

# Title: It's not personal

## Why I am investigating this research question?

2005 Skills Committee Report declared establishing 'effective' ILPs would be at the 'heart' of the new Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) and for this to be an 'immediate priority'.

- To examine if the current ILPs are 'effective' and if not could they be improved?

- To find out if learners' value existing ILPs

- To collaboratively develop with offender learners' a new type of ILP

- An ILP that focuses on their personal learning goals that are relevant to their lives, measuring non cognitive gains 'soft' targets, employability skills & individual needs

- To critically evaluate the learners' responses

- To modify the new type of ILP design via a learner focus group

## Research Methods & Data Collection

A focus group & individual interviews with learners that are Entry level 1&2 Literacy/ESOL to design a New ILP

Five participants (learners) all foreign national adult males serving custodial sentences.

Qualitative interviews and focus group feedback to measure effectiveness of existing arrangements ILP new ILP and no ILP.

Quantitative data to measure attendance of learners that have used New ILP, Existing Model ILP and No ILP

1. Learners' comments on ILP design

"Can we have My Individual Learning Plan & My targets written on it"

"I want to see pictures of what my long term goals look like"

"A tutor needs to explain and help us understand what skills we will be improving"

"If I can't achieve any targets will I get help?"

"I've never been asked to think about long or short term goals before, I need time to think about this"

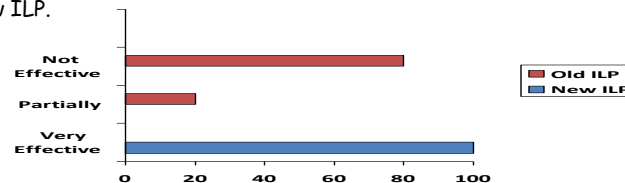
"Who can and when will they help us with our short term goals"

*ILPs are most effective when the learners are involved in setting their own targets & measuring progress..... It is essential that they are consulted in setting the agenda for their personal learning journey.*

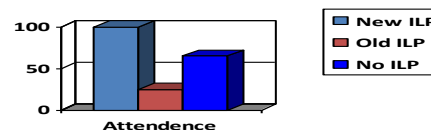
*....a holistic approach, covering all areas of learning, skills & welfare, based around the individual....*

*Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation, Review of Offender Learning May 2011, p.27*

2. Measuring effectiveness of existing arrangements Old ILP and New ILP.



3. Tracking learners' attendance over a period of 8 weeks (%)



## Findings

- Focus group very keen to use new ILP and wish to expand availability
- Clear explanations of what an ILP was essential
- Learners want regular target review sessions to ensure outcomes are met.
- Cultural sensitive - some learners stated they came from families with low expectations of education. Not encouraged to think about their goals e.g. careers, further education
- Learners stated they liked new ILP but want sufficient time to prepare and consider their contribution to the plans. "Don't want an ILP to turn into a meaningless tick box exercise".
- The learners commented on how valuable this new ILP was, by measuring their learning journey.
- Attendance improves with New ILP

## Recommendations

6 months New ILP trial to see if findings are replicated over a longer period

Expand trial into other subject areas including Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL courses

Staff training on how to collaboratively devise New ILPs with learners.

Develop an electronic ILP version to be shared across the prison establishments as learners move

## Strengths of the project:

Devised by learners  
Highly valued by learners  
Effective results

## Limitations of the project:

Small sample group  
Old ILP are inconsistently used or not used at all. It could be that any collaborate ILP could yield same results.

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Reading List: *Excellence gateway LSIS Individual Learning Plans, ILP Health check*  
[www.excellence.org.uk](http://www.excellence.org.uk)

*Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation, Review of Offender Learning May 2011*

*Report from the Prisoners' Education Trust, Inside Time & RBE Consultancy, Brain Cells: Listening to Prisoner Learners, 2009*