

>>LBB: Languages Behind Bars – A very useful tool for teachers and trainers in prison

LBB has produced a set of communication and language-learning materials for use by teachers and trainers in prison either as stand-alone communication programmes, or as complementary materials for integrating into existing language courses - for either



prison inmates, or prison staff. The materials - consisting of a workbook, a series of illustrated flashcards, visual dialogue builders and an ICT-based audio practice tool - are available in English, German, French, Bulgarian and Dutch.

Click [here](#) to download the English Workbook

Click [here](#) to download the Visual Dialogue Builders

Click [here](#) to download the Flashcards

The **workbook** - similar to a conventional language learning 'textbook' - is a set of learning units designed to meet the communication needs in a prison context. Ranging from giving personal information and talking about nationalities to giving and understanding prison-specific instructions and discussing rights and obligations in prison, this workbook can be used by both prisoners and staff looking to improve their ability to communicate with other people in prison.

The structure of the book enables its use both in classroom and training settings, but also for private learning. Learners are encouraged to use the book to note down translations in their own language, to keep a record of words and phrases for practical reference.

The **workbook** doesn't only emphasise functional language, but exposes learners to a culture of positive interaction. Dialogues between prisoners, detainees and staff are based around the conventions of polite conversation where terms such as "excuse me", "please" and "thank you" are common practice. Not only does this promote politeness and respect amongst prisoners and detainees when interacting with prison staff, but evidence from the piloting of the programme indicated very strongly that staff using polite terminology in the native languages of the prisoners and detainees with whom they are talking has a profound impact on the subsequent level of respect and cooperation. The workbook is based around the following course plan.

People, Identity and Nationality

- Introduction - key people in the prison - detainee, officer etc
- Introducing yourself
- Saying where you are from and what language you speak
- Filling out basic forms
- Understanding basic phrases
- Identifying basic personal items in the prison
- Rules - knowing what is permitted and not-permitted
- Expanding on key people in prison
- Introduction to making and receiving spoken requests with "please" and "thank you"

Your Space

- Introduction - the cell and items in the cell
- Identifying other places in the prison
- Everyday individual activities and routines
- Describing the cell and basic living situation
- Items and furniture in the cell
- Rules - knowing what activities you can and cannot do in relation to 'your space'.

Health, Religion and Culture

- Introduction - the human body
- Describing illnesses and ailments and being able to declare emergencies
- Making requests - seeing a member of staff (i.e. a doctor)
- Understanding basic medical phrases
- Informing of your religion, talking about religion and culture
- Making requests - receiving items (i.e. religious texts)
- Expressing dietary requirements (i.e. for religious purposes, fasting etc.)

4 - Living Together

- Introduction - review of activities in the prison
- Rules - knowing what activities you can and cannot do in relation to general activities
- Talking about jobs in the prison
- Talking about vocational training and future job opportunities
- Talking about general education and skills
- Talking about earning money
- Making requests - contacting the outside world
- Rules - specific rules and regulations of the prison
- Communicating information about sanctions and privileges

5 - What's Next?

- Introduction - the usage of the word 'release'
- Understanding information for preparing for release
- Asking questions about release
- Legal things to consider after release (deportation, extradition, electronic tags etc.)
- Practical things to consider after release (accommodation, family, work, education etc.)
- Discussing accommodation possibilities
- Jobs and job interviews
- Certificates and qualifications
- Talking about deportation

Imagery is hugely important in learning languages in prison settings, and is as useful for prisoners and detainees as for prison staff. An extensive set of flashcards can be used in training sessions, but can also be equally useful in practice; when communicating specific things in a prison setting without linguistic resources, imagery can help get messages across and reduce



misunderstandings and the tension in communication. A total of 125 flashcard images can be used to represent objects, people, activities or instructions across a diverse range of topics.



The workbook itself is illustrated through various comic-strip style dialogues, showing visually the interaction between prisoners, detainees and various types of staff. All of these individual comic frames are reproduced without dialogue, allowing an infinite number of individualised dialogues to be created and practiced. This affords a huge amount of flexibility and creativity to adapt teaching and training to the unique institutional context.

These are made available in full-colour printable

A4 format for teachers and trainers to print, cut up and integrate into their teaching resources.

>> Going Forward

To maximise the growth and adaptability of the LBB materials, we have created LBBx. LBBx is a spreadsheet-based document which codifies all of the text written in the workbook. On the basis of LBBx (which is currently only done in English, but which can very quickly be produced in the other language versions of the project), each chunk of text can be translated into further languages.

To get new workbooks in new languages, just contact the team at *die Berater*®



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