

Assignment 4: Research report:

Do prisons do any good?

The topic for the group presentation was do prisons do any good? The group consisted of four people, each of who were given a particular responsibility to cover. These responsibilities were split up into; introduction, arguments for, arguments against or the conclusion. My task was to conclude the presentation. In-order for me to do this I had to have knowledge on all areas of the topic. If I done my own research on the topic and came to my own conclusion, it would have wasted a lot of time, and depending on what sources of research I used I could have contradicted what my group was saying. Therefore, in the group meeting, the group decided that in-order for the conclusion to avoid contradiction or incase I looked at the topic from a different point of view, each group member would give me the notes to the research they had done on there own and so from that I could work on concluding the presentation. And so my particular job did not require me to identify relevant sources from both sides of the argument as this was already done for me. What I did, was take notes of my group members and the reference lists to familiarize my self with the topic and also with the resources that were used by the group to do the presentation.

However for me to complete the task of concluding the presentation I had to analyze each of the other sections add them, as I felt necessary. Whilst reading over the introduction I didn't feel the need to add much of its context into the conclusion as to refrain from repetition within the presentation. However I did use the national statistics which were taken from the home office website, which were given to me by Rupal as she was doing the introduction. I did not add any additional information to these and simply only put in what Rupal had found. However I did cross reference the website pages that Rupal had used and made sure I only used those which referred to the U.K. as most of them were statistics of the whole of Europe. I closely checked were the statistics came from and who they were recorded by as there is a difference in ones recorded by the British crime survey and the police. The statistics I picked all showed whether Prisons were good or not. What I also tried to do was to find some statistics, concerning the other issues addressed in our presentation such as the number of people who have taken parts in schemes and the number of them who re-offended. However at all times I made sure that my findings were consistent with those of my group members. During the group meetings, my findings were shown to the other group members, to see if they had any link with the research that they had done.

The second part of the presentation looked at whether prisons do any good, and the argument for them. I took the notes and references of the member looking at that particular part. She paid attention to a few prisons where studies were being conducted and schemes were carried out. Also what effects these schemes had. What I did was read over her notes, looked through the books and website pages she had given me to see what they had concluded. Again I looked for statistics on whether the schemes do work and how many of them are being carried out. As I didn't want to repeat what Nasima had said and so I made a summary of her points and took out the main arguments and used them to conclude that section. For this part of the research, using the same books as mentioned in the log. I read the conclusions to the chapters to see if there was any other theories which contradicted or supported what we had said and mentioned them in the conclusion.

The group member that looked at the opposing argument namely the arguments against prisons doing good used different books and websites and so again I used his notes and read the conclusions that had been drawn at the end of the articles that he had used. I assumed that as Nasima was doing schemes and how they do good, that Michele would do how the schemes are not so good but he didn't concentrate much on schemes. Therefore here I had to do some extra research and I used the books used by Nasima and conclude how schemes did not do that much good, I also used statistics to support my points, which were again taken from the home-office website. The website was quite straightforward, all I needed to do was type in schemes into the search engine and all the information about what schemes they were, where they were being held and the statistics for them were present.

Finally I put together all the information I gathered from the other members and found that

Overall from looking at the home office websites for national statistics results, prisons vary from prison to prison and within the prison itself. The topic we were given was very broad and could be looked at through many different angles. Such as when looking at whether prisons are doing well, we could look at the living conditions such as over crowding and whether that had an effect, what the actual purpose of the prison was? Does it teach offenders not to re-offend? However our group took the approach of looking at statistics to show the population in prisons, the prisoners backgrounds e.g. whether male or female, white or Asian and the rate of re-offenders and why these ex-prisoners re-offend. I also looked at the different schemes which government had introduced in

order to educate offenders, and also attempted to find out what happens psychologically to the individual. In order for me to do the conclusion I had to have some knowledge on these issues. To make this the case I had to use the same sources as the other members of the group. This was done by me reading the research my team members had done and also by looking at the references they used, as doing this would save me a lot of time. I then read all the information and took out the main arguments and concluded on whether that information showed if prisons do good or bad, I looked at whether there was more good than bad and what the statistics showed. I also visited the sites myself just in case my group had missed out something which could have made a difference to the conclusion. Here I had to make sure that I only extracted information that was relevant to the conclusion and not something that had been stated before or information that would not help me in concluding. However statistics and such information was repeated before as it helped me show the class how we had come to the conclusion that we did. As I didn't want to repeat myself and tell the class the main arguments again. I just done a small summery of what the group had said as a reminder and also commented on what the group as a whole thought about prisons doing good and what we thought the government should pursue in order to improve conditions.

As this was a very broad topic, and there are many different perspectives to look at it through, as many different theorists have put various views forward. In order for the group to see if we had enough evidence to back up our theory that prisons do not do any good, I had to research on the other theories put forward by other theorist and look at there evidence. It was essential that we had more evidence which showed that prisons do not do any good and to justify our findings. As much research has also tried to show that they do. Whilst the other group members were looking for evidence for both sides of the arguments I had to look for other theories which would support our conclusion. I did this by reading the notes of the other group members and reading additional chapters to look for evidence that may show that our findings were wrong. I read the conclusions of the chapters from "do prisons work" by Charles Murry 1997 and did find that there were many different point of views depending on the prisons themselves and where they were based. However over all, from the readings that me and the other members done we found more convincing facts showing that prison do not do any good than the opposing view. Therefore we extracted information from the data which we felt was convincing to show that the conclusion we came to was the stronger opinion. However

because there are opposing views we also added them and they were used to compare the findings, which showed that prisons do not do any good. All this information was used in the presentation to help explain to the group how and why we came to our particular conclusion.