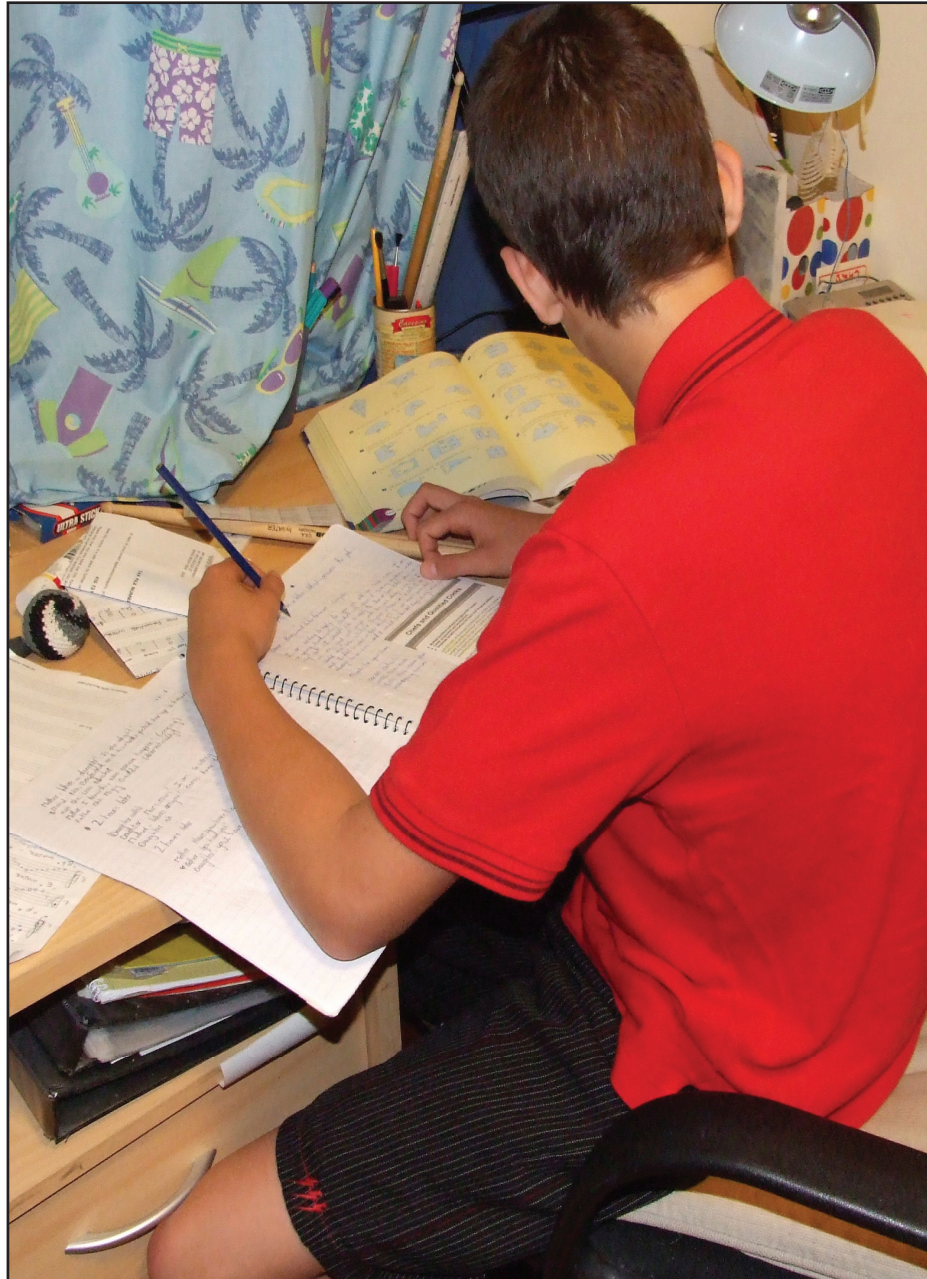


The Life of a Persistent Young Offender

Education / Employment

Developed by Garner Clancey



Research (and experience) tells us that young people who are persistent offenders, will often have experienced difficulties at school. Often, young persistent offenders will have poor educational attainment, poor attendance records (frequently with multiple suspensions and expulsions) and behaved poorly. School performance has significant ongoing implications. A failure to read and write will be a massive barrier to gaining employment. Failure to gain employment has obvious implications for one's ability to participate in society.

The following provides some excerpts taken from various books (criminological or sociological texts) about offenders. These excerpts have been taken to demonstrate how some offenders will think about their world. Read the excerpts and then answer the questions below.

"Didn't worry about school, we used to think they're trying to brainwash us... I didn't learn how to read and write till I was nineteen... We used to go to school once a week and that was on sports days"

"I was below grade, not the normal classes, the underachievers. But it wasn't just me, it was all my friends in class. It was good - we all ran amuck, we got caned, we got kicked out of class, we did what we wanted to do. We give the teachers hell and what are they going to do? Kick us out of school?"

"When I got to high school, maybe sixth class, I started wagging a bit; things just fell apart"

"I started smoking, hanging around the wrong people in high school. I got expelled in year seven and went back to my original high school. I got expelled from there about two months later and they brought me out to another high school. I didn't used to go; I'd have roll call in the morning and then take off"

"I hated school. I just hated it. I used to fuck up all the time at school"

"I went to a whole bunch of schools before I dropped out"

References:

Korn, N. (2004) *Life Behind Bars: Conversations with Australian Inmates*

Bourgois, P. (1995) *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*

Questions:

- Will they have gone to pre-school?
- What will it have been like on their first day of school?
- What do they think of the teachers?
- How do they relate to other students?
- When do problems begin to emerge?