

“I can reconnect with self, being given responsibility, gives you an opportunity-2<sup>nd</sup> chance”



“I was asked by my teacher to think about being a Learning Support Assistant” “I was chosen to do the role”  
“Helps me and my family in the future” “Employability”

**TITLE: Student Voice: The Role of the Learning Support Assistants within offender education: can they enhance the teaching and learning offer?**  
**By Steph Taylor, HMP Dovegate and Dr Anne O’Grady, Nottingham Trent University**

“I get along with people”  
“Good to help people learn”  
“Self-motivated”  
“Ambition to learn”



**Context:** The study was conducted in a large male Category B prison. Educational opportunities are available for offenders, with a broad curriculum offer, both in vocational and non-vocational areas. The Education Department is keen to improve their teaching and learning offer for offender learners. The voice of offender learners in shaping and informing the learning offer is a central element of our framework for improvement. Offender learners can become Learning Support Assistants within the educational provision and have a ‘Compact’ which outlines the role in the box below.

**Benefits of being a Learning Support Assistant**  
It is a comfortable atmosphere  
As an offender, understand the stresses of prison life  
Common ground with other learners  
Valued by teachers and learners

- Role of the Learning Support Assistant (LSA)**
- To assist other learners when the teacher is busy
  - To encourage learners to undertake learning activities
  - Develop educational working relationship with learners
  - Supporting learners on a one-to-one basis
  - Work with small groups of learners
  - Classroom paperwork
  - Support learners to undertake the topic questions
  - Discuss with teachers what they want/need from the LSA
  - To support those who cannot keep pace with the work
  - Development of good rapport with teacher/staff
  - Classroom enhancement duties, posters, wall displays.

**The Role of Qualifications in HMP Education**  
More important to have a chance to become a ‘model’ prisoner  
Develop confidence in learning  
Develop life skills  
Develop future employability skills  
Attending regular classes to gain confidence in Education  
Would like to achieve qualifications – keen to achieve qualifications to be able to teach adults in the future

**Training to support the Learning Support Assistant role**  
L2 Peer Mentoring qualification  
Teacher training qualifications (first part only)  
Literacy and Numeracy at Level 2  
Undertaken course and qualification in course being the LSA

**Personal growth, ambitions and future employability following on from being a Learning Support Assistant (LSA)**  
Learning Support Assistants are gaining the following abilities by being involved in the LSA Training Scheme:  
Ability to interact/How to help people/Development of confidence/Move beyond personal friendship groups and a chance to talk to other people/Positive attitude/To empathise/Development of patience/Working and dealing with people/Recognition of the value of education, following experience of compulsory education where expelled repeatedly due to rebellion and boredom/Keen to achieve qualifications for future employability/Undertaking L2 Peer Mentoring qualification and PTTLS Teacher Training qualification/Training the Shannon Trust Toe by Toe Reading scheme to assist students/Development of skills linked to future employability.