DESIGN AND CREATION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL FOR ADULT INMATES BASED ON WILLIS'S TBL APPROACH. THE POSSIBILITIES OF DISTANCE LEARNING

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Abstract:

This paper explores the transformative potential of adult education in detention centers, focusing on language development and social reintegration. It unfolds across five key stages: identifying educational needs, instruction design, learning material design, implementing the course and evaluating its impact. At the heart of the study lies the creation of educational content grounded in Willis' Task-Based Learning (TBL) model, tailored specifically to the realities of imprisonment. The pilot course conducted at the Larissa Detention Center with 16 male participants revealed meaningful outcomes. The educational material was shaped by the constraints and possibilities of prison life, integrating authentic tasks and culturally relevant experiences. Through TBL, learners engaged with language in ways that were practical, personal, and empowering—fostering autonomy, emotional resilience, and a renewed sense of identity. These elements are crucial for preparing individuals to reconnect with society upon release. A significant dimension of the study was the exploration of transferring this material to a distance learning format. The clarity of the structure, accessibility of instructions, and communicative orientation make it well-suited for both synchronous and asynchronous delivery. With adequate technological support, distance education emerges not merely as an alternative but as an essential pathway for inclusive learning behind bars. Ultimately, the paper argues that prison education is not a privilege—it is a right. When approached with pedagogical care and adaptability, it becomes a vehicle for personal

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growth, empowerment, and social justice. It challenges exclusion and affirms the principle that access to meaningful education must extend to all, regardless of circumstance.

Keywords: educational material, inmates, task-based learning, prison education, distance education

1. Introduction

Education within correctional institutions is emerging as a decisive factor in reducing recidivism and enhancing the social reintegration of inmates. The meta-analysis by Davis *et al.* (2013) showed that participation in educational programs reduces the likelihood of recidivism by 43% and increases employment after release by 13%. Similarly, the study by Bozick *et al.* (2018) confirms the positive effect on recidivism, although it does not identify a significant improvement in employment. The classic meta-analysis by Wilson, Gallagher and MacKenzie (2000) reinforces the view that both general education and vocational training contribute significantly to reducing criminal recidivism. At the same time, Esperian (2010) emphasizes the importance of educational engagement as a means of empowerment and rehabilitation, while Vacca (2004) focuses on strengthening self-esteem and social skills as key prevention mechanisms. Overall, studies converge on the view that education in prisons is not merely a corrective measure but a social investment strategy with long-term benefits for the individual and the community.

This study explores the design and implementation of educational material for adult inmates, based on Willis' Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach, with the aim of enhancing language communication and social integration. It also examines the possibilities and challenges of distance learning in constrained environments such as prisons and proposes pedagogical practices that enhance participation.

This study aims to design and evaluate a task-based language learning course for adult inmates, exploring its pedagogical effectiveness and adaptability within prison settings. It investigates how TBL principles can be applied in constrained environments and how distance learning tools may support inmate education, fostering linguistic competence, motivation, and reintegration.

1.1 Design of Educational Material

Effective design of educational materials (EM) is vital for successful distance learning (DL). This includes adapting learning experiences and tools to suit learners' needs and making sure they are interacting and engaged. The shift from conventional to contemporary distance learning environments (DLE) necessitates a focus on three key areas:

- The development of a user-friendly Learning Management System (LMS),
- The identification of effective teaching strategies and methods tailored to the needs of the target group,

- The incorporation of modern technologies and applications.

Effective EM design incorporates various teaching strategies: synchronous, asynchronous, and blended learning (Abuselidze *et al.*, 2021; Kebritchi *et al.*, 2017). Each offers unique benefits, such as direct interaction in synchronous environments, student autonomy in asynchronous environments, and the combined advantages of blended models (Halverson & Graham, 2019). This integration enhances engagement and outcomes. Furthermore, understanding the psychological and social parameters of learning is crucial. DL learners often experience isolation and reduced motivation (Algahtani *et al.*, 2020). Adopting models such as ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) can enhance motivation and reduce dropout rates (Pribadi *et al.*, 2021), ultimately increasing engagement and satisfaction.

Qualitative analysis of learners' needs is vital and critical for content creation. Effective management of learner participation and the quality of interaction with the Educational Material is critical to educational success (Wu, 2024). Educators should use tools such as forums and online collaboration to promote supportive learning environments. Overall, the success of distance learning programs depends on strategically designed educational material that is tailored to the needs of students. A solid foundation is essential, with an emphasis on the quality of the material, digital tools, and student engagement (Sudarti, 2022; Joaquin *et al.*, 2020). Activities are a vital element, as they promote interaction and contribute to learning outcomes, and are categorized according to context, outcomes, method, or type (Manousou & Lionarakis, 2013).

1.2 Designing Educational Material for Prisoners

This study presents the design of a course tailored specifically for adult inmates, with a dual focus: *learning the Greek language* and *developing meaningful communication* skills within a broader social context. The course was built upon the principles of Task-Based Learning (TBL), a methodology that places authentic interaction at the heart of language acquisition.

1.3 Task-Based Learning (TBL): A Human-Centered Approach to Language Education

Task-Based Learning, as introduced by Jane Willis in 1996, is a well-established and widely embraced framework in foreign language teaching. Grounded in communicative methodology, TBL moves beyond traditional instruction centered on isolated grammar rules and vocabulary lists. Instead, it encourages learners to engage in real-life tasks that require genuine communication—activities that mirror everyday situations and foster practical language use.

By prioritizing relevance and personal meaning, TBL empowers learners to use language as a tool for expression, connection, and autonomy. This approach is especially impactful in correctional settings, where education can serve as a bridge to self-awareness, resilience, and reintegration. Through task-based activities, incarcerated learners are not only acquiring linguistic skills—they're reclaiming their voices and preparing to re-enter society with confidence and purpose.

According to Willis (1996), TBL is organized into three basic phases:

- **Pre-task:** In this phase, the teacher introduces the topic of the task, activates the learners' existing vocabulary, and prepares them for the main task. Emphasis is placed on understanding the purpose of the activity and familiarizing them with the language forms that are likely to be needed.
- **Task Cycle:** Learners carry out the task in groups or individually, using the language spontaneously and functionally. They then present the results of their work and receive feedback. This phase reinforces authentic language use and the development of communication skills.
- **Language Focus:** Once the task is complete, learners focus on the language form they used. Grammatical phenomena, vocabulary, and structures that arose during the task are analyzed. This phase serves as feedback and reinforcement of linguistic accuracy.

The effectiveness of TBL stems from its focus on learning grammatical structures through practical tasks that require authentic communication. Richards and Rodgers (2001) point out that TBL promotes the use of language to achieve specific, non-linguistic outcomes, differentiating it from traditional grammar exercises. Communication precedes the focus on form, creating motivation and a need for expression, while also providing opportunities for analysis and improvement of language production (Ellis, 2003).

This "ecological" approach to teaching grammar, where form is addressed after the need for it arises, is considered particularly effective for long-term language learning. TBL enhances the authenticity of the language experience and encourages active student participation, making it ideal for restrictive environments such as correctional facilities, where communication and learner empowerment are key objectives.

The utilisation of the task-based learning (TBL) approach in correctional settings is both a challenge and an opportunity to empower learners through authentic communication. TBL, with its emphasis on performing tasks that simulate real-life situations, can serve as a tool for social integration and personal development for prisoners.

Willis's approach is fundamental, as it resolves a long-standing dilemma in language teaching: *how to combine the development of communicative fluency with grammatical accuracy.* By providing a structured sequence where communication precedes a focus on form, Willis' Task-Based Learning (TBL) allows for authentic language use, fostering motivation and the need to communicate, while offering opportunities for analysis and improvement of language production (Ellis, 2003). This "ecological" approach, which addresses form after the need arises, is considered particularly effective for long-term learning (Long, 2015).

For the educational design of the specific course, Willis's task-based learning model was adopted, which is based on communicative principles and focuses on building grammatical knowledge through practical tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Applying this approach in a prison environment requires specific parameters. The key factors related to safety and teaching conditions were as follows:

- **Respect and safety:** Ensuring that all topics and discussions strictly comply with prison regulations and safety standards.
- **Material constraints:** Adaptation to limited resources is necessary, where paper, pencils, and a blackboard are usually sufficient, while access to computers and the internet is often difficult or non-existent even today (2025).
- **Sensitivity to content:** Activities must be designed with particular care so as not to cause anxiety, violate personal data, or be inappropriate for the environment, focusing instead on improving daily life or prospects.
- **Adaptation to language proficiency level:** Activities should respond to learners' limited vocabulary, boosting their communication confidence.
- **Encouragement**: Providing positive reinforcement and actively encouraging participation were crucial to maintaining motivation.
- **Support**: The role of the teacher shifts from corrector to facilitator, providing meaningful support during activities.
- **Connection to reality – authenticity:** Although the tasks were performative, their connection to the reality of the prisoners (e.g., internal prison organization, problem solving) increased motivation and engagement (Willis & Willis, 2007).

2. Research Methodology

This research aims to highlight and describe the characteristics of educational material aimed at adult inmates, with the goal of cultivating communication skills in the language of the country of detention. The material is based on the activity-centered Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach, as developed by Willis (1996), and is adapted to the specific conditions of the correctional environment.

2.1 Research Questions
The study attempts to answer the following questions:
1) What are the specifications for designing and creating educational material for adult inmates?
2) How was the educational material created and applied in the correctional environment?
3) What are the results of the first application and evaluation of the material created?
4) What are the potentialities for a distance delivery of the appropriately designed educational material?

2.2 Methodology Stages
The research process followed five distinct but interrelated stages:
1) Educational needs analysis,
2) Educational design,

3) Creation of educational material,
4) Implementation of the educational design and educational material,
5) Evaluation.

2.3 Educational Needs Analysis

The investigation of needs analysis was conducted using qualitative methodology, within the framework of the Greek Language Program implemented by the organization "Diexodos" with official permission from the Ministry of Education and Citizen Protection. The process consisted of two phases:

- **Phase A:** Five semi-structured group interviews were conducted with six participants per group. The interviews focused on demographic data, educational and social needs, as well as expectations from the program. They were conducted by the researcher and the assistant trainer: one acted as the interviewer and the other as the observer, with handwritten notes taken due to security restrictions.
- **Phase B:** During the lessons, research tools such as diagnostic questions of cognitive content, participatory observation, research diary, and analysis of learners' work were used. The data was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, with the theme as the unit of analysis.

The two phases did not operate linearly and sequentially but with constant interaction so that the findings could be dynamically and continuously incorporated into the educational design.

2.4 Educational Design

The design of the educational material was based on the principles of TBL, with the aim of strengthening the Greek language through authentic tasks related to the daily life of prisoners. The activities were designed to be communicative, functional, and psychologically safe.

The following pedagogical principles were incorporated into the design:

- **Principle of supervision:** Activation of all senses for a more complete experience.
- **Principle of self-motivation:** Reinforcement of the student's autonomous action.
- **Principle of individuality:** Recognition of the uniqueness of each learner.
- **Principle of sociality:** Connection with social contexts such as family and community.
- **Principle of timeliness:** Use of contemporary and relevant examples.
- **Principle of totality:** Treating students as a dynamic group.
- **Principle of variability:** Anticipating alternative solutions and adjustments.
- **Principle of interdependence:** Highlighting relationships and correlations between concepts and experiences.

This design allows TBL to be implemented in a way that meets the needs of the correctional setting, enhancing learners' communication skills, self-esteem, and social integration.

2.5 Creation of Educational Material

The creation of the educational material was based on the activity-centered Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach, as proposed by Willis (1996), with the aim of strengthening the Greek language as a tool for communication and social integration. The activities were designed to respond to the experiences and needs of prisoners, incorporating authentic topics from their everyday lives.

The main teaching objectives of the material were:

- Acquisition of basic vocabulary at levels A1–A2,
- Development of oral communication,
- Comprehension and production of written language,
- Description of situations and events,
- Functional use of dialogue in social contexts.

The educational design incorporated the following pedagogical principles:

o Supervision (activation of senses),
o Self-motivation (independent student action),
o Individuality (personal differentiation),
o Sociability (relationships with the community),
o Timeliness (contemporary examples),
o Totality (collaborative learning),
o Variability (adaptability),
o Interdependence (conceptual associations).

The activities were organized according to the phases of TBL: *Pre-task*, *Task cycle*, and *Language focus*. In the pre-activity (Pre-task), students prepared themselves cognitively and psychologically, activating prior knowledge and vocabulary. In the main phase (Task cycle), they performed the task with an emphasis on communication. In the final phase (Language focus), the linguistic phenomena that emerged were analyzed, with a focus on form (Long & Robinson, 1998), followed by practical exercises to consolidate knowledge (Willis & Willis, 2007).

The differentiation of the material according to the ethnocultural group of the learners aimed to enhance mutual understanding and inclusion, preparing students for their integration into intercultural education programs and the continuation of their studies after release from prison.

2.6 Implementation of the Educational Material

The pilot implementation took place at the Larissa Detention Center in 2023, with the participation of 16 adult men. The program lasted six months, with weekly three-hour meetings. The activities were carried out by the teacher-researcher, with the assistance of a B1-level learner-assistant, who supported the other students.

During each activity, clear instructions and steps were provided so that the trainees knew what was expected of them. Guidance was continuous and supportive, with the aim of reducing the cognitive load and enhancing communication engagement.

2.7 Evaluation

The evaluation of the educational material and its application was designed to be carried out in three phases:

- **Diagnostic evaluation**. Before each activity, a focus group discussion was held based on questions aimed at identifying cognitive content and needs. This data was used to adapt the material and teaching practices.
- **Formative evaluation**. During the lessons, participatory observation was applied, with reactions, questions, and performance being recorded. At the same time, the learners' answers on the worksheets and in the individual activities were analyzed.
- **Final assessment**. After the completion of the course, questionnaires, a second Focus Group discussion, and the researcher's comments were used. The questionnaire included closed and open questions about the learners' experience, the perceived usefulness of the material, and their personal development. The Focus Group focused on feedback on the activities, language progress, and social dynamics of the group.

3. Findings – Results

The pilot implementation of the training material at the Larissa Detention Center in 2023, with the participation of 16 adult men, revealed important findings on five levels: needs assessment, educational design, material creation, implementation, and evaluation.

3.1 Investigation of Educational Needs

The investigation through semi-structured interviews and observation of the learners/inmates revealed:

- The need for communication in Greek as a means of coexistence and future social integration.
- The existence of different educational and language levels, which required individualization and flexible teaching.
- The need for culturally sensitive content that is relevant to the daily lives of inmates.
- The desire to strengthen mutual understanding between learners of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

3.2 Educational Design

The design was based on task-based learning and the principles of:

- Activation of the senses, self-motivation, sociability, individuality, variability.
- Preparation through Pre-task, authentic communication in the Task cycle, focus on form in Language Focus.
- Integration of experiential techniques, differentiation according to cultural identity and language level.

3.3 Creation of Educational Material

The material was organized into six thematic units as shown in Table 1, with the aim of developing linguistic, social, and emotional skills.

Table 1: Summary Table of Activities

Activity	Phases	Objectives Description	Duration
1. Living in prison	Pre Task	Opinion, vocabulary related to spaces/hygiene	3 hours
	Task	Argumentation, presentation, style	6 hours
	Language Focus	Language structures, critical thinking	3 hours
2. Drama Triangle	Pre Task	Self-awareness, empathy, and roles	3 hours
	Task	Improvisation, role dynamics	6 hours
	Language Focus	Realistic scenarios, trauma avoidance	3 hours
3. 'Bridge' – Titos Patrikios	Pre Task	Reading poetry, concepts	3 hours
	Task	Analysis, connection with meanings	6 hours
	Language Focus	Art vocabulary, description	3 hours
4. Historical Persons	Pre Task	Historical facts, family	3 hours
	Task	Stereotypes, relationship with identity	6 hours
	Language Focus	Communication, rules, vocabulary	3 hours
5. Environment & Nutrition	Pre Task	Reading, writing, everyday life	6 hours
	Task	Skills, creative expression	3 hours
	Language Focus	Understanding through images, language	3 hours
6. Olympic History	Pre Task	Culture, pedagogical approach	6 hours
	Task	Intercultural cooperation	3 hours
	Language Focus	Art, emotional expression	3 hours

3.4 Indicative Presentation of Activity 3: "Bridge" – Titos Patrikios

For example, in Activity 3, teaching the poem "Bridge" by T. Patrikios, the following stages were followed: pre-task (*reading the poem, approaching concepts*), task (*analysis of the poem and connection with meanings*), and language focus (*teaching art vocabulary and description*). The following paragraph provides a brief overview of the activity.

The poem was printed in clear form and in large letters. The biographical information about Titos Patrikios was brief and concise, with an emphasis on his life and his concerns.

A Reading/Analysis Guide was provided, structured as follows:

- *Pre-reading*: Questions that stimulate thought (e.g., "*What does the word 'bridge' mean to you?*", "*Have you ever felt the need to build a bridge?*").
- *Vocabulary*: Explanation of any difficult words or expressions.
- *Comprehension questions*: Simple questions about the basic plot or images in the poem.
- *Interpretation/discussion questions*: Questions that encourage personal interpretation and connection to their experiences, which they were asked to record on their worksheet by answering helpful questions such as: "*What do you think the 'other shore' is for the poet, and what is it for you?*"
- *Creative-Interactive Activities with Feedback*:
  - *Written Assignment*: We asked the inmates to write a short essay or their own commentary or poem inspired by "The Bridge," answering questions such as: "*What bridge would you like to build in your life?*" or "*How do you feel the need for connection?*"

○ *Artistic Activity* with the creation of a drawing or painting depicting their own "Bridge" or the images created by the poem "Bridge."

It is important and crucial to note that the intervention activities that took place in person formed the basis for the creation of the educational material and evolved considering the data collected and the feedback from the inmates. More specifically, the material was created in two phases: a) *to be used in part during the intervention*, and b) *to be used after the intervention with improvements identified during the in-person course and then by distance*. This material aimed to strengthen the linguistic, social, and emotional skills of the prisoners. It was organized into six separate thematic units, as presented in Table 1, each following the Task-Based Learning approach (Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003), where learners go through pre-task, task, and language focus stages (Willis & Willis, 2007). The section presenting an example of the teaching of the third activity, "Bridge" - Titos Patrikios, is a typical example of how poetry can be used as a tool for developing creative expression and introspection.
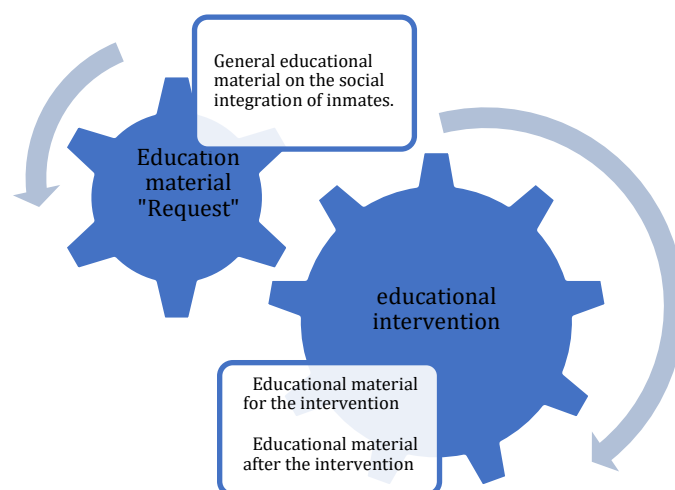

Figure 1: Mapping of the educational material development process

The creation of the printed and then digital material was organized through collaborative activities among the learners, with the aim of cultivating the relevant skills according to their needs (Figure 1). Part of the material was compiled and created in printed form: the guide/educational material "ZITO" (Figure 2).
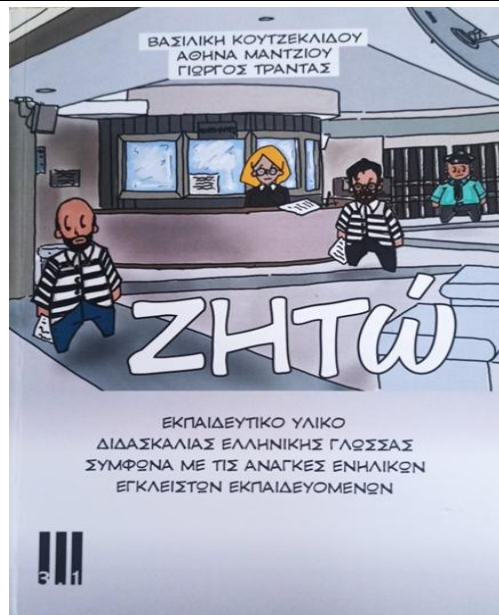
Figure 2: The cover of the printed educational material "ZITO"

This guide was based on the daily communication needs of inmates with internal and external administrative structures and institutions. To support diversity, an enriched model for designing educational material was followed, according to Lionarakis (2001), which is based on the earlier model by Richard West in 1996. The content was created in such a way as to present the sequence of information and make it easier for the inmate learners to relate their experiences and knowledge to the information they acquired. It has been enriched with a series of activities aimed at making learning more experiential and creative and helping learners process data. The main objective is to familiarize learners with the communication and language practices related to public documents, which require specific information to be filled in. The goal is to understand and effectively use types of authentic texts encountered when dealing with public services.

To create a digital educational material called 'Request' (Figure 3), multimedia learning principles are used, as there is a combination of visual and verbal content at the same time. The material was designed using the methodology of complementary asynchronous distance learning and Mayer's principles of multimedia learning (2020). The material is hosted in the educational application created for adult inmates in a flexible, easy-to-use, user-friendly format on a tablet or H/Y without the need for an internet connection.
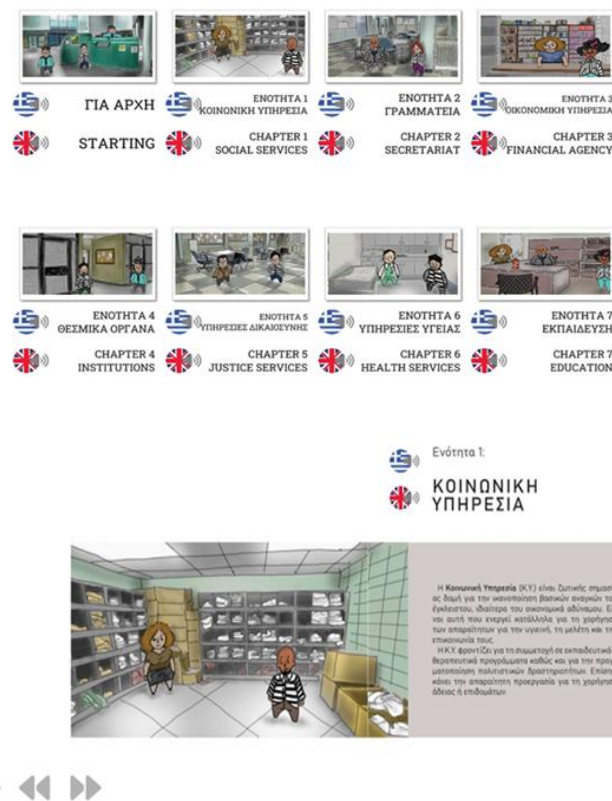
Figure 3: The cover of the digital guide and the 1st page for the section 'Social Services'

3.5 Findings from the Pilot Implementation

The learners suggested verbal solutions, wrote them down on the board, and participated actively, without the direct intervention of the trainer. Language deficiencies were addressed with individualized activities and grouping based on abilities. Step-by-step guidance was necessary at the beginning, but gradually the learners' gained autonomy. The educational process boosted self-confidence and participation, turning the trainees into active learners.

3.6 Findings from the Evaluation

The evaluation was threefold:

a) **Diagnostic Assessment.** This was carried out before each activity through focus groups, leading to adjustments to the material.

b) **Formative Evaluation.** Participatory observation and analysis of worksheets were used.

c) **Final Evaluation.** This included questionnaires, focus groups, and the researcher's reflections (see Figure 4). The results showed:

● Enhancement of language proficiency and communication autonomy,
● Development of social skills and intercultural awareness,
● Transformation of learning identity and strengthening of learners' self-image.

After this lesson, I can	😢	😓	🙂	🤓
Write about the places where I live				
Talk about the environment with my friends				
Match parts of the natural environment with animals				
Write about life in the city and the village				
Write about enjoyable activities in nature				
I distinguish the words that indicate the correct time to eat				
Use words I have learned about the cost of food				
Help my classmates when they don't understand something				
Learn from my classmates about their old and new eating habits				
Understand my friends' needs and preferences				

Figure 4: Indicative example of evaluation worksheet

3.7 Summary of Findings

The findings show that:

- Personalized teaching and a collaborative approach enhanced learner engagement and self-confidence, especially in multicultural and multilingual classrooms.
- Linking language to art, history, and everyday life enhanced emotional resilience and critical thinking, providing learners with opportunities for personal expression and processing of life experiences.
- Activities based on personal experiences, such as teaching Titos Patrikios' poem "Bridge," served as a means of self-expression and psychological empowerment. Learners were asked to connect the meanings of the poem with their own experiences, to create written comments and poems, and to visually represent their own "bridge," thereby enhancing their aesthetic perception and their inner connection with language.

Formative assessment through worksheets highlighted the learners' progress in practical language skills. For example, participants stated that after the course, they could:

- Write about the places where they live,
- Talk about the environment with their friends,
- Match parts of the natural environment with animals,
- Understand the needs and preferences of others,
- Help their classmates when they do not understand something,

The final evaluation, through questionnaires, focus groups, and the researcher's reflections, showed significant progress in terms of:

- Language proficiency and communication autonomy,
- Social skills and cooperation,
- Intercultural awareness and empathy,
- Recognition of personal identity and strengthening of self-image.

The educational intervention, within the framework of which the course was designed and implemented, served as a mechanism for transforming the learning identity of inmates, proving that education in correctional institutions is not merely a

corrective measure, but a strategic social investment with long-term benefits for the individual and the community. The learners acquired not only linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and social skills, but also the sense that learning can be a space for acceptance, recognition, and personal development, preparing them holistically for their reintegration into society.

4. Discussion

The importance of education in prisons has been extensively documented in international literature. The meta-analysis by Davis *et al.* (2013) confirms that participation in educational programs reduces recidivism by 43% and increases employment by 13%. Similarly, Bozick *et al.* (2018) point out the positive effect on recidivism, while Esperian (2010) highlights educational engagement as a means of empowerment and rehabilitation.

This study confirms that education is not merely a corrective measure, but a tool for social integration. The application of TBL in restricted environments, such as prisons, has proven to be feasible and effective, especially when accompanied by differentiated material and psychosocial support.

The integration of distance learning (DL) techniques and the use of models such as ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) enhanced learner motivation (Pribadi *et al.*, 2021). At the same time, the use of digital tools and the creation of supportive learning environments (Wu, 2024) contributed to enhancing participation and interaction.

The educational practice, as recorded, confirms Vacca's (2004) position that strengthening self-esteem and social skills is a key mechanism for preventing relapses. Linking language to personal experience and cultural identity strengthens psychological resilience and a sense of belonging.

5. Conclusions

This educational intervention, in the context of which the course was designed and implemented, confirms that education within correctional institutions can serve as a field of social transformation, empowerment, and redefinition of the identity of learners. The educational activity was not limited to language training but served as a means of reflection, emotional release, and cultural connection.

The use of Task-Based Learning in combination with culturally sensitive material highlighted the importance of the pedagogical relationship and participatory learning as key parameters for activating the learning potential of inmates. The educational process was transformed into a space for giving meaning to experience, where language was not simply a tool for communication, but a means of expression, identification, and hope.

Furthermore, the intervention highlighted the need for the systematic creation of educational material that would form part of and be an important objective of educational

policies that must consider the specific conditions of imprisonment, promoting empathy, intercultural understanding, and psychosocial support. Education in such environments cannot be neutral or detached; it requires critical pedagogy that recognizes social inequalities and seeks to empower the subject.

Finally, this experience demonstrates that educational intervention is not merely a practice, but an ethical and political act. Investing in the education of prisoners is a strategic choice for a society that seeks reintegration, reduced recidivism, and enhanced social cohesion (Darder, 2025). When education is meaningful and human-centered, it can serve as a "bridge" between confinement and freedom, between marginalization and dignity.

5.1 The Potentialities for Distance Learning

One of the most critical conclusions of the intervention concerns the possibility of transferring the educational material and methodology to distance learning (DL) environments. Although the present application was carried out in person, the structure of the material, the clarity of the instructions, the preparation phase (Pre-task), and the focus on form (Language Focus) are fully compatible with synchronous and asynchronous learning models. The use of the ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) to enhance motivation (Pribadi *et al.*, 2021), the use of digital tools for collaborative learning (Wu, 2024), and the integration of cross-curricular activities (Manousou & Lionarakis, 2013) are key elements that can support the remote implementation of the program. However, the lack of technological infrastructure within correctional institutions is a significant limitation. If there were access to basic digital media (e.g., tablets, LMS, secure connection), the educational material could be transformed into a polymorphic learning platform, enhancing the autonomy of learners and expanding accessibility.

Distance learning is not simply a technical possibility; it is a pedagogical challenge that requires planning based on the needs of the target group, the psychological state of the learners, and the social conditions of incarceration. This study demonstrates that, with the appropriate adjustments, DL can be a viable solution for the continuing education of inmates, both in general and more specifically in periods of restricted access or emergency conditions (e.g., pandemics).

5.2 Limitations of the Present Study

Despite the positive results, the study faced certain limitations:

The small scale of the intervention (16 participants) limits the possibility of generalizing the findings. The multicultural and multilingual composition of the class created challenges in the homogeneous application of the material. The lack of stable access to technological resources limits the full utilization of distance learning. The lack of prior learning experience among the trainees required intensive guidance, which increased the teaching load.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the above, the following directions for future research are suggested:

1) Blended distance learning application of educational material
2) Expansion of the intervention to more correctional institutions and a larger number of participants.
3) Development and evaluation of digital tools specifically designed for learners in restricted environments.
4) Deepening the intercultural dimension of inmate education with the aim of enhancing inclusion.
5) Study of the long-term impact of educational engagement on the social reintegration and mental health of ex-inmates.
6) Developing vocational training models combined with language training, enhancing employability.

Supplementary Materials

Not applicable.

Author Contributions

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