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Introduction

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Addressing the Challenges in Teaching Criminology and Criminal Justice

Criminology is an interdisciplinary field of study that has attracted widespread growth within the higher education setting in the United Kingdom. Developments within the discipline have been shown in levels of interest in the subject, indicating a huge rise of 240% increase in students enrolling in criminology courses from 2013 to 2019 (Young, 2022). This has resulted in an increasing number of higher education

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institutions offering criminology and criminal justice courses, with over 1000 undergraduate criminology Bachelor programmes on offer in the United Kingdom (UCAS, 2022).

There is a myriad of challenges with teaching criminology and criminal justice as an interdisciplinary subject. Some have an established legacy, such as the overlap, yet recognizable paradox, between theoretical approaches, the importance of the foundations of criminological enquiry alongside providing a critical lens on current topical challenges, in a global and localized way (McLaughlin, 2011). The discipline addresses such debates, which is why it can be transformative and empowering for the learner, often this is seen as the value of the subject and why it continues to secure its position and currency in social sciences, frequently helped by a multitude of research led or specialist modules. The age-old debate of the relationship between where and how criminology sits with criminal justice policy continues, whilst not ignoring the logical overlap with other social science disciplines, sociology, social policy, politics (see Garland, 2011; Palmer, 2021). This has resulted in criminology and criminal justice being seen as having mutual, yet interchangeable focus, alongside a blurry and nebulous connection with many other social science subjects.

Such attraction has led to criminology as a study at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The exhaustive realm of the subject, and the benefits that come with this continual evolution and development of new knowledges, presents criminology and criminal justice as being both historical, yet contemporary in nature. As a discipline, the diversity of theoretical debates, their relevance to current criminological issues, alongside evolving epistemological dilemmas and research topics have arguably widened the scope and broadened the challenges facing educators today. Such pedagogical dilemmas, and increasing diversification, have tended to lead to perceptions of the discipline as eclectic, with many interlocking and overlapping elements, often presented as 'lens' or subject areas which align together to form criminology and criminal justice as a discipline. All of these have evidently been presented as challenges for discipline, with responses to these being varied and often innovative.

It therefore seems timely and appropriate for a text of this nature to be published. A resource which shines a light on narratives from both academics and students, providing considerations of key disciplinary issues which have a place and relevance for the reader. This text furthers the discussion of the significance and currency of such debates, presenting criminology as a wide subject area. Externally, trends shown in higher education, raise questions about the place and value of studying, the evolving role of student engagement, relevance of authentic assessments and quality standards, and the move to more diversity with innovation and creatively shown in teaching and learning. These issues have been addressed in wider higher education agendas through the reassessment of the roles of students, the value of learning and graduate outcomes and employability within programmes (see: Policy from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2010, 2011, 2015, 2016a, 2016b; Augar Report, 2019; Office for Students, 2020). Discussions in the text address external drivers, such as the Teaching Excellence Framework and direction from the Office for Students, alongside the impact of such trends on the discipline, all being part of the holistic dialogue.

This edited text has the core remit to address the challenges for those involved in designing and delivering higher education through criminology courses, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, making it distinctive from all other criminology and higher education (HE) texts. The collection has a dual focus, which benefits both students studying and academics involved in teaching criminology. By highlighting a number of contemporary challenges and discussing differential approaches that can be developed with such debates, considerations of how teaching materials are designed and how content is delivered are explored in the chapters. With a focus upon answering the 'how' questions, this edited text presents a divergent focus through the chapters and debates, which all have some level of autonomy in their questioning and challenging dilemmas, whilst also having overlapping themes.

This collection is not a 'how to teach' criminology text, or indeed one that outlines key areas in the discipline, but is more about identifying the challenges and tensions that should be understood by all, students and those teaching criminology. The binary purpose presented

in this text highlights the wide context of themes and reflections of practice, evidenced through exemplars explored in the chapters. The sections provide depth, whilst narratives address key messages for discipline. The lens by which pedagogical issues, literature and resources are addressed presents chapters which have relevance for anyone involved and interested in the discipline of criminology and criminal justice. Whilst some of the discussions may hold more appropriateness for a UK market, many of the core challenges discussed do indeed cross boundaries to the international market.

Themes of the Edited Collection

One of the central themes presented in this text is the focus upon relevant pedagogical debates, which will be of importance to readers. With a dearth of texts focussing upon critical reflections and pedagogical guidance in criminology, this text focusses upon some of these aspects, covering different distinct 'lenses' by which the subject can be understood, its diversity, transformative learning and innovation. The edited text is divided up into thematic parts; Theme One 'The challenges of diversity and inclusion'; Theme Two 'Challenges of creating authentic learning environments and Theme Three 'The challenge of creating transformative conversation'.

Theme One presents four chapters which discuss the challenges of diversity and inclusion. Stockdale, Sweeny, McCluskey-Dean, Brown and Azam focus upon developing and embedding critical information literacy. Presenting arguments that address vulnerability and marginalization, they argue that criminology as a discipline, continues to limit itself, often to a male and Western viewpoint. This chapter explores their journey to improve critical information literacy in the criminology curriculum, addressing dilemmas from different viewpoints, lecturers, a doctoral researcher and graduate teaching assistant, a librarian and two students.

In the second chapter Duggan and Bishop present debates associated with feminist scholars, addressing the potential for conflict between personal and professional identities. This discussion reflects upon the

intersection of a gendered and intersectional nature, noting the freedom and autonomy on values and ethics, whilst considering wider institutional resistance and restrictions. By unpicking resistance to feminist perspectives, the discussion addresses ways to overcome institutional barriers to embedding intersectional approaches in teaching criminology.

In the third chapter Long presents the challenges involved with teaching race, addressing the pedagogical debates embroiled in such topics, and further reflects upon strategies to inform and challenge race thinking and the racial dynamics in the classroom. Part of this discussion considers the place and role for students and the positioning of these debates within the wider curriculum.

The final chapter in this first section from Peake addresses a common issue of widening participation, with reflections for personal tutors and educators to ensure the playing field is levelled as far as possible. The chapter addresses the transition from a non-traditional route to making the transition often seen as difficult to negotiate. By identifying the differences with wider socio-economic challenges, alongside vocational or alternative learning, considerations reflect upon how to promote equity in learning and teaching. The aim of this chapter is to encourage higher attainment and raise the self-esteem of those who may not initially feel part of the HE environment.

The second theme 'Challenges of creating authentic learning environments' begins with a chapter addressing contemporary issues of online and digital technology within criminology. By focussing upon the role and impact in the real world, McAlister discusses the need to move beyond traditional social science thinking and pedagogical approaches. Arguing to bridge the gap between criminology, digital technologies and computer science, discussions refer to different sociotechnical approaches to studying cybercrime, whilst exploring solutions to ameliorate the harm caused by it.

In Chapter 7, Johnson reflects upon approaches with visual teaching and its role in relation to learning in criminal justice. This chapter explores how visual teaching, predominantly based on smartphone photography, has been adopted at an undergraduate level in criminal justice modules. The chapter is presented in three parts firstly addressing why and how a visual approach has been adopted, moving

on to exploring the legal and ethical responsibilities arising from this kind of teaching and learning, and finally presenting opportunities for innovation that may arise with assessment from the visual approaches.

In Chapter 8, Jones focusses upon strategies and reflections for embedding employability in the curriculum. By identifying the currency with this topic, as shown in recent UK subject benchmarks (QAA, 2022), the chapter reflects upon curriculum enhancement adopted by one UK-based criminology HE degree provider. This progressive approach has transformed approaches to employability and considers the competing demands of the research-teaching nexus and the role of external partners in delivering criminological learning.

The final third theme 'The challenge of creating transformative conversations' explores how difficult topics have been embedded within teaching and learning. In Chapter 9, Nichols and Humphrey discuss the challenges of creating learning experiences to enable students to understand the experiences of vulnerable people within the prison estate. By presenting collaborative insights between lecturer and student studying the module the chapter addresses dilemmas and issues of relevance for supporting student engagement, alongside connecting theoretical concepts with lived experiences. The chapter further reflects upon ways of uncovering hidden voices and what the benefit may be for the wider learning experiences for students.

In Chapter 10, Harding discusses the topic of teaching sensitive materials. By reflecting upon sensitivity through educational, sociological and victimological considerations of delivering teaching, Harding addresses challenges by exploring the best way to address sensitive topics within criminology. The approaches discussed highlight the importance of ensuring duty of care to students' wellbeing, whilst further considering the potential impact of students' experiences outside of the university environment. It is argued that there is a core responsibility, as educators, to teach content that can be both challenging and potentially distressing, which drawing upon experiences of delivering sexual offending and victimization, seeks to explore the middle ground of the positions being presented.

Chapter 11 by Sercombe, Stanley and Mundine presents an eye-opening and powerful narrative of the impact of decolonizing the

curriculum, which addresses the epistemological challenges of doing black and doing white in the same space on a university campus. With the focus of the chapter on teaching at the University of New South Wales, narratives explore the efforts to expand provision whilst enabling students to learn about the realities of the disproportionate incarceration of First Nations people in Australian prisons.

The concluding chapter aligns the key themes addressed in the book and addresses what the future may hold for teaching criminology and criminal justice. It indicates key pedagogical principles for criminology courses that help to address the challenges outlined in the text. With an acknowledgement of some of the wider ethical and practical challenges for the discipline take away's and lessons learnt from the innovative work are presented in the book as the focus for the final reflections. The discussions highlight key questions for all criminology educators which are inherently particularly to the discipline.

On a final note, this collection offers critical reflections and pedagogical guidance which considers a wider range of challenges covering diversity, transformative learning and innovation. By learning from others' practice, and understanding their interpretations of dilemmas, important discussions are presented about how they have been overcome in practice. The illustrations discuss how innovation has been applied to learning inside and outside of the classroom, with an emphasis on the use of real-world examples. By providing suggestions for resources, alongside evidence-based argumentation, different voices and conversations are presented through the discussions of pedagogic practice. Issues are topical, addressing important agendas for UK Universities, with questions of why they are important and why they are often so challenging in practice. With the addition of top tips for educators and keywords, the chapters present arguments which can be applied to practice.

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