

**Odd Bue Kvadraturen Prison School, Head of the Department
of Prison Teaching, Norway**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first present myself. My name is Odd Bue. My profession is teaching. I have university degrees in physics, mathematics and a very old degree in electronics. From about 1985 have I combined teaching with a vice-principal manager position in a large (at least in Norway) vocational and general Upper Secondary School. We have 1200 full time students. This School, named Kvadraturen School Centre, is responsible for the Prison teaching in Kristiansand. Kristiansand is a town with approximately 75 000 inhabitants placed in the southern part of Norway. I have been the leader of the department of Prison teaching in our School for about five years.

In Norway we have a special system for the organization of the Prison education. The Prison Schools are always a part of an Upper secondary School or a school Centre outside the Prison. We called it "The import model", because the Prison "imports" the service from outside.

I will divide my speech in two parts. First I will say something about the Prison school in Kristiansand and afterwards I will say something about experience and challenges we in Norway meet with regards to flexibility in prison teaching. Norwegian authorities have recently evaluated education in Norwegian Prisons. This evaluation came out with some recommendations for what we can do to give the inmates a more structured but also a more flexible education. Structure and flexibility are in fact not contradictory. If you have focus on solutions and you are open to individual, adapted education, structure can be the best base or starting point for flexibility.

And now to Kristiansand Prison. Let me start by saying that I'm not an expert in the practical aspect of teaching in the prison. But as a leader of a prison school I know something about structure, and how to use the budget in a creative and flexible way. But who is an expert? In Norway we have a saying who goes like this: "Anybody can be experts, if they are far enough away from home".

Kristiansand Prison is a small prison. There are 44 inmates. The prison can have up to 6 female prisoners, but usually there is none or just one or two. Most of the inmates are in custody. But we have some prisoners in sentence. In 2004 the inmates stayed in the Prison for about 40 days on average. Then they are either released or moved to other (bigger) prisons. We can have, a few prisoners who serve up to two years sentence in our prison.

In Kristiansand we have three classes inside the prison and one class outside. The outside class we call the "Follow up" class. The inside classes are called the custody class, the lower secondary class and the upper secondary class. These names are dated and a little bit misleading, because you will find custody inmates in all classes and the teaching in all classes will be mostly an individual, adapted education.

And that's one of the key concepts for flexibility – the individual, adapted education. Among ordinary people the prison school in Kristiansand is often called "Høyskolen". Directly translated - "The high school". This is a wordplay, because "the high school" or "Høyskolen" in Norwegian means University college. The reason why our little prison school has obtained this name is not because of the advanced lessons, but simply because of the location of the prison. Kristiansand prison is located at the top (10th) floor of the tallest (or highest) building in the town – the police building. I tell you this because the location prevents us from giving the inmates a vocational education. That's a bit sad and our individual, adapted education is therefore mostly theoretical based.

How can you give a better adapted education to inmates who stay in school approximately 40 days? In 1998 we started a project to improve the learning

outcome for the inmates. What we did was a simple organizational grip. We started to modulate the subjects in lower secondary education. Every module was meant to take about 40 hours, a reasonable amount of work to cope with if you are in the prison school for 40 days. When we started the project, it was the prison teachers who created the modules. Then we contacted the Ministry of Education and told them about our project (which by the way was supported by The County Governor of Hordaland – the national education Office for prison teaching in Norway). We also asked the Ministry to consider some changes in the marking or grading directives so we could give our students (inmates) a mark after each module, and later on an assessed attainment (a final mark) based on the evaluation of each module. The Ministry liked the idea, and after a while our teachers became a part of a national group who create modules for all adult learners (not only prisoners) in Norway who want to take up subjects from lower secondary education.

What is the advantage or the profit of a module system? For inmates in our prison it's obvious. The average student (remember the 40 days) will have enough time to finish something. He or she will also, if they pass the module tests, get a certificate which describes the contents of the module. Some prisoners are transferred to other (often bigger) prisons. They can continue their training there. Some prisoners have the habit of visiting the prison more than once; they can build up their education through these modules. But the greatest advantage in my opinion is the methodical or the pedagogical aspect. With a module system the student can concentrate on a limited theme or sphere. That's a quite good adaptation for a lot of inmates. May be the inmates can lose some of the overall picture of the subject, but that is a small drawback compared to the advantages.

The statistics for prison schools in Norway show that the number of inmates who have finished the lower secondary school increases. We see the same tendency in our prison, and that's a good thing. We can then give more lessons in upper secondary level. Arendal prison (another small prison in the southern part of Norway) has done some work in modulate (or section out already existing modules) in upper secondary education. This is a huge job to be done, because there are lot of different curricula in upper secondary school and additionally the upper secondary education gets new curricula from autumn 2006.

A few years ago the government introduced a new reform called The Competence Reform for adult learners in Norway. The adults can combine their formal, informal and none formal education. We call it "Real qualifications assessment". Let me give you an example: If a man has no paper or certificates, but he has done some building work, he can now go to the county municipality (often some vocational upper secondary school) and ask for a real qualifications assessment. That is to combine all his earlier formal, informal and none formal competence to be a construction worker. Then we will help him to get there. He will be interviewed and may be tested in some subjects – and in the end we will make a plan for his further education, that is what classes, subjects or exams he has to pass to get the final certification.

The implementation of the system is still in a starting-up phase, and in Kristianand we have not yet used the system in the prison. But we will. Some of our inmates have informal and non-formal competence. With this reform we can give them credit for that, and then build up their education from there.

As I mentioned before, we also have a "Follow-up" class for released prisoners in Kristiansand. This class is a bit different from the other follow-up classes in Norway, because we don't give the students a theoretical or vocational education in the upper secondary school system. We give our students a practical and theoretical course in Surface Treatment that is Sand Blasting and Spray Painting. They stay with us from 3 to 5 months, depending on their capability to learn. They have to pass a test before they get their certification or diploma. The test is called Site test

501 and the industry accept it as a kind of standard. Most of the students get their diploma, and if they are lucky some of them also get a job.

The system is very flexible. If you are a former prisoner you just contact us. We explain our rules (no drugs, start at right time in the morning et cetera), and if we have vacant capacity you can start.

For a student or a former prisoner who has some motivation, it is an honest and excellent offer. During maximum five months they will get a certification and probably a job. And the best part is: they often will be paid more than their instructor, the teacher.

Here is some statistic from our follow-up class:

Year	Total	Certi- fication	Job	Dropouts **
1997	15	9	8	6
1998	14	8	7	6
1999	13	10	8	3
2000	15	9	8	6
2001	16	10	5	6
2002*	21	14	13	7
2003	17	14	7	3
2004	19	6	6	13

*) In 2002 we got a new teacher who has good connection with the industry

***) There are very many reasons for student "drop outs", but the most increasing reason is drugs.

Everyone has to have a dream. We have some dreams for our Follow up class. We want to be even more flexible and offer our students several short practical courses that can help them to get a job. As an example I can mention course in driving forklifts and course in building up scaffoldings. In Norway you need a certification for those kinds of jobs.

But we also want to offer the released prisoners a theoretical education. Recently we have installed Internet (broad band) in the locations to the Follow up class. Now we can offer former released prisoners some theoretical subjects in the upper secondary school as e-learning. For this we use a learning platform called It's learning combined with e-learning system called E-lev, which is a word play for "Stu-dent" in Norwegian. The learning platform is developed by the firm It:solution, and e-lev is developed by our School Centre.

We haven't had any Internet students yet. But inmates are now informed about the offer. They will be guided on internet by one of the prison teachers, their supervisor, and they can come to the location of the Fellow up class to work on the net. In this location he or she also will get some help.

What about internet in the prison schools? In Norway we have had some projects in how we can use ICT and Internet in Prisons. We all know that in this area there are some conflicts between the schools' wishes and the prisons' security. In Kristiansand we have used a closed system with dial-up modem and teachers watching the inmates working on Internet. But it will be a change. The county

Governor of Hordaland, the organiser of the prison teaching in Norway, has taken an initiative to develop a special Internet system for all prisons in Norway. The system includes a special server we all have to go through before we have access to Internet. This server will deny all internet access except those address the school authority permit. All the prison schools can make suggestions or wishes, but there is one invariable security rule; the Website must not have any communications possibility through Internet.

With Internet inside the prisons, we also get the possibility to be more flexible in our prison teaching. In the future I'm sure that we will be able to offer the inmates more flexibility in subjects and methods by using a learning platform like It's learning and several e-learning courses. Such a system can also be a great tool or very handy for inmates who are transferred to other prisons or released. They can continue their work or study in the new prison school or in a "following up class". That's flexibility.

Until now I have just given you some examples of what we are doing and what we are hoping to do in our small prison in Kristiansand. I hope you have found it interesting. Now I will speak about practices and tendencies in Norwegian prisons generally.

As I told you earlier the Norwegian Parliament, after initiative from the county Governor of Hordaland, asked for a research based evaluation of the prison education in Norway. The evaluation was finished in autumn 2003. The work has led to several reports about the matter. The latest report (Rapport number 1–2005 – called "Recommendations") is a summary – in English – of what they recommend we have to do to get a better prison education in Norway.

And what is the most positive, the evaluation has led to a so called White Paper, a report from The Ministry of Education and Research to the Norwegian Parliament, Stortinget. This is a great event for the prison education in Norway. It means that the prison teaching is an agenda in the political debate and that some of the changes proposed in the evaluation reports will be executed. The name of the White Paper is by the way "Another Spring".

In Norway (and in many other countries I think) we have three main area where the inmates can or have to participate. These are the education unit (prison school), the work unit (workshops, kitchen help, gardening etc.) and the national programmes (like cognitive skills programmes, drinking and drug programmes, anger management programmes etc.). In Norway the work unit is the largest "employer". About 60 % of the inmates are participating here. The school has about 35 % and the national programmes about 5 %. The evaluation report tells us that these three actors have to be better coordinated and especially the co-operation between the school and the working unit has to increase.

The report also mentions two other organisational aspects which are of importance for the flexibility. The education units must arrange their teachers' working hours and holiday in ways that meet the needs of the students and the institution. This means that education units cannot follow the normal academic year as today. In addition the education in the prison should adopt a pattern with fewer permanent teachers in the staff and a greater extent of recruiting teachers (part-time employees) in accordance with the students' needs.

The co-operation with the work unit and the teacher's organisational aspects are both drawbacks with regards to the "imports models" (where an Upper Secondary School outside the prison is responsible for the teachers and the prison teaching). There is none common administration for the school and the working unit, and the teachers in the prison schools follow the same rules as the teacher in the main schools, when it comes to conditions of employment, and vacations, at least until now.

Because of this and some other elements, the evaluation report suggests a new

organisation model for the prison schools in Norway, but it will not occur. There is a political majority in the Norwegian Parliament that wants to keep the "import model". But there will be some changes when it comes to co-operation and the teacher's working conditions. And it will be good for the flexibility, but may be not for the teachers.

I mentioned earlier that I was a bit sad because of the location of Kristiansand Prison. It prevents us from giving the inmates a vocational education and it prevents the prison from having work shops. We just have a small carpentry shop for 6 persons including the prison officer. It's sad because we would be much more flexible if we could offer our inmates a spectrum of vocational education, gladly in co-operation with the working units.

This is one of the main areas in the evaluation report. They say that "the education programme must expand and more subjects be added, for example in the vocational area. And more flexibility in the educational courses offered is needed. Better collaboration between the education and work units can lead to a greater number of more varied courses. The work unit can in this way lead more often to the award of qualifications. The education and work units must work together in offering vocational subjects and "new" subjects demanded by the labour market." To be a skilled worker in Norway you normally go two year in a vocational school and two year as an apprentice, but the system is flexible. You can do it the opposite way or in a combination between school and work. But there are some tests to be passed, both theoretical and practical ones. The report points out that a prison can have apprentices or adult workers in skill training. In co-operation with the prison school they can educate gardeners, cooks, carpenters, welders etc. There are prisons in Norway which have given inmates skill training in the work shop and the theoretical subject in school so that the inmates get the qualification certificate of apprenticeship. Now it will be more usual.

Together with the Real qualifications assessment, we here have a very flexible way of giving some of the inmates a complete or a part of a vocational education. But to do this we have to have structure and plans.

And structure and plans are also mentioned in the report. The different elements in education, in the work units and in the national programmes, together with real qualifications assessment, have to be built into the sentence plans and the future plans for all inmates. This means that the contact officers must work together with the education unit on planning the future for the inmates.

The evaluation report also mentions use of periods of liberty, combined with education outside the prison. In their opinion this is a possibility that has to be used more often, of course after an individual assessment of the students.

More systematic work must be done in preparation for release. We also have to have more commitment and cooperation between the different public bodies.

Arrangements must be made for participation in a Follow-up group (responsible group) giving assistance with school attendance, living conditions, and escape from drink and drug abuse. The so-called Steinkjer model has established responsible groups where the students themselves take charge of their own lives, by summoning the relevant interacting partners to meetings. In this system it is made much clearer who does what in different situations, and the students themselves are given authority.

The report also comments ICT and internet. ICT must be a natural part of all education and satisfactory security routines must be established, including access to internet. It also must be made possible to follow self-study courses through distance education.

In Norway (and I now quote from the research based evaluation report) "all prisoners today have, like all other citizens, a right and duty to receive basic schooling and a right to upper secondary education. Adults have, in addition, a right

to upper secondary education, a right to renewed basic education, and a right to special education. For these rights to be exercised, it is important that education in the prison system is constantly renewed and improved, so that the different groups of prisoners have their needs met as well as possible. This will ensure that a prison sentence can, to a much greater extent, be a meaningful preparation for life outside the walls.

To achieve this we have to be flexible, and flexibility means that we can't treat everybody equally. We have to give each inmate an individual, adapted education.



