#critlib: information resources and incarcerated people

This is the storify for the #critlib chat on information resources and incarcerated people moderated by @foureyedsoul & @B2PSeattle, which was held on 1/4/2016 at 2pm EST.



Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

Hi #critlib folks! It's time for the info resources & incarcerated people chat. Let's start with intros! @B2PSeattle critlib.org/information-re...



2 YEARS AGO



Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

I'm Ryan, an Instruction & Outreach Librarian at a community college in Boise, ID. I'm lucky to co-moderate today with @B2PSeattle #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jenna Freedman @zinelib

Howdy #critlib. This is Jenna, displacedly tweeting (library swing space not yet ready for habitation) next to @PoorCharlotte.



2 YEARS AGO



Violet Fox @violetbfox

Hi #critlib, happy new year! I'm at a small academic library in the middle of Minnesota. Thrilled to have the fabulous @B2PSeattle join us!



2 YEARS AGO



Samantha Winn @Sam Winn

Hi #critlib, I'm an archivist at an academic lib, frmr public lib employee & general advocate for human rights of incarcerated folks.





Hi #critlib I'm an academic librarian in California.





Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

I wrote a paper in school on library programs for children of incarcerated people. #critlib





Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

@lisahubbell Great! I'd love to hear more about that. Supporting everyone affected by incarceration is important. #critlib





Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

My previous place of work also ran the Prison University Project at San Quentin. #critlib





Jaime, a librarian @rowmyboat

Hi, #critlib. Jaime, systems librarian in NYC. Dirty street librarian in my spare time.





lan Beilin @ibeilin

Hi #critlib - academic librarian in nyclurking today from work

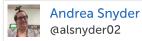




Emily Drabinski @edrabinski

Hi #critlib eating my lunch in Brooklyn!





Howdy folks! I'm an outreach librarian on Long Island & do work w/out county jail. #critlib





Nicola Andrews @maraebrarian

Hi #critlib! I'm an MLIS student and @B2PSeattle volunteer in Bellingham. The letters we get are frustrating/heartbreaking. Let's talk.





Books to Prisoners

@B2PSeattle

Welcome, everyone. We're happy to be here with @foureyedsoul discussing (unfortunately) timely & urgent issues about incarceration. #critlib





Jenna Freedman

@zinelib

We used to send a lot of zines to incarcerated ppl, but asked off @amdial's resource list bc we cdn't easily handle the requests. #critlib





Jenna Freedman

@zinelib

@B2PSeattle @amdial Really, it was volume. The need is so great; it's hard to keep up! And yes, the restrictions are a b. #critlib





Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

@foureyedsoul Family literacy programs encourage visitation. Girl Scouts Beyond Bars runs mother-daughter programs onsite. #critlib





Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

@foureyedsoul Annie E. Casey Foundation supports a lot of good programs during incarceration and re-entry. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Melissa Morrone @InfAgit

Hi #critlib - going to try to follow along while working. I'm in Brooklyn, volunteered for years for books-to-prisoners projects.



2 YEARS AGO



Jennifer Dekker

@jayeldee

librarian in Ottawa, CA. Best ALA session ever attended was on how prisoners build relationships with their kids via reading. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Annie Pho @catladylib

A little late to #critlib. Annie here, academic librarian in Chicago. Mostly lurking in today's chat but very interested.



2 YEARS AGO



Books to Prisoners

@B2PSeattle

Yes, let's.:) #critlib twitter.com/maraebrarian/s...



2 YEARS AGO



Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

Lets's move to questions! Both @B2PSeattle and I will tweet them out. #critlib





Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

Q1 How can we best negotiate the tension between prison restrictions and our commitment to fostering access to information? #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jaime, a librarian

@rowmyboat

A1: In the day-to-day, you just gotta make sure you read them all, follow to the letter, so that what you send makes it inside. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Emily Drabinski

@edrabinski

I teach a class @PrattInfoSchool w @Debbie_Rabina, students respond to Qs sent to NYPL letter service from incarcerated people. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Samantha Winn

@Sam_Winn

A1 Ideal to use existing advocacy resources (incl ALA statements) to negotiate policy w/ correctional admins. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jenna Freedman

@zinelib

A1: I'll be interested to hear what solutions people have be I've found restrictions to be inflexible (& arbitrary). #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Melissa Morrone

Not really an A1, but there's a lot of discussion on this among prison librarians on ALA's prison-L list. lists.ala.org/sympa/arc/pris... #critlib





Samantha Winn @Sam_Winn

A1 In my experience w/ other service work in prisons, it's an iterative process of trust building w/ staff. Info is our tool. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Samantha Winn @Sam_Winn

A1 But we should never forget that we are here to serve the incarcerated folks, not the institution. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jennifer Dekker

@jayeldee

@foureyedsoul no idea how to answer but research on reading and recidivism would be a propos here. assuming reading reduces it. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Andrea Snyder

@alsnyder02

A1: From my experience...building relationships w/staff @ facility, persistance, and lots of patience. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Books to Prisoners

@B2PSeattle

At We press for change when possible by speaking with DOC representatives. We have promising work going forward in PA in 2016. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Emily Drabinski

@edrabinski

@violetbfox We've written a bit, working on study right now. For me, the # of info needs produced by incarceration is interesting. #critlib





@violetbfox e.g., Qs abt health issues related to incarceration, home remedies for mold, physical therapy exercises, etc. #critlib





Books to Prisoners

@B2PSeattle

Absolutely. Unfortunately, some staff seem inflexible. Withholding access to books tool for compliance. #critlib twitter.com/Sam_Winn/statu...



2 YEARS AGO



Samantha Winn @Sam_Winn

@jayeldee @foureyedsoul Lots of case studies on this very question + successful progs that could be presented to administrators. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Andrea Snyder

@alsnyder02

A1: As I develop relationships, I continue to be connected to the right ppl who make it easier to provide better servies to inmates #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

A1 (1/2) Friends who work with avpusa.org and birthjusticeproject.org have had good luck taking programs into prisons. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

A1 (2/2) How much are libraries able to schedule programs? Amy Cheney brought authors to visit Alameda County Juvenile Justice Ctr #critlib





A1: Books are good place to start building rapport w those who're pro-prison. It's easier to make allies than w most other aspects. #critlib





@violetbfox Also, so many directory/ready ref Qs. I really see what it means to not have internet access. Huge problem. #critlib





Andrea Snyder @alsnyder02

@B2PSeattle the withholding of access infuriates me & is a battle that I fight regularly. #critlib





Books to Prisoners @B2PSeattle

Mental health needs pop up a lot. Meditation, stress relief, etc.--especially for those in solitary/seg #critlib twitter.com/edrabinski/sta...





Books to Prisoners

@B2PSeattle

Banned books lists--lists that prevent access for all inmates at a facility or state--are the worst. #critlib twitter.com/alsnydero2/sta...





Jaime, a librarian @rowmyboat

A1: +Nice bourgie white ladies et al will support books where they wouldn't support food improvement, med care, banning solitary... #critlib





Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

@edrabinski @violetbfox Any links to what you've written or presented? #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jenna Freedman

@zinelib

A1 (ish) I feel like a Q here is also about battling burnout since the barriers to working w incarcerated ppl are so high & cruel. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Samantha Winn @Sam_Winn

@alsnydero2 @B2PSeattle Related issue of arbitrary censorship + selection criteria, which some of our rec'd readings touched on... #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jennifer Dekker @jayeldee

@alsnydero2 @B2PSeattle also seems like a re-victimization of prisoners, who are largely victims of structural violence. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jaime, a librarian @rowmyboat

.@zinelib Especially since so many of us do the work outside of our paid jobs. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Violet Fox @violetbfox

@zinelib I love following @B2PSeattle et al. who often post letters of gratitude where you can hear how meaningful resources are. #critlib





A1 We've found that prisons object to pictures more often than text, so we cut out any pictures the prisons may object to. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO

Question 2



Books to Prisoners

@B2PSeattle

Q2 What steps can we take to make prison libraries genuinely inclusive? #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jaime, a librarian

@rowmyboat

A2 Know that needs of prisoners are specific: what fills those needs is not going to be generalizable from outside world. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jennifer Dekker

@jayeldee

@rowmyboat never worked in a prison, but I used to build a collection for an environmental org with only review copies. idea? #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jaime, a librarian

@rowmyboat

A2: Things we do to make libraries inclusive generally. Take jaundiced eye to our material, processes, etc, Listen for silences. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jaime, a librarian

@rowmyboat

A2: Prison libraries are notoriously bad. Old. Books no one actually wants to read. Poor condition. Must figure out needs, gaps. #critlib





Jennifer Dekker @jayeldee

It would seem that the importance of what librarians provide would be amplified in prisons cause the stakes are so high #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Andrea Snyder

@alsnyder02

A2 that's assuming there's an actual library.our county facilities aren't required. Men have nothing other than law materials 1/2 #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Andrea Snyder

@alsnyder02

A2 women have an extrememly dingy room that I'm starting the process of rebuilding. Students have access to a book cart. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Samantha Winn

@Sam_Winn

@alsnydero2 A2 so glad you mentioned this disparity - I would love to see hard data on availability of literature to women vs. men #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Samantha Winn

@Sam_Winn

@alsnydero2 B/c anecdotally I find that many ministries + service projects + literacy progs heavily focus on male institutions #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Samantha Winn

@Sam_Winn

.@rowmyboat Library-as-dumping-ground syndrome... Needs-based assessment & critical collection development just as important here. #critlib





.@B2Pdc Yup! I've had an art book returned because nudes. #critlib





Books to Prisoners

@B2PSeattle

Do all inmates have access, including solitary? (often a barrier purposefully created by prison systems) #critlib twitter.com/alsnydero2/sta...





Violet Fox @violetbfox

@jayeldee @rowmyboat I know at least a few of those librarians carrying giant stax of preprint books at ALA conf. are prison libs. #critlib





Jaime, a librarian

@rowmyboat

A2: LISTEN. High profile prisoners have wish lists online. Orgs receive requests. Prisoners will tell you what they want. #critlib





Andrea Snyder

@alsnyder02

A2: in NY, all state prisons have libraries w/librarians (often a high turnover) They are responsible for collection dev & programs #critlib

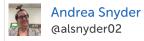




Jaime, a librarian @rowmyboat

.@B2PSeattle And pictures of a drawings at that. Not an actual human anywhere to be seen. #critlib





@rowmyboat they LOVE telling you what they want. Every visit, I leave with a large wishlist.



Question 3



Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

Q3 In what ways can we support prisoners even if we aren't working inside of a prison library?



2 YEARS AGO



Books to Prisoners @B2PSeattle

So frustrating b/c people want to build skills, pass time, express themselves...but figure drawing banned! #critlib twitter.com/rowmyboat/stat...





Melissa Morrone @InfAgit

A3. Remember that most people will get out one day! Your public library patrons, your students - some have been incarcerated. #critlib





Melissa Morrone @InfAgit

A3. Offer tech instruction, career search resources, etc., with the understanding that some have been locked up for months/years. #critlib





Books to Prisoners @B2PSeattle

Yes! Great point. 1 in 3 people in United States now have a criminal record. #critlib twitter.com/InfAgit/status...





Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

A3 Volunteering with your closest Books/Pages to Prisoners is a great start. ie Midwest Pages to Prisoners: pagestoprisoners.org #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jaime, a librarian @rowmyboat

Q3: For those with wishlists, send something! Give \$ & material to orgs that do the work. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Samantha Winn @Sam_Winn

A3 One tangent - we can examine how our access policies affect recently incarcerated. [1] #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jaime, a librarian @rowmyboat

A3: Talk about it to anyone who will listen. Slip it into convo everywhere. Talk about state of prison libraries, shitty regs. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Samantha Winn @Sam_Winn

A3 Ex - for public serving libs, do we accept DOC badges as photo ID? May be only form someone has. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

A3.1 I'm blanking on the specific name, but MP2P had another project aimed at info & letters to queer prisoners—helps inclusivity. #critlib





A3: Weasel books & postage out of your tepid liberal friends & relatives. #critlib





Andrea Snyder @alsnyder02

A3 Support your local public library - it's where many go upon release to look for jobs, social services, safe place, #critlib





Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

@InfAgit Volunteer with re-entry programs, coach recently released re public transportation, job search, what not to download. #critlib





Andrea Snyder @alsnyder02

a3 Try to connect w/the librarians who are working in or with the facilities to see what they need & how you can help. #critlib





Jaime, a librarian @rowmyboat

.@B2PSeattle Yes, weasel SPECIFIC books out of them. #critlib





Samantha Winn @Sam_Winn

A3 and do we train our staff to treat these patrons w/ inherent dignity? Can we work with est. reentry progs + orgs? #critlib





Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

#critlib twitter.com/B2PSeattle/sta...



2 YEARS AGO



Erin O'Meara

@diplomaticaerin

A3: what about teaching a class inside? Many non-profits that need teachers or they need help bldg access to info on syllabi. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



DC Books to Prisons

@B2Pdc

A3 If living near a books-to-prisons program, give time, books from wish list, or postage stamps. If living elsewhere be a pen pal. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jennifer Dekker

@jayeldee

A3: where I live: "Prison Letters" Ottawa-based collective of academics and students who promote prisoners' access to information #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Violet Fox

@violetbfox

A₃ A place for lib school curriculum, such as Pratt class @edrabinski mentioned & bringing prison libs in to talk about their work. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO

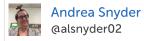


Samantha Winn

@Sam_Winn

Hence why it's so important for public lib staff to examine policies that might exclude unnecessarily #critlib twitter.com/alsnydero2/sta...





A3: Find ways to support the families of inmates. large scale example -- publiclibrariesonline.org/2014/09/librar... #critlib





Books to Prisoners

@B2PSeattle

Yes! In Seattle, we have a lot of great groups working on the inside. Will compile list at end. #critlib twitter.com/diplomaticaeri...





Free Minds Book Club

@FreeMindsDC

A3 @B2Pdc @B2PSeattle @foureyedsoul have volunteers give feedback on incarcerated poets' writing #critlib more here: bit.ly/1JTKuue



Question 4



Books to Prisoners

@B2PSeattle

Q4 Give that 95% of people incarcerated will eventually be released, how can we, as info professionals, help individuals re-enter? #critlib





Jennifer Dekker

@jayeldee

Prison letters online prisonlettersottawa.wordpress.com #critlib





Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

A₃/A₄ Also support programs and materials for children and families of incarcerated. #critlib





Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

A3/A4 Community colleges—for associates or prof/technical degrees—are a place reentering folks might head. Keep them in mind! #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Andrea Snyder

@alsnyder02

A4 Public libs need to reduce barriers to access. Provide job & tech training, have appropriate community connections for referals. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



DC Books to Prisons

A4 Research and tell prisoners about resources they can access immediately upon re-entry, e.g., nearby addiction recovery meetings. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Jennifer Dekker

@jayeldee

I know this is HUGE but educating re: injustice (poverty, racism, low education) which leads 2 substandard life/crime is important #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

A4 One of the brightest & most committed students I encountered as an adjunct had recently reentered. He made that class 10x better #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

A4 Work with churches and other strong communities on reintegration programs to support recently released and their families. #critlib





Andrea Snyder @alsnyder02

A4 i regularly talk up my work at the jail w/the goal of breaking the stigma & talking about challenges ppl face. awareness is key #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Lisa Hubbell @lisahubbell

A4 What congregations can do #critlib afsc.org/resource/5-thi...



2 YEARS AGO



Free Minds Book Club @FreeMindsDC

@foureyedsoul @B2PSeattle A4: programs run by credible messengers like @flikshop who understand the challenges w/ #reentry #critlib



2 YEARS AGO

Question 5



Books to Prisoners

@B2PSeattle

Q5 Given high levels of frustration and stress, how can prison librarians (and others working in related fields) prevent burnout? #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Andrea Snyder

@alsnyder02

q5 Selfcare is really important. I have a support network that I lean & force myself to step out as needed. #critlib



2 YEARS AGO



Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

Important bonus Q5—sorry we can't find original person to give credit from earlier! #critlib twitter.com/B2PSeattle/sta...





A5: That is the question, isn't it? Because it's designed to burn us out. The system doesn't want us to be able to do what we do. #critlib





Violet Fox @violetbfox

@B2PSeattle Difficult! Try to balance seastar throwing (helping one at a time) w/ effecting policy change? teachingquality.org/content/blogs/... #critlib





Andrea Snyder @alsnyder02

a5 Practicing patience is my sanity saver. I can't make changes overnight but I'm slowly chipping away & making a difference #critlib





DC Books to Prisons

@B2Pdc

A5 Some books-to-prisons volunteers avoid burnout by limiting themselves to a subset of prisoners, e.g., only addicts in recovery. #critlib



Resources



Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul

Time for #critlib pitches & relevant links to local projects you know about. Thanks for participating today & doing the hard work elsewhere.





Books to Prisoners @B2PSeattle

Thanks everyone! Some local prison-focused groups: @FreedomProject3 @yogabehindbars @ubbseattle #critlib (1/3) twitter.com/foureyedsoul/s...





More in Seattle! @Prisonscholars @PostPrisonEdu & Freedom Education Project (fepps.org) #critlib (2/3) twitter.com/foureyedsoul/s...





Books to Prisoners @B2PSeattle

And a group that has long worked to fight back against prison censorship, @prisonlegalnews #critlib (3/3) twitter.com/foureyedsoul/s...





Dr.EB @LNBel

Here's NY State Prison Annual Reports, listing the books purchased for each prison library #critlib archive.org/details/johnja...





Dr.EB @LNBel

We also have libguides on Re-Entry guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/reentry and NY State Prisons guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/NYPrisons #critlib





Books to Prisoners @B2PSeattle

Thank you for the link! Wish every system posted a list like that! #critlib twitter.com/LNBel/status/6...





Melissa Morrone @InfAgit

If I may, I want to throw in something I wrote about literature in prisons: libraryjuicepress.com/blog/?p=4157 #critlib twitter.com/foureyedsoul/s...





#RadicalTeacher had issue re teaching PIC abolition in summer 2010. We weren't OA yet; ping for articles! jstor.org/stable/10.5406... #critlib





Samantha Winn @Sam_Winn

Worth reading while we wait on ?s to drop - ALA Council's statement on prisoners' right to read #critlib ifmanual.org/prisoners





Jaime, a librarian @rowmyboat

In NYC there's Books Through Bars: booksthroughbarsnyc.org/wp/@BtBsNYC #critlib





David James Hudson @davehudson123

This also looks fantastic, #critlib: On the Surveillance of Blackness by Browne, dukeupress.edu/Dark-Matters/i...





Melissa Morrone @InfAgit

Couple things I don't think were mentioned in today's #critlib chat. @prisonbookprog's Natl Prisoner Resource List: prisonbookprogram.org/resources/nati...





Annie Pho @catladylib

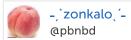
Relevant to today's #critlib chat. twitter.com/randcorporatio...





#critlib Highly recommend reading Running the Books by Avi Steinberg. Interesting account as a prison librarian #prisonlibrarianship





Okay done thanks #critlib. More stuff to check out: @BlackAndPinkBos @RussellMShoatz @afroCROWDit @FreeJeremyNet @nycabc @POCZineProject

