to navigate their liminal status, neither fully an insider, nor an outsider of the carceral system.

8.9. Unfoldings of walking intra-view analysis

The walking intra-views worked to illustrate how prison teachers navigate complex assemblages of power, space, affect, and materiality in their daily practice. Through movement and dialogue, participants articulated how their experiences are shaped by constant negotiation between institutional control and educational purpose. The analysis demonstrates how power operates through multiple channels, from explicit institutional hierarchies to subtle linguistic practices and spatial arrangements. Teachers develop sophisticated strategies to work within these power structures while maintaining their educational efficacy. The gendered nature of these power dynamics is clear, with female teachers navigating additional layers of complexity through experiences of verbal harassment and territorial negotiations.

The emotional labour required of prison teachers was both intense and often unacknowledged. While some participants initially minimised the emotional impact of their work, the walking intra-views uncovered significant psychological impacts, from anxiety about security to concern about student wellbeing. This affective dimension is experienced differently across genders, with male teachers often masking vulnerability while female teachers more readily acknowledge the affects but still struggle to seek support.

Spatial and sensory experiences were produced for some, as crucial factors shaping teacher practice. The analysis shows how different spaces within the prison carry distinct affective charges, requiring teachers to constantly adjust their approaches. The material analysis through weaving provided additional insights into these experiences. The created pieces reflect the tension between structure and resistance, the interplay of hard and soft elements in prison education, and the ways in which teachers maintain authenticity within institutional constraints.

More-than-human agents, including uniforms, keys, gates, plants, birds and photographs, are recognised as active participants in the prison education assemblage. Teachers' intra-actions with these elements unveils complexity in how material factors influence power dynamics and possibilities in prisons. The complex assemblage of human and more-than-human factors shaping affects in carceral spaces must be considered when preparing teachers for this environment. By acknowledging this complexity, teachers can be better supported to create positive educational experiences within the constraints of the prison system.

Chapter 9: Visual Matrix Analysis

This chapter examines the 'glow moments' (MacLure, 2013b) identified through visual matrix sessions that explored prison educators' shared experiences. Building upon Froggett, Manley and Roy's (2015) methodology and drawing on Deleuze-Guattarian rhizomatics, the analysis investigates how unspoken visualisations are generated through collective engagement with shared imagery.

9.1. Creating the participatory space

The visual matrix creates a participatory space where responses become visible through engagement with carefully curated sensory stimuli: participant drawings from walking intra-views, natural ephemera from the prison environment (such as flowers and feathers), and artefacts produced during the research journey (documented in [Appendix 3](#)). These materials, which I selected as catalysts for exploring participants' lived experiences and unconscious associations, were curated through an entangled process of walking-thinking-feeling with the prison environment. Rather than representing pre-existing phenomena, these materials acted as agents in generating new possibilities with participants.

During the visual matrix session, a particular challenge arose around participants' tendency to describe the physical stimuli rather than exploring their evoked associations and mental imagery. Despite repeated guidance, several participants continued to focus on direct observation rather than delving into deeper responses. This may reflect teachers' previous lack of autonomy within the prison regime; the participants' focus on concrete description might suggest a protective strategy of maintaining observable, 'safe' responses rather than risking the vulnerability of sharing personal, imaginary, associations. Alternatively, it could indicate that the method itself inadvertently privileges certain cognitive styles or cultural approaches to meaning-making over others. This pattern of engagement prompts important questions about how the visual matrix method as 'apparatus' (Barad, 2007, p. 141), produces certain types of responses while foreclosing others. The participants' attentiveness to material description, highlights assumptions embedded within the method about what constitutes 'valid' forms of engagement and meaning-making.

The blend of pragmatic and imaginative responses in the matrix made me reflect on the make-up of the staffing within the prison; some of the responses described exactly what they thought they saw in the image (in response to image figure 32 below) e.g., '*I saw a Chinese stir fry*'. This made

everyone laugh, but the participant then went on to say 'Er, and then it's just like, you know, like a like a web of erm, you know like life. It's, you know a lot going on'. Other responses were more abstract and able to connect with the evoked imaginaries in their minds e.g., 'It makes me think of something living off something else'. This combination of different approaches is an essential union in prison education; the staff who have a pragmatic approach, making light of situations through humour, combined with staff who might consider more fully the implications of situations and reflect on this.



Figure 32: Photograph taken by author of wildflower, rhizomatic roots, entangled with feathers, flowers and leaves.

9.2. The visual matrix analysis

One of the benefits of using the visual matrix over a 'standard' focus group method is that it presents an alternative to the logic of rational thought, allowing affects to be felt through embodied

responses. In undertaking the analysis, I have found it difficult to avoid representational themes connected to the responses. I have had to pull back to focus on the *affects* that arose in the matrix rather than developing hegemonic associations. This engagement with a creative state of mind aligns with Hollway's (Hollway and Jefferson, 2023) psychosocial research methodology and Bion's (2023) concept of 'reverie', where the researcher maintains an open, receptive state that allows for engagement with affects and unconscious processes without immediately categorising or interpreting them.

To enable this, I returned to my creative outputs (figure 33), choosing to visually represent the original stimuli as washed out and faded imagery on fabric. These initial prompts became less important as the affects instead are fore fronted, hence representing them as faded. I used stitch to connect the imagery to the words that were affective to me in the matrix. The stitch therefore created further affects for me. Through an embodied, non-linguistic mode of expression the textile piece has allowed me to develop meaning-making of the responses in the matrix.



Figure 33: Photograph taken by author of creative response to the visual matrix outcomes. Cotton fabric with transfer printed images from the visual matrix and stitched text/additions.

Rather than seeking to identify discrete themes, this analysis employs affect theory to explore the felt intensities, flows and resonances (Ingraham, 2023) that manifested through the collective process. Through creative responses, I preserved the flux and in-between-ness of these experiences. The visual matrix re-presents the unconscious, attending to the sensory, embodied, and atmospheric qualities of experience.

Concepts from affect theory such as 'intensities', 'hauntings', and 'becomings' capture the more-than-human experience of what unfolded. The findings resist definitive conclusions but offer speculative propositions or unfoldings about the social and material forces at play in prison space.

Below is a reminder of the processes involved in analysing the visual matrix outcomes, previously explained in the methods Chapter 7:

Phase	Visual Matrix analysis
1	Post-matrix discussion with the participants: development of analysis map
2	5-minute post-matrix analysis based on my own observations
3	Analysis with an 'expert' who has experience of working as an art teacher in a prison, 5 mins each brief analysis then open discussion.
4	Creative application of the matrix utilising the transcript, post-matrix discussions, participant created analysis map, my textile creations

Table 5: Phases of the visual matrix analysis.

9.3. Post-matrix participant analysis

The analysis map below (Figure 34) was created by participants immediately after the visual matrix in the post-matrix discussion.

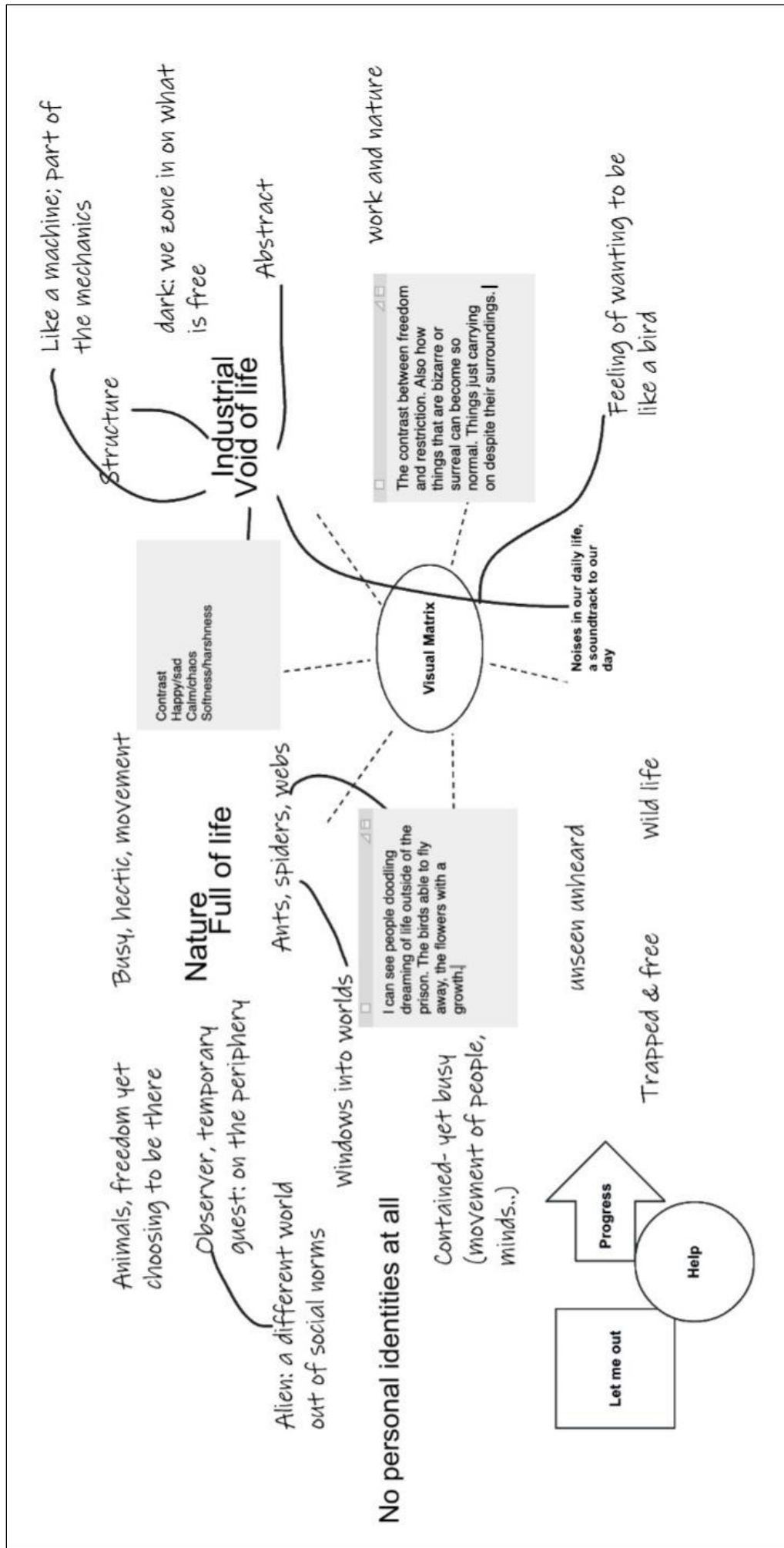


Figure 34: Participant analysis map, created in the post-matrix discussion.

9.4. Analysis of affects present in the visual matrix.

Participants explored a range of paradoxical feelings in relation to the stimuli. Contradictions were given across multiple discussions, including the dualities of life/death, void/fullness, chaotic/calm. I recognise these through a Deleuze Guattarian lens which does not see these as binaries in contrast, but as productive paradoxes (Colebrook, 2010) that are in constant flux, giving rise to one another and co-existing in their becoming. The entangled experiences and concepts shared in the visual matrix, create multiplicity (explained in chapter 4), the recognition of these co-constitutive elements shows the participants were embracing the complexity of prison space, as a multiplicitious assemblage of components, materials, forces, bodies and abstractions.

9.4.1. Void

The expression of prison education as a paradoxical experience emerged collectively through the participants' shared response to the aerial photograph of the prison. As one participant voiced:

'Full of life' and 'void of life.'

The group's energy shifted palpably. These contrasting phrases did not emerge in isolation but through the group's entangled presence, a collective meaning-making that transcended individual interpretation. I sensed the participants' shared discomfort when talking about this, displaying their collective reflection through synchronised body language by leaning their bodies in and then leaning back, in unison, affected by the rawness of the phrase. This corporeal synchronicity revealed how the emotional processing of carceral spaces happens not just internally but through intersubjective attunement and resonance. The paradoxical tension of 'void' and 'full' is not a problem, as it is the multiplicity of the prison; the lines of flight that are already present, particularly through the work of education.

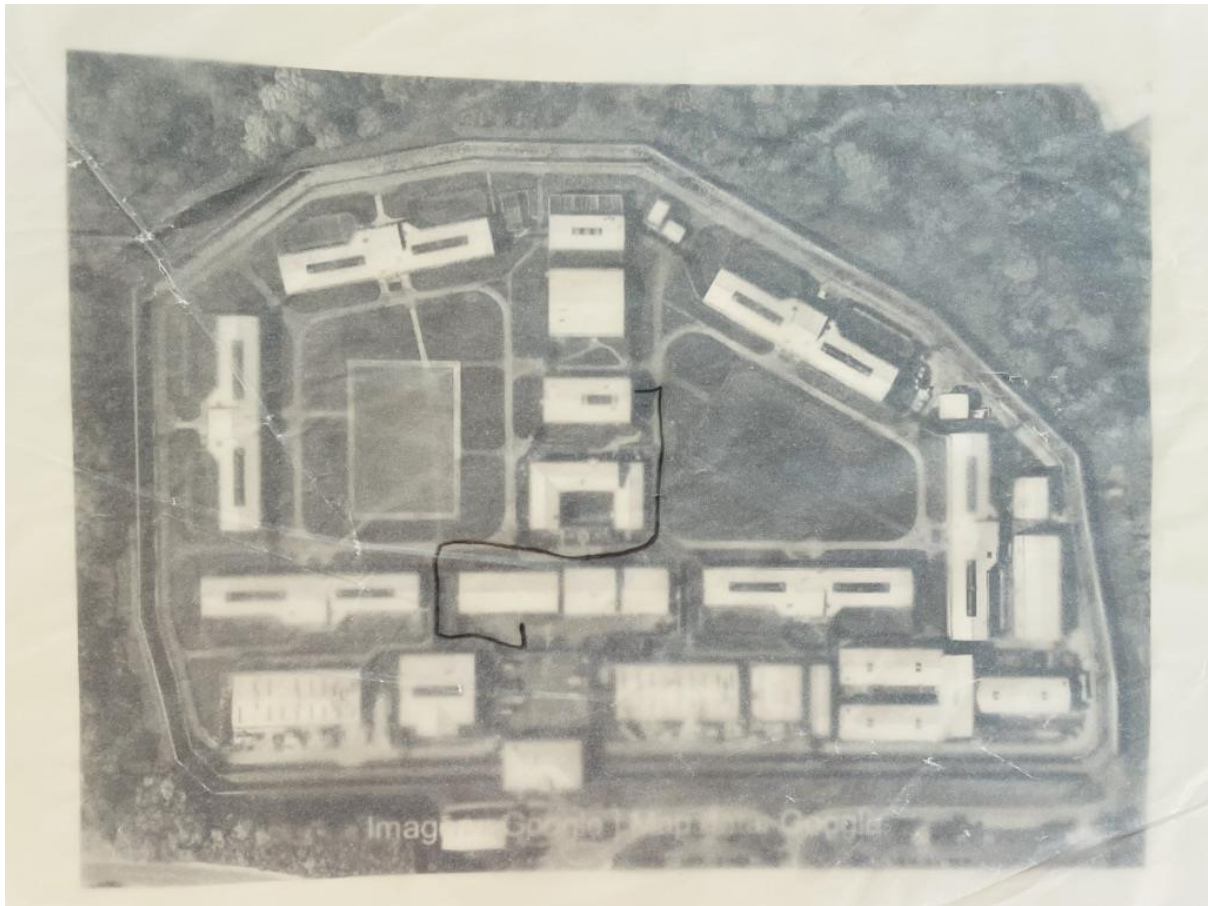


Figure 36: Example participant mapping of route for the walking intra-views. Google map (2021) aerial view of Prison A, shared in the Visual Matrix.

Participants contrasted the vibrant life they experienced in prison classrooms with their intense sensory experience of thousands of bodies, against the emptiness shown in the aerial prison photograph (figure 36). The 'void' participants describe emerges from this contrast between lived fullness and perceived spatial emptiness. This juxtaposition evokes a 'present absence' (Bille, Hastrup and Soerensen, 2010, p. 3); their memories of educational vitality exist in tension with the seemingly vacant architectural structure in the image. This paradox reveals how absences can have profound affective and physical implications, highlighting the complex ways in which presence and absence exist simultaneously in carceral spaces.

I have diffracted the emerging image of absence through the work of Barad (2017) who explores the notion of the 'void' as a practice of *avoidance* and erasure in postcolonial research. Barad (2017) explains 'matter' as 'discreet and finite' whilst a void is 'continuous and infinite' (p. 77). This bounded-void of a prison space is *felt* as an affective intensity; it is therefore confusing because of its captured presence by material walls, gates and locks. The void in a prison space can feel both finite and infinite, extending beyond the boundaries as it escapes with and into the teachers' daily lives. As Barad (2017) articulates, in classical physics the void represents a complete absence; of matter, property, energy, work and change, serving merely as an absolute frame, devoid of significance in itself (p. 77).

The prison, as a highly controlled and restrictive institution, might initially appear '*void of life*' as it can be seen as a space of stagnation; viewed by some in society as a place where lives don't matter. However, many of the teachers insist that they enjoy their jobs and, particularly, have fun with prisoner-learners. This highlights that, in correlation with Deleuze and Guattarian (1988) thought, even the most oppressive, constrained environments can be filled with forces of potential and becoming. The prison, despite its attempts to enforce and contain, is still traversed by affective flows, intensities, rhythms, and vibrancies in the education space that exceed its restrictions and institutional logics to become '*full of life*'. This resonates with other imaginaries from the matrix that generated concepts of 'fullness': '*like a web... life... a lot going on*'. Interweaving of these different image-affects reinforces the paradoxical affect of the prison. The institutional void and the lived experience of vibrant educational spaces, captures how the prison can be simultaneously void of life and full of life.

9.4.2. Death

Further images created in the matrix evoked similar image-affects of life and death; this was particularly in response to the image of flowers collected from inside the prison grounds during the walking intra-views.



Figure 37: Birds-foot trefoil, cut flowers collected from within the prison space.

These 'birds-foot trefoil' flowers had previously featured in the walking intra-view with Claire. We noted how their colour change, from yellow to red may signify the flowers' stress and fragility, mirroring the precariousness of prison life. The affective impact of the cut and displaced flowers led some matrix participants to experience an ominous feeling of death. One participant's visceral reaction: *'death is coming for you'* was echoed in another's reflection on the separation of the flowers: *'it's like death, like, the idea of them being pressed or they've been cut or separated'*. These responses highlight the affective weight of these more-than-human agents; severed from their natural environment and life source, the flowers persist as traces of their former selves.

The recognition of the flowers being both alive and dead through their separation, connects with Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of 'becoming-imperceptible', as they pass through a threshold where their being can no longer be definitively perceived. This paradox allows them to be in becoming, a new mode of existence, in a comparable way to prisoners and prison teachers as they enter and leave prison spaces. As I worked with this image through stitch, the rhythmic motion of the needle and thread created a contemplative space. Each careful selection of coloured thread and measured movement allowed the image's affect to unfold gradually, offering moments of diffractive thinking that might otherwise have been missed.



Figure 38: Flower image recreated by the author as a textiles response to the matrix experience.

The textile flower is 'dead' but embodies life through the thread colour and memory of that experience. The real flowers are captured as dying in process but frozen in photographic imagery. I kept these flowers as memento-mori in my personal journal (figure 39); their decay and loss of bright colour, further perpetuates their portrayal of death and their shifting entanglement as more-than-human agents.

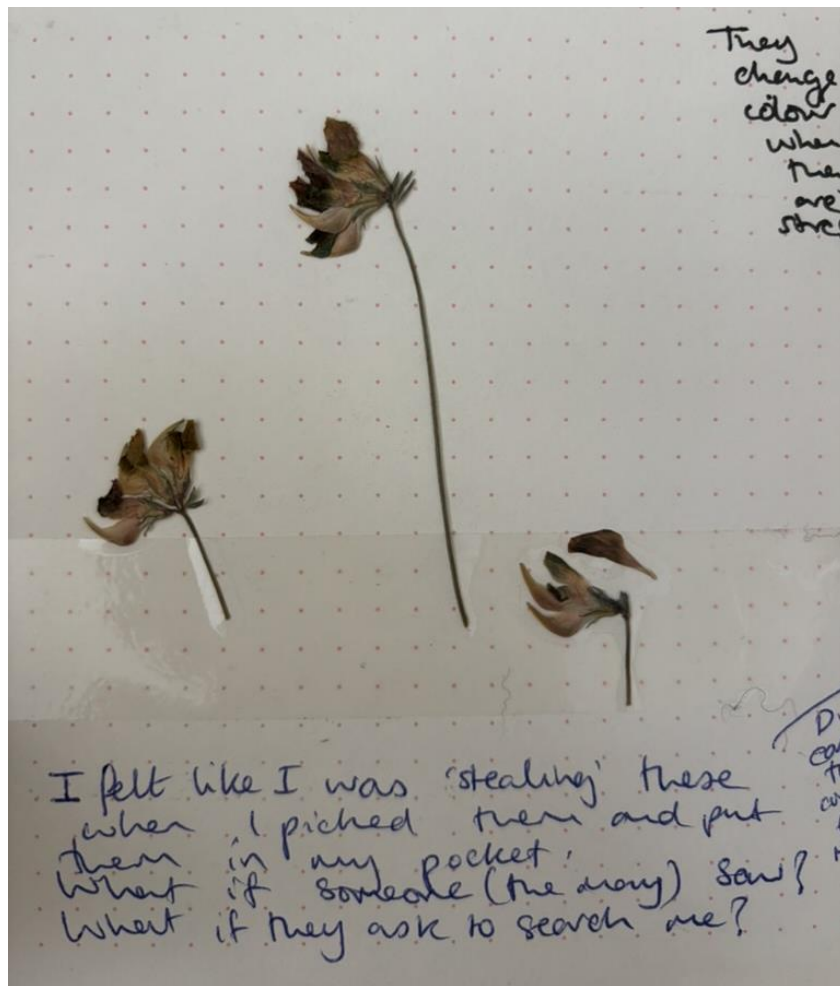


Figure 39: Collected trefoil flowers from inside the prison, pressed in my personal journal, 2025.

9.4.3. Scurrying creatures

The overview image of the prison (figure 36) evoked a visceral reaction in the participants which manifested as imaginaries of small creatures and insects running around the prison exterior space. Despite the picture seemingly representing an 'absence' (Barad, 2007), it evoked imaginaries that had an oppositional feeling of a busy, web-entangled structure with more-than-human entities swarming the space.

'I imagine, webs, spider webs... spiders scurrying all over the prison'.

The images evoked movement as a central feature of the prison teacher experience. The notion of 'scurrying' suggests time-constrained, hurried navigation across multiple intersecting paths;

reflecting how educators traverse different wings throughout the prison estate. These web-like patterns might also be understood as manifestations of the rhizome (previously discussed in Chapter 4).

The 'scurrying' movements may indicate attempts to remain undetected while navigating the environment; connected to the teachers' becoming-imperceptible. This behaviour could stem from their awareness of constant surveillance or might signify the temporal limitations of their role, as they rush between prison wings, striving to engage with as many prisoner-learners as possible within their allocated timeframe.

The imagined webs may have been elicited by the aerial photograph's capturing of trodden paths that create intersections and 'desire' or 'wander' lines on the courtyard pitch of the prison, hauntings of previous journeys. This relates back to comments in the walking intra-view in which female participants highlighted that many teachers would avoid walking past the wings by '*cutting across*' the pitch (Evelyn Chapter 8); evidence of the avoidance present in the path markings. This again, resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of 'becoming' and the rhizomatic nature of existence, where everything is connected and in a state of flux, forming multiplicities and 'lines of flight'. The prison teacher's experiences are presented as an assemblage of human and more-than-human elements, such as the paths and webs, intersecting in the shared outdoor space.

Images of scurrying creatures were reiterated in another participant's observation in the visual matrix; they commented that the prison was:

'Just like any other community, but this community is within a wall with restrictions, and from this angle, we'll be seeing ants. So, when you see a nest of ants, that's what we should see in this community'.

This analogy of an ant colony captures the restrictive nature of confined space and illuminates the complex web of relationships within the prison environment. Like a '*nest of ants*', each member has their designated responsibility in maintaining the collective functioning of the prison '*community*'. Although this community is perhaps buried underground '*unseen and unheard*', (as indicated on the participant analysis map) reflecting how their affective labour often remains imperceptible from both outside and often inside the prison. This ant metaphor also suggests a diminished autonomy, as

teachers perform repetitive tasks in an almost mechanical, regimented fashion; their continued presence driven less by individual choice and more by a sense of duty to the broader ecosystem.

Like worker ants in a colony, without teachers' collective contribution, the entire prison-educational structure risks collapse. The participant's observation invites us to view the prison as a self-contained microsystem, where everyone serves a specific function behind walls that both define and constrain the community.

9.4.4. Machines

The hive or nest image links to machine-like images that were developed later in the matrix; the component parts of a machine are required to enable the prison to work effectively, this can be compared to the scurrying spiders and community of ants described above. The concept of a machine manifested in the participants' imagined depictions of cogs and industrial machines conducting repetitive motions. One participant imagined a loom such as in the image below (Figure 40), connecting the experiences to my use of textiles in the inquiry and the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1988) when discussing the 'technological model' (p. 475).

'I'm imagining the erm large looms in a mill kinda like the shuttles, and the machinery clunking up and down as it's weaving'.



Figure 40: Photograph of loom taken by the author at Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, Cheshire.

This notion of a machine and technology may represent the control of the prison space, as a 'desiring-machine' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p. 1) that acknowledges the complexity of forces, structures and desires experienced as a prison teacher. Whilst the loom image might represent oppression of a workforce, my use of weaving in this assemblage is in a resistance within the constrained environment of academic and prison spaces. The concept of the loom therefore, with the multiple threads, some entangled, may encapsulate restriction, transformation and resistance simultaneously. Within the highly controlled and striated spaces of the prison, one can still find creativity, growth and multiplicity, again promoting a paradoxical affect.

The term 'machinations' was written on the analysis map (figure 33) by Evelyn. The term initially evoked images for me of machinic compulsions that are hard to avoid. The term encapsulates the intricate and multiplicitous operations within the prison. In contrast to machine, machinic or mechanical, '*machinations*' is more complex, typically meaning manipulations of power and influence over others: '*complicated and secret plans to get power or control or to gain an advantage*'

(‘Machinations definition’, 2024, n.p.). This resonates with Evelyn’s previous discussion of *‘people trying to manipulate’* her both inside and outside of the prison. It also links to previous participant discussions in which they recognise *their* part in the prison machine, acknowledging their power over prisoners and the ability to influence them positively, yet also being somewhat in control of the prisoners, thus enacting manipulations themselves.

The affects of feeling like a machine, both tangible and abstract, give insight into the entangled nature of staff and prisoner experiences. It suggests that the teachers feel an emotional tie and responsibility to the prisoners, one which is beyond their control. Thus, it becomes a symbiotic relationship essential for institutional functioning. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s (1988) exploration of deterritorialisation, using the orchid and wasp symbiosis as an example (p. 11), there is evidence of the teachers’ becoming-prisoner, where the relationship involves neither imitation nor resemblance, but rather represents an apparent evolution between two entirely distinct entities (p. 11).

9.4.5. Becoming- animal

In the matrix, the bird-related stimuli evoked a range of participant image affects; these highlighted complexity as we discussed mixed feelings around the birds kept in captivity in Prison A. Participants contrasted the captive bird experience to that of the birds that chose to be in the space; having the freedom to come and go as they pleased. The birds, therefore, became representative of prisoners as captive, and staff having greater freedoms as temporary guests. The phrase, *‘trapped and free’* appeared on the analysis map, evoking images of the birds, and teachers wanting to escape.

The response to the artefact of bird feathers (See figure 41, collected in-situ during the walking intra-views), created imaginaries of becoming-otherwise. As one participant imagined: *‘change and shedding a skin. Makes me think about that, like becoming somebody else. A new coat’*. This suggests a desire for transformation and release from their fixed identities. This may also link to masking, the *‘shedding skin’* could be like a snake, embodying the shifting identities of prisoners and staff, as they may manipulate others within the power dynamic.

The teachers also resonated with the birds that visited daily, particularly wagtails and seagulls that made nests at the prison; they appreciated the connection with their own visitor status. In a similar experience to their own, participants questioned why they would *‘choose’* to be there. This connects

to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation', as the prison space acts as a site of both captivity and potentiality. The captive birds (prisoners) and the free birds (teachers) who '*choose to be there*' (as stated by Claire in the previous chapter), are continuously re-negotiating boundaries and redefining their identities within the parameters of the prison constraints. The collected feathers had the affect of recognising identities as transformative in a process of becoming, where teachers might navigate their own desires for change.



Figure 41: Bird feathers collected from within the prison during the walking intra-views.

9.4.6. Alien

One of the teachers, in the process of producing the analysis map, recognised that many of the participants had mentioned the word '*alien*' during the matrix.

'Four of you used the word alien... and it is an alien place to work. It's erm, it's a different world'.

This idea of being in a different world was furthered with the comment on the analysis map: *'windows into worlds'*, suggesting that the affect in the prison space made teachers feel on the periphery; not as residents but as *'aliens'*. This might relate to their teacher identity or sense of belonging as they work in a place that has social stigmatisation and isolation from the wider teacher profession. This may also relate to the inhumanity of the place; the image of the alien suggests that they see themselves outside of human experience, as they watch on with disagreement when aspects of the prison seem less-than-human. A further comment on the map stated *'Alien: a different world out of social norms'*; presenting images of prisons as spaces that cannot be understood unless experienced.

The alienation teachers describe goes beyond mere unfamiliarity; it reveals the profound emotional demands placed upon them within this environment. The experience of navigating the emotional toll and challenges inherent to working in a prison environment, leads teachers to question their own motivations for remaining in a space that feels so disconnected from conventional educational settings. This sense of alienation is vividly captured in a comment from the post-matrix analysis discussion: *'It is the most unforgiving environment you could possibly ever have, such extreme emotions'*. The participant draws on affects which reveal the paradoxical emotional landscape of prison education, balancing the joy of supporting prisoners through transformative learning experiences and sharing moments of laughter; while simultaneously witnessing devastating lows, including incidents of self-harm and, most distressingly, prisoner suicides (linking back to the imaginaries of death that materialised in the matrix).

Other comments in the matrix analysis map such as: *'no personal identities at all'* and *'Observer, temporary guest; on the periphery'*, further the image-affects the *'alien'* created in the participants. This highlights the confusion of identity, agency and autonomy in the prison space. The feeling of being an affect-alien (Ahmed, 2023) discussed in Chapter 4 resonates with this, as teachers struggle with the paradoxes of the space. Teachers may unconsciously position themselves at the periphery to develop compartmentalised professional identities, whilst navigating the emotional complexities of their role. They recognise similar coping mechanisms in the prisoners they work with, as one participant reflected in the matrix when responding to my textile piece (figure 42):

'The underside of embroidery, it's the messy part, not the neat part. I think that's quite interesting and makes me think of like what goes on inside rather than what is presented or how you've, how like the lads would show themselves. Maybe instead of what was going on for them personally'.

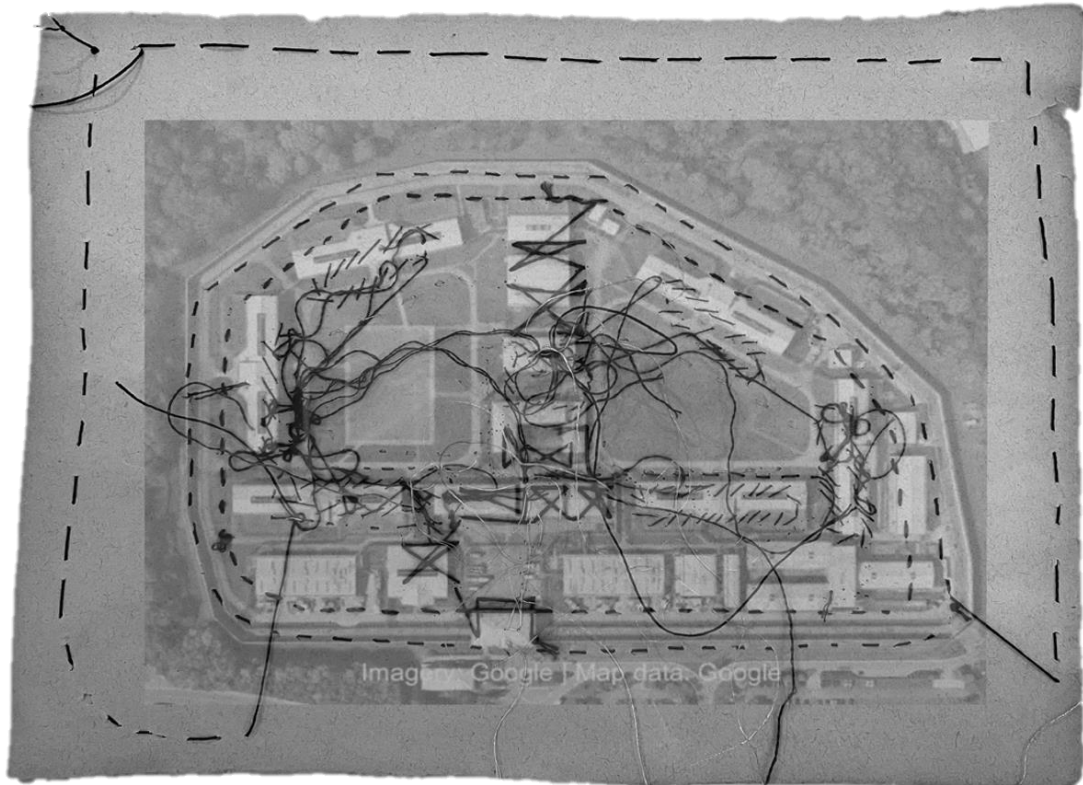


Figure 42: Image used in Visual Matrix: 'Messiness of prison estate', Feb 2022, created by the author. Mixed media: cotton threads, vintage paper, printed photograph of aerial prison map.

This distinction between inner experience and outward presentation suggests that teachers, like their prisoner-learners, may develop strategic forms of self-presentation within the prison environment. This might be understood as a conscious boundary-setting or emotional regulation strategy that enables them to function effectively in challenging circumstances.

The theme of feeling *'alien'* was also imagined in response to the entangled root image (figure 32), further reinforcing this sense of negotiating between different ways of being, or referring to the prison as something that might suck the life-blood of a person:

'I imagine almost like an alien kind of. I dunno, with like suckers, almost like leeches trying to reach out and quite a dark thing'.

The darkness in this alien-image connects to the imaginary of a void, an absence of light, or of hope. The analysis map also showed the entry: '*dark: we zone in on what is free*', indicating a complex interplay between different environments and their association with constraints and possibilities. The contradictory nature replicates the complexity of prison experience. The images produced, encompass the affects created by the '*chaos and calm*' of the classroom, the contrast between care and security, softness, and harshness. Yet these dualities in a complex world are too binary to represent the intensities felt in each passing moment. Instead, there is a multiplicity of feeling, an overwhelm of pure affects that are above the threshold of perception (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 309).

9.7. Unfoldings of the visual matrix

The visual matrix revealed prison education spaces as productive paradoxes where affects circulate through human and more-than-human assemblages. Rather than resolving contradictions (void/fullness, life/death, trapped/free), these rhizomatic entanglements generate multiplicities that embrace complexity.

Teachers navigate becoming-imperceptible while simultaneously maintaining their agency within prison machinations. The affects, manifesting as scurrying creatures, alien presences, and machines, demonstrate how prison space deterritorialises and reterritorialises identities in a continuous flux. These affective intensities resist definitive representation, instead inviting speculative propositions about the material-discursive forces at play. The matrix itself becomes an apparatus through which new becomings are co-constituted, unfolding possibilities beyond binary constraints of carceral education.

Chapter 10: One-to-One Interview analysis

10.1. Introduction

Six prison teachers shared their experiences in one-to-one interviews; all the previous participants were invited to take part, this included three of the original participants from Prison A: Brian, Donald and Evelyn and three participants who had also engaged with the visual matrix: Kevan, Hannah and Ingrid (further detailed in Table 2, Chapter 6). These interviews aim to give a differing perspective of the multifaceted experiences in prison education, incorporating experiences of different male prison as well as Prison A.

As discussed in Chapter 7, the decision to include semi-structured interviews, alongside more creative methods, was to 'sense-check' emerging insights with participants, ensuring accuracy before in-depth analysis. The interviews however, revealed more than I expected. There was a surprising openness from the participants, which prompted me to reconsider the approaches of qualitative and postqualitative inquiries through new lenses. The depth of disclosure may have been facilitated by the participants' prior engagement in either or both the walking intra-views and the visual matrix, allowing them to share more in this method. It could also be attributed to the relationship I had cultivated with them, as a colleague and relative 'insider' who appreciated and resonated with their experiences. What began as a 'sense-checking' activity, evolved into more descriptive insights about teacher experiences and affective intensities in prison spaces.

I started the semi-structured interviews (schedule in [Appendix 5](#)) by asking participants to re-visit the visual matrix analysis map (Figure 34). This enabled the participants to uncover more complex descriptions of their experiences. Notably, many participants returned to the notion of the machine; a prevalent concept in the matrix imaginaries and post-matrix discussion, reinforcing the interrelation.

10.2. Analysis

10.2.1. Prison-education as machine

The interview responses highlighted how the abstract notion of the machine becomes tangible through participants' narratives. By examining how educators perceive and intra-act with various components of the 'prison-education-machine', insight is gained into its capacity to both constrain and create possibilities within the carceral assemblage. Education is a machinic component that is captured and organised by the prison, hence entrapping it via hyphens in the phrase 'prison-education-machine', to create the same affects shared by the participants.

Hannah shares her perceptions in response to the visual matrix analysis map (Figure 34), extending her understanding of the prison as machinic:

'Specifically with education, it's one component, so, to, to... function as intended, it relies so heavily on the... wider, um infrastructure of the prison. So, the function of the prison is to kind of contain... security elements. That's the different agenda, the different regimes that are running... I think having that real understanding of how everybody is required to kind of work together is really important'.

The prison is perceived by Hannah above, as having a 'wider infrastructure'; this aligns with her perception of education as a foundational yet often unseen part of the carceral system. Her use of the word 'contain' reflects not only the physical confinement of bodies within the prison space but also, drawing from Foucault (1990), the biopolitical management of life within these institutions. She acknowledges how the two systems, education and prison have distinct 'different agendas, different regimes' and so working in tandem is not always possible. She suggests that for the prison, 'security elements' will always dominate, and so teachers may need to subsume that role in the machine, even when it is not part of their agenda. Below she expands on this difficulty:

'I think that in an ideal world, we can say that it is part of our kind of wider community. Or one part of the one component of a machine. But sometimes that priority, it might not be on education because there's other stuff going on... I think it's recognising that everyone has to kind of play their part in that, but it's not always, not always as simple as, working in harmony'.

Education as *'one component'* of the prison system creates rhizomatic effects throughout the entire assemblage, altering it in ways that may not be immediately apparent but are fundamental to the functioning of the prison. Her comment of the space not always *'working in harmony'* suggests an understanding that carceral spaces are unbalanced and disharmonious, despite rigid regimes. For teachers, this creates a conflict as they aim for harmony and balance in their classrooms. This paradox highlights the multiplicity of prison education, as it can also be viewed inversely. Critical pedagogy (as discussed in Chapter 2) for example, can aim to disrupt, therefore it is vital that teachers are aware of these multiplicitous potentialities in the prison classroom before they undertake the role.

Hannah's sentence *'but sometimes that priority, it might not be on education'* shows her appreciation that education has a lower intensity of power but is still part of the machine; meaning the teacher is still a part of the machinic assemblage. They are a requirement of the machine that is continuously producing and reproducing complex power dynamics, and affective experiences, whilst containing security and transformation. Her explanation is a good example of how the power of the prison can only exist when it has the opposite forces to work with, *'in an ideal world, we can say that it is part of our kind of wider community'*; she acknowledges that the prison-education-machine assemblage is less than ideal but that they rely on one another, in a community of sorts.

10.2.2. Clockwork

Evelyn shared her conception of the machinic prison education space through the concept of time: *'It's the regime isn't it, it's all; everything's timed. Everything runs by clockwork, doesn't it really, and I'm a bit more of a free, free flowing person. So that's the restriction, the frustration'*. The use of the term *'clockwork'* when describing the prison regime, can be perceived in Deleuzian terms as a striated space, while her *'free flowing'* presence is the smooth space (concepts explained in Chapter 4). Teachers must find ways to work with-in the prison space-time and its restrictions. Evelyn's words showcase the prison as a complex assemblage where time is governed by the *'regime'*, which dictates every aspect of prison life. Whilst this control of time, is an obvious form of punishment for those incarcerated, it is also a significant burden on the role of the teacher. The mechanical order of the regime shapes the experiences of teachers and prisoners alike, reinforcing the pervasive power of the prison through domination of their daily routine, cultivating teachers as becoming-prisoners.

Evelyn's frustrations of the regime's rigid temporalities and the restrictive affects are evident in the text. She is trying to conform despite her '*frustration*' that it conflicts with her '*free-flowing*' identity. Evelyn is therefore seeking to be her authentic self and fulfil her moral obligation while negotiating the constraints of institutional subjection. She does however find ways to resist this by '*making time*' for her learners:

'You've got to be in this place at that time, till that time, but it doesn't really fit with the reality of it...I don't compromise my time... I always make time for them... for me that's all part of a trust; them feeling that someone's actively listening to them and not, you know, just giving them lip service'.

Her willingness to resist these constraints, suggests an ethical praxis of temporal autonomy. Her ability to stick to her values and not '*compromise*' her time, reflects the way in which her embodied and relational engagement with learners produces smooth spaces within the prison regime. Her affirmation, '*you've got to be in this place at this time, till that time*' confirms the power of the prison-education-machine over teacher bodies. She feels that this doesn't match the '*reality*' where the prisoner-learners need more time than the machine is prepared to give. She therefore pushes against this power and carves out the time '*for them*' in a minor gesture (Manning, 2016). She is creating temporalities and rhythms for her learners that work against the clockwork that is expected. This aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) idea that the machine is not only about control but about cultivating conditions for creativity and collective transformation. Her praxis embodies the radical potential of hope through refusing to treat prisoner-learners as cogs in an exploitive machine, but instead she embraces the potential flows and disruptions.

10.2.3. Machinic affects of contractual obligations

The teacher-participants described how contractual requirements between the education provider and prison, generated powerful affective responses. These contributed to an atmosphere of mechanistic dehumanisation. Donald reveals how these administrative demands created intense feelings of frustration and diminished professional identity.

'The environment is now a tick-box, you're not a name, you're not a person, an individual. It was like, we need somebody to do that, to tick

the box... you know, get back to work... We need somebody to cover a lesson... So, you feel like, well, what about me, you know... But it's more important for the organisation, for the contract'.

Donald's account reveals the visceral impact of being reduced to an interchangeable part; his words '*what about me*' captures the upset of feeling dehumanised. This affective dimension is also evident in Kevan's description: '*Like a machine, er part of the mechanics, we're just doing a tick box exercise... it's more important that you sign the register, and leave feedback... not for them, but for the system... me and the learner are part of the mechanics of the big machine*'. The repeated metaphor of mechanisation through the term '*tick boxes*' reflects how deeply these contractual obligations penetrate their experience of teaching in different prison settings, creating environments where teachers feel stripped of their autonomy.

Ingrid's testimony reveals how these contractual pressures generate a pervasive atmosphere of artificiality: '*You do quite often get the feeling that if the figures are nice and they all look right, then everybody's happy, regardless of what the actual picture is*'. This disconnect between statistical appearance and lived reality creates an additional layer of emotional strain, resonating with Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) and Kafka's (2012) analysis of bureaucratic machines that produce facades masking human experience.

The affective intensity reaches its peak in Evelyn's account of constant pressure: '*You always have managers you know, saying "bums on seats, get them through, no matter what"*'. While this mirrors Foucault's (Foucault, 1991, 1998) observations about schools resembling prisons, the prison-education context amplifies these pressures through unique challenges which other educational institutions are less likely to incur. These include but are not limited to past educational traumas, drug influence, undiagnosed learning disabilities, brain injury and severe mental health problems. Additional to the prisoner challenges, there are institutional disruptions which schools don't face, such as prisoner 'churn', prolonged lockdowns, probation meetings and medical appointments. The command to '*get them through, no matter what*', takes on a particularly intense affective quality when teachers must navigate these multiple layers of complexity, creating an environment where professional agency feels increasingly impossible.

10.2.4. Complexity of the machine

The participant interviews gave greater insight into the complexity of the prison experience as the teachers shared a range of affective impacts that might implicate their praxis. Brian describes how the interruptions he experiences daily, disrupt his ability to process information: *'because of the noise that can go on it's a bit of a, you can't hear yourself think sometimes... the workshop, the lads, the telephone, and people coming in mithering ya... you get used to that... the radios and things, you get used to that background noise... there can be a lot of interruptions'*.

His inability to hear himself think, shows the environmental impact on the senses and teacher efficacy. This overwhelm of noise and disruption can be seen as part of the machinic assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988) of the prison education space, where the various more-than-human components (e.g., radios, alarms, keys, birds) and human components (e.g., officers, prisoners) interact in a complex rhizome of productive flows and interruptions or intra-ruptions. These intra-ruptions are made possible from within the relational field itself rather than from external forces, as the elements of the assemblage affect and disrupt one another through their entanglement. This assemblage then affects Brian's ability to function amongst the relative chaos.

Hannah recognises the complex interplay between the prison *'system'* and education, that needs to align to the prison regime with little flexibility: *'It's more complex... you've got the prison system, and you've got education kind of existing and trying to align to a system that's quite <pause> inflexible <laughs>'*. Her pause shows hesitation in criticising the prison system. The laughter suggests sarcasm in the word *'inflexible'*. This word cannot encapsulate the full extent of the rigid nature of the prison bureaucracy. She continues to state that *'we can't do much about some of that stuff. So, how do we work in the parameters and allow us to do what we need to do'*. Her use of the words *'align'* and *'parameters'* furthers the concept of a machine that needs to be calibrated and programmed with specific operational limits. This word choice discloses how Hannah views teacher agency as constrained within rigid, predefined limits.

Ingrid furthers the understanding of the prison-education-machine complexity as she describes having to find work- arrounds to basic tasks:

'Everything takes, everything's a little bit harder to do than, say, if you are working in schools. So, planning your lessons is always that bit harder... if you get to your lesson, you realised you've left your photocopying behind, you can't just Google it and print it off, and so you always have to be extra prepared... there's always an extra hoop to jump through... always another hoop'.

Her descriptions emphasise the entanglement of materiality through the photocopying and the present-absence of the internet. As Bille *et al.* (2010) would suggest, these absences aren't merely lacking but actively shape her teaching experience, requiring adaptations and extra preparation. The unavailable technology becomes an affective presence that structures pedagogical practices in prison education.

Aligning with Alice's earlier frustrations, these disruptions are also a reminder of the infra-structure as Hannah shares the difficulty of getting material components such as photocopiers fixed: *'It always seems a little bit more difficult ... it takes a little bit longer... it's never just one person. It's someone who needs to then tell someone else, who needs to tell someone else, who then needs to get it okayed by someone else. That kind of chain'*. She highlights the complexity of the contractual outsourcing of education and its relation to the prison chain-of-command, which can enable and disable things from happening. These structures do not just create logistical challenges; they shape the affective atmosphere in which educators operate, influencing their capacity to innovate, and persevere.

10.2.5. Mechanisms to cope

Viewing the prison as a machine-like system can serve as a coping mechanism to those working within carceral settings. Brian explains how he approaches the emotional aspects of working in prisons:

'Unfortunately, that's part of prison life... and you just seem to, to cope. Or you've got to try and work your own mechanisms out... I suppose at some point in time; you would maybe have to go and do some counselling'.

His ability to *'cope'* through *'mechanisms'* may enable him to be numb to what he sees; this lessens the affective intensity but only temporarily. He suppresses those affects until such *'point in time'* that they need addressing. This enables him to maintain his praxis through machine-like engagement as a form of affective dissonance or disaffection.

Hannah also shares her perspective on becoming enmeshed within the prison's machinic assemblage. When I asked how teachers might prepare to work in prison education, she replied:

'I don't think you can... until you experience it. And part of the day-to-day kind of function within a prison establishment, I think it's really hard to prepare for that. Erm, I think when you're in that environment and you are one part... you have to kind of align to everything else that's going on'.

Hannah accepts that teachers contribute to and are *'one part'* of the prison-education-machine. She suggests that it is difficult to prepare for teaching in that space as the affective intensity cannot be known *'until you experience it'*. Thus, indicating that it can only be felt as an *insider* of the space.

She uses the phrase *'align to everything else'*, emphasising rigid conformity rather than flexible cooperation. The alignment is not an optional process but something they *'have to'* do for the machine's continued operation, affirming that submission to the regime is necessary for maintaining effective function. These experiences of simultaneously being resistant and submissive may lead to cognitive and affective dissonance as teachers try to reconcile these paradoxical affects.

10.3. Paradox

Throughout the interviews, teachers described conflicting experiences; moments where they found themselves concurrently upholding and subverting their roles, being both empowered and constrained, supporting and restricting learning. These experiences further the paradoxes discussed in the visual matrix (Chapter 9) which are embedded within prison education, going beyond mere contradictions to absurdity. Deleuze (1990) drawing on the work of Jung, offers a useful framework, as the paradox is conceptualised into a force that simultaneously pulls in two directions, between *'becoming-mad and the unforeseeable'* (p. 78).

Evelyn shared that the paradox sits uncomfortably with her: *'The paradox between being trapped and us here or free, you know, that constant dynamic... you always feel a little bit guilty sometimes*

about that'. In sharing the guilt which she feels at her relative freedom, there is contradiction as she uses the terms *'always'* and *'sometimes'* concurrently, further perpetuating the paradoxes. Evelyn's experience highlights the disconcerting pull of opposing forces, that may ultimately lead to her experiencing the notion of becoming-mad (Deleuze, 1990) where she is caught in the continuous flux between these affects.

Ingrid's interview also unveiled paradoxes of prison experience: *'Things that are bizarre and surreal can become so normal, and things just carry on despite their surroundings'*. She recognises the impossible paradox of security (as a genuine threat), clashing with educational transformation:

'You've got the prison regime that wants to carry on and be safe and just carry on and be the same, and you've got education which wants to progress and be a bit more creative and... different. And those always kind of clash... a lot of the time the prison said 'no'... and if you have that chance to be a bit different and try something new... and it's like, no... we're just gonna stay the same coz that's safer'.

Her words suggest that the prison constraints dampen teacher enthusiasm through avoidance of risk when teachers want to *'try something new'*. The juxtaposition of the prison regime's emphasis on security in contrast to education's drive for creativity and progress, highlights this fundamental paradox. The *'clash'* Ingrid refers to can lead to a sense of stagnation as the teachers' attempts to introduce novel approaches are stifled by the institution's response of *'no'*.

However, these boundaries can paradoxically stimulate creative thinking; teachers will find a way to create *'lines of flight'* in response to the barriers. These moments of deterritorialisation allow teachers to navigate the rigid prison-education-machine, finding creative ways to exist within it. By embracing this paradoxical tension, educators can generate new becomings, transforming constraints into pedagogical opportunities that challenge the status-quo while still operating within the system's boundaries.

10.3.1. Different world

Brian feels affected by the regulations that define what he can and cannot say in the prison, leading to him experiencing this as a *'different world'*, linking to the earlier concepts of feeling like an *'alien'* that arose in the visual matrix (Chapter 9):

'I shouldn't say that, or I can't say this, or you know, I can't, you know, it's all these other things, which is a little bit of a, like a different world. Even though you're still in the world, but this is like a different environment completely'.

The physical and regulatory aspects of the prison create an affective atmosphere that is palpably different from the ordinary, outside world. The affective dimension of confinement is not only impacted by the physical boundaries, but also by the constraints of behaviours that then influence social intra-actions. Thus, making it feel like a *'different environment completely'*.

Ingrid describes how teachers may acculturate to the prison space as it becomes *'strangely'* comfortable:

'I remember when I first started and there were cockroaches in the staff room <laughs> and people just eating lunch around them. And I was just thinking, no, this, this is really not, no, this is wrong. Like you shouldn't but you can just get a bit used to them... like seeing rats run under the portacabins outside... I guess you kind of become immune to it'.

Her phrase *'you can just get a bit used to them'* illustrates a change in the intensity of affect over time. This experience resonates with Evelyn's prior experience with sound in the walking intra-views, as teachers become accustomed to aspects of the prison which shock the body.

Ingrid initially experienced a visceral rejection to the presence of cockroaches, her body reacting with disgust and moral outrage (*'this is wrong'*). However, through prolonged exposure, her bodily threshold for these environmental affects shifts. Ingrid laughing while recounting the memory reveals the distance between her former and current embodied state. The phrase *'become immune to it'* is particularly thought-provoking as it suggests not just her mental adjustment but a recalibration (connecting to machinic qualities) of her body's capacity to be affected by these more-than-human encounters (cockroaches, rats).

Teachers may acculturate to other affects in the prison space; gradually developing a similar embodied tolerance to various elements of the carceral environment that may have previously evoked strong affects; as was seen when participants and I laughed in response to the heckling and lurid comments shouted at us during the walking intra-views. This could extend beyond getting used

to the 'pests' (as described in Hanah's encounters with cockroaches), to acculturate with prison aspects such as the surveillance practices, security protocols, spatial constraints and more troubling aspects like the dehumanisation and mistreatment of prisoners.

This process of affective adaptation raises questions about the long-term impact on teachers' perceptions and behaviours. As they become '*immune*' to these initially disturbing stimuli, there's potential for a broader numbing of affective responses, influencing their approach to education. The numbing or immunity could questionably be a requirement of the role, as Evelyn stated earlier '*it's the only way to work in a prison <laughs>*,' but it does not mean it *should* be that way.

10.4. Affective load

The term 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 2012) aptly describes the constant self-regulation teachers employ in prisons to manage their emotions and those of their learners. However, the interviews revealed an innate, more persistent phenomenon that stayed with teachers beyond the learning spaces. As discussed in Chapter 4, affect theory suggests that emotions are subjective experiences, whilst *affects* are the pre-personal forces and flows that inform the experiences. I see affects as the textures of the prison space, teachers are not consciously aware of the affects, yet they may have names for the emotions they feel because of the affects. Drawing on these concepts, I have recognised the 'affective load' teachers carry with them; this term captures the gravity of the burden and enduring nature of these experiences, as described by participants using embodied terms such as '*heavy*' and '*weighted*'.

This affective load manifests not only in human interactions but also through the material textures of the prison environment itself. Connecting the more-than-human aspects of the prison, Evelyn describes the physical and metaphorical load of the gates. '*It's tiring. If anything, it's tiring, just a drain on your energy, when you're carrying stuff and you're trying to get through the thing, you're just trying to get to where you need to be and it's just so difficult. There's always blocks, barriers <sighs> or hurdles for you to get over*'. Evelyn sees the gates as intra-ruptions (previously conceptualised earlier in this chapter) as she travels from wing to wing. The materiality of these gates as agents can be seen as metaphors for the systemic barriers teachers face.

Both Evelyn and Ingrid use metaphors of physical barriers that disrupt their everyday navigation of the prison. Evelyn's term '*hurdles*' and Ingrid's earlier use of the term '*hoop to jump through*', suggests continuous negotiations of these obstacles within an already affectively charged assemblage.

The affective load of teachers can be experienced as 'microshocks' (Massumi, 2015b), previously explained in Chapter 4. These small, affective incidents, such as shouts from cell windows, seeing cockroaches in the staffroom, observing self-harm scars, or witnessing a fight, do not necessarily put the teachers in direct harm or cause immediate trauma. However, over time, the collective resonance of these can create an affective load that may impact their efficacy as teachers and potentially cause trauma in the long-term. Ingrid describes how she initially felt about the security elements of prison:

'I definitely didn't feel quite comfortable at first. There was always that kind of, um, having to think a bit extra before you go anywhere and making sure you've locked it... it's taking up headspace isn't it, that could be used for planning or creativity. It's using up some part of your brain that could be used for other things... you're thinking about that, rather than producing really good lessons or chasing something up, or remembering something... it's another, another thing in your list of things to think about'.

Ingrid's phrase '*didn't feel quite comfortable*' illustrates how security requirements create an affective load that manifests as both physical and emotional discomfort. This resonates with Ahmed's 'sticky affects' (2004, 2023) which accumulate in spaces and bodies over time. The affective burden becomes evident as Ingrid describes how she makes sure she has '*locked it*' and expresses concerns about how this compromises teaching quality. This affective load consumes her '*headspace*', occupying significant mental and physical energy. Like Claire's earlier comment (Chapter 8): '*I used to go home and panic that I'd left a gate open*', the affect of security requirements then permeates beyond the prison boundaries. Such ongoing labour represents a substantial affective load that, when unaddressed, potentially leads to burnout and trauma.

10.4.1. Trauma

I approach the term 'trauma' with careful consideration of its resonance for both teachers and those incarcerated (as previously discussed in Chapter 2). Haraway's (2016) concept of 'Staying with the

trouble' and Ettinger's (2001) notion of 'wit(h)nessing', (previously explained in Chapter 4) help to understand how trauma is experienced relationally, not just by those directly involved, but by those who witness it. As readers engage with these excerpts, they too become part of this 'wit(h)nessing', creating what Ettinger describes as an 'alliance' where one can be 'carried by an event s/he did not necessarily experience' (2001, p. 109). I therefore invite you, the reader, to join me in bearing wit(h)ness to these narratives. As you engage with these accounts, you may experience echoes of trauma, subtle hauntings or discomforts that arise from encountering others' trauma. These are integral to the ethical encounter this work proposes; acknowledge the weight of these experiences without attempting to resolve or escape them.

The excerpts that follow illustrate a continuum of affective experience, with potential traumas that surpass those typically encountered in mainstream educational settings. Through this inquiry, the reader is not only wit(h)ness to these experiences but also becomes entangled in the web of affects, challenges, and potentialities that characterise the prison education space.

10.4.2. After-effects

Prison educators occupy a liminal space where wit(h)nessing violence demands them to regulate their emotions as part of their professionalism. Brian's account reveals how he cultivates strategic detachment as a survival mechanism. This creates a psychological boundary between his educational role and security responsibilities, acknowledging how little control he has as teacher in that situation. This complex positioning is brought to the fore in his reflection:

'Because I'm not actually a prison officer and we're not on the wings... that's where most of it happens. It doesn't really faze me much. I mean, okay... I've seen a fight happen and then it's just a case of you tried, you know, to defuse the situation... press the red button on your radio or whatever. And then... you just step back, and you just think, well, just let 'em' beat the hell out of each other. I mean, there's always, sometimes, probably the after-effects, you know, because its, I mean, then you just get used to it. Unfortunately, or fortunately.'

Brian's embodied phrase 'step back' reveals his resignation to let the violence unfold. Yet, his ambivalence surfaces as he acknowledges that such detachment is not without consequence. His comment 'there's always, sometimes, probably, the after-effects... then you just get used to it'. is difficult to read; the words are tripping themselves up as the uncertainty of the affects unfolds. He

does not want to acknowledge this, instead staying with being unsure because it avoids facing the reality and gravity of the affects.

The ambivalence might reflect the broader institutional cultures that occur in spaces of trauma such as prisons and hospitals, where emotional detachment is often encouraged or necessary for staff to function effectively. As Menzies Lyth (1990) explains in her study of nurses; 'detachment and denial' become part of the institutional defences against anxiety, 'repressive techniques were culturally required and typically used to deal with emotional stress' (p. 445). Such mechanisms, while protective in the short-term, can also hinder emotional engagement and blur the lines between resilience and numbness.

Brian's expressions '*unfortunately or fortunately*' suggest that he is aware of a gradual process of becoming desensitised to violence in the prison and the paradox this creates. The desensitisation can be seen as both a coping mechanism ('*fortunately*') or affective dissonance ('*unfortunately*'). His difficulty in articulating whether the desensitisation is fortunate or unfortunate, highlights the complex nature of affects in this environment. It is not a simple positive or negative experience, but a multifaceted affective response, that is constantly in flux.

Brian's term '*after-effects*' or perhaps '*after-affects*', suggests a delayed impact of affect, hitting unexpectedly. This terminology echoes Weegels' concept of 'carceral reverberations' (in Stuit, Turner and Weegels, 2024, p. 107) describing the enduring influence on those who interact with carceral environments (discussed in Chapter 2). Brian may not fully comprehend these intense affects when he acknowledges their lingering presence beyond immediate events. His unconscious recognition aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) theory of affect as an intensity flowing through bodies outside conscious awareness. The term potentially indicates teachers' evolving emotional responses to experiences over time, further complicating affective temporalities.

10.4.3. Weighing heavy

As a Personal and Social Development (PSD) teacher, Evelyn may face greater exposure to vicarious trauma due to the emotional nature of her role. While she initially claims she has not '*seen that much*', she goes on to describe a violent incident that deeply affected her: '*That's one thing I can't be sensitised to. Fortunately, I've not seen that much. I have recently seen something quite bad. That really did weigh heavy on my heart for quite a while*'.

Her description of the experience weighing *'heavy on my heart'* embodies the physical and emotional effect of wit(h)nessing something violent as a teacher who is not trained or prepared for these occurrences. Her experience was made worse by the fact that she knew the prisoner as a learner, who she had a teacher-student relationship with; supporting him to build confidence in her role as a PSD teacher: *'I did some work, I really built him up'*, suggesting an emotional investment.

Graphic warning for the next excerpt as it describes blood loss and self-harm:

'And then as I went past one of the rooms, I just turned and I saw a massive pool of blood. It was a massive... So, there's a bed and it was all there and he's sitting with his legs hanging over. There were two nurses... I was shocked by the amount of blood; I couldn't believe it. I thought he'd really like done something like close to death. And the nurse said, he's cut himself up really bad. Really bad. And I said, okay, and he looked so crestfallen that I'd seen that as well, his way of coping with what he'd done, because how he felt about himself, it's like self-hatred, isn't it, it was on the thigh... it was really, really deep... So, this the self-harming aspect. Yeah, that weighed on me terrible... But that day was, it just knocked me for six, took me about a week or so to get over that feeling, flattened by it'.

Evelyn explains above how the prisoner was taken to solitary confinement in the CSU (Care and Separation Unit) due to being in a fight; it was in the CSU that she witnessed him self-harm. The visceral affects of seeing the massive blood loss from her learner clearly shocked her. This resonates with Brian's term *'after-effects'* as she stated it stayed with her for a while: *'took me about a week or so to get over that feeling'*. Her description of the affects is embodied; it felt *'weighted'*, she stated: *'it knocked me for six'* (like Donald's previous statement, *'knocks the stuffing out of you'* in Chapter 8) and she felt *'flattened by it'*, illustrating the way affect registers in the body before it can be fully processed cognitively, often bypassing rational thought.

Evelyn's use of the word *'crestfallen'* to describe her student's demeanour following this incident, is a term derived from fighting birds whose crests droop in defeat, similar to the drawing she created during the walking intra-view (figure 19). This becoming-bird reveals how affects flow beyond species boundaries in the prison environment, where birds represent one of the forms of natural life that flourish in the space. The drooping physical posture implied by *'crestfallen'* speaks to how affectivities materialise through bodily expressions, that resonate across the prison's affective ecology.

Despite teachers frequently witnessing varying levels of self-harm and suicide in prison, there is no formalised support system to help them process these critical incidents and prevent vicarious trauma or post-traumatic stress. While prison officers have protocols for receiving support, teachers are not directly employed by the prison and are therefore expected to ask for support from the education provider, rather than be offered it as part of an automatic process. This unspoken endurance therefore haunts the culture of prison teaching (Gordon, 2008).

Evelyn reinforces this, as she acknowledges witnessing trauma and not gaining formal support for it:

'You know, there was a different incident of fire... with a lad. It was terrible. They [prison officers] were all sent home that day. But I wasn't. But I didn't ask for it. That was just a given for them because that's in place for them. But I don't think it's in place for tutors that if you've seen something traumatic, that could trigger PTSD. You know, I'm fortunate, you know... I did find that traumatic and it hit me hard for a few, quite a few days afterwards. And then I managed to just pick myself up again, to just keep going'.

These experiences are in stark contrast to Evelyn's original statement: *'Fortunately, I've not seen that much'*, especially considering she had only worked in the prison for one year at the time of this interview. This highlights a discrepancy between her stated perception and described reality and raises important considerations for the analysis, emphasising a need to look beyond surface-level statements to uncover deeper affects. Evelyn recognises the inconsistency between officer and teacher experience but takes personal responsibility for not getting support, stating: *'but I didn't ask for it'*. She even downplays the affective intensity of the event, suggesting she is fortunate to not easily suffer PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and managed to *'just pick myself up'*. These repeated exposures without support or counselling, may eventually lead to PTSD, compassion fatigue or burnout.

This mention of PTSD resonates with Justine's comment in the visual matrix after listening to the sound recording of the gates and keys: *'I got, I got like a weird feeling of like panic thinking oh, I hope that door's locked... I think it brought like a weird. Like PTSD almost <laughs>'*. The laughter tries to soften the words but highlights the affective resonance these experiences have as affects, which linger even when away from the prison. Donald who had worked for the prison for over twenty years, reinforces these points when he shares his experiences of wit(h)nessing trauma:

'Yeah, over the years, I've noticed... officers are asked "are you alright?" after seeing people jump off, but never the teacher, because I've witnessed somebody jumping off with sheets around his ankles, broke his ankles... I never got asked, you know, do you need counselling? Do you need to talk about it?'

Donald emphasises that institutions routinely overlook teachers in these violent and traumatic incidents, with their erasure having profound consequences. This institutional neglect intensifies the trauma as teachers must navigate the 'after-effects' in isolation, significantly amplifying their affective burden. Ingrid, a teacher with four years' experience, also acknowledged the lack of support and training from the institution, particularly around working with learners who self-harm:

'I've seen learners in my classroom with, really quite severe self-harm scars or fresh wounds, um, yet no one, we don't get trained for that. So, you don't know whether to say anything, if I say something, is it going to be the wrong thing? Is someone else dealing with it? Does he want to talk to me? Or has everyone else tried to talk to him? You just don't know what to do for the best'.

Her use of multiple questions shows that she has cognitively battled with how to process this experience. Despite having several years of teaching experience in prisons, this was clearly not a skill that could be learned on-the-job but requires specific therapeutic training on how to respond to this situation. The inability then for the teachers to 'know what to do for the best' can lead to moral distress and compassion fatigue.

Donald expresses potential compassion fatigue in his words: *'Its helping people find the help. Help, help that's all I ever do'*. His repetitive use of the word 'help' may be an unconscious attempt to convince himself of the value and purpose of his work, despite the challenges. The repetitive use of the word 'help' could also be a defence mechanism or a cry for help due to overwhelm at the complexity of the role. As his sense of self becomes entangled with the act of helping others, the boundaries blur, making it difficult for him to separate his personal wellbeing from his professional duties. This affective burden mirrors how institutional systems, like the prison-education-machine, operate; with constant exposure to traumatic events leading teachers to become mechanised.

10.5. Staff Attitudes

The risk of emotional burnout and disengagement amongst prison educators is evident in Kevan's reflection below on his seven years of teaching experience. While he maintains his connection with his students, he reiterates previous comments from participants that *'it's not the lads'* who cause tensions in his role. He expresses concern about following the path of longer-serving colleagues who have become detached over their decades of service.

'Looking at the ones that have been there twenty years... their behaviour and attitude towards the men is that they're just turning up, doing their job. I can say that [they] must have come in for a good reason, but over time, [they've] lost that... I'd hate to think that happens to me, because I know I've been, in the last year, you know... it's felt like, not the lads, because I love being in there with 'em'... But the managers are not interested in me as a person. They're just making sure this box is ticked, and that box is ticked and, will that rub off on me?'

Kevan argues that it is his teacher colleagues and managers that make him feel a sense of apathy in the prison. Like Donald's previous comments, they both feel they are being used as objects to meet the contract agenda, without consideration for their agency and autonomy. Thus, being in a target-driven space affects their experiences. Kevan raises concerns that, over time, he too will amalgamate into becoming-machine, like his colleagues.

Kevan's concern can be viewed as a 'refrain' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 312); a pattern of repetitive habits that risk solidifying into a territorialised existence, reflecting his observation of long-serving teachers whose *'behaviour and attitude towards the men is that they're just turning up'*. This repetition reveals how routine practices can calcify into territorial markers within the prison education assemblage, where teaching becomes mechanical rather than transformative. Since the interview, Kevan has left prison education. His decision to leave can be viewed as a personal 'line of flight', a deterritorialising movement that allowed him to escape the constraining forces of the prison assemblage, preserving his mental wellbeing and retaining his enthusiasm for teaching. This departure represents not merely career change but a conscious withdrawal from institutional patterns that threatened to diminish his educational ethos.

The institutional culture around staff attitudes appears as a significant concern across multiple interviews, including Kevan's above. Brian also believes staff who have been there longer, suffer

from stagnation: *'They're stuck in a rut, and nobody's challenged them. Nobody's got things to change'*. This lack of challenge can be viewed through a Deleuze and Guattari (1988) lens as a form of machinic enslavement, where modes of operation become encoded within rigid institutional structures. Ingrid also identified a particular challenge with long-serving teachers:

'There are some teachers that have been there a long time... who would teach in a way that 10 years ago... about 10-15 years ago it was just used for something to get them out the cells so that they weren't causing trouble on the wing. And it was more of a holding activity than a, a real kind of [pause]... making sure they were progressing... I think I get the impression the job has changed quite a lot from how it was'.

As with previous participant comments, this suggests that there is a cohort of long-standing prison teachers that take a behaviourist approach to prison teaching, that doesn't align with relational paradigms and practices such as a pedagogy of care (discussed in Chapter 2). This approach and the dissonance from some teaching staff has an impact on the 'affective economy' (Ahmed, 2004, p. 117) and culture of the space, making it harder for teachers to maintain enthusiasm.

Evelyn also shares the same view as Kevan: *'It's not the lads, not that... it's the nature of the place rather than the lads themselves'*. She supports the idea that social intra-actions with staff influence the affective environment:

'I've not found it to be the lads, it's been more the staff can be quite harsh, you know, so in my early days, it's <pause> hard, everyone can be so rude. That type of element. I actually find that the lads are, in my experiences, generally, have been very polite, and willing'.

Evelyn draws a clear distinction between the generally *'polite and willing'* attitude of the prisoners and the *'rude'* behaviour of prison staff. As with previous participants, she aligns more with the prisoners, proposing a becoming-prisoner experience. This suggests that her struggles were related more to navigating the complex interpersonal dynamics and institutional culture of her colleagues (officers and teachers), rather than issues with the prisoners. She furthers this opinion of staff with the ironic phrase: *'They're getting away with murder'*, highlighting concerning behaviours of teachers that would be unacceptable in other educational settings. I sensed her unease at openly sharing these thoughts whilst inside the prison. Her whispered delivery reveals both the sensitivity of these observations and the surveillance that is an ever-present affect in the prison spaces:

'<whispers> the amount of times, incidents I saw that you would be sacked for... They're terrified of losing anyone. Their hands are tied to a degree. Because what are you going to do, sack the whole workforce? There needs to be a culture change'. This power imbalance, where staff leverage their indispensability, points to systemic issues that are beyond the teachers' control.

10.6. Resilience

In the context of prison A, teachers continued to work inside the prison spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet faced frustration and moral challenge daily, as prisoners were locked in their cells for twenty-three hours a day. The practice of education during this time was reduced to paper-based 'education packs' and brief conversations with learners *through* cell doors and protective face masks; these more-than-human entities became part of the affective assemblage.

'During Covid-19... it was quite, quite a bad, negative atmosphere that dragged on for a long time and that caused a bit of a division. There were, um, us that were trying to make the most of it... but the atmosphere could be felt in the Education Department... you could like, feel the atmosphere... the motivation wasn't there, and the usual routines were all out and everyone was sort of, out of sorts... that was quite a difficult time'.

Ingrid's description of the '*negative atmosphere*' suggests unconscious affects that may have contributed to this environment due to the moral distress teachers faced in this situation. Her observation '*you could like, feel the atmosphere*' aligns with affect theory, which suggests that these experiences impact the body and alter the perception of space before conscious recognition occurs.

The disruption of the teachers' '*usual routines*' during COVID-19 represents a breakdown or reconfiguration of the previously discussed prison-education-machine. This upheaval in the prison's usual way of working led to a collective state of being '*out of sorts*'. This furthers the concept of acculturation of staff becoming-prisoners as the change to regime disorientates the body and creates a feeling of unease that permeates the carceral environment. The situation reveals how resilience is not just an individual trait, but a dynamic interplay between personal coping mechanisms, systemic power, and the ability to navigate shifting affective landscapes.

In a post-pandemic setting, the nature of prison still requires teachers with resilience, emotional strength and adaptability. Those who thrive possess not only teaching skills but the psychological endurance to navigate daily challenges. It is often clear within the first few weeks if a new teacher can sustain working there. Evelyn shares how the environment of prison is not for everyone:

'Make sure you know what you're getting yourself into, the reality, the environment, can be harsh for a lot of people. Some people bend more... you know, really feel the knocks... if you're a little bit more sensitive maybe <laughs> look at your own mental health and whether this is the right environment for you'.

Evelyn uses embodied language to explain the impact of the prison suggesting that *'some people bend more'*, and that they can *'really feel the knocks'*, like Donald's comments of being *'knocked for six'* and how it can *'knock the stuffing out of you'*. This highlights the affective impact the space can have on teachers' bodies. Evelyn stresses the importance of new teachers to this environment to ask themselves whether they have the capacity and resilience to endure such experiences. She suggests that successful climatization to the prison landscape requires a particular temperament as it may not be suitable for someone who is a *'little bit more sensitive'*. Her nervous laughter when framing sensitivity as a potential liability, may be a coping mechanism; revealing the complex emotional negotiations prison educators must constantly manage.

Many new teachers in the profession decide quickly that the prison is *not* a space that they can work in; this choice to leave can also be perceived as a form of resilience, or self-preservation. I experienced this myself, as I left the prison role to protect my mental health (further discussed in personal memos: Chapter 11). Other participants interviewed acknowledged that the prison space is an environment to be tolerated; recognising that it was not for everyone.

The process of employing staff for a role is inhibited by red tape and can regularly take six months for security clearance to come through, before teachers can start. In Donald's experience and my own, there were times that new teachers were employed, after the security checks and clearance period, only to then discover that it was not for them. Donald recalled the experience of teachers leaving straight after they had started: *'A female teacher, she was shaking in the staff room... frightened, you know, surely they would have known before they, some sort of pre-training... so, it's like they've not been told or not got a picture of what life in prison would be like'*. The physical *'shaking'* Donald describes shows how fear moved through the new teacher's body, in a visceral

reaction to the experience of being *inside* the prison. The shock experienced by some new teachers upon entering the prison environment can be seen as an 'affective rupture' (Dadvand, Cahill and Zembylas, 2022, p. 287), where the intensity of the experience overwhelms their preconceived expectations or '*picture*' of what the space might be.

Ingrid, when discussing how she came to work in prisons, highlights: '*It's no one's first choice, is it?*'. Her comment lays bare the hesitation that many would experience when applying for a role in a prison; this reflects in the challenge of recruiting prison teachers and retaining them in such a marginalised and affective environment. Ingrid continues to share her thoughts on the need to be resilient as a prison teacher: '*It does chip away. You do need to be quite resilient because there's always those little things... there's little kind of <pause> things, that always just make your life that little bit more difficult*'.

Linking to earlier participant comments about the barriers, '*hurdles*' or '*hoops*' teachers must navigate, Ingrid's term '*chip away*' reflects a similar feeling that the prison is a challenging environment that takes energy, reducing capacity to be resilient as they traverse the space. She furthers this through explaining how the '*little things*' can make things more '*difficult*', therefore having a lasting impact on resilience. These '*things*' may be, for example, security elements, the emotional load or smaller '*things*' like the photocopier persistently breaking (as explained in Chapter 8). The seemingly '*little*', minor intra-ruptions or '*microshocks*' (Massumi, 2015b) become molecular forces or '*microscopic events [which] upset the local balance of power*' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 16).

The participant excerpts suggest that to maintain the role of a prison educator they need the capacity to modulate, responding appropriately to the intense affects circulating in the environment. Hannah encapsulates the difficulty of maintaining this in her interview, which I have presented as an i-poem inspired by the work of Gilligan (Gilligan, 2015; Gilligan and Eddy, 2021). I have not edited Hannah's words, I have only placed them in stanzas when the 'I's appear, to highlight the affective resonance:

I think it's. Being resilient.
I think.
I think it's something that you do have to learn overtime.
I think.
I don't think it's something that you can necessarily prepare for. Erm, because
I think you have to come up with your own strategies.

I don't think
I mean the way that I, that I cope...
I think it's about being resilient.
I, I can't, but I don't know how you prepare to be resilient.

I think you just have to,
I think it's something that people have to just learn, and,
I've worked with people over the years, who haven't been able to, they've been fantastic teachers,
but the environment and their resilience hasn't been, erm, hasn't really stood them in good stead for
the for the setting because you can't prepare them for what's going to be, kind of shared in that
sense. Erm, it's a hard one isn't it, it's a hard one... There's so many complexities that you have to
appreciate to working in that environment, it isn't like any other.

Hannah's use of 'I', and particularly '*I think*' is persistent throughout her interview; I found this to be an interesting divergence from other participants. She explained in the post-interview transcript-check that her excessive use of '*I think*' is in relation to her hesitancy; a way for her to gather her thoughts. While this i-poem does not strictly adhere to Gilligan's (2015, 2021) guidance, it nevertheless powerfully illustrates the affective dimensions of Hannah's experience as a prison educator. The above excerpt, presented in this way, beautifully shows the complexity of the prison affects. The flux of hesitancy and uncertainty is such a complex expression of her ability to both cope and not. This is accentuated in the last extended section, where she is surer in her response; the pronouns switch to '*them*' and '*you*' in contrast to her excessive use of '*I*' in the previous uncertain responses, revealing her movement between personal uncertainty and professional distance; a coping mechanism for managing the complex emotional landscape of prison education. Her remarks highlight that teachers are often on their own, '*you have to come up with your own strategies*' in navigating this complexity.

Resilience in prison education is emphasised as a complex, rhizomatic experience that defies simple definition. Participants' responses describe resilience not as a fixed trait, but as a fluid process of becoming, entangled with the unique assemblage of the prison environment. This understanding challenges the use of the concept resilience as an individual responsibility, instead highlighting the need for system-wide approaches that develop communities of practice and effective support mechanisms.

10.7. Micro-community

Teacher resilience can be enhanced with the wider support of a community within the prison space. Some of the teachers talked about the community they rely on to 'cope', whilst others shared that they had struggled to feel part of a community. Kevan discusses the prison community and how people within it behave differently to the outside world:

'you've got this community buzzing around... that Jo Public never sees...there is something going on all the time, isn't there; alarms going off, people being moved about, people getting their meds. From the moment you get in there, it's bang, bang, bang, bang, you know, you never stop. You don't even get your dinner break, but you can hear that life is going on and it's that micro-community that we have'.

His term '*micro-community*' is interesting, as it reinforces the separation from the outside world. Boundaried by the walls, it is a smaller version of society that operates with its own distinct rules, rhythms, and relationships. This micro-community is hidden from view; when Kevan states it's a community '*that Jo Public never sees*', the '*micro*' prefix takes on additional meaning. It suggests something that operates below the surface of public visibility, like the ant colony (mentioned in the visual matrix: Chapter 9) '*buzzing*' with unseen activity beneath the surface.

This buzzing community quality is further emphasised through Kevan's repetition of the word '*bang*'; while this affective comment initially suggests background noise, his addition of '*you never stop*', links to the affects of constant bureaucratic pressure and the workload demanded of him within this hidden micro-community.

Brian shared how he continues to work in the prison environment because of the community support of colleagues: '*I don't really resist it <shrugs>, you just get used to it, in the end. You just then go, right "sod it" I'll try and find a way around doing it, luckily, we can, because we're... we're a good team, we support each other... if you get frustrated, you'll just go find yourself another job*'. He attributes his resilience to the support of the teacher community to which he belongs. His initial frustration transforms into a collective resilience, displaying the rhizomatic nature of teacher adaptations. The supportive teacher community is shown as a crucial site of micro-resistance, where the frustration and support intertwine. This collective approach enables educators to creatively navigate challenges, deterritorialising institutional constraints and reterritorialising their teaching

spaces in collaborative ways that sustain their professional commitment and efficacy, despite ongoing frustrations.

Within these bounded micro-communities, attempts to develop communities of practice or connections with other prisons or education establishments encounter significant barriers, as Hannah explains:

'I have tried... what it comes down to is the same investment from people might not be there, so it sounds nice, but people don't want to share... it becomes another thing somebody feels like they have to do... a community of practice, I don't know, it sounds brilliant, but I think in reality, it's kind of... an extra thing'.

The isolated nature of each prison, combined with limited internet access and lack of staff commitment, makes it difficult to create connections between establishments. While expanding into broader '*communities of practice... sounds brilliant*', the practical implementation proves challenging within prison constraints. Teachers' reluctance to '*invest*' or '*share*' beyond their immediate micro-community stems from the multitude of competing demands they already face.

This isolation is further expressed by Kevan's observations about '*investment*' and trust-building with learners, affected by prison '*churn*' (prisoners moving to other prisons or being released in a short space of time): '*These lads need so much investment... and trust is built in four to five weeks, isn't it? And then, then you go "bye", if you're lucky to say that, I mean, you're never involved in that person's life again... and that is, that is the difficult part because you do think that, you know, five weeks and they're gone, how much emotion can you invest in that?'*

The transient nature of prison micro-communities creates a particular challenge; while teachers operate within their bounded spaces, the constant flow of learners makes the community itself unstable and in perpetual flux. This instability creates an unsettling paradox for teachers; they must simultaneously adapt to constant change while trying to maintain a sense of community. In response, many turn to their colleagues as the only constant in this shifting landscape. Teachers find themselves caught between their role as supportive educators and the need to emotionally protect themselves from the continuous '*churn*'. This often leads to a complex pattern of emotional investment and withdrawal, where colleague relationships in the '*micro-community*' become the fixed threads in a constantly unravelling fabric. The difficulty of this, as alluded to by Alice in Chapter

8, is that when the relations between teachers are strained, this problem can feel 'big' in the constrained environment where there is no one else to turn to.

10.8. Pedagogy of care

Furthering Hannah's experiences of the prison spaces, she expands the discussion of the complexity to consider the implementation of care as an approach to working in the prison. She informs me that care is needed to nurture change. It is therefore vital to consider the prisoners' previous educational experiences before undertaking any work with them, highlighting a pedagogy of care.

'The individuals that we work with, regardless of any other additional needs, they're in a complex situation as it is, so, there's always going to be some kind of legacy that could impact them accessing education or engaging positively. So, I think that it's having that understanding and, just <pause> you've got to, it could be so easy to kind of just <pause> I don't know, if they didn't have that level of encouragement from you... people always come or present with an issue or something's just gone on, on the wing or they've been unlocked late, so they come across grumpy or whatever, there's always something. I think you've got to persevere through that and engage them... which is care, isn't it?'

Her recognition of the complexity of the prisoner-learners is, I believe, an aspect of prison education that is unexplored: '*people always come or present with an issue or something's just gone on... there's always something*'. This appreciation of the affects created from prior experiences, whether that be from previous education establishments, or incidents that have happened '*on the wing*', highlights the importance for teachers to '*persevere through that*'. Her statement affectively highlights what remains unspoken: '*it could be so easy to kind of just <pause>*', connecting to Kevan's previous question: '*how much emotion can you invest in that?*' Both participants acknowledge that for some teachers it is easier not to invest, either emotionally or cognitively.

As discussed in Chapter 2, education departments are often described as an 'oasis' (Behan, 2014, p. 24) for prisoners. The classroom creates a temporality where learning occurs outside the harsh affects of prison, though prior experiences may still haunt the atmosphere despite teachers' efforts to create different dynamics. Hannah confirms this: '*Prison education departments in most prisons, don't feel like prison*'. This distinction stems from different affective intensities; Crewe *et al.* (2014)

suggest education spaces are softer due to nurturing aspects traditionally associated with female influence. However, this gendered interpretation is contested by male teachers like Kevan and Brian, whose pedagogy of care challenges the masculine prison hegemony. Brian exemplifies how affective labour can be central to a teaching approach grounded in care and relationality.

'It's a careful, how to find out how a person is, or how he is as a person, you know to find their personalities... I have a bit of banter and then they understand we can have a laugh and a joke, and it's not serious. So then, you can ask them questions... then you can bring their life into things. I mean, because most the time you end up doing counselling there anyway. Because sometimes they've got nobody else to talk to... you're not a prisoner, you're not a prison officer, you're somebody completely different they can talk to'.

He positions himself as a supportive teacher, distinct from prison officers, he recognises a difference in the roles. His acknowledgement that teachers *'end up doing counselling there anyway'* suggests a commitment to the wider role of the teacher, who cares beyond the prisoners' educational needs. His comment, *'bring their life into things'*, humanises the experience and allows him to show both *his* vulnerability and what Crewe *et. al.* (2014) described as *'feminine' care*.

Kevan draws on his own negative educational experiences to empathise with and better support his incarcerated learners: *'The reason I wanted to do maths was because that was something I was told I couldn't do. And that I was stupid, and all those things... I just didn't have somebody who cared enough to show me, to push me and encourage me to learn it'*. His vulnerability becomes pedagogical strength, demonstrating how past negative affects can be transformed into nurturing teaching practices. This personal affective history shapes the assemblage and Kevan's response to vulnerability in others. However, he found that this approach did not align with the behaviourist prison approach and contractual obligations which, as discussed earlier prioritised *'tick boxes'* over relations and care.

10.9. The joy of prison teaching

Despite many difficult experiences in prison education, it was clear that teacher-participants also wanted to portray their positive experiences and the joy they gained from working with prisoners.

Therefore, I am concluding this chapter with the teacher experiences which demonstrate these affects.

Brian explains that prison work '*can be really enjoyable*', in contrast to the dichotomy that it is a difficult space to work in, the phrasing of this suggests it is a surprise to those on the outside that the job and the space *can* be enjoyed. He shares that the enjoyment comes from seeing the prisoners have '*lightbulb moments*' or seeing them gaining qualifications, which gives him a sense of fulfilment that he has '*made a difference*'. He also shares that there is reciprocity in the experience: '*you'll learn so much*'. The mutual learning experience challenges the traditional power dynamics associated with prison settings.

Kevan is insistent that he loved his role: '*I love my job... I absolutely love my job*'. Interestingly his more-than-human classroom door features as an agent when he describes the experience: '*When I shut that classroom door, it's just me and the lads*', in a similar way to Beauchamp (2010) previously discussed in Chapter 2; this suggests that the classroom can be a refuge not only for prisoners but also for teachers. The closure of the door allows them to focus on the relations with learners, rather than wider affective intensity of the prison and the demands of contractual obligations.

Hannah also sees the value of connection through '*perseverance... working with people*', she can realise what is achievable. In a pragmatic approach, she sees the limitations and warns of the need to be '*realistic*'. Her hesitancy reflects the complications of the prison; '*we can't, ... we're not gonna be able to change the infrastructure*'. That said, Hannah is keen to point out that '*fantastic*' outcomes have been achieved despite the restrictions. But the measurement of what teachers believe is '*fantastic*', is misaligned to the prison's expectations, as teachers value the holistic impact they make over the completion of qualifications (Szifris, Fox and Bradbury, 2018).

Hannah has worked in multiple prison estates teaching family programmes, PSD (Personal and Social Development) and arts-based programmes for over fifteen years. I was struck by her realism towards prison experiences. She is honest in her appreciation of what is possible, yet clear that she does not want to paint an unrealistic picture of prison education experience: '*I sound like I've had brilliant days, day in, day out and I haven't*'. She is proud of the work she has achieved to '*push boundaries to make new things happen*', repeating this phrase several times in her interview. By continually repeating this ability, Hannah is engaging in a form of micropolitics, attempting to convince herself as she aims to deterritorialise the rigid structures of the prison system, often

resistant to transformation. Hannah's words *'make new things happen'* therefore reflect both the challenges and the persistent *hope* inherent in prison education work.

Hannah acknowledges that she likes the *'challenge of bringing in new opportunities'* and encouraging those staff that have *'got their own ways of working'*. This links to the previously discussed cohort of teachers who may be hesitant to change and in Brian's words, are *'stuck'*. The prison, as a disciplinary institution, exerts a *'normalising force'* on prisoners and staff, creating what Foucault might term *'docile bodies'* (1991). Hannah's drive to introduce change serves as a counter-discourse to the institution's normalising power.

Evelyn reiterates this hope and possibility, identifying what it is that keeps her in the role of prison teacher, she believes the relationships she creates with prisoners is *'the most fulfilling'* aspect of her work, but she goes on to share that not all staff work in the same way:

'I'm always trying to do this, whether it's informally or through teaching, trying to lift people up, trying to help them see the world. Some, not all, don't see it like this, but this darkness, you know, that seems to be around quite a lot of them. I don't feel it myself... I see the light, you know, I'm a very spiritual person. And knowingly or unwittingly, I seem to, you know, spread the light really. And that's the way I see my time here, doing a lot of good... and there are days where people are not so nice, but in the main, that's what I carry around with me.'

The *'darkness'* that she refers to may have manifested due to the affective environment of the prison-education-machine, linking to previous comments on the visual matrix map about light/dark. Her phrase suggests an encompassing quality *'around quite a lot of them'*, positioning darkness as an atmospheric affect that surrounds and potentially infiltrates the space. She expresses, *'I see the light'* and suggests that she can *'spread the light'*, in an almost evangelical approach to the role of teacher. While well-intentioned, this light-bringer and saviour mentality may risk placing undue emphasis on the teacher's role. From a Deleuzian view, rather than seeing light and darkness as opposites, teachers might better understand them as varying intensities of affect within the prison education space.

She refers to *'my time here'* as though it is a prison sentence; this linguistic parallel subtly shares the experience of confinement that teachers experience in becoming-prisoner. Despite acknowledging that she works with individuals who are *'not so nice'*, a euphemism that may refer to both

challenging prisoners and disillusioned teacher colleagues, Evelyn '*carries*' a positivity and hopefulness; her conscious effort to maintain and spread positivity represents a form of affective labour that seeks to reconfigure the emotional landscape of the prison-education assemblage.

The joy of teaching in the prison, as described in this section, highlights the complex affective landscape of the space. Despite challenges and restrictions, these teachers still find joy and fulfilment in their work. However, their experiences reveal a tension between institutional constraints and personal agency. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, the deterritorialisation of the spaces has created lines of flight that these teachers cling onto and maintain. The teachers' emphasis on relationships, mutual learning, and bringing '*new opportunities*' demonstrates their role as activists within a rigid system. Ultimately, the teachers' persistent hope and enjoyment, in the face of difficulties, highlights the potentiality of education in the prison environment.

10.10. Unfoldings of the one-to-one interviews

This chapter has revealed the complex assemblage of the prison-education-machine through the affective experiences of teacher-participants. Their narratives unfold the multilayered nature of teaching within carceral spaces; where paradoxes, affective loads, and machinic elements continuously intertwine and transform. Teachers navigate this complexity by developing mechanisms of resilience, creating micro-communities, and embracing pedagogies of care despite institutional constraints. The unfolding of teacher experiences reveals both the challenges and potentialities of prison education. While teachers experience microshocks, after-effects, and the weight of trauma, they simultaneously create lines of flight through relational connections and moments of joy. This diffractive analysis uncovers how teachers continuously deterritorialise and reterritorialise their practice within the rigid structures of the prison environment. The unfolding of these experiences contributes to understanding the rhizomatic nature of prison education, where affects flow through bodies, spaces, and materialities, creating both constraints and possibilities for transformation.

Chapter 11: Personal memo analysis

11.1. Introduction

These personal memos span from 2021 to 2025, beginning within the first few months of my employment as prison manager and continuing through my transition to leaving the role and completing this thesis. While the earliest memos predate the formal commencement of my research study, the later ones coincide with my inquiry and analysis phases.

Initially, these memos were not created with the explicit intention of relating to this inquiry but served as a personal reflexive aid; to document my feelings and disentangle the paradoxical encounters and moral dilemmas I faced in my professional role. Only later in the inquiry process did I recognise their significance as *da-næuds-ta* (conceptualised in Chapter 6). This recognition led me to appreciate how my experiences are entangled with those of the participants, revealing not separate data to be triangulated but rather demonstrating their inseparability. The memos therefore represent intertwined expressions of phenomena that are difficult to understand in isolation, providing valuable context that bridges my professional experience with the research conducted for this thesis.

The memos demonstrate intra-actions between me, participants, prisoners and the prison space generating a 'plugging in' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 8), revealing how meaning is created not from isolated entities but through their dynamic, ongoing relationships and mutual constitutions within this institutional space. As discussed in Chapter 2, researchers working with sensitive topics like prison experiences, inevitably encounter difficulties separating their own agency from the research process. Following Liebling's (1999) assertion that these *affects* should be central, rather than peripheral to analysis, my personal memos function as affective elements which, as Jewkes (2014) suggests, enrich the research.

Beneath each memo, I analyse the intricate entanglements with participants and prison experiences, diffracting these observations through theoretical and philosophical frameworks established in the earlier chapters. Some of the memos were voice recorded as I drove home from the prison each night, these have then been transcribed verbatim. However, most of the memos were handwritten in journals, kept with me as I traversed the space. For clarity and analysis, I extract key excerpts from the handwritten documents while maintaining their connection to the original material artefacts.

11.2. Memos from working inside the prison

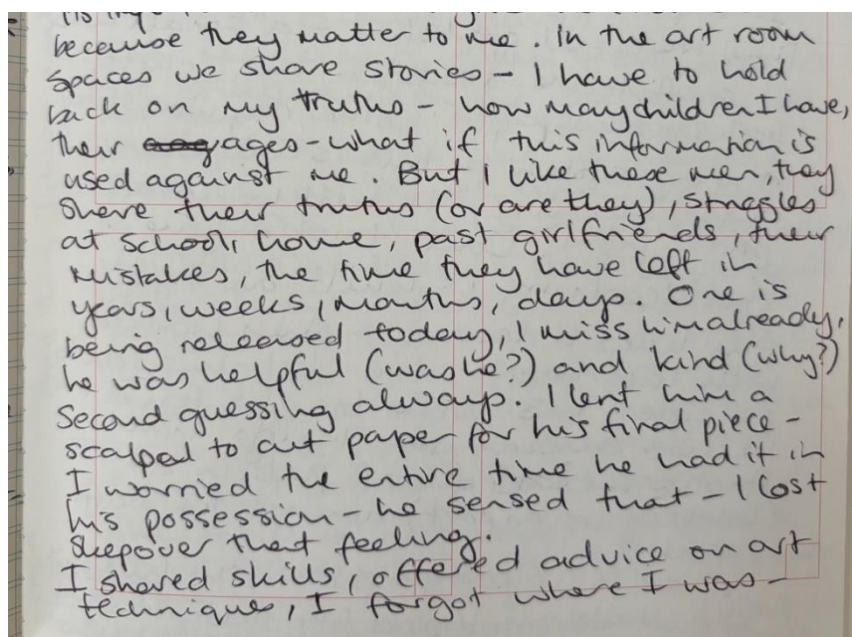


Figure 43: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook, Nov 2021.

In this first excerpt, I was covering lessons for the art teacher who had been signed off work due to anxiety. I found comfort in the art room, where I could be creative, 'share skills' and 'forget where I was'. This resonates with teacher-participants' experiences where many would forget they were in prison whilst teaching. The memo reminds me of the complexity of the space; the paradoxical feelings of being both friends with the prisoners whilst also remaining highly suspicious of their intentions and activities; 'One is being released today; I miss him already; he was helpful (was he?) and kind (why?)'. My use of multiple questions aligns with the participants use of questions such as Donald asking, 'They are always capable, aren't they?'; thus, reflecting the constant sense of unease and uncertainty in the prison environment. This recognition relates to Evelyn's prior assertion that the prison may have changed her personality to be more aware of people manipulating her. My notes suggest a similar affect; I am aware of the threat-potential, particularly when a learner is using a scalpel blade: 'I worried the entire time he had it in his possession- he sensed that- I lost sleep over that feeling'. The lost sleep indicates an embodied affect due to the misalignment with my values and the relations I wanted to cultivate in education spaces; an affect that may also be felt by others working in prisons.

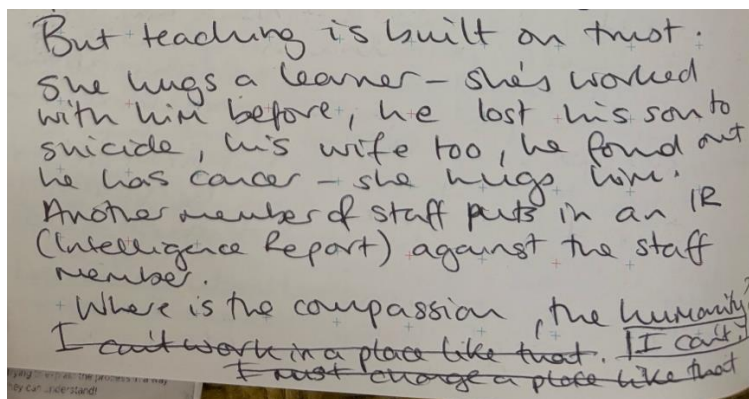


Figure 44: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. Dec 2021.

This memo signifies a pivotal moment for me and reflects the emotional tensions experienced by many prison teachers. It was certainly one of the aspects which contributed to my departure from working in the role of prison education manager. This experience revealed to me the indifference displayed by some prison staff, which seemed to exist either despite or perhaps because of the traumas they had wit(h)nessed in that environment (Ettinger, 2001). I saw a teacher-colleague hug a distressed prisoner after finding out his son had committed suicide, knowing he had previously lost his wife, and that he was suffering from cancer, all whilst being incarcerated. Under my ethico-ontopistemology (Barad, 2007), the hug represented not just personal compassion but exemplified the affective labour prison educators perform daily, navigating between institutional protocols and human needs, despite breaking prison protocol and potentially risking repercussions for both teacher and prisoner (as previously outlined by Meyer, 2024 in Chapter 2).

My memo documents that a fellow teacher had filed an IR (Intelligence Report) on this matter, which required me to explain the situation to my prison employed superiors. Fortunately, they agreed with my position, resulting in no reprimand for the teacher who had given the hug, or the prisoner who had received it. My question 'where is the compassion, the humanity?' resonates beyond my personal reaction, capturing the collective emotional burden carried by prison educators who witness suffering while operating within restrictive institutional frameworks. The tears I still shed when re-reading this, reflect the shared affective experience reported by many educators in this environment who struggle with similar ethical dilemmas. The crossed-out section: ~~'I can't work in a place like that. I must change a place like that. I can't'~~, encapsulates the affective paradox experienced by many prison educators: the simultaneous desire to transform an emotionally demanding environment and the recognition of institutional constraints that limit such

transformation. This incident illuminates how prison educators collectively navigate the tension between institutional rules (exemplified by the colleague who filed the report) and a pedagogy of care (demonstrated by the teacher who offered the hug), a central tension that emerged repeatedly in interviews with other prison educators in this inquiry.

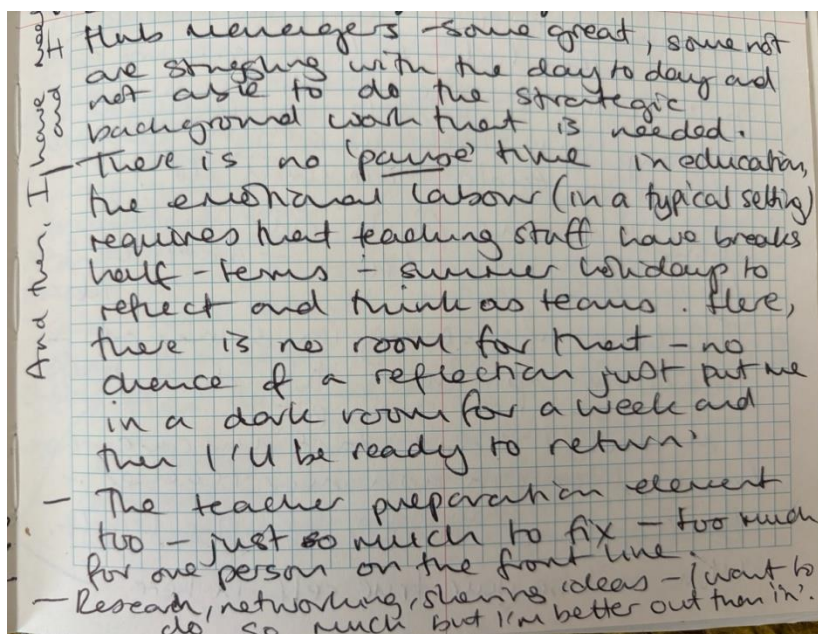


Figure 45: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. Jan 2022.

This recollection highlights how difficult it was for both me and the team of 'hub managers' (department leads) under my supervision to allocate time for the essential 'strategic background work that is needed'. This was largely due to the monetised aspect of prison contracts and the 'churn' of prisoners who arrive and leave on short-term sentences. The prison education department does not run on a standard academic year, but instead (as previously discussed in Chapter 1) runs throughout the year, even teaching on Christmas Eve. This means 'there is no pause', and unlike in mainstream teaching, where teachers get breaks each half term, these teachers and managers just keep working the prison-education-machine.

I reiterate how this impacts on reflection time: 'Here, there is no room for that, no chance of reflection'; such a crucial element to teacher development and pedagogy. The phrase 'just put me in a dark room for a week and then I'll be ready to return', showcases the overwhelm teachers may feel due to the constant repetition of demands. If teachers were to book holidays, or have time off due to illness, it impacted the prison-education-machine massively, as unlike in mainstream, the security restrictions meant 'cover' by supply teachers was not possible. This meant classes had to be

cancelled, leading to an additional burden and guilt for the teachers who desperately needed that time away from the space. This was evidenced in Claire's responses during the walking intra-views (Chapter 8) when she highlighted the guilt she felt leaving prisoners.

5/7/22
 I'm feeling more annoyed today with the gates and restrictions - I just want to get from A → B but there are so many doors + locks - then a reminder that each unopened door cost £20,000 in fines. That weight + the physical weight, the metaphorical weight.

6/7/22
 I didn't get a chance for a toilet break or lunch today - it dawned on me that the prisoners were probably having a more positive experience than me today.

7/7/22
 I had an interview today, a day off - feel like I'm on day release from the prison - at like it's always there, time I'm always only get thinking of those I'm leaving behind. Teachers and learners. My line manager 2 years ago. thinks the reason I'm struggling is because I care - I care about the teachers when I asked to

Figure 46: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. July 2022.

As my time working in the prison progressed, my memos documented further frustrations of the prison constraints, highlighting a becoming-prisoner experience: 'I want to get from A---B but there are so many doors and locks'. Not only were the doors a physical restriction, but they also signified the prison's power and surveillance as I recall the threat of a £20,000 fine if we were to forget to lock one: 'that weight, the physical weight, the metaphorical weight'. Thus, the gates, doors, locks and keys all become more-than-human agents of control, not only for prisoners but for the staff as well.

My experience in the prison began manifesting as collective affective exhaustion that many prison educators report; I recall increasingly feeling imprisoned each day: 'I didn't get a chance for a toilet break or lunch today, it dawned on me that the prisoners are probably having a more positive experience than me'. In hindsight, I recognise the problematic nature of this comparison and acknowledge the vast differences between my situation and that of the prisoners, who lacked the freedoms teachers possess. However, this reflection highlights the affective dissonance experienced

by many prison educators, where the emotional toll of working within carceral systems creates unexpected parallels between vastly different positions of power, privilege and agency. These feelings of resentment stemmed not only from physical restrictions but also from contractual demands that prevented me from taking breaks as I was forced to focus on the metric outputs of the prison-education-machine. This tension between care-full teaching and metric production became a shared affective reality among the teaching staff. The latter part of the memo confirms the becoming-prisoner as I recall leaving the space for a day and feeling 'like I am on day-release from the prison'. The entry reveals the emotional haunting that educators may experience, as I felt guilt even for a single day's absence; 'it's always there, like I'm always thinking of those I'm leaving behind'.

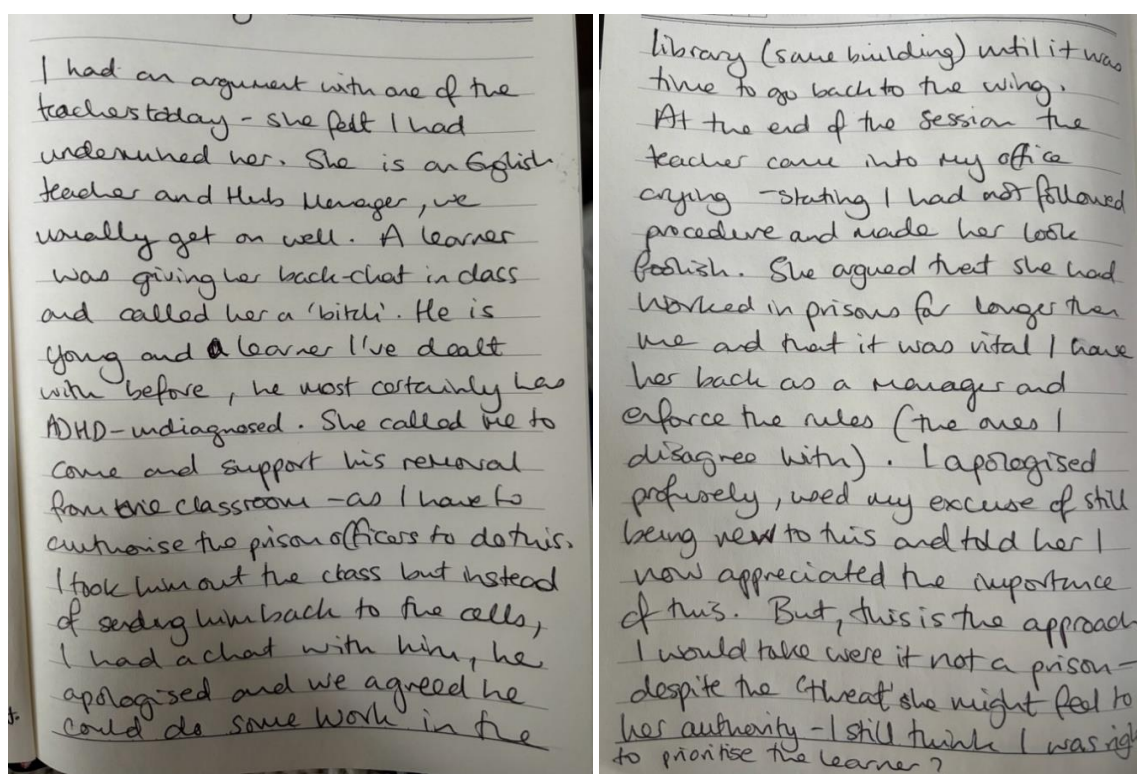


Figure 47: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. May 2022.

The incident shared in the memo above signifies the personal breaking point of my endurance; exemplifying the affective threshold many prison educators reach when navigating institutional demands that conflict with their pedagogical values (as discussed with Kevan's experiences in Chapter 10). This incident shows the intersubjective dimension of prison education, where different educators' affective responses to behavioural challenges reveal conflicting approaches. My decision

to help a learner self-regulate rather than enforcing punitive measures exposed the tension between care-based and control-based educational philosophies that permeates prison education systems.

While I acknowledged the learner's violation of classroom norms (calling a teacher a '*bitch*'), my ethico-onto-epistemological stance (Barad, 2007) enabled me to see the entangled assemblage of factors: his educational history, the disruption of teacher continuity, potential neurodivergence and trauma histories. This appreciation of multiplicities wasn't merely personal preference but reflected the theoretical orientation of this research, seeing prisoner-learners through a relational rather than reductive lens. This also aligns to Kevan's (see Chapter 10) earlier described stance of showing the prisoner-learners that someone cares, rather than responding with sanctions. What affected me most profoundly in this situation was navigating the complex dynamics between pedagogical care and institutional expectations. When I chose not to enforce behaviourist prison rules during an incident, I experienced my colleague's sense of vulnerability, she felt I hadn't '*had her back*'. This moment revealed how prison educators develop collective affective norms balancing institutional compliance with care ethics. I realised that while prioritising the prisoner as learner, I had inadvertently left my colleague feeling exposed within the carceral power structure. The emotional labour of reconciling these competing responsibilities uncovered the deeply entrenched carceral logic that structures not just prisoner experience but educator subjectivities as well. It was this approach, the expectation of treating the 'lads' as prisoners first and learners second, which I could not sustain, revealing the central tension explored throughout the thesis; how educators navigate the affective demands of working within systems that often contradict pedagogical values and ethics of care.

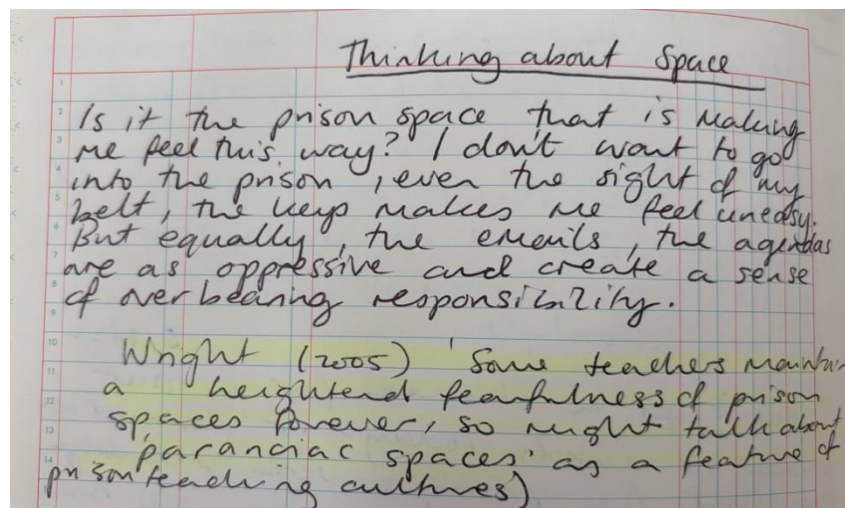


Figure 48: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. June 2022.

This memo above is fraught with the affects of the space educators inhabit, through its associated ephemera: *'even the sight of my belt, the keys makes me feel uneasy'*, these more-than-human agents created an *'unease'* which permeates educator bodies as mentioned in interviews with Claire and Evelyn (Chapter 8 and 10). The parallel between material objects (*'belt, keys'*) and administrative demands (*'emails and agendas'*) which created *'a sense of overbearing responsibility'* illustrates how institutional control manifests affectively across multiple dimensions, a phenomenon central to understanding how prison educators collectively negotiate their professional identities within carceral spaces. The threat-potential I carried with me through the weight of the belt, keys, and radio highlights how prison education is fundamentally an affective endeavour where educators' bodies become sites of institutional power where pedagogical aspirations conflict.

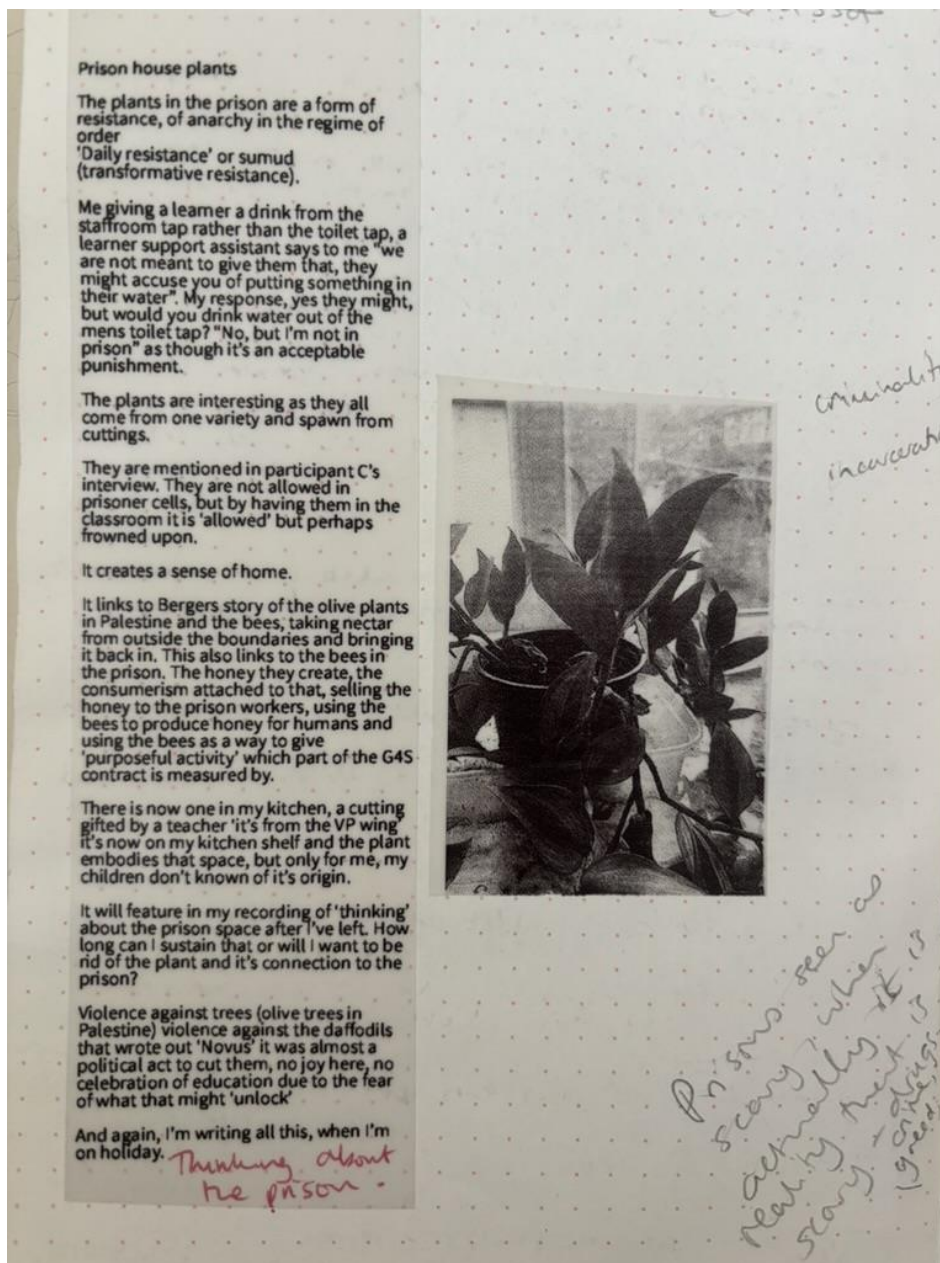


Figure 49: Personal Memo. Phone note. June 2022.

The entry above, recorded when on leave from the prison, uncovers the porous nature of the prison affects. The plant on my kitchen windowsill; propagated inside the prison, represents the material manifestation of how prison affects can permeate educators' lives beyond the carceral space. This cutting belonged to the same plant species used in Claire's classroom to 'soften the bars' (as discussed in Chapter 8). The shifting affective resonance of this plant, from prison reminder to domestic companion, demonstrates the fluid, temporal nature of affective experiences that characterises the emotional labour of prison education. Its transformation mirrors the way many

teacher-participants described their evolving relationship with prison spaces: initially overwhelming but gradually reframed through small acts of reclaiming a space.

Another extract from the same memo reminds me of the un-caring nature of some prison teaching staff. This experience, in a similar way to the prior experience of the 'hug', highlights the inhumanity that was often present. When a prisoner-learner knocked on the staffroom door to ask if I could fill his plastic cup with water, I proceeded without hesitation to fill the cup. However, a teaching and learning assistant (TLA) present in the staffroom stated, *'we are not meant to give them that, they might accuse you of putting something in it'*. The only alternative however, to asking for a re-fill from staff, was to fill the cup from taps in the men's toilet. I therefore responded to the TLA with *'Yes, they might, but would you drink water out of the men's toilet tap?'* and her response, which saddened me, was *'No, but I'm not in prison!'* While I acknowledge the water from the men's toilets is the same, the contrast between the prisoner's request for basic humanity and the TLA's institutional response highlights my desire for a relational approach to working with prisoner learners.

This institutional logic in the TLA's response shows how some educational staff normalised dehumanisation, with punishment extending beyond the deprivation of liberty to include the denial of basic human needs. The teachers interviewed in this inquiry, however, were largely trying to work against this mindset and culture of punishment in a rhizomatic way (as explained in chapter 4). My minor gestures (such as providing the water) and the minor gestures of the teachers created lines of flight from the dominant carceral assemblage.

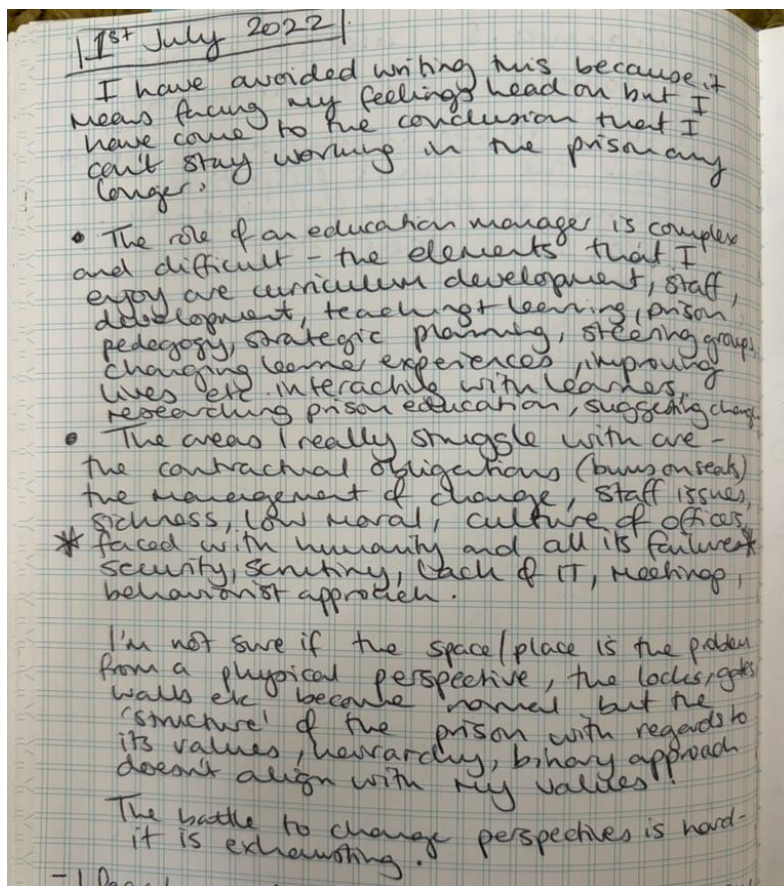


Figure 50: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. July 2022.

This journal entry provides a raw, unfiltered account of how the prison's dehumanising culture affects not just the incarcerated individuals but also the staff trying to facilitate education. As I recognised my inability to change the culture and institutional mindset, I had made the decision to leave. My reflections clearly articulate the tension between the aspects of my role I found fulfilling, such as the curriculum development, interaction with prisoners, teaching, and staff development, and the overwhelming institutional barriers I faced daily. The prison's rigid hierarchical structure and binary approaches fundamentally clash with most educators' educational values and philosophies. I found myself continuously confronting 'humanity and all its failures', from security measures to the behaviourist approaches that dominated the culture. I had acknowledged here that 'The battle to change perspectives is hard; it is exhausting' but I had not yet realised just how futile and unrealistic my efforts were.

It grew increasingly apparent that the problems existed well beyond the physical boundaries of 'locks, gates, walls'; the entire structure of the prison system contradicted my core beliefs about education and humanity. Despite my attempts to create meaningful educational experiences, I was

constantly undermined by contractual obligations, staff shortages, and the pervasive culture. The emotional toll of attempting to maintain humanistic educational practices within a punitive system ultimately became untenable. This exhaustion from battling entrenched perspectives represents not only my personal fatigue but illuminates the collective affective burden carried by prison educators, whose testimonies revealed similar emotional costs (Chapters 8 and 10) of attempting to maintain pedagogical integrity within systems designed for control rather than transformation.

11.3. Dreamscapes and Hauntings: The Affective Persistence of Prison Beyond Its Walls

In the liminal space between presence and absence, my unconscious mind began anticipating my departure through dreams of leaving during my final weeks working in the prison. After my physical departure, these visions persisted as affective residue, continuing to process the separation. The unconscious manifestations that emerged during this transitional period represent more than just psychological processing; they embody what could be understood as affective border-crossings, where the boundaries between institutional and personal identity become permeable, allowing the carceral experience to transgress established thresholds of space and time.

My dreamscapes became sites of transgression where the prison continued to assert its affective dominance, challenging the notion that leaving the physical space enabled complete separation from its influence. My dreams reveal how deeply the prison's temporal rhythms, power dynamics, and threat-potentials continue to haunt outside of the space, creating 'sticky' affects (Ahmed, 2004) that refuse to be contained by institutional boundaries or conventional understandings of professional detachment.

Reflection/dream/Echo

- I woke this morning thinking about the prison.
- I had dreams about it:
 - In the dream: I was asking the prison for training before I left on something to do with detaining a prisoner in a cell.
 - The cell they were using was entirely made of bars. The people involved were managers and officers showing how to use force effectively, on an officer pretending to be a prisoner, with tattoos on his back depicting areas of the back where force is effective.
 - The main trainer then used his radio to give a call sign that the 'prisoner' was detained and to release the locks of the cell but this was misconstrued and the prison went into lockdown down with sirens and lights flashing. I then woke.

Figure 51: Personal Memo. Phone note. July 2022.

The memo above, entitled '*Reflection/dream/Echo*' reveals how my unconscious mind was engaging with my significant transition before my conscious awareness could fully process it. In the dream, I sought training on detaining prisoners before leaving, suggesting my unconscious was processing the impact of violent occurrences I witnessed as well as unfinished aspects of my role. The managers and officers in charge of this dream-scenario reminded me how the prison power had overruled my attempts at assisting prisoners to gain dignity through educational endeavours. The cell made entirely of bars, highlighted these material barriers as signifiers of restraint, making me feel simultaneously confined and exposed; still subject to the institutional gaze, highlighting my struggle to maintain my educational identity within these rigid yet penetrable boundaries.

The dream's focus on '*how to use force effectively*' connected to my feelings of inhumanity in the prison, governed by the prison rules as was indicated by the '*tattoos*'. This reflects not just my personal ambivalence, but mirrors tensions described by multiple teacher-participants who simultaneously resisted being implicated in systems of control. The dream's conclusion, where miscommunication led to '*lockdown with sirens and lights flashing*', suggests both my anxiety related to the threat-potential in the prison but also about leaving the space; I was concerned my departure

would be misconstrued as me leaving because of the 'lads' rather than the structural barriers. This dichotomy, however, fails to capture the complex affective landscape inhabited by prison teachers who simultaneously care for learners while critiquing the environments that constrain both parties.

This unconscious processing created a transitional space through my dreams; a psychological buffer where I could process my leaving before the event occurred. This experience resonates with the visual matrix methodology's foundations in social dreaming (explained in chapter 7), suggesting that prison educators' affective experiences cannot be fully captured through rational discourse alone.

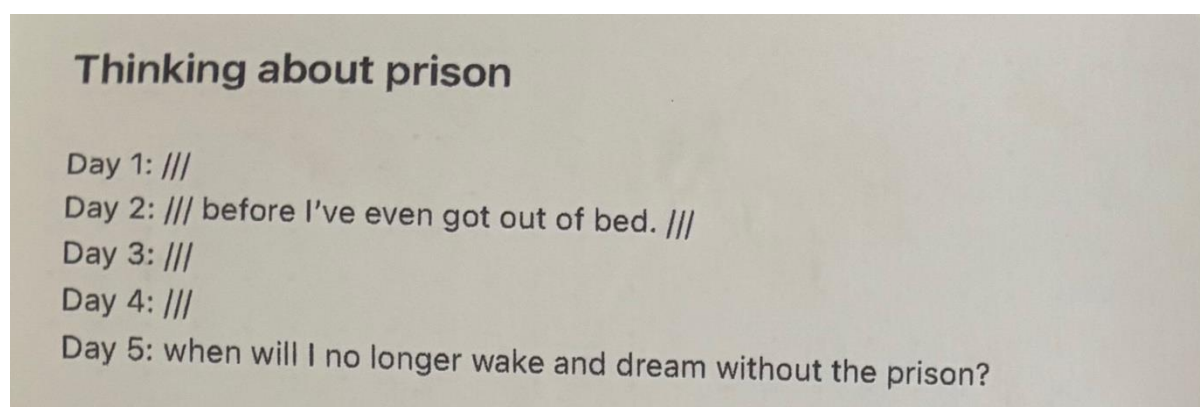


Figure 52: Personal Memo. Phone notes. Aug 2022.

Immediately after leaving the prison, I found it too difficult to write anything substantial in my journal; unable to articulate the complexity of my feelings yet compelled to record their presence. I therefore simply recorded how many times I was '*thinking about prison*'; through the prison associated practice of tallying, I was both marking the passage of time as prisoners might on their cell walls, whilst also, inadvertently, reproducing the very quantification methods that had characterised the prison-education-machine I had resisted. This notation '///' tracking how I had considered the prison three times daily, reveals not just personal preoccupation but exemplifies the affects that cling to professional identities long after physical departure.

My attempt at un-becoming-prisoner reflects the complex process of affective disentanglement that teacher-participants described when discussing transitions away from the prison. I couldn't control when or how frequently the prison entered my mind. Particularly revealing is my notation on day two: '*/// before I've even got out of bed. ///*'. This suggests the prison's affective resonance was strongest during liminal states between sleep and wakefulness, when my conscious defences were

lowered. The question on day five: 'when will I no longer wake and dream without the prison?' marks not just my personal temporal anxiety but surfaces a central question in understanding the permanence of institutional affects. This persistent affective resonance demonstrates how prison education environments produce not just temporary emotional responses but fundamentally reshape educators' affective architectures in ways that continue to reverberate long after physical departure.

3/9/22
Reflective thoughts.
I haven't written in here for a while, since leaving the prison 10 days ago. It feels like the first day. I can come back to this, to process the feelings I've been having and to force myself to acknowledge it all.
I've been in a bit of a daze, a denial maybe? I've closed myself off from what was, but also feel an immense guilt at how easy that was to do.
I've been thinking about the people ^{and} prisoners daily, every evening and every morning.
It's almost like a dirty secret, as though I've been 'in prison' myself and just want to forget about it but for the sake of the research I am forced to return to it.
I have had a mental block in doing anything to do with the research and feel perhaps it taking me to a 'dark place'.
But today I feel ready to tackle it again, the distance is now there but it is still close, in my subconscious, being played out as I work through the messiness of it all.

Figure 53: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. Sept 2022.

The affective impact preserved in the above personal memo, reflects the complexity of emotions that I felt on leaving the prison and may reflect experiences of prison educators' transitions. The inability to return to the journal signified a psychological disruption that can be described as an institutional withdrawal, aligning with Justine's comments in the Visual Matrix, when she noted that the sounds of the space made her feel 'like PTSD almost' (Chapter 9). As I wrote ten days after leaving: 'I've been in a bit of a daze, a denial maybe? I've closed myself off from what was, but also

feel an immense guilt, at how easy that was to do'. This conscious acknowledgment of guilt after a period of avoidance illustrates how prison educators often embody a tension between institutional escape and continued responsibility toward those left behind.

My journal reveals a tension: *'It's almost like a dirty secret, as though I've been 'in prison' myself and just want to forget about it. But for the sake of the research, I am forced to return to it'*. This reflects where the boundaries between educator and institution become porous through material-discursive practices that transform both parties. The prison wasn't simply an environment I occupied but became constitutive of my professional and affective identity.

The reference to *'the messiness of it all'* reinforces the entangled nature of experience and Barad's (2007) notion that separation is never complete; we remain entangled with past experiences through ongoing material-discursive intra-actions. This messiness itself becomes *da-næuds-ta*, revealing how prison education environments produce lasting affective imprints that continue to shape subjectivities.

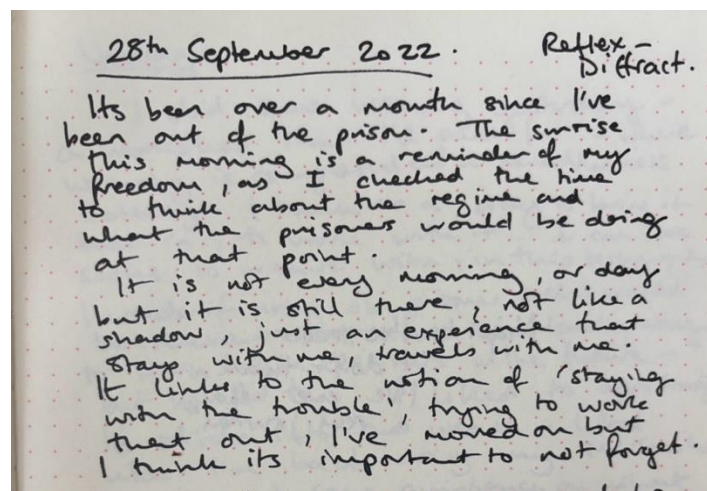


Figure 54: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. Sept 2022.

The haunting of the prison is evidently continued in the above memo, written one month after I left. The 'sunrise' serves as a temporal reminder as I *'checked the time to think about the regime and what the prisoners would be doing at that point'*. The temporal structuring that permeated my experience within the prison took a considerable time to fade, evidence that educators' body-clocks and routines are being governed by the prison regime. Even one month after departing, my body remained aligned with these institutional rhythms. The affects at this point were dissipating: *'it's not every morning, or day, but it's still there... it travels with me'*. However, my body was telling me that

it was important not to forget; I use Haraway's (2016) words 'staying with the trouble', embracing the reminders. I recognise how easily it would be to turn my back on the experience and bury the affects, yet the dreams and embodied hauntings are reminders of the wider systemic failures in prison education and a call to action.

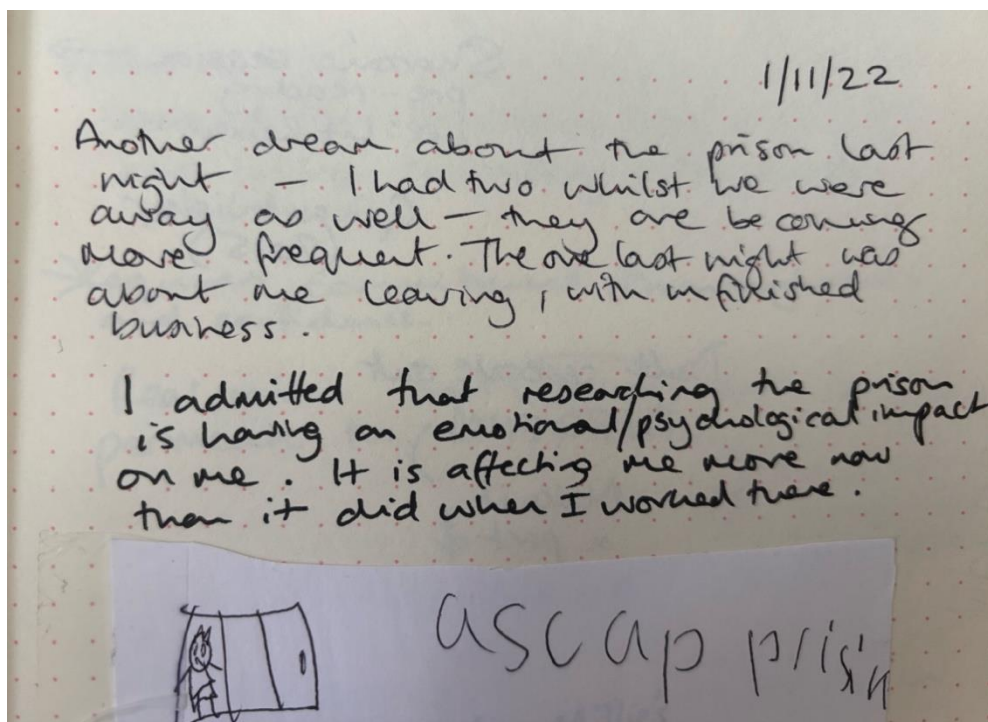


Figure 55: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. Nov 2022.

This memo, written four months after my departure, highlights how my recurring dreams increased in frequency despite my physical distance from the space; 'Another dream about the prison last night... they are becoming more frequent'. I had planned to return to the prison as part of the research undertaking to conduct one-to-one interviews, and this was playing on my mind. The dream about 'leaving with unfinished business', points to the lingering responsibility I felt toward the prison community and the guilt for leaving.

As I was analysing the participant transcripts, with distance now between us, the comments and experiences were hitting harder. I was now able to see the experiences with a different lens, appreciating the magnitude and absurdity of some situations. The memo explicitly acknowledges this intensification: 'I admitted that researching the prison is having an emotional/psychological impact on me. It is affecting me more now than it did when I worked there'. While the research

process appears to have contributed to the affective dimensions of my prison experience, potentially manifesting as vicarious trauma as I re-engaged with difficult narratives, I recognise that other factors may also have influenced this shift in perspective. The analysis process likely accelerated or furthered the affects that might have occurred differently, or perhaps to a lesser extent, without this intimate engagement with other prison educator's experiences.

The image included in this memo features my six-year-old daughter's drawing with 'escaped prison' written beside a sketch that, despite its simplicity, captures the essential elements of incarceration. What struck me most powerfully was her deliberate inclusion of cell bars and a lock; carefully drawn to convey incarceration. I worried that her play-acting revealed underlying fears about my safety, as public perceptions of prisons as dangerous places, with the threat of escapes, had clearly affected her young mind.

My daughter created over ten identical drawings displayed as posters and front page news stories. This was a moment of profound revelation, as her repetitious act resonated with my own repetitious hauntings of prisons. I was overwhelmed with emotion, a complex wave of realisation and guilt washing over me. In her innocent play, where she cast me as the prison officer while she embodied the escaped prisoner, I witnessed how the emotional weight of my work had crossed the threshold of our home. These weren't random scribbles, they were evidence of her processing the reality of my work, a world she was curious about but could never visit.

As we played, our embrace when I 'captured' her, reminded me of elements of care and the acts of attention seeking that many prisoners utilise to feel that human connection. Thus, relating back to the previous memo of the 'hug' with a prisoner, our mother-daughter hugs were both contradictory and revealing, highlighting the complex interplay between constraint and care that exists in both worlds (further correlations between prisons and my role of mother are discussed in Chapter XY).

The re-turning to the prison in March 2023 for the one-to-one interviews has been previously discussed in Chapter 7. The memo shared there indicates how the re-entry into prison in a research capacity gave me closure, preventing my imagination from creating unrealistic interpretations of what I thought it was like versus the reality. This phenomenon was also present for Claire, as she shared how she would worry about returning after having a week off, but once she was back, she remembered that *'it's not that scary'*. These parallel experiences show how the mind can amplify threats and anxieties when physically distant from the material realities of the environment. My

personal note (figure 21) captures this visceral dimension through descriptions of 'sleepless, dream filled nights', and 'stomach in knots', as well as the need for 'deep, conscious, grounding breaths' before re-entry. Yet both accounts share that moment of recalibration upon return, when the imagined prison gives way to the relational experience of being present within its walls.

11.4. Buried memories

This final memo below has been written recently, although has been carried with me for a while, only surfacing through the writing of the thesis discussions chapter:

I have avoided acknowledging this experience so far - now almost three years ago, I was almost embarrassed by the incident, as it challenged my authoritative power - and my ability to be ~~not~~ resilient.

Whilst walking the 'twos' (slang for the top level of a wing) in education, to get prisoner-learners back into their classrooms. I was confronted by a learner, in fact I was surrounded by three learners (male prisoners) all young, perhaps early 20's. I recall I was wearing a suit, as I often did, to indicate my managerial status in the prison (perhaps a form of protection), I was joking with the prisoners to encourage them back to class when one of them started to (~~just~~ jokingly?) challenge me - he then ~~pretend~~ pretended to punch me, his fist speeding towards my face, stopping what felt like millimetres before me. ~~They the + learner~~ They laughed - I said 'that's not funny' and they went back to their classrooms. I went downstairs and back to my duties, not speaking of the incident to anyone. In hindsight, I should have reported him. In hindsight maybe it was 'the lads' that contributed to me leaving, but I didn't want to admit that.

vaping or the was common

Figure 56: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. Mar 2025.

This memo recollects an experience of me in my authoritative role as a prison education manager, feeling undermined by a prisoner-learner and, more significantly, feeling physically threatened by

him. I recall how *'I was wearing a suit, as I often did, to indicate my managerial status in the prison (perhaps a form of protection)'* linking to gendered expectations of dress (discussed in Chapter XX); the wearing of the suit gave me additional power in that hyper-masculine environment, yet it may have also antagonised him as I portrayed that 'masculine' sense of authority.

I was threatened by this learner in a *'joking'* way, as he pretended to punch me, *'his fist speeding towards my face, stopping what felt like millimetres before me'*. The prisoner-learner was perhaps emboldened to perform this act in front of the other prisoners, as was often the case, the 'lads' were normally quite respectful in the classroom, but the combination of the territory of the 'twos' on the landing and the group mentality shifted his demeanour. This experience was embarrassing for me as it challenged my authority, my response to the situation and my ability to be resilient. I didn't share this experience with anyone, partly because I didn't want to share that vulnerability of how it affected me and partly because I probably should have reported the behaviour in an IR (Intelligence Report), thus highlighting my becoming-prison, as I have shifted perspective on the prison rules, in comparison to my earlier memos.

One of the key reflections of this experience is that, despite my prior rhetoric that *'it's not the lads'* as had been shared by other participants, it brings to the fore that the *'lads'* were very much part of the prison assemblage. The threat-potential that they bring creates an affective atmosphere that needs to be tolerated by teachers, and although these incidents were rare (but the potential always constant), this highlights a tension present throughout teacher-participant narratives: the collective professional tendency to attribute negative affects to institutional structures rather than learners, even as embodied encounters with threat-potential created undeniable affective responses. For me and the teachers, downplaying this threat-potential becomes a way to cope in a situation where we need to care for our learners; by distancing ourselves from a reality we would rather not acknowledge, we avoid making our roles more difficult, yet this very coping mechanism contributes to the complex intersubjective reality of teaching within carceral spaces and shapes pedagogical relations, in ways that contradict our professional rhetoric.

11.5. Unfoldings of personal memos

Throughout this section, the sharing of my personal memos captures the complex affective dimensions of moving in and out of prison spaces. The phenomenon of re-entering prison, whether as an educator or researcher, reveals not just my individual experience but mirrors the collective affective patterns described by teacher-participants across the inquiry. These transitions demonstrate the rhizomatic nature of prison educators' relationships to carceral environments, with anxiety and comfort existing not as binary opposites but as shared intensities that flow through material-discursive practices. This surfaces the reality of prison education, where educators collectively navigate the porous boundaries between institutional demands and pedagogical values, their experiences entangled within the broader affective assemblage of the prison.

(Chapter XX: Experiences of being a female in prison)

'It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what worlds make worlds, what worlds make stories' (Haraway, 2016, p. 12).

This section has purposefully been placed as a liminal chapter as the knot presented here is ubiquitous throughout the inquiry. Several authors have discussed the additional complexities of being a female researcher in a prison environment (Liebling, 2016; Jewkes and Laws, 2021; Schlosser, 2021). Here, I will provide my own perspective and experience of this. Just as Haraway's recursive statement reveals how matters intertwine to create meaning, my gendered presence in prison forms its own significant entanglement, creating particular spaces of unease that matter deeply to this inquiry and the knowledge it produces. These embodied stories, like Haraway's knotted thoughts, cannot be separated from the worlds they help make visible.

XX.1. Objectification and Harassment in Prison Spaces

The objectification of women is profound in the male dominated space of the prison and was noted throughout the recordings of the walking intra-views. The method intentionally recorded this intra-action, to capture the background noises of the prison, including wolf whistles and abusive heckling, to enable understanding of the affective experiences teachers held, particularly for women. At the beginning of the walking intra-view with my first participant, Alice, two minutes after we had entered the overlooked space, there was offensive shouting directly related to us being women: '*pair of slags*'. Similar interruptions were replicated and discussed in the intra-views with both Claire and Evelyn but were not apparent in the intra-views with male participants.

LH: So, 8 years you said, and in those 8 years you've been teaching...

<Background noise: prisoner shouts from cell window 'You pair of slags'>

<Both speakers laugh>

A: Marvellous <said in a sarcastic tone>

LH: So how have you found the teaching of PSD here?

Perhaps more surprising than the abusive comment, was the laughter and dismissal of the comment by both Alice and I, demonstrating a troubling normalisation of harassment within the prison space.

This reaction differs significantly from how we might respond to similar abuse in public spaces, where such behaviour would likely be confronted or reported. The laughter serves as a coping mechanism in an environment where such harassment is frequent and seemingly unavoidable. The incident created an 'intra-ruption' (as conceptualised in Chapter 10) to both our physical walk and the flow of our intra-view. Yet, remarkably, we continued as if nothing had occurred. I recall this moment as a powerful reminder of the external gaze constantly upon us, and how our seamless continuation of the intra-view exemplified the acceptance of harassment that had become embedded in our prison intra-actions.

The derogatory language directed at women within the prison might represent collective misogyny; yet in this environment, such behaviour can also stem from the complex psychological impact of confinement. These men are trapped in often inhumane conditions and therefore may project their anger and trauma through gendered harassment. This hostile environment shaped not only my inquiry design but also my embodied experience as a researcher navigating this space. As Schlosser (2021) aptly notes, 'Once access is gained... our bodies become sexualised, our methods questioned and our very presence in prison is often held up as separate from the masculine culture that dominates it' (p. x). Her observation resonates with my own experience, where I found that being a female researcher or teacher becomes entangled in the gendered power dynamics I was exploring, necessitating methodological adaptations that acknowledge this reality.

XX.2. Institutional Dress Codes and Bodily Control

Women's bodies are positioned as security risks within the prison system, evident in the induction process for non-operational staff. Counter-coercion training foregrounds cautionary narratives about female prison staff engaging in sexual relationships or smuggling drugs for prisoners, constructing women as potential security threats. This framing is reinforced through strict dress-code regulations imposed on women in carceral spaces. These rules limit expressions of femininity, creating a complex tension: they aim to protect women while simultaneously reflecting institutional acceptance of problematic attitudes. Rather than simply perpetuating gender dynamics, they exist within practical constraints of environments housing diverse populations with complex histories. The challenge lies in developing institutional approaches that address legitimate safety concerns while recognising the impact on women's liberties. The directive I received on my first day exemplifies this gendered surveillance: wear nothing prisoners could '*see through, up or*

down', language that objectifies women's bodies while placing responsibility for prisoner behaviour on female rather than male conduct.

Prison rules on dress code for female staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• no high heels or stilettos• no tight clothes• no leggings• no low necklines• no short skirts• no wrap dresses• no see-through garments• no false eyelashes• limited make-up is allowed• only lip balm and no lipstick

Table 6: Prison dress code for female staff, based on personal experience and rules at Prison A.

These institutional rules highlight the paradoxical position women navigate within the carceral environment. While professionally recognising the need for personal safety in this hypermasculine space, my feminist principles contest the premise that women's clothing choices, rather than men's responses, were the problem. I recall being challenged at the security gate, for having a lipstick in my pocket, as officers cited it as contraband. Many of the female staff would deliberately bring in lipstick as a defiance against the rules, creating their own subtle form of resistance while still navigating the complex power structures of the prison environment. This small act of defiance represented more than mere vanity, it was a reclaiming of feminine identity in a space where such expressions were explicitly problematised and controlled. Some would apply it after passing through security checks, while others would wear subtle shades that could pass inspection but still afforded them a sense of personal expression.

This tension between institutional compliance and personal resistance became profound in my role as prison education manager, where I was tasked with enforcing the female-staff dress codes that

fundamentally contradicted my personal convictions about bodily autonomy and gender equality. The conflict between institutional responsibility, personal safety and personal ideology is preserved in the following incident from my personal memos:

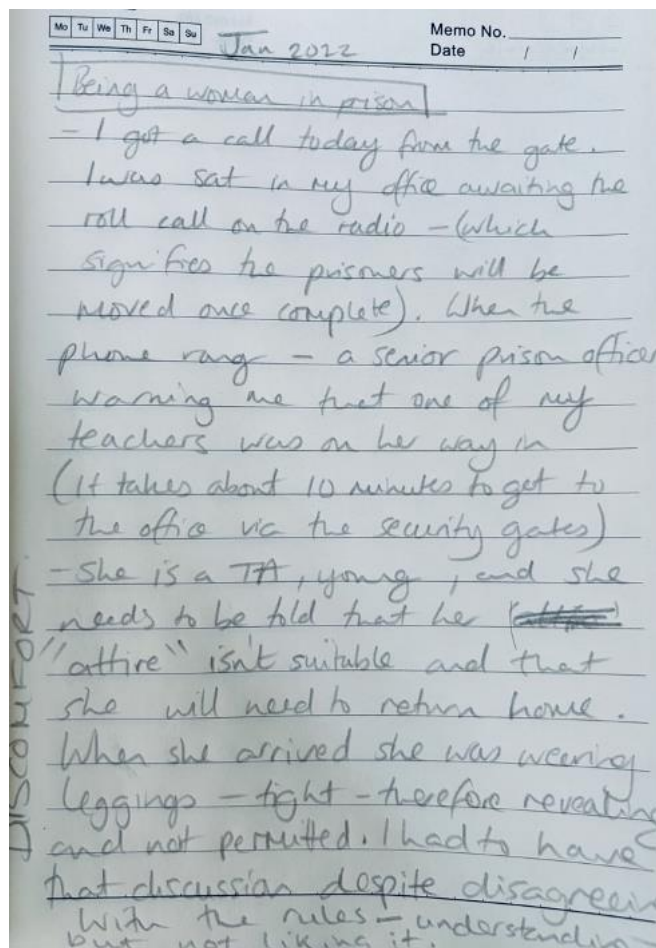
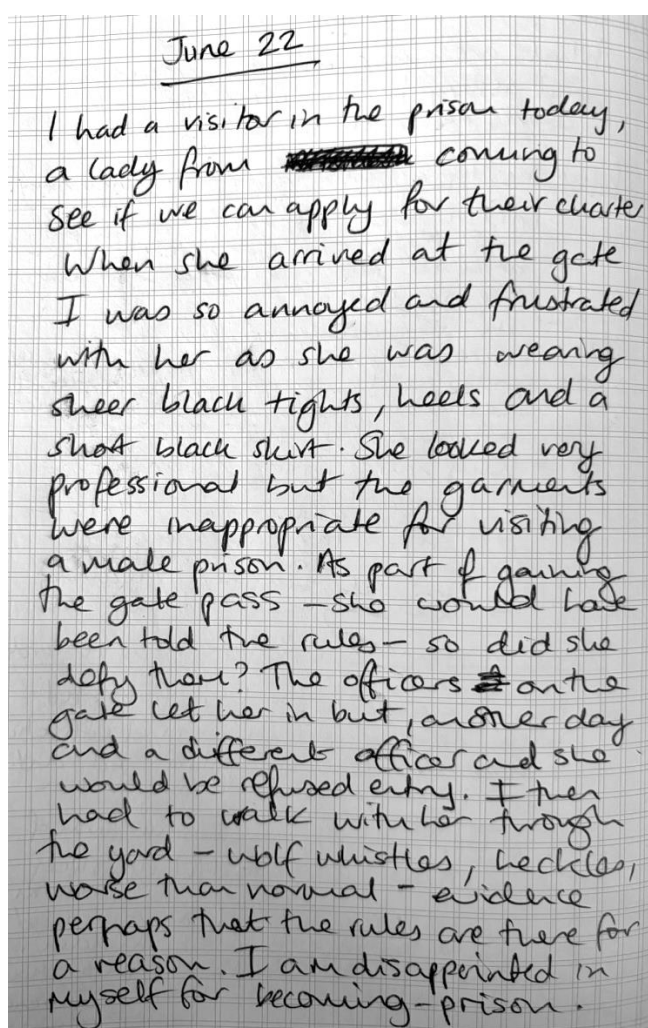


Figure 57: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. Jan 2022.

The incident captured in this memo reveals the contradictions of gendered expectations within the prison environment; for this young teaching assistant, being told her leggings were inappropriate attire, may have evoked shame for simply having a female body. I was annoyed that the officers at the gate had allowed her to walk through the prison, to be told this when she got to the education building, having to then walk back the ten-minute journey to be sent home, knowing the officer, and prisoner gaze was on her. I experienced shame in relaying this message, deeply uncomfortable that enforcing such body-policing fell within my professional responsibilities. My marginal note 'understanding but not liking it' encapsulates my conflicted position; I recognised the security needs

driving these regulations while fundamentally disagreeing with their gendered implications. This paradoxical conundrum, that these truths are indeed irreconcilable, is something education staff must live with daily. The prison-education-machine operates through these disciplinary mechanisms, yet I found it increasingly difficult to reconcile them with my personal ontology and feminist principles, a tension that perhaps cannot and should not be neatly resolved.

There were indications that I was becoming-prison in the next memo as my view on this changes to recognise the implications of dress choice and the entanglements of that in the teacher experiences:



June 22
I had a visitor in the prison today, a lady from ~~XXXXXX~~ coming to see if we can apply for their charter. When she arrived at the gate I was so annoyed and frustrated with her as she was wearing sheer black tights, heels and a short black skirt. She looked very professional but the garments were inappropriate for visiting a male prison. As part of gaining the gate pass - she would have been told the rules - so did she defy them? The officers ~~at~~ on the gate let her in but, another day and a different officer and she would be refused entry. I then had to walk with her through the yard - wolf whistles, heckles, worse than normal - evidence perhaps that the rules are there for a reason. I am disappointed in myself for becoming-prison.

Figure 58: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. Jun 2022.

The revelation that I was 'so annoyed and frustrated with her' for wearing tights, heels and a short skirt and not annoyed at the prison, not the prisoners, but 'her', reveals a complex interplay of institutional expectations and personal judgement. This realisation prompted deeper reflection on

how easily I internalised and enforced these restrictive dress codes rather than questioning the environment that necessitated them. I even question if she had defied the rules on purpose, perhaps to gain the attention that was obviously going to happen. This moment revealed my conflicted position; recognising her attire as resistance while feeling bound by institutional expectations I'd internalised. I felt envious of her naivety or perhaps deliberate defiance. Jealous of her freedom to dress how she wanted; the tensions between my job to enforce rules and my understanding of her choices showed the messy reality women face in these restrictive spaces.

More than ever, due to her attire, I felt vulnerable and violated in the situation as *'I then had to walk with her, through the yard – wolf whistles, heckles, worse than normal'*, I recall the discomfort of that walk, for her and me; both of us became subjects of objectification, under the gaze of the whole prison, this was one occasion in which I did not laugh. I felt shame at my role, *'I am disappointed in myself for becoming-prison,'* and shame for wanting the rules to be adhered to, *'evidence perhaps that the rules are there for a reason'*. The acculturation, whilst helpful in the formal role, did not give me pride in adapting to the situation but instead made me fear my becoming-prison, fear that I would forget my values, despite them being untenable in that space.

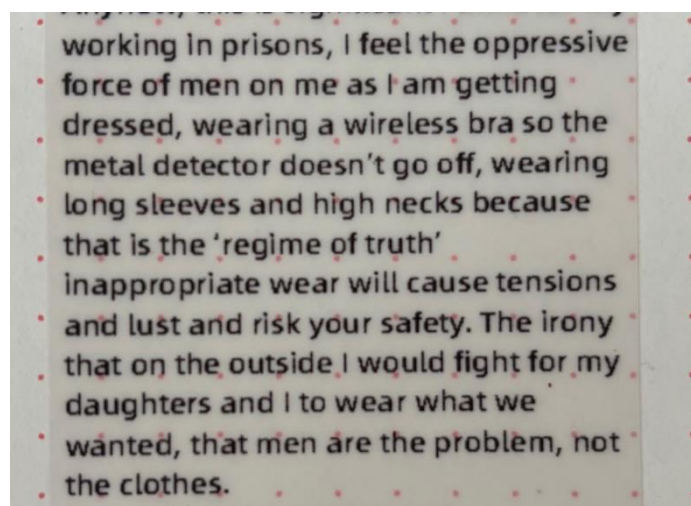
From a Deleuzian perspective, the rhizomatic nature of my feelings reveals a complex interplay of affects that coexist rather than cancel each other out. My irritation, enforcement of rules, and subsequent shame operate simultaneously, highlighting my dual subjectivity as 'becoming-prison manager' within this institutional space and 'becoming-feminist' in my critical reflections. These seemingly paradoxical positions exist together. This multiplicity demonstrates how prison spaces produce complex subject positions that must be navigated simultaneously, with different aspects of 'self' emerging in response to these complex contexts and relations.

Schlosser (2021) had similar experiences during her research within prisons, where she had anticipated the heckles; she knew that being a young woman wouldn't go unnoticed: in a 'prison full of men I wouldn't realistically be able to remain invisible' she expected the 'looks, leers, the comments, the names I'd be called as I walked past, the whistles' (p. 32). Schlosser knew she would be objectified, that it would be bad and, in her words, 'it was' (p. 33). This mirrors Foucault's (1991) analysis of panopticism, reversing where power operates, in this case from the prisoners rather than the prison officers that Foucault refers to. The feeling of being observed intensifies the affective burden on female teachers, particularly when supporting those in the margins like on the VP wing

(as discussed by Claire in Chapter 8). This emotional strain and potential moral distress can lead teachers to feel ashamed of their work through association, further perpetuating their becoming-prisoners. As Claire noted during her walking intra-view:

'When I'm walking home.... and have like the plastic bag, I was like everyone knows I work in a prison. Everyone knows... I don't know if that's something that might be me <laugh> but other people's opinions of the prison'.

In a different personal memo, I reflect on my own body as a site of control, even at home; getting dressed I am aware of that control:



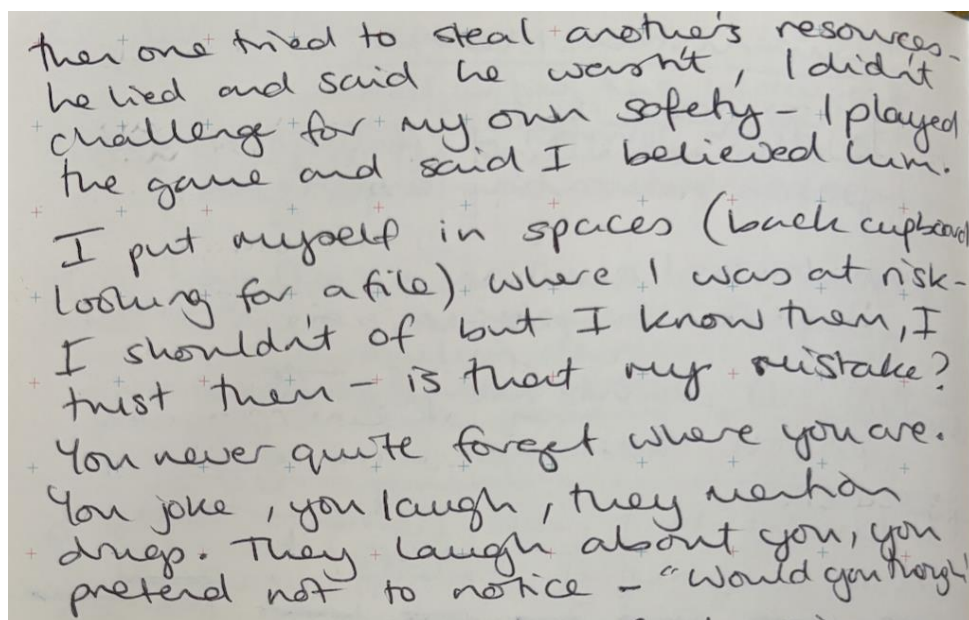
working in prisons, I feel the oppressive force of men on me as I am getting dressed, wearing a wireless bra so the metal detector doesn't go off, wearing long sleeves and high necks because that is the 'regime of truth' inappropriate wear will cause tensions and lust and risk your safety. The irony that on the outside I would fight for my daughters and I to wear what we wanted, that men are the problem, not the clothes.

Figure 59: Personal Memo. Phone note. Feb 2022.

In the memo above, I link to how this feeling embodies Foucault's *'regime of truth'* (1980, p. 131); an institutionalised knowledge system enforcing what constitutes 'true' or 'acceptable' in institutional spaces, in this case, dictating what is appropriate female appearance. While externally I advocate that women should dress freely without bearing responsibility for male reactions, within prison walls, I recognise the need to conform to the rules, as evidenced in my actions *'wearing a wireless bra'* to avoid metal detection, ensuring 'modesty' through covered arms, and high necklines to prevent *'tensions and lust and risk your safety'*.

The materiality of clothing in prison thus becomes both a site of control and potential resistance, revealing the complex interplay between institutional power and personal agency. My experience,

and that of the female teachers, challenging and complying with power structures we would critique elsewhere, leads to exhaustion as we censor our bodies and opinions to ensure security and order.

A photograph of a handwritten personal memo on a piece of lined paper. The text is written in cursive and includes several lines of reflection. The handwriting is somewhat slanted and includes some corrections or additions. The paper has a light beige or off-white tone. The text is as follows:

then one tried to steal another's resources -
he lied and said he wasn't, I didn't
challenge for my own safety - I played
the game and said I believed him.
I put myself in spaces (back cupboard
looking for a file) where I was at risk -
I shouldn't of but I know them, I
trust them - is that my mistake?
You never quite forget where you are.
You joke, you laugh, they never
drop. They laugh about you, you
pretend not to notice - "would you though!"

Figure 60: Personal Memo. Handwritten in notebook. Dec 2021.

In this reflection, I critically examine disregarding my safety while substituting for an art teacher with five male prisoner-learners. Positioning myself inside a cupboard created vulnerability: out of sight of officers and potentially trappable, revealing complex power dynamics for women in this environment. Like other teachers (as discussed in Chapter 8), I temporarily forgot my surroundings until the realisation of potential risk brought me back. While I was likely safe, my trust in them overshadowed potential risks; this experience made me more aware, noting 'You never quite forget where you are'. Despite trusting the prisoners, I was confronted with troubling intra-actions that highlighted my vulnerability as a female educator in a male prison: 'you joke, you laugh... they laugh, about you, you pretend not to notice' overhearing the prisoners say, "would you though". This comment, presumably alluding to my body as an object of sexual interest, exposes the persistent undertone of sexual objectification that female teachers routinely encounter in this environment, where professional identity is subverted by gendered dynamics.

XX.3. Navigating Professional Boundaries in Gendered Spaces

While recognising the prison as hyper-masculine, I overlooked potential gender power issues with male teachers during intra-views, focusing instead on my position as education manager. As Grenz (2005) notes, power dynamics between researchers and participants are 'multi-dimensional and fluid' (p. 8). Schlosser (2021) anticipated and accepted heckling from prisoners but found the derogatory comments from male prison officers more surprising than the prisoners' behaviour. This dynamic reflects Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of territorialisation and deterritorialisation in gendered institutional spaces, where women must navigate established masculine boundaries and practices.

My experiences with one teacher-participant highlighted how the prison's atmosphere influences behaviour beyond its immediate confines. During the research process, I was communicating with a participant of the study via WhatsApp messages to arrange a suitable time and location for our interview, but the messages quickly crossed professional boundaries, illuminating how these gendered experiences of the prison can seep into other spaces. The participants' messages became inappropriate, veiled beneath superficially polite exchanges yet crossing boundaries by suggesting meeting locations outside of the prison that had romantic connotations. The sexualised attitudes which were displayed in this context raise questions about whether the prison environment itself amplifies or transforms typical gender dynamics, creating a more pervasive atmosphere of objectification that affects even professional relationships.

Interestingly, my response at the time was to laugh these off (in a similar way to the laughter in response to heckling inside the prison), even replying with a laughing 😄 emoji yet, through the lens of this liminal chapter, I unveiled a further entanglement of affect that highlighted this potential misogyny. These messages demonstrated binary perceptions of women, beneath seemingly friendly interactions that concealed objectification and gendered power dynamics. My participation through emoji responses highlights how I actively engaged in a way that potentially normalised these interactions. This echoes Fox's observation (in Schlosser, 2021) that methodological pressure often leads to female researchers prioritising data collection over their own wellbeing: '...the burdens of being a woman, especially in a male space. In an effort to get the data, we may compromise ourselves' (p. 9).

Reflecting on my responses to different forms of harassment, it is noteworthy that I appeared more troubled by the inappropriate messages from a colleague than the constant sexualised aggression from prisoners, perhaps as the prisoners were locked up, they seemed safer. This difference in reaction also speaks to the varying expectations we hold in professional-teacher versus prisoner-learner contexts, and how the prison environment creates distinct spheres of 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' behaviour. The normalisation of prisoner harassment through nervous laughter contrasts sharply with the lingering discomfort of professional boundary violations, suggesting complex layers in how gender-based harassment is processed and managed within the prison research context.

XX.4. Unfoldings of being a female in prison

This liminal inclusion addresses the affective impact of gendered experiences and how female embodiment can shape experiences within prison environments. The normalisation of harassment, evidenced by our laughter at verbal abuse, reveals how female teachers develop coping mechanisms that both resist and accommodate prison power structures. Institutional dress codes illuminate how female teachers' bodies become sites of control, creating tensions between professional obligations and personal autonomy. My journey from resistance to accommodation (*'becoming-prison'*) illustrates the impact of the carceral environment on subjectivity. The emotional labour required to navigate constant objectification creates an affective component of female teachers' experiences. These insights extend beyond personal reflection to address the broader theoretical questions regarding prison education experience, demonstrating how the environment produces specific forms of gendered knowledge and power.

(Chapter XY: Personal Entanglements)

While I initially hesitated to share the following personal entanglement involving my life and my child's life, I've come to recognise its value to my inquiry. My subjective experience provides a unique vantage point that illuminates the inside/outside dynamic central to understanding carceral spaces. As explored earlier through my daughter's drawings of escaped prisoners and further examined in this chapter via my son's journey through the SEND system, the entire mother-child dynamic became intertwined and affected by the experiences discussed in this inquiry.

This personal connection does not exist as separate from my academic work but instead enriches it in multiple dimensions: through my embodied understanding of carceral logics that permeate beyond institutional walls; through my daily transitions between prison and home spaces as both researcher and mother; through the emotional complexity of navigating freedom, while simultaneously feeling confined by maternal responsibilities; and through witnessing parallel systems of control operating in both education and prison spaces. My positioning creates a productive tension between these intersecting worlds that allows me to theorise carcerality not just as an abstract concept but as a lived reality that manifests across these seemingly disparate domains.

XY.1. Context of my son and I: entangled in prison-education systems

My son is ten years old and is autistic. The length of time to his diagnosis and navigation of the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) system, incidentally, corresponded with my time undertaking the PhD. As I was working in the prison, my son's unmet needs were starting to impact his experiences in school; the parallels then started to appear between his schooling experience and that of the prisoners I was working with. These overlapping experiences of navigating the prison, the PhD and the SEND/school system, whilst difficult, were important in grounding me to the realities of the problem. The entanglements of lives and work, and research and family were impossible to separate.

With each passing day, my son's ability to engage with school deteriorated. Eventually, it reached a breaking point where he would desperately try to escape, crying, screaming and kicking, it resulted

in teachers physically restraining him (reminiscent of my prison dreams). This was a profoundly traumatic experience that scarred us both. He would no longer attend unless a parent was present; the carcerality of the space was exemplified and it was causing irreparable harm. The school-to-prison-pipeline data was raw in my mind. I was concerned about the lack of support he was getting, the mis-understanding of his needs, the interpretation that he was being defiant, that he was not capable, or not interested in learning, despite his intellect and caring nature. I was so worried that his life chances were being impacted, just like many of the prisoners with learning difficulties that I encountered.

XY.2. Institutional Parallels

Navigating bureaucracy for both my son's education and prisoners revealed disturbing parallels in these supposedly distinct systems, echoing Foucault's (1991) analysis of schools and prisons as parallel disciplinary institutions. In a Kafkaesque (2012) fashion, both prioritised compliance over understanding and control over compassion. The SEND system's bureaucracy with its multiple assessments, waiting periods and gatekeeping, mirrored the prison-education-machine I researched, providing an analytical lens beyond mere theory. I witnessed how seemingly caring systems reproduce carceral logics, particularly affecting boys and men with learning needs.

The visitor badges (figure 61) I accumulated while attending meetings at my son's school became potent symbols of this reality. These badges marked my 'outsider' status, with the term 'visitor' reinforcing the carceral notion. My face on the left reflects my disdain at the situation and my smile with my son present on the right, shows my attempt to maintain hope. The dehumanising barcodes, reducing us to scannable entities, with the text: *'visitors are required to observe the visitor rules'*, extended the prison-education-machine's reach. My dual position as advocate and educator highlighted the emotional labour required to nurture possibility within environments designed to assess, regulate and categorise.

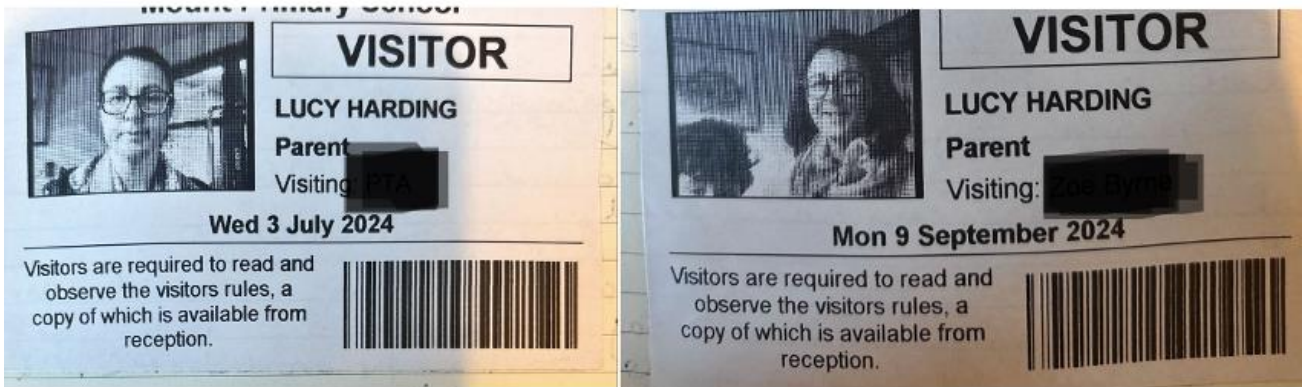


Figure 61: Identity badges at son's school July and Sept 2024.

The excerpt below from my personal memos, was captured on one of the days that I would spend sitting in the reception of the school. As my son was too fearful for me to leave; I too, became trapped in that space.

I need to write about my parallel experiences of working in prison education and being 'mum' of a child with autism struggling to attend school; currently I attend with him.
I sit here in the reception area of school; unable to use my phone for security measures
<clanging, banging, voices, overhearing private conversations I shouldn't>
A parent doesn't quite belong in this space, I feel like I am an intruder here: I am tolerated but I am not part of their community. <Sign in please>
I am sensing the same affects I had in the prison, the restrictions on my body, my freedom, my choices, the overwhelm. I feel the fear for boys/men in education that doesn't cater for their needs.
<A crashing noise from the canteen, a child crying in the hallway>
Should I be alert? My body tenses, I feel a tightness, a constraint around me.
The door is unlocked and propped open; it makes me nervous.
I want to see my child, he is just out of sight.
A TA encourages him to 'do' some work: sit still, fill in the missing gaps- do this and then you'll get a reward- a snack, you can read your book, have some time outside, the freedom to move as your body wills it to.
The door is now locked, it makes me nervous.
If I feel these restrictions, does my son feel this carcerality too?
I see him as a prisoner in this school- I saw many prisoners as my son, their face, just for a fleeting moment becoming his- the parallels of fear for their futures, wanting to help, but feeling helpless.

Figure 62: Personal Memo. Transcribed from handwritten memo in notebook. Sept 2024.

The first line highlights my feelings of being imprisoned not only physically in the school but mentally: 'being 'mum' of a child with autism struggling to attend school'. I was imprisoned by the systems and the limitations of what I could do as 'mum' to advocate for my child. Smith (2024) refers

to this experience of feeling restrained by systems that diminish parental agency. She describes how professionals maintain 'an assumed level of authority, expertise, and decision-making power' while we become merely 'mum', expected to 'turn up to join the dance when needed and not step out of line' (p. 13). This institutional captivity mirrors the carceral elements I experienced in both prison education spaces and the navigation of my son's schooling needs.

Surrendering my phone at both prison and school entrances (for safeguarding purposes) reflects an interesting institutional parallel. At each threshold, I relinquish the device alongside my connection to the outside world. As both parent and professional, I experienced a shift in my status; the trust in me doubted, despite my roles. Supporting my autistic son at school, I noticed these correlations with prison education: the same quiet restrictions shaping my experiences in both environments. This shared practice of disconnection portrays how institutions manage different vulnerable populations through similar approaches. This creates a collective assemblage of control where my multiple positions enable a becoming-minor that perceives the system's mechanisms from different perspectives, again evoking elements of Kafka's (2012) bureaucratic systems where individual autonomy is superseded by institutional procedure.

At the point of this journal entry, I had been out of the prison role for two years, yet the haunting of the prison was still evident. My visceral response to the background noises '*<clanging, banging... crashing... crying>*' evoked memories from working in the prison, I consider: '*Should I be alert?*', my body perhaps confused by the similarities, it troubled me when the door was '*propped open; it makes me nervous*' but similarly it also concerned me when the '*the door is now locked; it makes me nervous*'. I am confused at the rules of the space, the liminality between care and security, similar to the experiences of teachers in the prison space.

XY.3. Affective Bridges

I recall in the memo how the prisoners' faces would sometimes morph into my son's '*just for a fleeting moment*' as I was talking to them, their innocence as boys rather than imprisoned men would reveal itself to me. The experiences with my son allowed this affect to surface more-so than if those experiences were not entangled. This momentary morphing of prisoners' faces reveals the rhizomatic connections of my experiences and the vulnerability in both contexts. This affective

bridge dissolved the institutional barriers I had unconsciously maintained, allowing me to see beyond 'offender' labels to the often-traumatised children within these men. I began noticing institutional behaviours mirroring my son's school struggles, I was therefore feeling the experiences differently to others. This reinforced my pedagogical approach; less focused on curriculum outcomes, more attuned to creating safe learning spaces that acknowledge trauma histories. The entanglement of these worlds revealed education as potential healing rather than focusing on rehabilitation.

Diffraction of the memo above (figure 62), with the work of Foucault (1991, 2015, 2018), creates further entanglements of power across the two institutional spaces. My embodied experiences materialise through body tensing, feeling tightness, nervousness about locked/unlocked doors, illustrating Foucault's (1991) analysis of how disciplinary power operates on and through bodies in institutional settings. My writing captures surveillance mechanisms functioning differently yet similarly across prison and school contexts, as I feel I am being tolerated but unwanted in the space.

'Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?' (Foucault, 1991, p. 228).

From a Foucauldian sense, the memo emphasises my experience of restricted movement, monitored phone use, and mandatory sign-ins as evidence of the carceral power that extends beyond prisons and into schools. My peripheral position as 'mum' (and, and, and) in that institutionalised space, enabled me to witness how different (autistic/ADHD) bodies are subjected to normalising practices in schools. As Foucault (1991) observed, disciplinary systems operate on learners' bodies not merely to develop specific skills at designated times, but to ensure they are fundamentally shaped, 'trained or corrected, classified, normalised, excluded' (p. 91). My formal position as education manager in the prison also enabled me to see this happening to prisoners yet despite that authority, I was unable to make significant changes to their educational experiences.

XY.4. Unfoldings of personal entanglements

My immersion in these entangled domains as teacher, prison education manager, researcher, and mother transcend just observation, becoming what Ettinger (2010) terms wit(h)nessing: a co-affective, embodied participation rather than detached witnessing (explained in Chapter 4). My affective experiences through this simultaneous navigation of prison education and my son's schooling difficulties, create unique insights. My body becomes a site where institutional power manifests tangibly across contexts, revealing how similar material-discursive practices constrain different vulnerabilities. This entanglement highlights something fundamental: the shared humanity often obscured by institutional frameworks. The morphing of prisoners' faces into my son's represents not just parallel systems but interconnected struggles against normalising practices. These insights, born from my immersion, offer a distinctly human and humane understanding of how carceral logics permeate seemingly disparate spaces, while also revealing potential pathways towards more compassionate educational approaches.

Chapter 12: Entanglements and knots (Findings and Discussion)

I present my findings as 'Entanglements' of *da-næuds-ta*; these entanglements are created when methods, experiences, affects, and materialities knot at the centre of the study. Following Barad's concept of 'the entanglement of material relations' (Barad, 2007, p. 232), this framing highlights the inseparable relations between elements connected by the 'and' (as explained in Chapter 4). The following section presents these entanglements (findings), followed by knots (discussions) related to affect. Each knot described below illustrates where affects, theories, methodologies, participant experiences, and my own positioning as researcher converge, creating productive tensions. Rather than seeking to fully separate these knots, I invite readers to engage with them alongside me, recognising that these intersections reveal significant insights about prison educators' experiences.

12.1. Entanglements

The inquiry revealed that teacher-participants experienced joy, alongside feelings of anxiety and 'concern.' They wit(h)nessed elements of prison space and life that negatively impacted their mental health and wellbeing yet still enjoyed the role. Teachers acknowledged the paradoxical nature of the prison space, which led them to have these simultaneous feelings. This emphasises the layered complexity; suggesting that the teachers' positive feelings about their work weren't simply coexisting with negative aspects but were fundamentally intertwined with them.

It was evident that most teacher-participants were consciously unaware of the affects the experiences in the prison were having on them; they did not recognise their moral distress as such, instead naming this as personal emotions. Some who had wit(h)nessed traumatic situations, demonstrated affective blockages, exhibiting reticence to articulate these encounters or acknowledge their full intensive capacity. They did acknowledge that the situations were severe, but that the 'after-effects' were only short-lived. However, I felt differently as someone with experience of the prison-education space myself, I noted in my personal memos (Chapter 11) that the affects lingered, and this was also perceptible in some participant responses through what was said and what was *not* said during the inquiry.

Teachers and I, in an intersubjective recognition, demonstrated strong protective and caring responsibilities for prisoner-learners, who are often termed 'lads', whilst appreciating the need for boundaries and protection of personal identity. Some teachers reflected on how this complexity affected their ability to be authentic in their roles and influenced the student-teacher relationship. Many, including myself, experienced guilt when confronting their relative freedoms compared to prisoners.

Participants explained how the regime constrained their bodies as well as the prisoners', through the spatial and temporal control of the space, thus limiting their ability to fully embody their vision of relational prison teaching. The prison's impact on teacher bodies manifested differently across genders; women described avoiding certain areas of the prison space due to heckling as they traversed prison grounds, while male teachers experienced a heightened awareness of potential violence, leading to them feeling vulnerable in some situations. Some teachers spoke of the affect of the regime on their bodies; recognising that they also felt bound by the time constraints the prisoners were confined by, such as the lock ups and roll calls.

Material and acoustic agents played a part in shaping the affective atmosphere of the space; from radio chatter to plants, these entities created intra-ruptions (conceptualised in Chapter 10) affecting teachers and prisoners in multiplicitous ways. These affects were often exemplified in the prison space due to its constrained practices which impacted the engagement with material artefacts and sounds.

Contractual obligations focusing on prisoner 'outcomes' reduced teaching to box-ticking exercises, transforming classrooms into prison-education-machines that stifled creativity. Teachers felt constrained by outcomes-driven policies and resource limitations, particularly lack of digital access for planning and teaching. The emphasis on metrics over meaningful relationships undermined teacher autonomy and effectiveness.

These combined pressures manifested as daily microshocks (Massumi, 2015b). Different prison spaces created varied affective atmospheres, generating heightened awareness that teachers eventually normalised. This 'crisis-ordinariness' (Berlant, 2011) led teachers to develop a coping mechanism of 'zoning out', mistakenly believing they could shield themselves from the emotional impacts of their environment.

Teachers wit(h)ness(ed) (Ettinger, 2001) traumatic experiences, including self-harm, and seeing/feeling the aftermath of violence and suicide. They observed prisoners being treated as less-than-human in the CSU (Evelyn, Chapter 10), through racism (Claire, Chapter 8) and the conditions of extended lockdowns during Covid-19. These experiences accumulated, leading to teachers facing moral distress and trauma, although they did not always recognise these affects. The teacher-participants agreed that the training for teaching in a prison space was not adequate in preparing them for these traumatic elements, both the intra-ruptions and microshocks associated to the regime, resource limitations and metric-focused assessments, as well as more distressing traumas related to critical incidents they may experience.

12.2. Disentangling the surfaced knots

Throughout the walking intra-views, visual matrix, one-to-one interviews, and my personal memos, distinct affective intensities of prison education experiences were evidenced. The intense affects manifested in sensations of mechanisation, trauma responses, sensory overwhelm, and the gendered navigation of space.



Figure 63: Disentangled weave. Fibres created from sock remnants and cotton threads.



[Link to Disentanglements](#)

The QR code and link above take you to a video recording of me disentangling one of the weaves created during the inquiry. The video displays the difficulty of disentangling the threads that are knotted together. The fibres have changed through the weave, they are now distorted in their unravelling, revealing different textures and complexities. The misshapen fibres are suggestive of my own changes in becoming-otherwise. I do not intend to unravel the complexities of the prison web in their entirety but seek to raise awareness of those aspects of prison educator experiences which have previously been unvoiced, allowing these knots to remain partially intact while still exposing their generative tensions and possibilities.

The knots, or *nœuds*, shared in this chapter, function paradoxically as enabling constraints (Guyotte, Coogler and Flint, 2022), simultaneously limiting certain possibilities while generating others. Like the beginning stitch of an embroidery that anchors the threads, these knots represent both sites of challenge within prison education and opportunities for newness. As St. Pierre (2018) describes, they become 'the provocation, the knot, the world kicking back' (p. 607), disrupting comfortable understandings while creating space for *nœud* insights. The friction within these entanglements doesn't merely restrict, it proves necessary and generative, holding multiplicitous elements in productive tension.

12.3. Knot/nœuds 1: The Machinic Nature of Prison Education

This first surfaced knot explores how teachers experienced and articulated their integration into this machinic assemblage, revealing the complex ways affect moved through and transformed their experiences.

12.3.1. The affects of the Prison-Education-Machine

The concept of the prison-education-machine emerged through walking intra-views, visual matrix methods, one-to-one interviews, personal experiences, and my reflective memos. As embodied intra-subjects within the prison space, the teachers and I experienced ourselves not just encountering a machine but becoming integrated within its assemblage. This resonates with Foucault's (1991) observation that 'even staff are confined by the prison's rules' (p. 14), where he characterises the prison as 'a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power as well as those subject to it' (p. 14). Unlike Deleuze's machine concept discussed in Chapter 4, this perception arose from how the regime controlled teachers' time and bodies, coupled with the mechanical pressures of assessment requirements and contractual obligations imposed by the prison-education framework.

The visual matrix imaginaries shared in Chapter 9, showed an appreciation of the regime as a constant, machinic presence. Participants identified the systemic processes as a requirement to keep them safe while simultaneously experiencing the rigidity of the prison regime and educational procedures. They acknowledged that the prison-education-machine was just one part of the prison assemblage that is reliant on '*infrastructure*' to function; the tensions between the two are therefore constant, evoking Foucault's (1991, 2015) conceptualisation of power as a pervasive force that holds authority over people within institutional spaces.

The Prison Education Trust statement: 'Education is the engine of rehabilitation' (Prison Education Trust, 2023, p. 4) highlighted education's central position in the machine but this also perpetuates such an idea in terms of social expectations. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a strong focus on employability in prison education, particularly emphasising the importance of maths and English qualifications, which are recorded as measurable outcomes of the prison-education contracts with HMPPS. This banking model (Freire, 1986) approach to prison education persists despite promises to transform the system.

The imposition of rigid assessment structures in prison teaching means that feedback is used as evidence for the 'system' which can stifle the autonomy and spontaneity of teachers. The participants' feelings of being '*part of the mechanics of the big machine*' (Donald, Chapter 10) highlights a dissonance between teachers' long-held values and evolving institutional practices; many of these educators entered the role with idealistic motivations to make a difference in prisoners' lives but now find themselves becoming-machine, aligning with an increasingly bureaucratic system that prioritises measurable outcomes over meaningful connections (Crewe, 2009). This individual struggle does not occur in isolation; it contributes to a collective affect within the prison-education-machine. As more teachers experience this dissonance, it creates a shared affective climate of frustration.

As teachers feel themselves becoming-machine, they experience a shift in their professional identity and praxis, creating a 'machinic enslavement' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 428) particularly over time. Reinforced when Kevan shared that teachers get '*stuck in a rut*', and when Evelyn explained the regime being like '*clockwork*' (Chapter 10). Teachers attempt to disrupt this through their 'minor gestures' such as when Evelyn was '*making time*' for her learners and when Claire bent the rules to enable her learners to tend to plants in the classroom (Chapter 8). These moments represent acts of deterritorialisation; challenging and potentially reshaping the boundaries of what is possible within the confines of the prison-education-machine. Thus, the machine in this context is not just a metaphor for control, but a dynamic assemblage that simultaneously enforces structure and generates possibilities for change.

12.3.2. Deterritorialisation and crisis-ordinariness

As Deleuze and Guattari (1988) discuss, deterritorialisation (explained in Chapter 4) involves escaping the codes and controls of established organisations and norms. This urge can also apply to the teachers, particularly in more challenging environments. Evelyn's experience shared in the one-to-one interviews, was in one of these environments; the ironically entitled Care & Separation Unit (CSU) in the prison, also known as 'The Seg' or segregation unit, is where prisoners who do not comply or intentionally defy the rules are isolated. I experienced the commotion of a prisoner being brought there as it reverberated throughout the jail, this significantly shifted the atmosphere of the prison when such an event happened. As such, the CSU is territorialised through the affect of fear-control.

Evelyn's wit(h)nessings of trauma in the CSU, (Chapter 10), show the affects of the space as a traumatic site, yet she managed to deterritorialise the CSU space over time, making it a place of learning despite its affectively traumatic backdrop. She discussed the visceral impression from her first CSU experience, using a metaphor: '*it left such an impression on me*' suggesting the affective trauma left a residual mark on her body. As Lambert *et al.* (2015) note, working in such stressful environments can lead to burnout and fatigue among staff working in carceral spaces. But with repeated exposure, Evelyn seemed to adapt, learning to '*zone out*' noises, rendering them no longer threatening. She deterritorialised the space by inhabiting it differently through her own focus.

For Evelyn, this experience is transformative but not positively; her changed personality signifies a moment of rupture, a pivotal emotional shift. These minor resistances by teachers in the space can be seen as continuous cycles of interaction and intra-action, where resistance of power in one place, may lead to it appearing on a different plane (Foucault, 1991). Thus, reterritorialisation occurs, and the teachers are having to constantly negotiate this (Tamboukou, 2003).

The process of deterritorialisation converges with Berlant's (2011) concept of 'crisis-ordinariness' (p.10); a situation where microshocks (Massumi, 2015a) and intra-ruptions (conceptualised in Chapter 10) are the norm rather than the exception. Within the prison education context, this manifests through for example, the constant 'churn' (explained in Chapter 1) of the prisoner-learner population, the differing soundscape, the changes of policy, the lock downs, and the shifting atmospheres. Unlike trauma, which is attached to discrete events with conclusions, crisis-ordinariness suggests an ongoing becoming-with (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988) that teachers must navigate daily. In Deleuzian terms, prison teachers create momentary deterritorialisations within this crisis-ordinariness, embodying rhizomatic connections that work both within and against institutional structures.

12.4. Knot/nœuds 2: Affective Intensities

This knot addresses how prison educators affectively experience the carceral environment. I consider the teachers' experiences of becoming-imperceptible, the affect of the prison soundscape as well as embodied affects, after-effects and the concept of being affect-aliens.

12.4.1. Becoming-imperceptible

Becoming-imperceptible involves a dissolution of the self into flows and assemblages that escape dominant structures of perception and control. It represents not absence but rather a strategic mode of existence that operates beneath thresholds of recognition, allowing for new potentialities and connections to emerge beyond rigid categorisations. The teachers in the visual matrix included the words '*unseen and unheard*' on the analysis map, reflecting how their affective labour often remains imperceptible within the carceral system, yet this very invisibility creates spaces of possibility where alternative pedagogical relations can flourish against the disciplinary regime.

Donald's image of the mask-like bird head (chapter 8, figure 29), drawn during the walking intra-view and used in the visual matrix, links to his imperceptibility as it symbolises the deterritorialisation of identity, allowing him to navigate prison space through a becoming-other that protects his vulnerability while enabling new modes of expression and connection. Teachers also shared the imaginary of an ant colony in the visual matrix that suggested the prison work they engaged with was imperceptible to the outside world, masked by other workings of the prison that prioritise security over learning.

Evelyn presented herself as becoming-imperceptible in different ways; her ability to move through different spaces in prison and intra-act directly with prisoners on the wings allowed her to develop a hyper-visibility and familiarity that distinguished her positioning from other teachers (Chapter 8). While readily recognised by prisoners, Evelyn blended into the backdrop of the prison space, using her outreach mobility to forge bonds and support learner potential through care, which is often in antithesis to the wing space expectations.

Evelyn's embeddedness within carceral flows may make her activities imperceptible to surveillance, as she moves under the radar. As Manning (2016) notes, becoming-imperceptible involves finding the proximities and zones of indiscernibility that open creative potential. Hence by permeating the boundaries between educational and carceral spaces, teachers create ruptures and reterritorialise the space. Recognising this reveals how teachers mobilise strategic imperceptibility to cultivate empowering relationships against the prison codes of control. In Evelyn's case, it appears that she was self-aware of her becoming as a process, in which she recognised the boundaries within the assemblage of the prison and her own life. Being aware of the complexity of experience and the paradoxes of prison education, has enabled her to be more resilient than other teachers in the same

space. That said, I was also aware of my becoming, as was identified in my personal memos (Chapter 11); I could sense my becoming-prisoner and amalgamation into the prison-education-machine, yet it did not enable my resilience, as I chose to leave due to the moral distress the role impressed upon me.

12.4.2. Carceral Soundscapes

The notion of carceral soundscapes was previously discussed in Chapter 2; the consideration of affect through and with noises, sounds and music of the carceral space allows me to examine how these sensory environments can influence the affective dimensions of teacher experiences and the subsequent impact on their roles as teachers. As researcher, I had recognised the prison as a noisy space; noises that I became used to and noises that still make me feel unsettled when I return to them. This aligns with participant experiences in the visual matrix (Chapter 9) who on hearing the recorded sound of gates being locked in the prison, stated '*it brought like a weird. Like PTSD almost <laughs>*'. Thus, confirming that the affects linger even when we have left the space, however, the laugh masks this recognition as they still conform to the expectations of the role.

The ambient atmosphere of the prison was characterised by a constant rhythm of institutional sounds: the harsh mechanical clang of heavy security gates, the metallic jangling of keys, reverberating whispers, sporadic shouts and the constant background disruption of radio chatter. These sounds, though sometimes faint, created a persistent auditory reminder or intra-ruption of the carceral environment, permeating the space and both imperceptibly and perceptively influencing the affective atmosphere.

Prisons are recognised as 'peculiar places' that possess the capacity to both restrict and overwhelm the senses (Jewkes, 2014, p. 389); the differing sounds encountered have distinct sensory characteristics that teachers endure as part of their daily routines. The teachers experiencing this are then in a heightened embodied mode of sensitivity, not sure if they need to be on alert, ready for any violent episodes that they can become implicated. The noise of the prison space becomes agential in the teacher experiences. This was evident in my personal memos (Chapter 11) which demonstrate how the prison sounds and need for alertness can reverberate well beyond the experience, demonstrated when I was still anxious of doors being locked and unlocked whilst sitting in the reception of my son's school, even after I had left the prison role.

The 'ubiquitous presence' of music which is loud and often contains derogatory lyrics, can be an attempt to portray aggression in the hyper-masculine prison culture of the jail (Rice, 2016, p. 7). The space on the wings, however, is not the teachers' space to control; the loud music marks the territory of the prisoners' cells. Johnston (2016) discusses the acoustical agency of prisoners, using sounds, voice projection, and music to re-gain agentic control of the space (as discussed in Chapter 2). In this instance, teachers found themselves stripped of acoustical agency in a space where they could not control the affective reverberations thus leading them to adapt.

The sonic environment of prison was unavoidable; for example, when hearing loud music during the walking intra-views, I did not (at the time) notice the booming background beat of the music being played out of the cell windows, yet when re-listening to the recordings it had an intense resonance. <music gets louder>. However, many of the teachers were unaware of the affect the prison rhythms and intra-ruptions were having on their wellbeing or capacity to undertake their roles effectively. As Wolf (2020) noted 'No matter how eager the students were to learn... some prison logistics inserted themselves into the classroom' (p. 211). For some teachers, the action to 'zone out' may have provided the ability to proceed with the roles in the moment but these affects could have longer-term impacts on their ability to be fully present both in prison spaces and their lives outside of that space.

12.4.3. Embodied tensions

The teachers' embodied sense of the prison atmosphere relates to the emotional geographies that Turner *et al.* (Turner, 2016; Turner, Moran and Jewkes, 2022) claim are exercised in carceral spaces. The affective charge, evident in body language and unspoken feelings, materialises the structures of control and confinement. Alice described this embodied perception as visible in prisoners but shared how teachers had to hide it (Chapter 8), she emphasises how teachers perceive external affects and try to internalise them. This was also evident in my final personal memo, as I recalled an incident of a prisoner pretending to hit me, which profoundly affected me, yet I did not at the time show any affect in front of the prisoner or colleagues. As Schefer and Liebling (2008) note, this 'moral performance' (p. 266) within the prison might bear down on all within its walls, imposing pressures to conform an emotional display that adheres to institutional expectations.

The demand teachers may feel to suppress their reactions illustrates how the spatio-power relations impact on both prisoners and staff, enforcing an emotional script aligned with carceral order

(Turner, Moran and Jewkes, 2022). The teachers' own sense of surveillance and regulation around expressing their authentic feelings, mirrors the hyper-monitoring that prisoners endure daily. The atmospheric climate of the prison then functions as an additional form of governance over minds and bodies (Crewe *et al.*, 2014). Phillips (2020) demonstrated how constant identity masking in prisons significantly impacts the mental health of those within such environments. This inquiry revealed teachers experiencing similar psychological burdens, as exemplified by Alice's struggle with authentic self-expression when she stated she was '*not allowed to show it*' in relation to her emotions, forcing her to become a '*smaller version*' of herself (Chapter 8). Similarly, Donald exhibited contradictory statements; claiming the prison environment didn't affect him while simultaneously acknowledging his mental anguish and trauma, described as '*pain*'. These experiences highlight the intricate relationship between authenticity and resilience within carceral spaces.

Within this context, the prison emerges not merely as a physical structure but as what Coole and Frost (2010) describe as a place of 'embodied humans within a material world' (p. 3), where affect materialises through bodily experiences and institutional constraints. This material-discursive entanglement means that prolonged exposure to these encounters triggers negative embodied affectivities that are no longer isolated to specific events but remain with teachers well beyond their departure from the prison space.

12.4.4. Gendered experiences

As discussed in chapter 2; Fransson and Johnsen (2015) observed the affect and sensations on female bodies in male prison settings: 'I'm seldom as aware of my gender as when I am in male prisons' (p. 187). Gender differences presented in the inquiry, when teachers navigated authenticity in the prison space. The female participants and I frequently navigated sexually charged environments. This was evident through experiences such as wolf whistles during walking interviews (Chapter 8) and sexually objectifying comments about my body that I overheard in the classroom setting (Chapter XX). In this context, the performance of a persona by female teachers especially, may serve as a necessary means of self-protection in an environment where learners could potentially be perceived as predators.

The prison-education-machine operates distinctly for female educators through complex embodied experiences that reveal the entanglement of power, gender, and institutional control. As described

in Chapter XX, female teachers navigate a hyper-masculine environment where their bodies are simultaneously sites of objectification and institutional regulation. This dual positioning creates an affective burden whereby women must constantly negotiate harassment from prisoners (and even male prison staff as discussed in Chapter XX) while adhering to restrictive dress codes that paradoxically position them as responsible for male behaviour.

While accommodation to the rules is pragmatically necessary within the prison context to prevent escalation of abusive behaviours, it nonetheless reveals something more profound. The normalisation of this dynamic, evidenced by the participant laughter and dismissal of verbal abuse, functions as a micro-community that makes visible the otherwise often tacit misogyny permeating broader society. This generates a tension between professional identity and gendered subjectivity, creating a 'becoming-prison' experience where teachers' bodies become entangled in complex assemblages of power, gender, and institutional control that reflect and intensify broader social conditions.

For male teachers like Donald, authenticity was complicated by expectations to project security and order, even when experiencing trauma. Brian, in contrast, used vulnerability strategically, sharing his mental health struggles through a photograph that served as a visual prompt for prisoners to connect with imperceptible affects. The use of the photograph resonates with the Deleuzian concept of percepts (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988); the photo provides a visual, material prompt for prisoners to perceive invisible affects and forces related to Brian's mental health struggles (resonating with the visual matrix method: Chapters 7 and 9). The image-affects impact the teacher-student relation bringing together a collective unconscious becoming of mental health and suffering (Manley, 2018).

These gender-specific negotiations of identity reflect how the prison environment shapes different embodied experiences for male and female teachers, while all must navigate the tension between institutional conformity and being their authentic selves. The emotional labour required to balance institutional expectations with personal autonomy contributes to professional exhaustion and moral distress as has been evidenced throughout the inquiry.

12.4.5. Affect Aliens

The term 'alien' appeared in the visual matrix discussion several times, mentioned by different participants; while initially abstract within the matrix's imaginaries, its consistent recurrence points

to an affect of the prison space that operates beneath conscious awareness. Some teachers in the intra-views shared how they felt 'othered' by prison officers, as Claire explained in Chapter 8 regarding her security experiences: '*it's foreign and really weird coming through a gate every morning*'. Ahmed (2023) describes being an 'affect alien' as experiencing a space differently than expected or prescribed. In prisons, female teachers like Claire embody this concept through their femininity in a masculine environment and their prioritisation of care over security. This affective alienation manifests when teachers' care-oriented approaches encounter institutional suspicion.

Jacobi (in Schlosser, 2021) advocates for an ethics of care and intentional compassion in carceral settings, challenging prisons' emotional architecture. Wright (2005) identified this fundamental conflict, acknowledging the contradiction educators face when practising a 'helping' profession (p. 22) within spaces designed for objectification and punishment. The juxtaposition of rehabilitation ideals against punitive structures creates tension when care-oriented practices meet institutional resistance, highlighting systemic barriers to implementing effective pedagogy.

The teacher experiences highlighted an affective dissonance when navigating spaces where their professional imperative to care contradicted the carceral logic of emotional detachment. The personal memo (Chapter 11) documenting a colleague reported for hugging a distressed prisoner-learner illustrates how basic human compassion is simultaneously framed as institutional deviance and potential danger within the sexualised prison environment. This links to Foucault's recognition that prison space can never be a neutral ground and those that hold the power/knowledge shift and change (Foucault and Gordon, 1980). More poignantly, this reflects not only institutional control but also acknowledges the complex reality where these gestures might be misinterpreted or manipulated within a context where boundaries between care and sexuality for female teachers are perpetually scrutinised.

The characterisation of prison teachers as 'abnormal' or 'alien' can also be linked to Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of becoming-minoritarian, a process of challenging and destabilising dominant representations and norms in society. Teachers such as Kevan, when he discusses the '*micro-community*' in Chapter 10, can be seen as becoming-minoritarian, as teachers exist outside the boundaries of what is considered 'normal' in mainstream education but also in contrast to what is normal in prison society. Yet, as teachers spend more time in that space, it is hard for them to distinguish between what is deemed 'normal' or not, as they are also arguably becoming-machine and becoming-prisoners.

12.4.6. After-effects

When Brian speaks of '*after-effects*', (Chapter 10) he refers to tangible, recognisable consequences like shock, stress, or heightened vigilance that follow violent or traumatic prison events. These are effects that can be named and categorised within existing frameworks of understanding. They represent the observable aftermath of trauma that teachers can identify and articulate. However, when viewing the prison-education-machine as in a state of 'crisis-ordinariness' (Berlant, 2011), the imperceptible, accumulating traumas or 'carceral reverberations' (Stuit, Turner and Weegels, 2024, p. 107) may not be appreciated as teachers cannot see or feel the effect, yet the lingering 'after-effects' are evident in the inquiry, despite not being registered by all participants.

Brian's hesitant articulation in the same passage ('*unfortunately, or fortunately*') revealed not just individual ambivalence but the complex intra-action between human responses and inhuman carceral systems. This multiplicity manifests across various dimensions of the prison experience. This finding suggests that prison educators require targeted professional support that acknowledges the delayed emergence of trauma and the complex emotional labour inherent in navigating carceral spaces, where desensitisation acts as both a professional coping mechanism and a potential barrier to wellbeing.

The process of desensitisation demonstrates how the inhuman prison system gradually reshapes human affective capacities. Teachers like Brian find themselves caught between maintaining their human sensitivity and adapting to institutional demands that require affective detachment, which would make working in such environments unsustainable. The '*after-effects*' Brian describes point to temporal dimensions of this human/inhuman system. The carceral reverberations aren't contained within institutional time or space but escape the prison boundaries, affecting teachers beyond the walls and working hours. Claire shared this experience as she worried about learners when she left the prison yet recognised her entanglement as an actor in the prison regime. Teachers, therefore, simultaneously occupy positions as empathetic humans and institutional agents. This creates an affective multiplicity where emotions aren't simply felt but are produced through the tensions between human care and inhuman institutional obligations. The multiplicity of these affects becomes even more apparent when exploring how prison spaces themselves shape experiences and responses among those who navigate them.

12.5. Knot/nœuds 3: Spatial Dynamics and Material Agency

This knot discusses how physical spaces and material objects shape experiences and intra-actions in prison education. I discuss how teachers and prisoners ‘forget where they are’ and how material agents may contribute to these spatial dynamics.

12.5.1. Forgetting where you are

Alice's suggestion (in Chapter 8) to prisoners: *'let's forget about prison'* points to a privilege that teachers retain. She can mentally transport herself outside the confines of the prison, while for prisoners, the affective haunting presence (Gordon, 2008) of incarceration makes it difficult to achieve a temporary escape which Alice was able to enact. Claire also shared how she found it *'easy to forget when you look around in that little classroom'* yet this was arguably due to the environment she had created, when she attempted to *'soften the bars'* with plants in her classroom; the plants as agential agents were employed to help prisoners (and teachers) forget where they were. Both practices highlight how the materiality of the prison space shapes and constrains not only prisoner but also teacher experiences. This strategic 'forgetting' functions as a psychological buffer that momentarily shields teachers from the prison reality, yet as revealed in my personal memos, this illusion dissipates instantly when confronted with reminders of threat-potential, such as when a prisoner handles a scalpel in an art class (Chapter 11), forcing an abrupt cognitive shift from classroom to carceral space.

In Chapter 8, Evelyn explained that her forgetting provided what she recognised as a *'false sense of security'*, though this security was illusory, she considered it necessary to continue functioning in her role. This ‘forgetting’ by teachers, is therefore a mechanism to maintain a positive outlook; a way to facilitate the teaching in a challenging space. When teachers engage in activities like decorating the class space, or listening to the radio in the classroom, they can momentarily forget their surroundings, only to be abruptly reminded by spatial effects that bring them back to where they are (Baer and Ravneberg, 2008). Others, including myself, found it more difficult to forget the longer I worked there, perhaps due to the inquiry; I was attuned to the affects of the prison space, this feeling was recorded in my personal memos: *'You never quite forget where you are'* and in my dreams of the prison (discussed in Chapter 11).

Despite my awareness and frustrations of the prison space, I felt a guilt about leaving (Chapter 11) aligning to Meyer's (in Corbett, 2024) experience 'We teach; we leave. It's always jarring to leave your students behind and return to your regular life' (p. 92), and by Claire in Chapter 8 when she described how the prisoner-learners often relied on her. Despite physical absence when away from the prison, the prison's weight lingers, shaping interactions with others outside of that space; confirmed by Evelyn when she realised the experiences of the prison may have affected her personality (Chapter 8). Teachers therefore must reconcile with their freedom alongside the relative immobility (social and physical) of their students (Giroux, 2021). They may be able to forget in the moment of teaching, but the prison affects linger far beyond the classroom space, carried through the porous walls, affecting them outside as well as inside.

12.5.2. Material Agents

Material agents such as the bars on the windows, helped form the '*background of where we are*' as indicated by Alice's remarks in Chapter 8. This also included less obvious artefacts such as the plants and photocopiers. When something goes wrong for teachers, for example, a broken photocopier or blocked access to IT resources, the material exclusions were amplified (Alice, Chapter 8). This highlights the entanglement of material objects; how these more-than-human agents form an important aspect of the prison assemblage, with an ability to affect the atmosphere and emotions of the teachers and prisoners.

These agential materials can also enact the dominance of the prison environment, denying teachers the relative autonomy they feel in mainstream education spaces. Unlike in traditional school settings, where technical problems may be a minor inconvenience, there are no quick fixes or alternate resources. Most prisons lack Wi-Fi and have very limited physical resources. This small intra-ruption therefore, became magnified with the sense of material fragility, triggering embodied affects of frustration among the teachers in this context.

Teachers shared how the prison gates, doors and physical restrictions impacted their working day; as intra-ruptions these elements created additional barriers in some moments, but also safety in others. The keys themselves functioned as powerful material-discursive agents within the prison assemblage. For me and other participants, the physical weight of carrying these keys produced a parallel psychological burden; a constant, embodied reminder of our paradoxical positioning within the carceral system. The jingling sounds announced our 'key-holder' presence, marking our

differential mobility and power compared to prisoners, while simultaneously signifying our responsibility and entanglement within the prison-education-machine. This sensory experience of key-carrying represents a form of what Foucault (1991) might term 'disciplinary power' (p. 194) turned inward, as teachers' bodies become both instruments and subjects of institutional control. The keys thus materialise the complex tensions between care and security, freedom and constraint, that define the prison teacher experience. My personal memos (Chapter 11) share my frustrations of navigating security and several locked gates when traversing the prison. The sensory and embodied method of walking intra-views in situ of the prison, connected participants to these experiences and enabled greater articulation related to the perception of the space (O'Neill and Hubbard, 2010).

12.5.3. Spatial Dimensions of Affect

Jewkes (2014) highlights that prison spaces are 'spatially and temporally defined' (p. 388), creating distinct affective landscapes that teachers must navigate. The teachers' spatial perceptions demonstrate how affective responses aren't uniform but are created by specific environmental contexts and past experiences that continue to reverberate into the present.

Both Donald and Evelyn felt safer on the residential 'wings' due to the increased presence of prison officers. This reinforced 'the wings' as affectively different prison territory with more rigid and specific disciplinary rules, in contrast to the education space, which has been described as a liminal space (Wright, 2005; Turner, 2016; Jewkes and Laws, 2021). Donald shared his sense of vulnerability about the education building, following a hostage incident (Chapter 8) despite feeling '*at ease*' on the wings; reinforcing the idea that specific carceral spaces take on distinct meanings and elicit different emotional responses, where affect lingers.

This confirms Moran's (2016) assertion that carceral spaces can be socially constructed and are on a spectrum from soft to hard, with harder spaces being more explicitly bounded and secured. The wings, though sites of confinement, felt to Donald like secure prison territory due to the visible presence of officers. In contrast, the education rooms represented more porous, softer spaces with weaker boundaries. Wright (2005) maintained that some teachers develop a sense of 'paranoiac' space (p. 24) due to the constant threat of violence within the institution, Donald's experience certainly aligns to this notion. As does Claire's as she avoided the VP wing, and in my own deviation during the walking intra-views (Chapter 7) when trying to avoid a space occupied by prison officers.

For prisoners, education departments function as 'third spaces' for prisoners (Soja, 1998; Wilson and Reuss, 2000; Bhabha, 2004; Wilson, 2004) where prisoner identities shift through intra-actions with teachers rather than officers. Many prisoners experience these environments positively, as 'sacred' and a 'loophole' (Malakki in Ginsburg, 2019, p. 18), offering temporary escape from incarcerated identities. Yet for teachers, these spaces exist at a complex borderland (Wright, 2005) between educational sanctuary and institutional constraint, simultaneously functioning as their daily workplace while remaining socially and affectively distinct from conventional teaching environments in mainstream education.

This spatial-affective dimension was evidenced when Ingrid encountered cockroaches and rats in the prison staff room (Chapter 10), she struggled to reconcile these dehumanising conditions with her commitment to create humanising educational spaces. Yet over time, this was normalised, and she learnt to see past the environmental conditions, focusing instead on the benefits of the role and what she could control. Teachers must therefore practice what Castro and Brawn (2017) term an 'emplaced praxis' (p. 117), recognising the deeply situated nature of teaching within facilities characterised by dehumanisation, boredom, isolation, complex power dynamics, and safety threats (Liebling, 1999; Crewe, 2009). Teachers' affective labour in creating these transformative learning environments, despite the 'background' remains unacknowledged.

12.5.4. Borderlands

Prison teachers exist at the periphery of multiple systems, inhabiting what Wright (2005) terms the 'borderlands' (p. 36), as previously discussed in Chapter 2. Wilson (2004) captures this positioning as being 'caught in the no-mans-land between policy and people' where practitioners serve 'two masters': (p. 194), institutional prison demands and prisoner-learners' needs. This was evidenced when Alice (Chapter 8) described her daily negotiations with prison officers, '*keeping them onside*' to secure resources while simultaneously appreciating their negative perspectives towards education. The visual matrix further revealed this through paradoxical terms such as light/dark and structure/abstract, highlighting teachers' boundary-spanning roles.

The teachers' liminal existence creates what Irwin (2008) describes as 'an intense and emotional experience' (p. 520), with education spaces feeling perpetually 'on the periphery' of prison infrastructures. This manifested concretely through participants' visual maps created during walking

intra-views, where they deliberately avoided certain prison areas that evoked discomfort, physically demonstrating Beauchamp's (2010) concept of being an outsider on the inside.

Claire's reflection on teaching in the VP wing exemplifies the moral complexity of this position. Her nervous laughter when describing harassment from other incarcerated men shows how educators become marked by association, their professional commitment to teach all prisoners reinterpreted as moral corruption. This spatial stigma extends beyond prisoners to affect teachers themselves, requiring navigation of both physical geography and moral terrain through constant border-crossing.

The boundary traffic which Moran (2013) identifies, was exemplified by Brian, who reconfigured borders by bringing photographs from the 'outside' and sharing his mental health experiences with prisoner-learners. Similarly, when Kevan recognised parallels between his own negative schooling experiences, creating different opportunities for his learners, he positioned himself at the intersection of past and present, another borderland requiring navigation.

Despite their peripheral positioning, teachers create vital sanctuaries within the prison constraints, demonstrating that 'with careful facilitation by appropriate staff' (Szifris, Fox and Bradbury, 2018, p. 57), education cultivates positive environments. Operating in spaces that differ physically, temporally, and emotionally (Jewkes and Laws, 2021), teachers harness their borderland position to foster learning, turning limitations into pedagogical opportunities.

12.6. Knot/nœuds 4: Navigating Tensions and Complexities

This knot focuses on how prison educators navigate the paradoxical contradictions and complexities of the prison space. I discuss how they develop resilience within the system to enable their efficacy as teachers.

12.6.1. Linguistic Distancing: 'lads'

Drawing on Maturana and Varela's concept of 'linguaging a world' (2008), the teachers' adoption of the term '*lads*' represents far more than a simple lexical choice. This linguistic shift embodies a profound transformation in how teachers experience and create their prison world. When teachers begin using '*lads*', they signal their integration into the prison community, moving from outsider to

an insider/outsider/in-between status. The term 'lads' carries within it specific ways of relating to prisoners that blur the traditional student-teacher boundary while maintaining necessary professional distance. Through this language practice, they simultaneously acknowledge their learners' prisoner status while trying to humanise them. This linguistic evolution reveals how teachers' experience of prison education is created through their participation in the prison's social norms.

Teacher-participants were unaware of the power the term 'lads' may have in the make-up of the prison-education-machine. Whether (as discussed in Chapter 8) the term was used to soften the relation or make the prisoners seem 'smaller' and less scary, was not a conscious choice but instead was an indicator of the imperceptible powers that are pervasive in developing demarcations via the language choices. Bringing these into conscious awareness, may not change the actions of teachers, but may enable them to be more reflexive in the way they approach language and dialogue with their prisoner-learners.

The recurring phrase '*not the lads*' (used by Alice in Chapter 8, Kevan and Evelyn in Chapter 10, and in my personal memos in Chapter 11) reveals a crucial complexity. When teachers acknowledge prison affects or decide to leave prison education to protect their mental health, they consistently emphasise that the 'lads' are not the reason. Teachers explicitly attribute any negative affects to metric-focused assessment measures, structural limitations, and staff attitudes, 'not the lads'. However, as explored in Chapter 11, this linguistic pattern may serve as a protective mechanism rather than a straightforward statement of fact. Teachers' professional identity is deeply rooted in student-centred care, creating a potential cognitive dissonance when negative feelings arise from intra-actions with 'the lads' themselves. By displacing blame onto institutional structures, teachers can maintain their self-image as compassionate educators while navigating the complex emotional landscape of teaching individuals who have committed serious crimes. This deflection may reflect teachers' unwillingness to acknowledge fully the affective impact of working with convicted criminals, perhaps functioning as a psychological buffer that preserves their professional capacity to engage meaningfully in this challenging environment.

The linguistic demarcation transcends semantic preference, exposing the fundamental paradox at the heart of prison education: teachers function simultaneously as agents of the carceral system and as resisters to its dehumanising effects. This duality creates a complex ethico-ontological space where educators navigate the competing morals of institutional compliance versus human

connection. The linguistic boundary-work performed through 'lads' represents unconscious attempts to resolve what is essentially irresolvable: teacher embeddedness within a system they disagree with. This reveals how prison teachers occupy a liminal position where language becomes both a tool for navigating institutional power structures and a means of creating minor gestures. Understanding this linguistic negotiation offers insights into how educators might develop more conscious, ethically-informed practices that acknowledge their complicity in carceral systems while pursuing meaningful educational relations.

12.6.2. Paradoxes

The notion of paradoxes surfaced through the visual matrix method (Chapter 9) as shown in the analysis map created by participants (figure 34). Contradictory concepts appeared through their imaginaries for example: calm/chaos and full of life/void of life. This aligns with Novek's (2017) understanding of prison education as both a burden and a gift, unravelling the paradox of rehabilitation within carceral systems.

Teachers may be affected by these tensions and need to consider how they reconcile the feeling of being in a paradoxical space. Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of *becoming* is particularly helpful, as it links to the importance of movement, change, and the creation of new identities. In the prison context, some teachers may experience this as a process of becoming-mad, as they negotiate the conflicting affects and strive to be agents of change.

Linking back to the work of Higgins *et al.* (2024) discussed in Chapter 2, the affective dissonance teachers encounter, can be seen as part of a larger affective economy (Ahmed, 2004) within the prison assemblage. This perspective aligns with Massumi's (1995) interpretation of affect as pre-personal intensity that shapes social realities. The teachers' affective dissonance becomes a force capable of reconfiguring the assemblage itself.

One notable paradox is the contrast between care and security; teachers often face complex situations that required both elements simultaneously. As Nichols (2017) acknowledged, teachers must navigate the 'complex realm of personal moral negotiation' (p. 7) creating an 'emotional conundrum' (Higgins, Smith and Swartz, 2024). Rather than seeking to resolve the paradox of prison education, teachers find value in attuning to their minor gestures (Manning, 2016) as sites of potential transformation. This perspective offers a way to navigate the affective dissonance without falling into the trap of paradoxical dualities such as good/bad or optimism/despair.

The teachers' minor resistances (enabling plants in the classroom, sharing photos of their experiences, and creating time for learners) where they are more 'authentic' to their values, creates hope and space for multiplicity, allowing different modes of being, thinking, and acting to co-exist within otherwise rigid governance frameworks. This approach mirrors Guattari's work at La Borde clinic (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983) where he developed schizoanalysis theory and practice to reduce hierarchy through collaboration. The teachers' resistances in a similar vein, disrupt the dominant power dynamics and open possibilities for alternative ways of doing prison education. This aligns with Albuquerque's and Pischetola's (2022) assertion of affect as future-making pedagogy which recognises how emotional and embodied practices can transform educational spaces by fostering connections that transcend institutional constraints and nurture possibilities for different futures.

12.6.3. Resilience

Resilience was identified as a process of becoming, entangled with the unique assemblage of the prison environment. This understanding challenges the use of the term 'resilience' as an individual responsibility, instead highlighting the need for system-wide approaches that acknowledge the unpredictable nature of prison teaching. The teachers who had shared the affects of wit(h)nessing trauma, (Evelyn and Donald, Chapter 10) stated that any support they required had to be sought by themselves. This abandonment suggests teachers are becoming-prisoners as they are amalgamated into the machine, affected by the space, without gaining adequate support. This was emphasised via the visual matrix analysis map (figure 34) with the words '*unseen and unheard*'.

The analysis of the excerpts which included wit(h)nessing of trauma (Ettinger, 2001), has in part been a therapeutic process for me. In acknowledging the traumatic events I wit(h)nessed and the restrictions that I faced, I have recognised the moral distress that contributed to my leaving the prison role. Sharing the affective load with colleagues and supervisors has been a coping mechanism; something I believe should form part of the prison teachers' praxis. This aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) analysis of how forces that appear oppressive can become essential components of an assemblage, 'You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn... you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems' (p. 178). In this prison context, by strategically maintaining rather than resisting these elements, teachers can work within the system to create positive learning spaces, demonstrating how institutional power can support rather than just constrain education.

12.8. Disentangling of knots

Through the process of unravelling these entangled knots, this inquiry has revealed the profound and often unacknowledged affective impact that prison teaching exerts on educators. I will not summarise the discussion here as the forthcoming ‘and, and, and’ (conclusions) chapter will do that for you. However, I will share my reflections on the inquiry as I edge closer to loosening my ties to prisons, the affective burden that haunts me and the complex web in which I was entangled.

My position as both researcher and former prison manager has afforded me a unique perspective on these affective dimensions. What has struck me most powerfully through this inquiry is the way teachers develop sophisticated coping mechanisms while often remaining unaware of how deeply the prison environment permeates their identities and wellbeing. The concept of ‘becoming-prison’ was particularly significant; teachers do not simply work in prisons; they become entangled with the prison assemblage in ways that transform their professional and personal selves. This was evident in my own experience, where despite recognising the sources of moral distress that ultimately led me to leave, the affective burden of the prison space continued to reverberate long after my departure.

While this inquiry has focused on the affects of prison education spaces, I also acknowledge the moments of transformation and connection that surfaced in the inquiry. Teachers’ ‘minor gestures’, creating welcoming classroom spaces, making time for meaningful interactions, sharing personal experiences, represent powerful acts of resistance within a system designed to prioritise control over care. These moments reveal the potential for agency even within highly constrained environments.

The process of loosening these knots has itself been transformative, though some resist complete unravelling by their very nature. As I conclude this chapter and prepare to present the ‘AND’ in the next, I recognise both the limitations of this inquiry, bound as it is to specific contexts and participants, and its potential to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of prison education.

What remains clear is that to sustain the valuable work prison educators undertake, prison education providers must develop systems of support that acknowledge the full spectrum of affective labour they perform, rather than perpetuating the expectation that they should simply endure the emotional weight of the carceral environment alone.

Chapter 13: &, &, &

This inquiry has brought to light the often-overlooked affective experiences of prison educators. The previous entanglements and knots reveal both the challenges and possibilities that exist within prison education spaces. Rather than proposing a simplified summary of experience, this conclusion acknowledges the multifaceted nature of prison education, offering insights into how educators navigate this complicated terrain while suggesting directions for future development, support, and further inquiry.

13.1. The Complexity of Prison Praxis

When I began this inquiry, my third research question sought to find pragmatic solutions to this complex problem: ‘How do we create a model of praxis that effectively supports and prepares teachers entering the prison environment?’ As the research progressed, it became evident that a single framework could not adequately capture the diverse experiences and needs of prison educators. The complex dynamic of the prison-education-machine defies reduction to a simple model, making my original question impossible to answer. In hindsight, I realise this question emerged from my desire to help the prison teachers I left behind, but came from a mindset, as this inquiry has shown, that cannot adequately grasp prison education's intricacies: a mindset aligned with neoliberal, metric-focused thinking that assumes complex social problems can be ‘fixed’ through prescriptive models and interventions. By considering a model of praxis, I was accepting the same logic that has contributed to the mechanistic, outcome-focused approach to prison education that my inquiry outcomes critique.

Through the *doing* of the inquiry, I have moved away from this reductive frame of mind towards an understanding that acknowledges the paradoxical, entangled nature of prison education that cannot be captured in a model. This transformation in my thinking reflects how deeply embedded one can become in dominant discourses, even when attempting to critique them. What became possible instead was an understanding of prison education as a web of entanglements where affect, materiality, power, and pedagogical praxis intersect in ways that resist standardisation and simple solutions.

The inquiry shows that prison educators exist within a paradoxical space where care and control, freedom and constraint, rehabilitation and punishment continuously intersect. Teachers navigate complex boundaries in their relationships with prisoner-learners, developing care-full approaches while maintaining necessary professional distance. The choices teachers make in their minor gestures (Manning, 2016), reveal how they unconsciously position themselves within the prison assemblage, simultaneously embracing their role while creating subtle forms of resistance.

13.2. Contributions

The inquiry has led to many contributions across different fields which I will summarise below. I hope these points will spark ideas and create space for others to experiment and *do* something differently in spaces as complex as prison education.

13.2.1. Methodological Contributions

- Utilising creative approaches and postqualitative inquiry in a complex prison setting, opens possibilities to use similar approaches in other complex, affective settings e.g., Youth Offender Institutes (YOIs), Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), hospitals and mental health institutes.
- The walking intra-view and Visual Matrix approaches enabled affects to be recognised in different ways to appreciate experiences.
- The inquiry acknowledges the entanglement of the researcher as a crucial element of the prison education assemblage; shown through the use of personal memos which capture the knottiness of experience.
- Use of textiles during analysis processes aids slow appreciation of the data and brings affects to the fore.

Methodologically, I've shown how research-creation and a post-qualitative approach can create knowledge that traditional approaches might miss. By combining walking methodologies with creative practices like textiles, drawing, and the visual matrix, I've demonstrated how affect can be recognised in different ways to appreciate and understand experiences. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic thinking and concepts like Barad's agential realism, these research-creation elements enabled new insights and methodological possibilities for exploring institutional spaces

where power, bodies, emotions, politics, environments and a multiplicity of other affects, intra-act in complex and often paradoxical ways.

The walking methodology enabled understanding of the spatial dimensions of prison education. By physically moving through prison spaces with educators, this approach captured the embodied, affective dimensions of their experiences. The incorporation of drawing through the creation of mapped routes and images of more-than-human aspects was foundational, connecting the methods across all three inquiry phases. This integration of movement and visual documentation proved particularly generative, thus demonstrating a creative approach that should be applied in future inquiries.

Rather than positioning myself as separate to these experiences, I acknowledged my own entanglements, which allowed me to trace how researcher presence itself becomes part of the educational assemblage, a methodological insight impossible without this innovative theoretical framework. Therefore, my personal memos as material-discursive elements portrayed the knottiness and my embeddedness in the inquiry. This was furthered in the liminal chapters XX and XY, which revealed further implications and border crossing of my life with the experiences in the prison and the wider theoretical concepts; an approach which led to a unique cartography of affective intensities.

By tracing these entanglements across institutional boundaries, I uncovered how educational practices in carceral settings are continuously (re)constituted through relations between bodies, spaces, policies, and histories; relations that could not have been understood through representational frameworks focused solely on either participant or individual experience. This approach moved beyond the limitations of representational thinking that typically segregates researcher from researched, theory from practice, and institution from lived experience; echoing Barad's agential realism and operationalising Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic thinking.

The role of creativity has been central to the study. Research-creation elements, including weaving, stitching and the visual matrix, allowed for explorations of affect beyond linguistic representation. These approaches enabled engagement with a 'slow ontology' (Ulmer, 2017, p. 201) which would benefit not only inquiry of prison education but all carceral spaces viewed through a Foucauldian lens (Foucault, 1991). This approach encourages awareness of the imperceptible affects of traumatic

or stressful environments where there is a duty to perform moral obligations, specifically the institutionally-imposed expectations to comply with normative standards of conduct, achievement, emotional expression and sartorial presentation that often conflict with authentic experiences and needs of individuals within these spaces.

13.2.2. Theoretical Contributions

- Development of the term 'intra-ruptions' which are co-created within prison assemblages highlighting ruptions which implicate praxis.
- Pressures of carcerality manifest as daily 'microshocks' for teachers creating normalised disruption, requiring coping mechanisms that protect short-term wellbeing but may burden in the long-term; this is made visible through affect theory.
- Recognition of teachers' entanglement in the prison-education-machine.
- Creation of the term 'da-nœuds-ta' to understand the knottiness of material, affective data that is often impossible to disentangle from the complexity of affective space.

Building on Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of smooth and striated space and Barad's intra-action, I developed the notion of 'intra-ruptions', these co-produced ruptions created from within prison assemblages, demonstrate how teachers are both part of and resistant to the prison-education-machine. Material and acoustic elements create 'intra-ruptions' in carceral settings; disruptions that uniquely shape the affective atmosphere of spaces. This included radio chatter, bird squawks, broken equipment; these more-than-human agents influence the educational environment in ways that highlight the entanglement and vibrancy of matter (Bennett, 2010).

The combined pressures of carcerality and assessment expectations manifest as daily microshocks (Massumi, 2015) that accumulate over time. This creates what Berlant (2011) terms crisis-ordinariness, a situation where constant disruption becomes normalised, requiring teachers to develop coping mechanisms that may simultaneously protect them in the short-term, while potentially contributing to long-term affective burden. Using affect theory, the research created opportunities to feel these nuanced intensities teachers encounter daily; experiences that remain largely invisible and unrecognised by institutions.

The conceptualisation of the term 'da-nœuds-ta' has provided understanding of how different elements (material, affective, pedagogical, political) knot together to create both constraints and

possibilities in data. This approach emphasises the generative tensions that exist within this context of prison education. These concepts, informed by affect theory, extend feminist (new) materialism thinking into carceral contexts and help explain that these paradoxes are not problems to be solved but are actually constitutive tensions that generate both constraints and possibilities.

13.2.3. Contributions to Knowledge

- The inquiry has made visible and tangible the difficulty of prison educator experiences.
- It has exposed the reality of teachers wit(h)nessing trauma, including self-harm, violence and the dehumanising treatment of prisoners, potentially leading to moral distress.
- The inquiry identified how all teachers were affected by the ever-present threat of violence and women staff are especially affected through objectification of their bodies, revealing how this was normalised in the prison setting.
- Most teachers did not recognise the significant affects the prison space was having on their wellbeing.
- Contractual obligations and outcome metrics in the prison create 'box-ticking' education that prioritises quantifiable results over meaningful relationships and care.
- Teachers carried embodied tensions of their experiences beyond the prison boundaries, as the affects manifested in their lives outside of the prison in different ways.
- Teachers show resistance to the constrained practices through 'minor gestures' which demonstrate care.

In terms of new knowledge, the research made visible just how difficult it can be to be a prison educator and how profoundly this impacts their whole life, inside and outside of the prison boundaries. Teachers enter these spaces with caring intentions to make a difference but have to work within striated environments which stifle creativity and care, potentially leading to moral distress.

A significant entanglement of this inquiry concerns the unrecognised affective labour performed by prison educators. The study unearthed that teachers wit(h)ness traumatic incidents including self-harm, violence, and the dehumanising treatment of prisoners, leading to trauma that often goes unacknowledged. Many teachers do not recognise these experiences as significant affects, instead framing them as expected 'after-effects' or short-lived discomfort.

The prison regime constrains teachers' bodies through spatial and temporal control, limiting their ability to fully embody their vision of relational teaching. This manifests differently across genders: women describe avoiding certain areas due to sexual harassment through heckling (reflecting a normalisation and objectification of women's bodies in prisons) and the prisoner's gaze, while men report heightened awareness of potential violence. Both demonstrate how the prison environment shapes and restricts teachers' embodied experiences in gendered ways, creating embodied tension that stays with them.

Contractual obligations and outcome-focused metrics transform education into what participants described as 'box-ticking', creating a prison-education-machine that prioritises quantifiable results over meaningful educational relationships. This mechanistic approach diminishes teacher autonomy, contributing to frustration and moral distress. I recognised from the teachers' experiences and my own that the heightened emphasis on security and control in prison education spaces overwhelms the care and compassion inherent in meaningful educational practice. Therefore, educators experience moral distress in their daily efforts to transform lives.

This tension between care and control is a constant knot that is unlikely to be resolved. But despite these constraints, teachers are creating smooth spaces through 'minor gestures'; these ruptures that humanise dehumanising environments, demonstrating lines of flight and a pedagogy of care.

13.3. Implications for Policy

- Policy makers must invest in comprehensive prison education initiatives that prioritise teacher training and preparation, equipping educators with strategies for maintaining their wellbeing alongside care-centred pedagogical approaches that are sensitive to prisoners' needs and adapted to the constraints of the prison space.
- Without ongoing, adequate support for prison teachers, emotional labour may lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, and professional departure. Approaches should support educators' capacity for care and could be developed through clinical supervision models which appreciate the prison environment and unique challenges.
- The inquiry outcomes challenge the current approach to a metric-focused, contractual arrangement between education providers and prisons.

- These metric-focused approaches ignore the relational and affective potential of care and compassion by prison educators to aid transformation.
- Tension between pedagogical ideals and institutional constraints creates complex daily navigation for educators.
- Structural paradoxes require alternative approaches that acknowledge complexity while fostering constrained change.

The findings of this research reveal the intricate web of challenges facing prison educators and the support systems necessary for their professional sustainability. Beyond simple recommendations, these insights point to the paradoxical nature of carceral education systems and how support frameworks might function within that complexity.

Alongside traumas teachers wit(h)ness, they frequently experience guilt due to their relative freedom compared to prisoners, creating emotional burdens that affect their professional identity and relationship with prisoner-learners. Without adequate recognition and support, this emotional and affective labour can lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, and eventual departure from the profession.

What emerges from participants' experiences is not a neat recommendation for better training, but rather an acknowledgment of the inadequacy of conventional preparation for the unique challenges of prison education. Participants agreed that preparation and training was insufficient, particularly regarding trauma exposure and the distinctive constraints of the carceral environment. Any approach to professional development would need to embrace the messiness and contradictions of the role, refusing the simplicity of 'quick fix' solutions.

This preparation must encompass trauma-informed pedagogical strategies, boundary management techniques, and approaches for navigating the emotional complexity of working with vulnerable populations within restrictive environments. Training programmes should address the psychological impact of wit(h)nessing trauma, strategies for maintaining professional boundaries whilst fostering genuine care, and methods for sustaining motivation despite systemic constraints. Furthermore, preparation must acknowledge the unique positioning of prison educators as both agents of institutional control and advocates for learner transformation, equipping them with frameworks for managing this inherent role conflict and the moral distress it generates.

Prison educators, like mental health practitioners working in challenging environments, would benefit from structured support beyond traditional professional development. Clinical supervision models used in mental health services, which provide opportunities to discuss difficult cases and their psychological impact, could be adapted to help teachers develop trauma-informed and care-centred pedagogical approaches while addressing the moral distress they experience. However, such supportive frameworks may be difficult to implement within the current culture of prison education, which centres completion of qualifications and employability skills to meet contractual requirements set by the MOJ and HMPPS.

The tension between pedagogical ideals and institutional constraints creates a complex knot that prison educators must navigate daily. While trauma-informed and care-centred approaches would address moral distress, the prevailing focus on qualification metrics creates a fundamental disconnect between teacher wellbeing and system requirements. This misalignment highlights a structural paradox embedded in the carceral education system itself. Rather than attempting to resolve this tension through conventional means, alternative perspectives and methodologies become necessary, ones that acknowledge complexity while still fostering change within constrained environments.

13.4. Stitching Through Complexity

Building upon the contributions and implications discussed above, I turn to my textiles practice as a medium to explore these entangled realities. Rather than presenting recommendations, this approach allows for engagement with the fullness of prison education experience while considering alternative possibilities.



Figure 64: Textiles panel with artefacts from the inquiry and 'implications' on hexagonal patches. Mixed materials. By the author.

The textile panel shown in Figure 64, incorporates the textile artefacts from throughout the inquiry, creating a visual and tactile representation of the research journey. Each implication has been stitched into hexagonal patches, inspired by traditional English paper piecing techniques. This visual arrangement serves as both documentation and provocation, inviting viewers to consider the possibilities differently. My approach draws inspiration from Malakki's observation, referenced in Chapter 2:

'For to be an educator is like being a needle and thread, while the students are the fabric. When people remark on an exquisitely

designed quilt, no one asks about the needle' (Malakki in Ginsburg, 2019, p. 17).

I deliberately employ this precision-oriented technique to embody the tension between structure and potential in prison education. In creating hexagonal quilt pieces, I must follow exacting techniques that counter my natural inclination to allow creativity to wander. Between sheer fabric and paper, I entrap insights from my inquiry, then connect these layers through disordered stitches, physically manifesting the dichotomy between my suggestions and the rigid reality of current prison education frameworks.

As shown in figure 65 (below), the hexagonal sections hold implications that can be materially engaged with, held both physically and mentally in a space for consideration of how this may come into being or not. The surrounding embroidery embraces necessary messiness, portraying the rhizomatic entanglements within the flux of institutional realities, policy limitations, and the complex human elements of prison education systems. This deliberate juxtaposition acknowledges that implementation requires navigating paradoxes rather than resolving them.

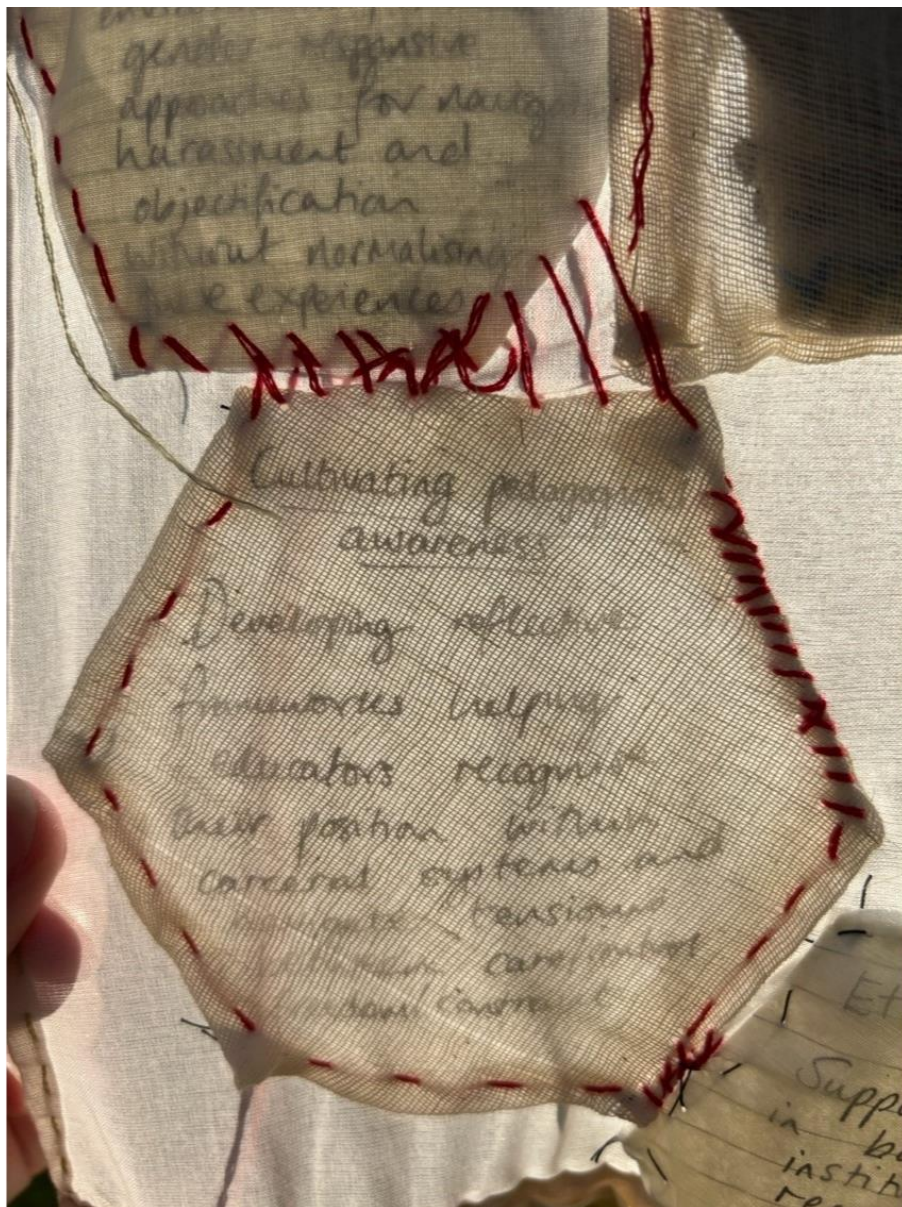


Figure 65: Implication of the inquiry: 'Cultivating Pedagogical Awareness'. Mixed materials. By the author.

Unlike the neatness of an 'exquisitely designed quilt' and prescriptive frameworks, the needle and thread (represented as educators in Malakki's quotation) enable other possibilities. As I worked on the surface of the textiles panel, the needle pierced from front to back; working in some cases blindly, as the fabric obscures the intention (Magi, 2015). The needle punctuates the striation of the weave and the expected conformity of the quilt. As Deleuze and Guattari indicate, unlike the technologies of weave or quilting, 'embroidery's variables and constants, fixed and mobile elements, may be of extraordinary complexity' (1988, p. 476). Thus, the needle and thread disrupt.

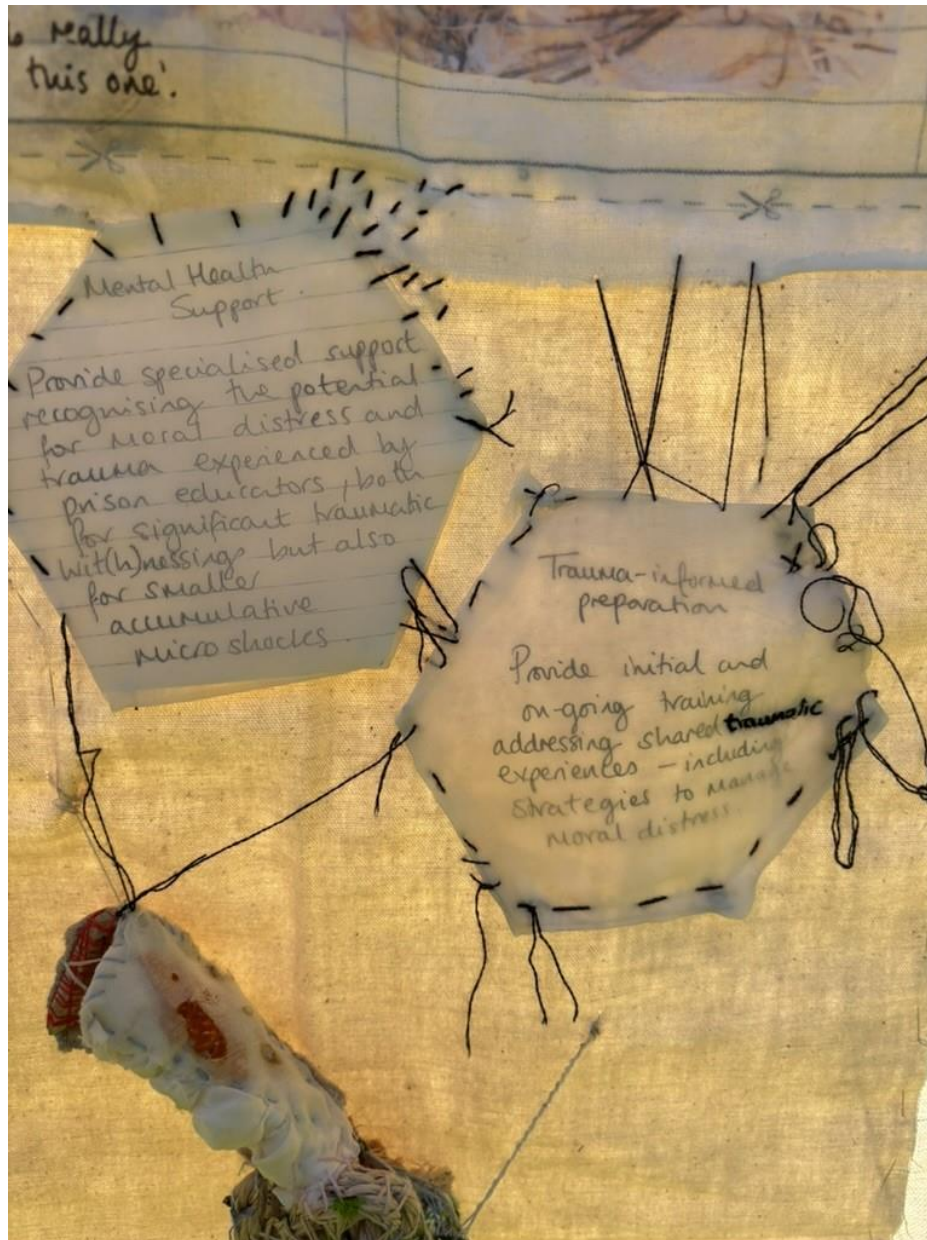


Figure 66: Implication of the inquiry: 'Mental Health Support' and 'Trauma-informed Preparation'. Mixed materials. By the author.

Figure 66 further illustrates how embroidery, like the scribble and scramble in Bussoti's musical score (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 379) referenced earlier (figure 5), communicates the potentiality of what could be, when creativity and expectation are working together. The embroidery and the teachers occupy both smooth and striated spaces, existing concurrently. The implications written within the hexagons serve as sense-making prompts, while the surrounding embroidery reminds viewers of implementation challenges. These partially obscured implications

offer some hope in a complex territory while acknowledging the difficulty of enacting change within a striated institutional culture.

The full textile panel can be viewed in the accompanying video below, where some implications within hexagons are intentionally difficult to read. The recording includes the sounds of the space as humans and more-than-humans intra-act with it, providing an affective dimension that complements the visual elements. I trust the affect of the textile piece and the reminders of the inquiry through the material artefacts is enough to leave an intensity which will linger with those who engage with these provocations.



[Link to video](#)

13.5. Future Research Directions

- Investigating how gender influences dynamics in prison education spaces, particularly sexualised interactions affecting female teachers' praxis.
- Dedicated research on affective dimensions to develop robust support systems and enhance retention of teachers.
- Exploring educators' 'becoming-prison' journey as they acclimatise to institutional regulations while developing identity.

- Using Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis framework to understand how institutional 'clockwork' affects embodied carceral education experiences for learners and teachers.
- Incorporating prisoner narratives alongside teacher experiences to understand 'minor gestures' shaping educational intra-actions.
- Exploring material agency in carceral settings: how objects, more-than-human beings and architectural constraints enable or restrict educational possibilities.

This inquiry unveils numerous avenues for future investigation across multiple disciplines and contexts. The first and most critical aspect that should be expanded upon is the gendered experiences of females working in prison settings, particularly for teachers. Understanding how gender influences dynamics remains vital for training prison staff, especially regarding the sexualised interactions identified as profoundly impacting female teachers. Such research could uncover how these dynamics affect practice and develop strategies to address, rather than merely endure these challenges.

Second, the emotional labour performed by prison educators specifically deserves dedicated attention. Enriching understanding of the affective dimensions of prison education would facilitate more robust support systems, enhancing teacher effectiveness and retention. Complementing this, a longitudinal analysis of educators' adaptation to prison environments could explore their 'becoming-prison' journey as they acclimatise to institutional regulations while developing their professional identity.

Additional research directions include exploring correlations between educational experiences in prisons and mainstream settings, particularly for neurodiverse individuals. Lefebvre's (1991) rhythmanalysis framework offers promising insights into how institutional 'clockwork' can affect embodied experiences within carceral education environments. Furthermore, incorporating prisoner perspectives alongside teacher narratives would enrich understanding of 'minor gestures' that shape educational intra-actions, providing multidimensional insights currently missing from the literature.

The material agency of carceral spaces, how physical environments, objects, and architectural constraints enable or restrict educational possibilities, represents another critical area for investigation. These interconnected research directions would contribute to a more holistic understanding of prison education, potentially informing both practice improvements and policy

development aimed at enhancing educational outcomes while acknowledging the unique constraints and opportunities within carceral settings.

13.6. Becoming-otherwise

Throughout this inquiry, I have experienced my own process of becoming-otherwise; a fundamental transformation through engagement with knowledges, relationships, and systems that disrupted my fixed identity and opened possibilities for new ways of being and thinking. This becoming-otherwise has manifested through my engagement with participants, and my entanglement with prison education. The disentangling of knots has not aimed to completely unravel the complexities but rather to loosen them enough to create space for new possibilities.

This struggle to present what might be considered a paradoxical 'inconclusive conclusion' embodies a central tension in postqualitative inquiry. As noted in Chapter 3, such approaches are sometimes critiqued for not focusing explicitly on their contribution to the public good (Greene, 2013). Yet postqualitative inquiry fundamentally asks what the research is *doing* and what possibilities it creates, rather than what definitive answers it provides. The implications offered throughout this inquiry are therefore necessarily rhizomatic and immanent, with room to grow, change, and develop according to who and what encounters them.

Beyond personal transformation, this inquiry makes three significant contributions to the field. First, it illuminates the hidden affective dimensions of prison education that shape teacher experiences. Second, it demonstrates how materiality, human and more-than-human relations fundamentally constitute educational spaces in ways that conventional educational theories often overlook. Finally, it provides methodological innovations that can be adapted to explore other institutional contexts where affect, power, and materiality intersect.

Rather than providing definitive answers, this research offers openings: 'tiny explosions, momentary intensities' (St. Pierre, 2024, p. 8), that can disrupt established patterns and reveal alternative perspectives. These momentary disruptions might create glimmers of different approaches to prison education. The entanglements of the prison-education-machine cannot be fully resolved, but in acknowledging these complexities, the research creates spaces where both prison teachers and

prisoner-learners might experience moments of transformation and connection despite institutional constraints.

The findings make visible the invisible; the affective labour, the material agencies, and the paradoxical experiences that shape prison education. In doing so, they contribute to a more complete understanding of the challenges and possibilities of teaching and learning in carceral spaces, offering pathways toward practices that support both educator wellbeing and meaningful educational experiences for prisoner-learners.

Any attempt to disentangle the knots of the prison-education-machine will require creativity. Throughout this inquiry, the textiles have guided understanding and created insights impossible to fathom in isolation. The textile piece in its entirety (figures 64 and 67) embodies both practical potential and complexity, where the forces of striation and smoothing co-exist and give rise to one another. As Deleuze and Guattari remind us, 'Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us' (p. 500), but it is in navigating these interwoven tensions, understanding institutional constraints whilst simultaneously offering pathways of resistance, that transformative possibilities emerge within the prison-education landscape.



Figure 67: Reverse of textile panel. Mixed Material. By the author.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Categories of male prisons in the England and Wales.

Category	Description
Category A	High-security prisons for male prisoners who pose the greatest threat to the public, police, or national security if they escape.
Category B (Where this inquiry is set)	Includes local and training prisons. Local prisons house prisoners taken directly from court (sentenced or on remand), while training prisons hold long-term and high-security prisoners.
Category C	Training and resettlement prisons where most prisoners are held. They focus on skill development to help prisoners find work and reintegrate into the community upon release.
Category D (Open Prisons)	Minimal-security prisons allowing eligible prisoners to leave on licence for work, education, or resettlement purposes. Only those assessed as suitable are placed in open conditions.

Adapted from: <https://prisonjobs.blog.gov.uk/your-a-d-guide-on-prison-categories/> [Accessed 18/02/2025].

Appendix 2: Walking intra-view schedule

Walking Interview schedule

Version 1: March 2022

- I will remind participants of the audio recording and invite them to draw at pause points during the walk.
- Participants will plan the route prior to the walk. They may look at the route they have mapped out again and can change their mind on that route if they wish to.
- I will use the map to mark where the drawings are completed
- I may be taking some brief notes as we walk.
- I will remind participants that if we encounter anyone during the walk, we will pause the interview and I will switch off the audio recording, to protect both parties' confidentiality. We will resume once we are out of their vicinity, however, any background noises of other people or animals may be recorded as part of the interview.

Thank you for agreeing to this interview, can you verbally confirm that you have read both the information sheet and consent form. I have your signature here to confirm your consent, are we still okay to audio record this?

Reminder: you are free to ask me to stop the interview at any point.

Once confirmed press **RECORD**

Questions below will be used as prompts during the walking interview, of which the methodology suggests a less formal interview process with a free-flowing reflective discussion.

<p>Suggested questions to prompt discussions</p> <p>Opening question: Tell me about your experience of being a teacher in the prison</p> <p>Additional Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you describe how you feel when you are in prison spaces?• How has that changed over the time you have worked here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do the security elements become normalised?• Do you think there is an element of madness in prisons?• How is the atmosphere created or changed in prison education?• Is there a stereotype of a teacher prison teacher?
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the boundaries of the prison have an impact on you personally? • How do you feel the prison impacts on your teaching? • Do you consider the impact of space and place on the learner when planning your teaching? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel an emotional intensity or emotional labour from working in the prison? • Do you ever forget you are working in a prison? • How does the constant surveillance or need for being searched impact on you? • Are your morals and views impacted by the prison? • Can you be your true self in the prison?
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Related to the drawings and map

- Why did you choose this route to walk?
- Can you describe what it is that you are drawing?
- What story do you think this object tells us about prison education?

If these objects were participants in this research, what do you think they would say about the influence prison space has on teachers?

Is there anything else you want to share with me?

END:

Thank you for being part of this research, your interview recording will be stored as outlined in the consent form and information sheet and a transcript of the interview will be available for you to check and amend prior to my analysis.

If you have any questions, please do contact myself or my DOS (contacts on info sheet).

Appendix 3: Images used in the Visual Matrix

What is a Visual Matrix?

Using collected images and sounds from the 'walking interviews' as a stimulus, we will share ideas, feelings, thoughts, associations and visual 'imaginaries' (images in our mind) arising from the images shown.

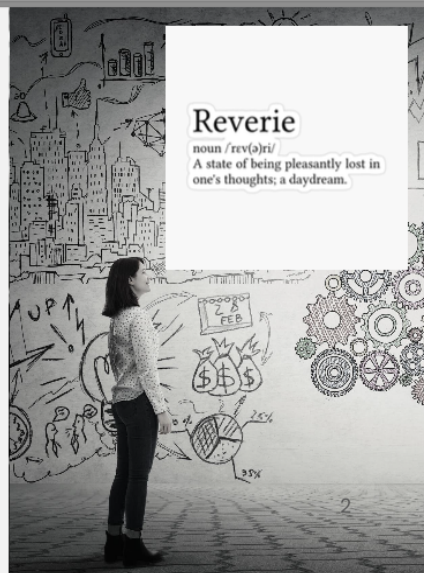
You are asked to keep in mind the research topic:

'Teacher experiences of prison education space & place'.

As these initial ideas are shared with the group, you will be asked to contribute any further associations and images which emerge based on other participant responses.

The visual matrix is like sharing daydreams, being in a state of 'reverie', sharing your immediate visual responses, rather than analysed thoughts or discussions.

After this activity, we will have a post-matrix discussion of the associations and connections made and will map them visually.



Rules for the Visual Matrix

- While the images are initially being shown please remain silent on mute, just be with your thoughts and imagination.
- I will then invite everyone to contribute if they wish to. I will also participate. As facilitator, if I feel there is not equal contribution, I may ask if individuals if they would like to share their ideas.
- There should be no interruptions when someone else is speaking, there is no time limit for each image or person, but we only have 45 minutes in total.
- Please listen attentively, cameras on, no mobiles or other distractions, if possible, you don't need to take notes.

Please note that you may recognize some of the images as your own or may want to compliment others but in the matrix, the images belong to the whole group, not individuals, therefore please refrain from 'discussing' the images themselves, instead you should be sharing what comes to your imagination in response.



Plan for the hour

Main session:

45 minutes

Sharing images and associations prompted by the images shared on the slides and those that are shared by the group.

Post-matrix session:

15 mins

Review what was shared, discuss and make connections, drawing on the white board what images have emerged.

Reminders

You have already signed to give your consent to audio and video record this session but if you no longer consent to this, please state now.

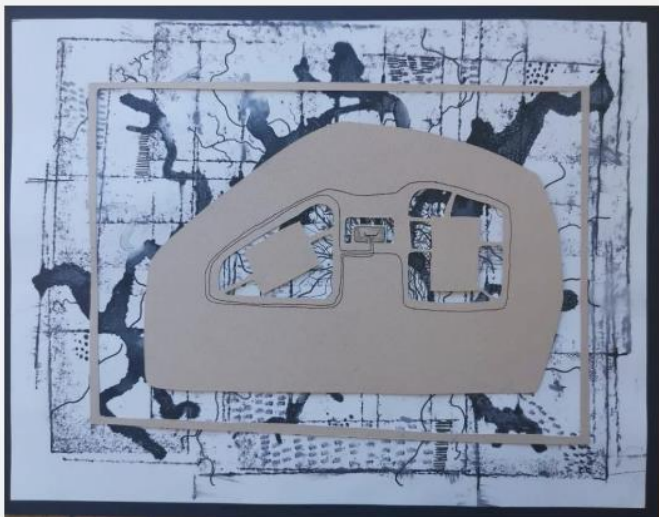
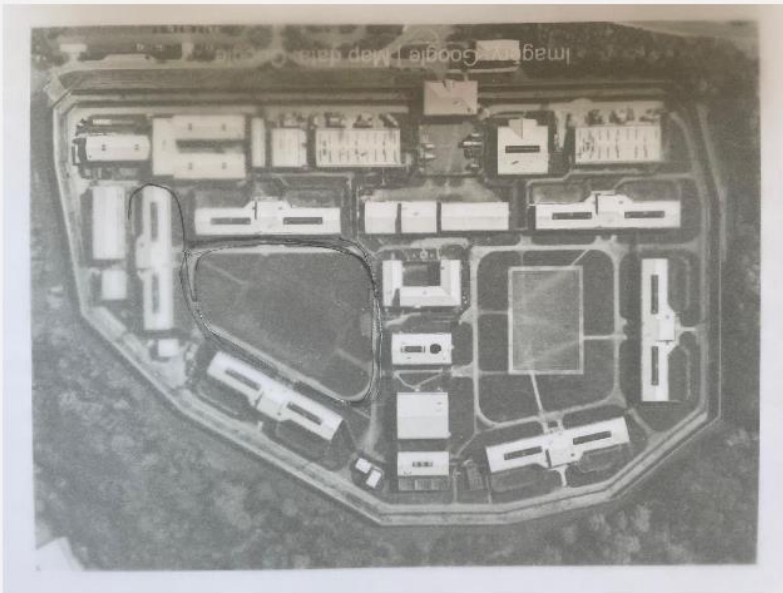
Teams will also complete automatic transcription, this will be shared with you after the event for you to agree or redact any information.

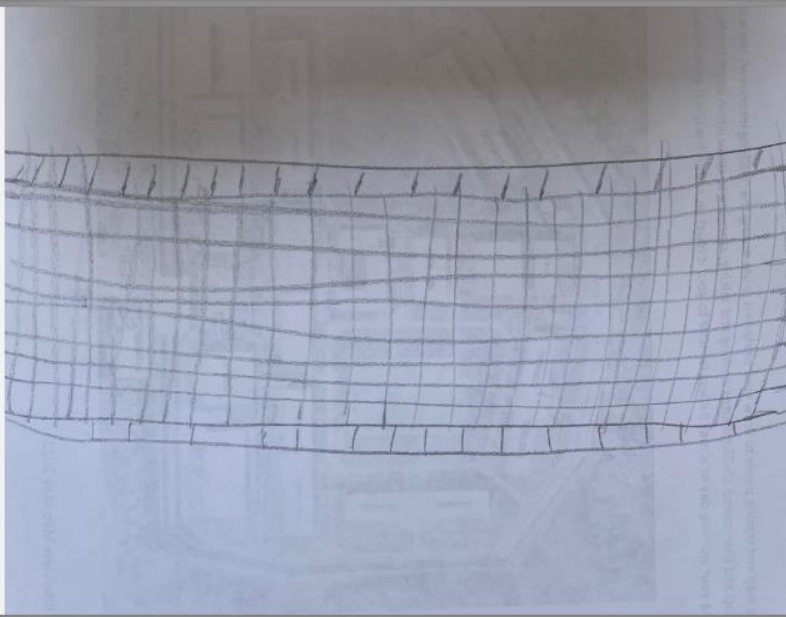
The final phase of the research will be a 1:1 interview, this can be your choice of either face to face in the prison (gate pass permitting) or via Teams online. I will be in touch via email shortly to arrange these interviews.

Any further questions before we start?

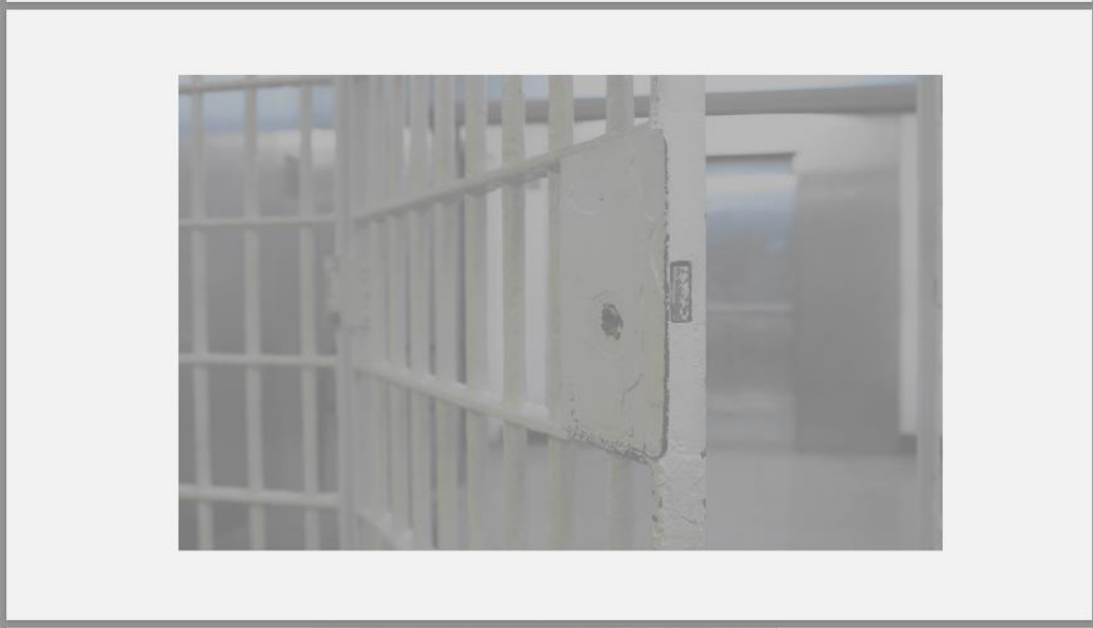
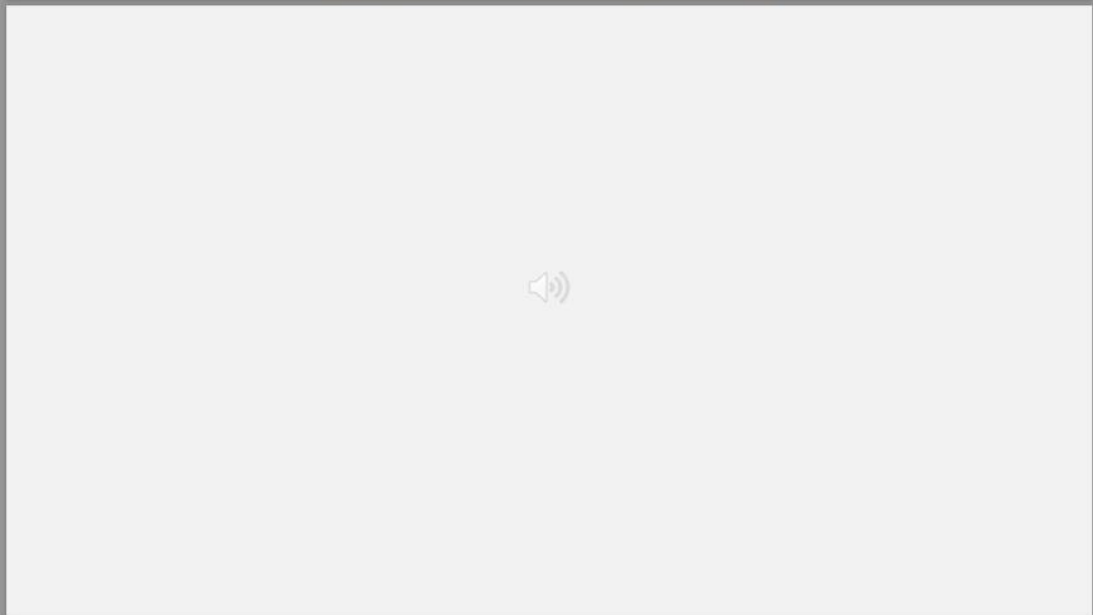
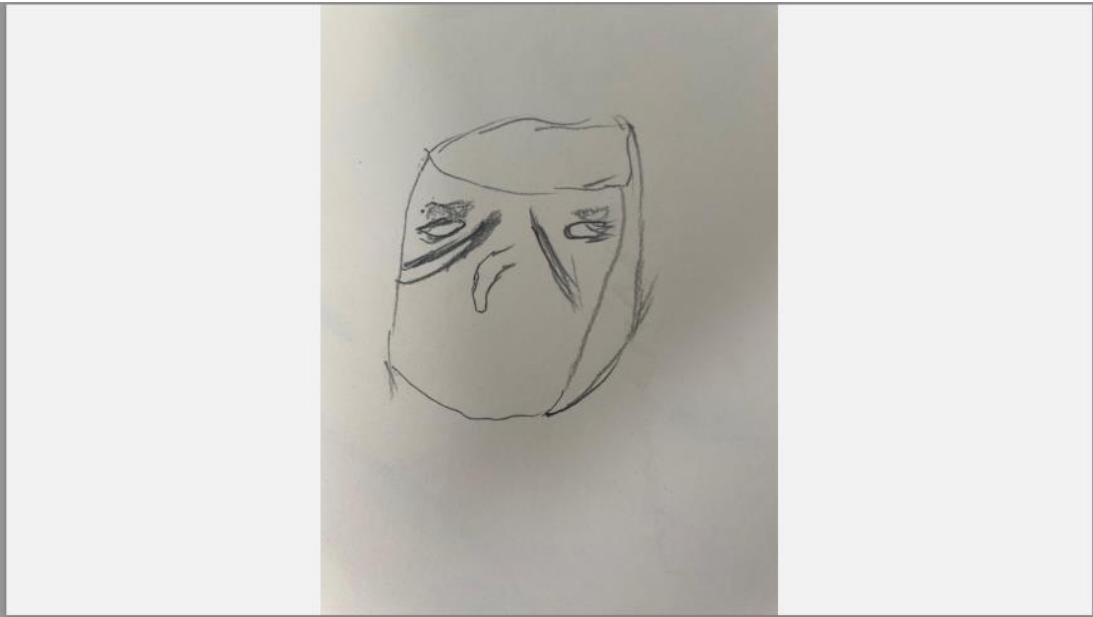


Visual Matrix



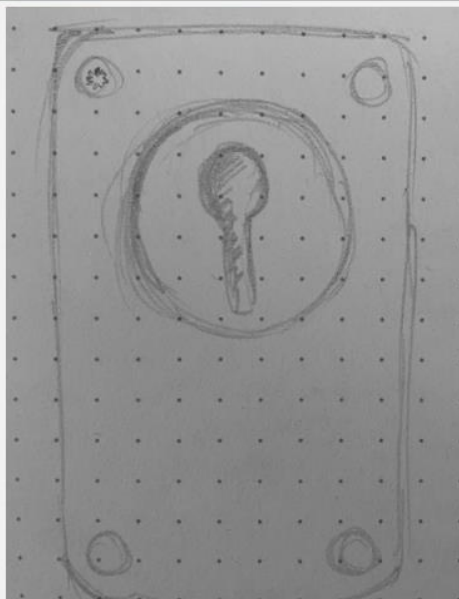
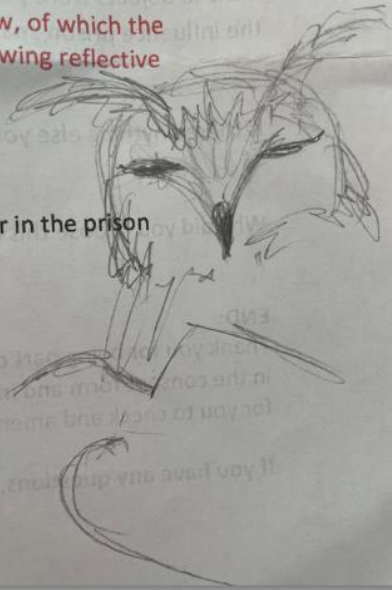


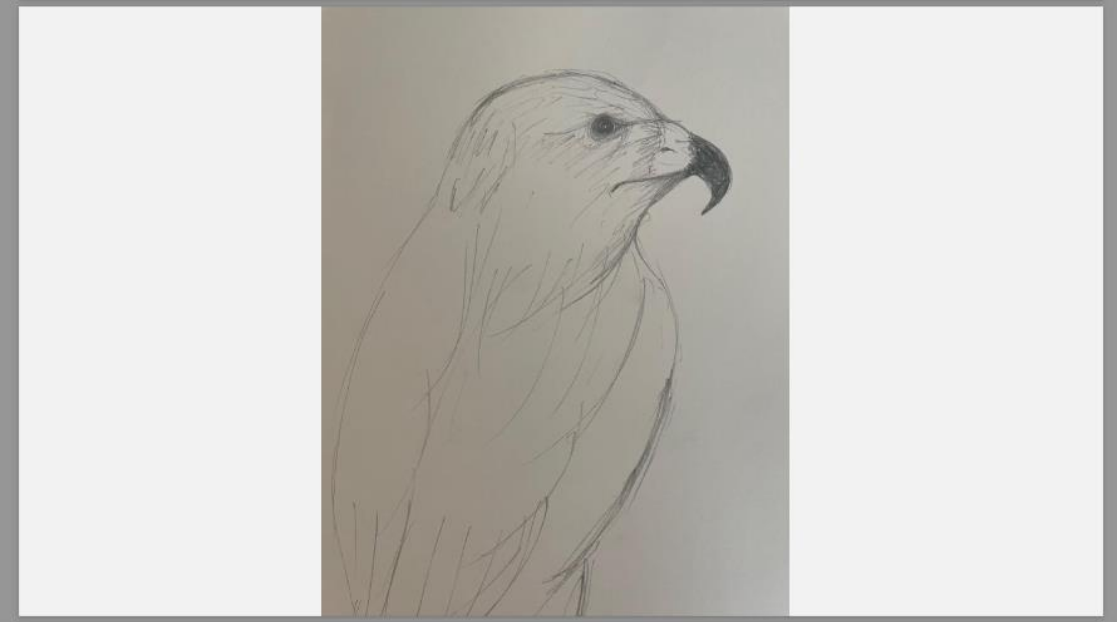
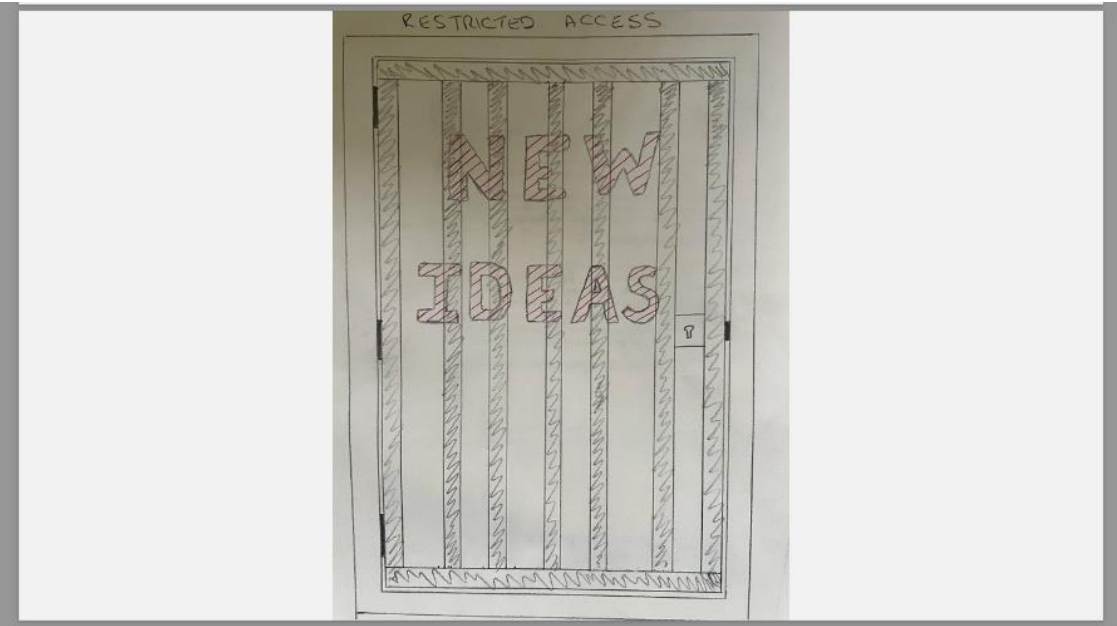


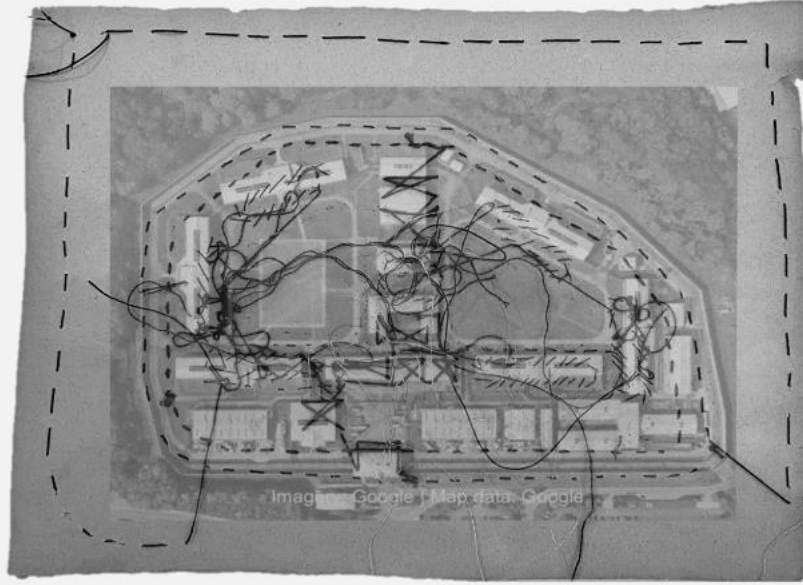


view, of which the
e-flowing reflective

acher in the prison







Visual Matrix

Appendix 4: Information sheets Visual Matrix



Researcher contact information:

Lucy Harding
Lharding3@uclan.ac.uk

Supervisor contact information:

Dr Jacqueline Dodding
JDodding@uclan.ac.uk

Research Title:

Teacher experiences of prison education space & place: disentangling a boundaried praxis.

Version 1: May 2022

Participant Information Sheet: Visual Matrix

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, 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 feel free to ask us if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with your friends, relatives, and colleagues if you wish. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to. Thank you for reading.

Aims and purposes of the research

1. To research prison education teacher interpretations of experience using creative methodologies in a Post Qualitative, Posthuman, Feminist New Materialism approach.
2. To explore the impact of material surroundings, place and space on prison pedagogy and teacher experience in prison education.
3. To make recommendations for further research, future training, and development of approaches in prison education and teacher training for prisons.

You have been invited to take part as you would provide interesting information in relation to your experiences of teaching in a prison. I will be seeking to recruit between 6-8 participants. You do not have to take part; participation is voluntary.

Right to withdraw

Participants have a **right to withdraw without explanation** from the study at any time prior to anonymisation after transcripts have been checked. To withdraw, participants can either contact myself or my supervisor using the details provided above.

What participation involves:

-Participants will be asked take part in a 'Visual Matrix'. The focus group activity will last 60-75 minutes on the 29th September, with a follow up 1:1 interview (dates TBC) lasting an additional 60-75 minutes.

The activities will be conducted at a mutually agreeable time and will be conducted online via Microsoft Teams in the UCLan hosting domain. **Interviews will be video, and audio recorded** for the purpose of assisting with transcription and analysis. Stills may be included in the thesis or any resulting publications. Participants will be asked to participate with **cameras on** to ensure full experience can be achieved. Additional consent will be sought if stills are to be published and participants can request to be anonymised by blurring faces.

-During the Visual Matrix, participants will be asked to share their 'imaginaries' (images created in the mind) in response to collated drawn images, photographs and sounds. Images will be shared anonymously for participants to respond to in turns, uninterrupted. The group will then discuss the imaginaries and any connections between them.

-Participants will then be invited to attend a further 60–75-minute 1:1 interpretation session via Teams or face to face after the activity. These will also be video, and/or audio recorded. The recording will again be utilised for transcription and analysis; however, no stills will be used for the thesis or any resulting publications. The interview questions will centre on interpretation of the imaginaries within the prior focus group.

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

There are several benefits that can be gained from your participation in this study. Your participation will help us understand how to further support teachers of prisoner learning. It will also enable you to reflect on your journey as a prison teacher and develop independent thinking skills in the activity.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part. However, you will be asked to volunteer 60-75 minutes of your time to participate in the initial focus group and a further 60-75 minutes for an interpretation interview. There will be minimal risk of emotional harm to the participants; although the focus group environment may lead to emotional, affective responses. If you should experience any discomfort (mental, emotional or physical) or disadvantage as part of the research, that this should be made known to the researcher immediately.

Participants may feel vulnerable in that space. Therefore, participants involved in the activity will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement and confidential, identifying information will be withdrawn from transcripts. Confidence will be maintained by the researcher unless a safeguarding concern arises, in which case safeguarding referrals will be made.

Participant data

The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of ‘public task’, and in accordance with the University’s purpose of “advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit”.

Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University’s research. The University privacy notice for research participants can be found on the attached link https://www.uclan.ac.uk/data_protection/privacy-notice-research-participants.php

Further information on how your data will be used can be found in the table overleaf:

How will my data be collected?	<i>Data will be collected via an initial questionnaire, audio and video recordings, memos and notes during focus groups and interviews.</i>
How will my data be stored?	<i>All video/audio recordings, transcripts, consent forms and information relating to participation will be kept in password secure files on the secure UCLan university server,</i>
How long will my data be stored for?	<i>Data will be stored securely for a maximum of 7 years. At the end of this study, details linking participant names with pseudonyms will be permanently deleted.</i>
What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data?	<i>All data will be gathered and stored via the University’s Microsoft (MS) 365 suite. Recordings of group and individual interviews will be completed via MS Stream through University MS Teams which is password protected with double authentication. The audio/video files will be saved in a project-specific shared drive in Teams, with the consent and interview recordings stored in separate folders. Only the researcher (LH) and Supervisors will have access to the project specific shared drive, and so no further password-protection will be required. Once the recording has been transcribed, the transcript will be checked for accuracy and then the original audio/video files will be deleted from the shared drive.</i>

Will my data be anonymised?	<i>Any identifying information will be removed from the focus group and interview transcripts. All names and places will be replaced with pseudonyms, I will be the only person who knows which pseudonym belongs to which participant. The name and features of the institution worked in will be replaced with vague descriptions, such as “northwest prison”. All anonymised transcripts will be sent to participants to ensure that they are comfortable with the data informing the analysis and EdD thesis. At this point, participants can also redact and develop the opinions expressed during the focus group and/or interview.</i>
How will my data be used?	<i>The data will be gathered via audio and video recording alongside notes/memos of the researcher during the activities. The images selected by participants will also utilised as data. The data will then be transcribed and analysed by the researcher, to draw out conclusions.</i>
Who will have access to my data?	<i>The Researcher Lucy Harding and the Supervisory team only.</i>
Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?	<i>The data will be archived for 7 years and stored securely via the UCLan MS Platform, this may be retrieved for future use in accordance with the Research Data Management Policy. https://www.uclan.ac.uk/assets/pdf/research-data-management-policy-2020.pdf</i>
How will my data be destroyed?	<i>Video and Audio Data as well as any data relating to pseudonyms will be deleted as soon as the information has been transcribed. All transcriptions, consent forms and notes will be stored for 7 years and then destroyed via digital deletion from the storage facility.</i>

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering taking part in the project. *If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by LHarding3@uclan.ac.uk and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with, then please contact the Ethics, Integrity and Governance Unit at OfficerForEthics@uclan.ac.uk.*

The University strives to maintain the highest standards of rigour in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the University processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113.

If you would like to participate, please complete, and return the separate consent form

Appendix 5: One-to-one interview schedule

Updated research questions:

- How does the prison environment impact the experiences of prison educators in terms of affect?
- How can post human and feminist new materialism inquiry enable better understanding of prison educator experience?
- How do we create a model of praxis to effectively support and prepare teachers entering the prison environment?

Interview questions for final stage 1:1 interview: RECORD

Introduce myself, explain the purpose of the interview, ask for permission to record, and take notes, and explain confidentiality, length of interview, etc.

Discussion of the VM: 15mins

Looking at the mind map: Are there any themes on there that resonate with your experiences of prison education?

What do you think the imagined responses say about the prison education experience?

Some themes for discussion: mechanical, alien, extremes, migration.

Interview: 45mins

Warm up questions:

- How are you?
- Tell me about your teaching experiences in prisons
- What have you been most proud of over the last year?
- What do you think motivates you most to work in prison education?

Environment

- How do you prepare yourself for working in a prison environment?
- Do you feel comfortable now in the prison space?
- In what ways does the prison environment impact your teaching? How does it affect you?
- Can you describe any specific ways in which the environment has influenced the way you teach and interact with your students?
- How have the physical aspects, the walls, gates, and locks of the prison impacted your teaching practice?
- Can you give me some examples of spaces in the prison that make you feel different to others? And why?
- In the visual matrix session, some of the group described the prison as a machine, with various aspects like education as mechanical parts, what are your thoughts on this?
- Others described it as a hive, busy and full of life, lots of movement, how do you perceive it?

Power

- Are you aware of any power dynamics that might exist in the prison? How might this impact your teaching? How does that make you feel?
- How do you perceive the concept of 'resistance' between teachers and the prison? Are there any tensions that arise from this?
- In your experience, what are some teaching approaches that can help challenge or disrupt those power dynamics within the prison environment?
- Can you describe a time when you have enacted this? How did it make you feel?

- To what extent and how do you and your students resist the potential dehumanising aspects of the prison system?

Pedagogy/praxis

- How do you look after your own mental health when working in the prison? Do you think it is something new teachers should be taught to manage?
- How do you develop relationships with students in prison? In what ways do you think this affects your approach to teaching?
- Does your approach to teaching in prison ever conflict with your personal values? Can you give examples?
- What support do you think we could give to new teachers entering the profession?
- What do you wish you had known about the prison environment before you entered this profession?

Close

Is there anything more you would like to say about your experiences of working in prison education?

Is there anything you would like to ask me?

End recording

Appendix 6: HMPPS and NRC authorisation for completion of the research in Prison A.

Dear Dave,

Please find attached a research application for consideration for **HMP [REDACTED]** only.
Research Title: Prison Education space & place effect on teacher
Ref: 2022-116
Researcher: Lucy Harding

Lucy - Please take this as confirmation that your application has been sent to **Dave** for consideration/processing.
Research approval criteria are as follows:

- There are sufficient links to MoJ/HMPPS business priorities.
- The demand on resources is reasonable.
- There are no concerns regarding overlaps with other (current/recent) research.
- The proposed methodology is appropriate and robust.
- Data protection/security issues have been sufficiently considered and addressed.
- Ethical issues have been appropriately addressed.
- The applicants possess the relevant experience and skills.

If the research is approved, the researcher should complete the attached research summary document for HMPPS (approximately three pages; maximum of five pages) which (i) summaries the research aims and approach, (ii) highlights the key findings, and (iii) sets out the implications for HMPPS decision-makers. The research summary should use language that an educated, but not research-trained person, would understand. It should be concise, well organised and self-contained. The conclusions should be impartial and adequately supported by the research findings. It should be submitted to the NRC. Provision of the research summary is essential if the research is to be of real use to HMPPS. The form should be completed and submitted once the research project has ended (ideally within one month of the end date).

Dave - Please can confirmation of the decision be sent to the researcher **and the NRC**.

Kind regards,
Chanelle



On behalf of the National Research Committee
National Research Committee | Data & Analysis Hub: Evidence & Partnerships
3rd Floor, 10 South Colonnade, Canary Wharf
London, E14 4PU
Follow us on Twitter [@MoJGovUK](#)
[Research at HMPPS](#)

Protecting and advancing the principles of justice

Good Morning Lucy,

Authorisation to conduct the research is granted.

Could you please complete the attached Authorisation Request for the items required to support the completion of your research. Dictaphone, Lapel Microphone etc.
Once completed it should be emailed to the Head of Security for approval to the email address below, please copy me into your email.

[REDACTED] [uk.g4s.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@uk.g4s.com)

Regards

Dave

Ds [REDACTED]
Head of Offender Management Services/
Head of Reducing Reoffending
HMP [REDACTED]
Care and Rehabilitation Services
G4S Care & Justice Services (UK) Limited



e-mail

Secur



Direct Dial: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]@UK.G4S.com

7th March 2022

To whom it may concern.

Dear Colleague,

Prison approval for the conducting of research

I am writing to confirm that:

Lucy Harding, EdD candidate

has approval and permission from HMP [REDACTED] to conduct the research she has outlined in terms of: Prison education space & place effect on teacher experience: disentangling a bounded praxis with [post]qualitative, posthuman, and feminist materialism thinking.

Lucy has shared the details of her research proposal, including the ethics application.

The Prison is keen to support this research proposal and is content that relevant and clear detail has been shared in order to support our informed participation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should any further information be required on the part of the College.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Director – HMP [REDACTED]

G4S Care and Rehabilitation Services

Appendix 7: University Ethics Approval Documentation



University of Central Lancashire
Preston PR1 2HE
01772 201201
uclan.ac.uk

24/05/2022

Lucy Harding
School of Humanities, Language and Global Studies
University of Central Lancashire

Dear Lucy,

Re: BAHSS2 Ethics Panel Application
Unique Reference Number: BAHSS2 0323

The BAHSS2 Ethics Review Panel has granted approval of your proposal application, 'Prison education space & place effect on teacher experience: disentangling a boundaried praxis with [post]qualitative, posthuman, and feminist materialism thinking'.

Approval is granted up to the end of project date*.

It is your responsibility to ensure that

- the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
- you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
- any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved, by Committee
- you notify ethicsinfo@uclan.ac.uk if the end date changes or the project does not start
- serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to Panel
- a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (Existing paperwork can be used for this purposes e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report. If none of these are available use [e-Ethics Closure Report Proforma](#)).

Yours sincerely

Kartina Aisha Choong
Deputy Vice-Chair
BAHSS2 Ethics Panel

* for research degree students this will be the final lapse date