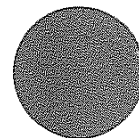


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THE IMPACT OF CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION ON  
RECIDIVISM  
EXCERPTS/ABSTRACTS  
1988-1994

COMPILED BY  
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# Correctional Higher Education: Reduced Recidivism?

Marian O'Neil

## Abstract

*A great deal of the post-release success of inmates depends upon the treatment received during incarceration. The success or failure of any specific treatment depends upon the support given by both the public and the prison administration. There are laws in support of basic K-12 education for those incarcerated. However, there is a tremendous gap in opportunities for these people when it comes to higher education. In an attempt to determine if post-secondary correctional education bears significant impact on the post-release success of past offenders, my study sought to determine if there was a lower rate of recidivism among those who had participated in post-secondary education while incarcerated as compared to the recidivism found among those who qualified for such a program but did not attend.*

According to researchers such as Roush (1983) and Corcoran (1985) there is a considerable need for improvement in correctional education programs. Lack of societal support, lack of collaboration between correctional and educational leaders, poor resources and inadequate planning are only a few of the many problems. However, one glaring omission is the lack of post-secondary educational opportunities for the ever-increasing qualified inmate. Since education is to prepare future citizens to lead productive lives, prison education should hold high priority in the rehabilitation of the incarcerated, but investigations into the various priorities of prison officials have found education at the bottom of the list. With the hope of prompting improvement through increased awareness, the need for more research has been repeated throughout literature as well as in federal documents such as those released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. This study focused on the need for collaboration between educational and correctional leaders in order to offer meaningful, continuing post-secondary education programs.

Theoretically, the need for correctional education is explained through Clemmer's (1958) theory of "prisonization" which suggests that as an inmate enters an institution, he enters a microcosm into which he becomes absorbed if for no reason other than survival. If this is so, then why not offer the educationally qualified inmate a collegiate atmosphere into which he can be constructively absorbed? If both education and prison are intended to bring about change, why not combine the best efforts of the two? Sutherland and Cressey (1978) theorized "differential association" which posits that criminal behavior is learned through interaction with persons of like predilections. Here again, if the inmate

is placed very quickly into the collegiate atmosphere as opposed to an atmosphere of intellectual inactivity with other intellectually able but unchallenged persons, the mores of the surrounding culture may bring about a positive rather than negative change. This study hopes to suggest that an institution that supports post-secondary correctional education is enhancing the associational atmosphere, and thereby, creating a culture in conflict with the criminal element.

The research questions asked were the following:

1. Are the qualified inmates being served?
2. Is there a significant relationship between participation in post-secondary correctional education and lower rates of recidivism?
3. Is there a significant relationship between participation in post-secondary correctional education and the types of offenses committed for those who have been reincarcerated?
4. Can a correctional post-secondary education flourish?

Alabama was chosen as the study area because during a pilot study that state was found to keep accurate records and also to have a well-rounded post-secondary correctional education program. The sample studied was obtained through the records of attendance at Alexander City Junior College. A similar group of qualified non-participant inmates was randomly selected from the 3,445 inmates who were released in 1983. The total sample of 258 (participants and non-participants) was chosen on the basis of their eligibility for post-secondary correctional education, high school diploma or GED.

## Background

Many researchers have indicated that one of the most challenging and most needed adult educational delivery systems is the one found within the prisons (Conrath, 1986). Correctional education as part of rehabilitation has a great impact on society because education denotes change (Roberts, 1971). Change is certainly what is desired for the incarcerated. However, the dilemma that exists between the goals of corrections (custody and control) and the goals of education (freedom, growth, and self-actualization) cannot be ignored. These problems polarize the two administrative fields. In order to advance the educational goals and to help the prison officials view them as not contradictory to correctional goals, studies have been constant over the last decade.

Roush (1983) and then Corcoran (1985) both spoke of the internal as well as the external problems confronting the prison educator. Difficulties such as (a) the prison officials viewing education as another form of control, (b) silent opposition from guards who may resent the inmates for receiving a costly education, and (c) the inmates themselves viewing education as busy work are only a few of the internal problems. Some external problems come from the politicians who might push for financial help in this area but are torn between the knowledge that education is necessary and their constituents who claim that the correctional system is coddling hardened criminals.

Despite the conflicts, the prison population eligible for post-secondary education is growing.

**Table 1**  
Inmate Educational Growth from 1970 to 1981

	1970	1973	1974	1981
Completed	%	%	%	%
High School	12.40	13.52	22.67	37.0
Some College	1.1	3.4	4.32	9.0

Sources: 1970: U.S. Department of Labor Manpower Administration. Office of Manpower, Policy, Evaluation and Research, 1970.  
 1973: Bell, R., Conrad, E., Laffers, T., Lutz, J.G., Miller, P.U., Simon, C., Stavelton, A.E., & Wilson, N.J. (1979). Correctional education programs for inmates. Washington, DC: National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 175 982).  
 1974: Bell, R., Et al (1979).  
 1981: Correctional Education Association, Washington, DC.

Another interesting report was given from the Division of Planning and Research, North Carolina Department of Corrections in 1971.

**Table 2**  
Comparison of the intelligence test scores among felons and general population

IQ Groups	Ranges	General %	Inmate %	
			Males	Females
Superior	120 or above	1.5	1.8	.3
Above Ave.	110-119	16	9.4	3.8
Average	90-109	65	49	34.3
Below Ave.	80-89	16	22.4	25.3
Dull	79 - Below	1.5	16.8	36.2

Source: Division of Planning and Research, North Carolina Department of Corrections, Nov. 1971. Intelligence data from Wechsler Test for Adults.

Inmates may have societal problems, hence their incarceration, but in many cases the prison inmate is highly skilled and capable, as this study indicates.

Recent studies have suggested a very positive correla-

tion between correctional post-secondary education (PSE) and recidivism. Blackburn (1979) reported 37% recidivism among those releasees who had attended correctional PSE versus 58% recidivation among the non-PSE. In a study by O'Hayre & Coffey (1982) pertinent information was given on the following states: Maryland (no date) reported 37% recidivism for the PSE participants and 58% for non-PSE, and New Mexico (1979-1980) reported that the recidivism for students completing 40 or more semester hours was less than 1/4 of that of the general population.

A study by Wesley A. Jones (1982) recommended that such "success stories" of parolees who had received a higher education in colleges behind bars should be publicized to educate the public about the potential for this type of treatment to produce productive, better-adjusted, contributing citizens. Publicizing the positive effects of correctional PSE can contribute to the well-being and safety of society because as the public interest is aroused, perhaps funding for such programs will increase. In times of economic difficulty, low priority projects must prove their worth to society as a whole (Peak, 1983). The effects of educating a population such as the incarcerated can be wide-reaching. Society may benefit through the inmates' positive resocialization and reintegration. Without education for successful reintegration, the released inmate cannot survive and will either seek public assistance through welfare programs or resort to any means, legal or otherwise. The prisons will benefit because intellectually challenged minds tend to maintain clean institutional records since the inmate, trained at a higher cognitive level, will acquire the ability to respond to situations intellectually and verbally rather than physically. The remodeling of the criminal mind through intellectual challenge should be the responsibility of education leaders. A correctional higher education program should be devised for maximum impact on attitudes, values, thinking and then possibly behavior.

**The Current Study**

Alabama began Alexander City Junior College, Prison-college Extension in 1972 by offering evening classes on-site to the inmates. In 1973, the Draper Prison site became a full-time, off-campus college center (Thompson, 1987). In June of 1983, Alexander City Junior College joined with J.F. Ingram State Technical College to construct a separate educational facility between two prisons. According to the 1984 Annual Report (Alabama, 1984), the 1983-84 enrollment statistics were as follows:

- Average number of college inmate registrants each quarter... 210
- Average number of students per class... 37.8
- Percentage of inmates served by college at each institution... 11%
- Average number of 5 hour courses offered each quarter... 17
- Estimated recidivism rate of former college inmates... 16%

In a study of the 1983 releasees, Alabama reported an overall recidivism of 26%. This same group of 1983 releasees

became the focus of this study.

Of the group released in 1983, 129 attended correctional PSE during the years from 1980-1983, the years chosen for the study. Of these 129, their educational backgrounds were varied but all qualified for higher education either through GED, high school or some college. A similar number of non-PSE participants was chosen through random selection. This non-PSE sample was chosen based on their eligibility for correctional PSE, GED, high school or college.

**Table 3**  
Educational Levels of Sample in current study

Level	Post-Secondary Education Participants	Non-Post Secondary Education Participants
GED	57.4	48.5
High School	31.0	36.2
Some College	11.6	15.4
Sample Size	129	129

Is the qualified inmate population growing? From the numbers shown in Table #1 and the current study, the answer seems to be in the affirmative. Of the 3445 inmates released in Alabama in 1983, 8% were studied and 4% were served through Correctional PSE. Fifty-two percent of the eligible inmates had GED's, 33.5% had high school diplomas and 13.5% had some college education. Because many of the 10-12% served by college in the state of Alabama remained in prison after the 1983 releasees and were released in the following years or are still imprisoned, the sample studied was small and therefore the percentage of 4% being served is small.

The ages at first arrest of the PSE group ranged from 11 to 39 (X 19.9, S 4.5) with 57% of them having at least one or more prior arrest. The ages at first-arrest of the non-PSE group ranged from 14 to 43 (X 20.9, S 5.015) with 59% having at least one or more prior arrest. In trying to answer the question: Is there a significant relationship between participation in post-secondary correctional education and lower rates of recidivism, the phi coefficient was used. The phi coefficient is actually the Pearson product-moment coefficient for nominal-dichotomous data. The phi coefficient is interpreted in the same manner as other correlation coefficients: it provides an index of the strength of the relationship (Ary & Jacobs, 1976).

Of the total number of 258 educationally qualified inmates studied, the results follow in Table 4.

The chi square of 5.34, before Yates Correction is small but statistically significant at the .05 level with a phi

**Table 4**  
Significance of Education to Recidivism

	No Recidivism	Recidivism	Level of Significance
No PSE	88.5%	11.5%	.0209
PSE	96.1%	3.9%	

Chi-square = 5.33513, df 1, significance .0209 (before Yates correction)

Phi coefficient = .14352

Contingency coefficient = .14207

coefficient of .14352. Ninety-two percent of the sample studied were still out in the free world and 7.7% were recidivists. Of the 7.7% who became recidivists, 11.5% had not participated in correctional PSE and 3.9% had been active in the correctional post-secondary education program. This is a much lower recidivism rate than for the entire 1983 releasee population which the State calculated at 25%.

The second question asked was the following: Is there a significant relationship between participation in correctional PSE and the types of offenses committed for those who have been reincarcerated? Another chi-square was run with the results as follows:

**Table 5**  
Types of Crime committed and participation/non-participation

	Same Offense	Different Offense
PSE	60%	40%
No PSE	60%	40%
Sample Size	258	

Fisher's Exact Test = One-tail .70382 Two-tail 1.0000

Phi coefficient = .0000

Contingency coefficient = .0000

No differences in types of crime were found between those who had participated in correctional PSE and those who had not. The phi coefficient was .0000 and the contingency coefficient was the same. Fisher's exact test was run because the numbers were less than 30 and the

two-tail result was 1.000.

In answer to the last question concerning the ability of a correctional PSE program to flourish, when we consider the success of Alabama in this study it seems possible. From its modest beginnings as an evening extension in 1972, to being selected in 1975 as one of ten model rehabilitation programs by the Law Enforcement Planning Agency in Washington, D.C., Alexander City State Junior College Prison-College Extension now serves inmates "without regard to custody level, length of sentence, or type of offense committed" (Thompson, 1979, p. 12).

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

Participation of the incarcerated in correctional education programs seems to result in some decrease in recidivism. Prisoner education also prepares the inmate psychologically for reentry into the free world. Placing the incarcerated into a collegiate atmosphere rather than an intellectually idle atmosphere provides a smoother life both within as well as outside of the walls of the institution. Education is a change-agent: incarceration is meant to change attitudes. The combination of higher education along with incarceration for the qualified inmate can not help but increase the safety of society when the offender is released. More studies are needed to investigate the true extent of the intellectual and educational level of the incarcerated. More encouragement and counseling is needed to be sure that in the self-selection process some of the inmates are not left out of the educational mainstream because of prior negative educational experiences, poor self-image, and/or lack of sufficient correctional higher educational opportunities. Increased publication of the "success" stories of those who have attended correctional PSE and have succeeded in the free world is also recommended. Names need not be used. Numbers are impressive enough. Finally, more states need to look to the placement practices of states such as Alabama to be sure that qualified people are given the opportunity to attend correctional post-secondary education.

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#### Biographical Sketch

Marian O'Neil has been in education for over 25 years. She was involved in law enforcement through her husband who was in both corrections and crime scene investigation. She received her doctorate in educational administration from the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. O'Neil is now an administrator at a private school in New Orleans.

## The 6th Annual Special Issue

The June, 1990 special issue of the **Journal of Correctional Education** will address the use of technology with the offender. The concept of technology as it will be used in this edition includes computer assisted instruction (CAI), computer based instruction (CBI), computer managed instruction (CMI), video, interactive video, audio, adaptive learning devices, and other emerging non-print educational tools.

If you are interested in submitting an article for this special issue, please send 5 copies of your manuscript to the **Journal of Correctional Education**, Karcz, McGing and Associates, Inc., P. O. Box 75502, St. Paul, MN 55175.

Recidivism Among Federal Prison Releasees in 1987:  
A Preliminary Report.

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## Introduction

Within 3 years of their release from the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) in 1987, 40.8 percent of the former inmates had either been rearrested or had their parole revoked, that is, recidivated. This finding is based on a representative sample of 1,205 BOP inmates released to the community during the first 6 months of 1987.

Since at least the late 1950's, the BOP has conducted several recidivism studies regarding recidivism risk prediction indexes and prison program effectiveness. The BOP has worked closely with the United States Parole Commission (USPC) in the development and revalidation of the Salient Factor Score (SFS), a statistical instrument used by the USPC in actual decision making (Gottfredson, Wilkins and Hoffman 1978; Hoffman and Beck 1974; Gaes 1986). The BOP has conducted recidivism studies to evaluate halfway house release (Beck, Seiter, and Lebowitz 1978); large scale rehabilitation programs, such as those at the Robert F. Kennedy Youth Center at Morgantown, West Virginia (Cavior, et al. 1972; Gerard, et al. 1969), and at Butner, North Carolina (Federal Bureau of Prisons 1987); and prison industry (UNICOR) and vocational training programs (Saylor and Gaes 1992). Presently, the BOP is conducting comprehensive recidivism studies to evaluate its intensive confinement centers (i.e., Federal prison boot camps, Klein-Saffran 1991) and expanded drug treatment programs (Federal Bureau of Prisons 1992).

In line with these past and ongoing recidivism studies, the current study will update our understanding of recidivism among Federal prison releasees by examining the association between pre-prison, prison, and post-release characteristics and experience and recidivism rates; revalidating the U.S. Parole Commission's Salient Factor Score and the U.S. Sentencing Commission's Criminal History Score; and testing the effectiveness of several BOP policies, operations, and programs aimed at reducing recidivism.

The study report is presented in six parts. Part I summarizes the study's findings and defines its sources. It also describes the release population and sample and the two-way, or bivariate, associations between each of the background, prison experience, and community variables and recidivism. Recidivism is also compared among 1970, 1978, 1980, 1982, and 1987 release cohorts.

Part II defines the concept of normalization and uses multivariate statistical models to test hypotheses about the normalizing effects of social furloughs and education programs and reviews the independent effects of individual characteristics, prison experience, and post-release living arrangements. By multivariate models, we mean statistical models

that describe the simultaneous and independent (or relative) effects of many variables on recidivism rates.

Part III uses multivariate statistical procedures to examine the effectiveness of drug and alcohol treatment programs, in place prior to July 1987.

Part IV uses multivariate statistical procedures to assess the predictors of recidivism frequency among those releasees who recidivate.

Part V uses multivariate statistical procedures to assess the effect of halfway house release on post-release employment.

Part VI summarizes the study's findings and suggests future research and data collection efforts to help confirm and deepen our understanding of what pre-prison, prison, and post-release individual and environmental variables predict recidivism and which prison operations, policies, and programs are most effective for reducing recidivism.

## Part I. Summary, Data Sources, and Two-Way Associations

### Summary of Findings

In this summary I discuss primarily the two-way associations between each of the pre-prison, prison, and community variables with recidivism. Unless otherwise noted, the significant two-way, or bivariate, associations described here were supported in the multivariate analysis, presented in Part II of this report.

Major findings of the study include the following:

- Within 3 years of their release from the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) in 1987, 40.8 percent of the former inmates had either been rearrested or had their parole revoked, that is, recidivated.
- Recidivism rates were highest during the first year back in the community -- 11.3 percent of the released prisoners recidivated in the first 6 months and 20.3 percent did so in the first year after their release.
- Recidivism rates were higher among blacks and Hispanics than among whites and non-Hispanics -- 58.8 percent of the black releasees recidivated compared to 33.5 percent of the whites; 45.2 percent of the Hispanics recidivated compared to 40.2 percent of the non-Hispanics.
- Recidivism rates were almost the same for males and females; 40.9 percent of the males recidivated compared to 39.7 percent of

the females.

■ Recidivism rates were inversely related to age at release; the older the person, the lower the rate of recidivism -- 56.6 percent of those 25 years of age or younger recidivated compared to 15.3 percent of those 55 years of age or older.

■ Among offense types, persons in Federal prison for fraud or drug trafficking had the lowest recidivism rates at 20.8 percent and 34.2 percent, respectively, while those in prison for robbery or other crimes against a person (excluding homicide, manslaughter, and sex offenses) had the highest recidivism rates at 64.0 percent and 65.0 percent, respectively.

■ Generally, the more years of schooling the person had completed when beginning their prison term, the less likely they were to recidivate.

■ Both the U.S. Parole Commission's Salient Factor Score and the U.S. Sentencing Commission's Criminal History Score are strongly associated with recidivism. Persons in the "Very Good Risk" category (scores 8-10) of the Salient Factor Score recidivated at a 17.4 percent rate and those in the "Poor Risk" category (scores 0-3) at a 71.4 percent rate. Persons in the "Very Good Risk" category of the Criminal History Score (scores 0-1) recidivated at a 19.0 percent rate and those in the "Very Poor" risk category (scores 13 and above) recidivated at a 74.5 percent rate. Both the Salient Factor Score and the Criminal History Score are heavily weighted with measures of the person's prior criminal record, e.g., prior convictions and prior incarcerations.

■ Persons who were employed full time or attended school at least 6 months within 2 years of the time they entered prison had a recidivism rate of 25.6 percent, compared to 60.2 percent for those not so engaged.

■ Persons who were under criminal justice supervision (e.g., parole, probation) at the time of their Federal offense had a recidivism rate of 61.8 percent, compared to 28.4 percent for those not under supervision.

■ Recidivism rates were higher among persons with a pre-prison history of drug or alcohol dependency. Among the specific drug types, heroin abusers had the highest rate of recidivism -- 69.5 percent of those with a heroin dependency recidivated -- while those with a dependency on powder cocaine had the lowest rate of recidivism (51.3 percent) among those with a dependency history. In the multivariate analysis of Part II, only heroin and alcohol abusers were found to have higher likelihoods of recidivating.

■ Recidivism rates were directly related to prison misconduct; the higher the frequency of misconduct, the higher the rate of

recidivism -- 65.7 percent of those with four or more misconduct incidents recidivated, compared to 34.1 percent of those who had no misconduct incidents. However, in the multivariate analysis, misconduct was not found to be a significant predictor of recidivism. Apparently the variables predicting recidivism and used as controls in the multivariate models (e.g., prior record, age, race, gender, educational attainment, drug or alcohol dependency) also predict prison misconduct.

■ Recidivism rates were inversely related to educational program participation while in prison. The more educational programs successfully completed for each 6 months confined, the lower the recidivism rate. For inmates successfully completing one or more courses per each 6 months of their prison term, 35.5 percent recidivated, compared to 44.1 percent of those who successfully completed no courses during their prison term.

■ Recidivism rates were lower among inmates who received a social furlough while in prison than among those who did not. Of the 302 persons (25.1 percent) in the sample who received at least one social furlough during their prison term, 19.5 percent recidivated, compared to 47.8 percent of persons receiving no social furloughs.

■ Time served in prison was unrelated to recidivism -- 41.0 percent of those serving 6 months or less recidivated, compared to 42.1 percent among those who served more than 37 months. While longer prison terms may achieve varying degrees of crime rate reduction through incapacitation, depending on the incapacitated person's propensity to reoffend, longer prison terms apparently do not reduce crime rates through specific deterrence.

■ Releasees who had arranged for post-release employment prior to release had lower recidivism rates than those who did not make such arrangements; 27.6 percent of those arranging for post-release employment recidivated compared to 53.9 percent of those who made no plans for post-release employment.

■ Inmates released through a halfway house had a recidivism rate of 31.1 percent, compared to a rate of 51.1 percent for those released directly from prison. However, in the multivariate analysis in which several risk measures are used as controls (e.g., prior record, age, substance abuse, post-release employment and living arrangements) halfway house release was found not to reduce recidivism (see Part II). Nevertheless, a separate multivariate analysis found that halfway house releasees were significantly more likely to find post-release employment than persons released directly from an institution. In sum, while halfway house release appears not to reduce recidivism directly, it does appear to reduce recidivism indirectly, by increasing post-release employment. That halfway house

employment is to some extent coerced suggests that strong encouragement given inmates to participate in prison work, education, and drug treatment programs may pay off in reduced recidivism. When the number of days spent in a halfway house was examined in a multivariate model predicting recidivism, we found a modest recidivism-reducing effect. One possible explanation for this effect is the greater community adjustment a longer stay in a halfway house may allow.

■ Recidivism rates for releasees with a history of substance abuse were the same regardless of whether they had participated in a drug treatment program. Of the 799 releases with a drug or alcohol problem, 208 participated in a BOP drug treatment program and 591 did not. Participants had a recidivism rate of 50.0 percent. Non-participants had a recidivism rate of 47.6 percent. However, in the multivariate analysis where many variables were controlled, including age, we found that abusers with more severe dependency problems disproportionately received treatment. When a measure of the extent of drug dependency was used as a control variable, a very modest treatment effect was observed. We note that since 1987 the Bureau of Prisons has considerably enlarged the availability, variety, and intensity of drug and alcohol treatment programs provided (Federal Bureau of Prisons 1992). A massive research project is currently underway to evaluate the effectiveness of these new programs.

■ Persons living with a spouse after release had lower recidivism rates than those with other post-release living arrangements -- 20.0 percent of those living with a spouse recidivated, compared to 47.9 percent with other post-release living arrangements.

■ The more urban the area, the higher the unemployment rate, and the larger the percent of families living in poverty in the community where prison releasees resided (defined by ZIP Code), the higher the recidivism rate. In the multivariate analysis, however, the unemployment rate was found to be a strong and significant predictor of a lower likelihood of recidivating. That is, the higher the unemployment rate, the lower the likelihood of recidivating. Although this finding seems counterintuitive, it does, as discussed in more detail in the paper, support one criminological hypothesis about the relation of aggregate unemployment rates and crime rates.

■ In many cases releasees who recidivated were rearrested for committing a similar crime to the one for which they were just imprisoned, e.g., 47.2 percent of the recidivating drug offenders were rearrested for drug trafficking or possession and 35.3 percent of the recidivating property offenders were rearrested for a property offense.

■ Among the 490 recidivists from the 1,205 study group members, 246, or 50.3 percent were rearrested or had parole revoked once during the 3-year followup period, 128 (26.1 percent) twice, 48 (9.8 percent) three times, and 24 (4.9 percent) four times. One person accumulated 15 recorded recidivating events. The largest number of recidivating events, 245 (25.3 percent), were arrests for drug trafficking or possession, followed by 129 (13.1 percent) for larceny theft, and 127 (13.1 percent) for a parole violation. The fourth highest recidivating event was arrest for assault, with 67 events, or 6.9 percent of the total. We should note that the majority of these assaults were simple assaults. A multivariate analysis predicting the frequency of recidivism found the following variables to be significant predictors: the Salient Factor Score (the higher the SFS the lower the frequency); gender (males have higher frequency); pre-prison and post-release employment (employment reduces frequency); and length of prison term (a longer term has a very modest effect toward reducing recidivism frequency).

■ Except for the 1970 release cohort, recidivism rates for the 1978, 1980, 1982, and 1987 release cohorts were remarkably similar at around 40.0 percent during a 3-year followup and similarly defined as a rearrest or parole revocation. The 1970 release cohort had a recidivism rate of 51.5 percent, which, can be attributed to a disproportionate number of youthful auto thieves in that cohort. Both youth and an incarcerating offense for auto theft are significantly related to higher recidivism.

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# *PREP Study Links UNICOR Work Experience With Successful Post-Release Outcome*

*by William G. Saylor and Gerald G. Gaes  
Edited by Jamie Lillis*

This report summarizes several initial findings of the Post-Release Employment Project (PREP) conducted by the Federal Bureau of Prison's Office of Research and Evaluation. The Office designed the PREP study to answer fundamental questions about the effect of prison vocational training and work experience on offenders' behavior upon release to the community. PREP is primarily an analysis of the differences between Federal offenders who received training and work experience (the study group) and similar offenders who did not participate in these activities (the comparison group). The Office also contrasted study and comparison groups with a "baseline" group of offenders who represented all other inmates released in the same time frame as the study and comparison offenders.

## **BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY**

Preparation for the Post-Release Employment Project began in 1983. Data collection on the post-release results of more than 7,000 inmates continued into early 1987, with some data collected as late as October 1987.

Throughout the duration of this project (1984 through 1986), Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR) employed about 35 percent of study and comparison inmates released from Bureau institutions with UNICOR operations. Currently, UNICOR employs 32 percent of inmates in such institutions.

We do not know whether there is an optimal level of UNICOR employment in an institution. Increasing or decreasing the percentage of inmates employed in prison industries may or may not increase the positive effects of employment. Therefore, the proportion of UNICOR-employed inmates could influence the conclusions of this study.

Unlike most studies of prison vocational training or work experience, PREP is a prospective, longitudinal study. Institutional case management staff identified study inmates for several years. Staff selected inmates for the study group before their release if they had participated in industrial work for at least six months or had received vocational instruction. Inmates with UNICOR work experience primarily constitute the study group. Fifty-seven percent had UNICOR work experience exclusively, while 19 percent had a combination of UNICOR work experience and vocational training or apprenticeship training.

Staff chose the comparison group to be as much like the study group as possible. Researchers selected a comparison observation subject specifically for each study group member from a cohort of individuals released during the same calendar quarter. They based each pairing on an

exact match of gender and individual security level and on the closest possible match in criminal, educational, and employment histories and characteristics of the current offense.

While the study and comparison groups were similar to each other in terms of expected length of incarceration, individuals in these groups were much more likely to have a longer expected length of incarceration than individuals in the baseline group. In addition, usually the conviction offense for study and comparison groups were more serious than the baseline group. These differences are especially significant. They show that the PREP study participants were no more predisposed to succeed than any other inmates either in prison programs or in the community after release.

## **INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT**

An argument for continuing or even expanding industrial work opportunities in prisons is that such programs are necessary to cope effectively with inmate idleness and to assure the orderly running of correctional institutions. This issue is not directly addressed by the PREP study. To explore this issue, a research design would have to evaluate changes in institutional misconduct patterns related to the expansion or contraction of prison industries. Comparison among prison systems that have varying degrees of industrial work programs is very difficult since prison systems are often different in many other aspects as well.

In this section, we address a more focused question: *Do inmates working in prison industries or participating in vocational training show better institutional adjustment than their matched comparison counterparts?*

The results of three measures suggest that *study group participants did show better institutional development.*

- ◆ First, study group members were less likely to have a misconduct report within their last year of incarceration.
- ◆ Second, when they did, it was less likely to have been for serious misconduct.
- ◆ Third, unit teams rated study group participants to have a higher level of responsibility than their comparison counterparts. (The 'level of responsibility' refers to an inmate's dependability, financial responsibility, and the nature of the inmate's interaction with staff and other inmates.)

*Continued On Page 6*

# PREP Study Links UNICOR Work Experience With Successful Post-Release Outcome

Continued From Page 5

## HALFWAY HOUSE OUTCOMES

The Bureau of Prisons contracts with halfway houses to provide qualifying inmates an opportunity to work in the community before the end of their imprisonment. This is also the first opportunity to recidivate. Although the Bureau released most of the study offenders through a halfway house, it released many of the comparison inmates directly to community supervision.

The variable disposition shows that *almost the same proportion of study (83.9 percent) and comparison (83.3 percent) inmates successfully completed their halfway house stay.* On average, study inmates spent 98.0 days in the halfway house environment before their release to community supervision, while comparison inmates spent 93.5 days. *Study observations were 24.4 percent more likely than comparison observations to obtain a full-time job at some point during their halfway house stay.* Of the 3,070 study inmates released through a halfway house, 86.5 percent obtained a full-time job, while only 62.1 percent of the 1,043 comparison inmates released through a halfway house had worked at a full-time job. Study observations were also 7.7 percent more likely to obtain day labor employment (e.g. a one-day job performing unskilled labor at a construction site). Nevertheless, both study and comparison group members who obtained employment spent the same proportion of their entire halfway house stay on their job (on average, about 4.1 and 1.5 days per week on full-time and day labor jobs respectively).

One of the responsibilities of staff at halfway houses is to provide employment counseling. Most offenders get jobs through their own resources. Study inmates, however, were more likely to get employment help from their friends or from an employment agency than were comparison inmates. Finally, for inmates who left their longest held job at the halfway house, most study offenders quit in order to get a better job. However, 7.8 percent were fired and 23.8 percent were laid off. Comparison subjects were more likely to quit their jobs for reasons other than to get a better job.

In summary, at the point of halfway house release, both study and comparison offenders were equally likely to complete their halfway house stay successfully. Regardless, study inmates were far more likely to obtain a full-time or day labor job.

## POST-RELEASE OUTCOME

Once released to community supervision, researchers tracked offenders in the PREP study by making phone calls to their supervising probation officers. Follow up occurred at six and 12-month intervals. However, researchers collected monthly information over the entire period.

At both the six and 12-month follow-up points, researchers found that *probation officers were less likely to revoke the supervision of study group offenders.* Study and com-

parison group offenders showed their reasons for revocation were statistically indistinguishable (parole violation vs. new offense) at both the six and 12-month junctures. Nevertheless, the predominant reason for revocation during each six-month period (60-70 percent) for both groups was a parole violation rather than a new offense.

Furthermore, inmates who participated exclusively in UNICOR were also less likely to have their supervision revoked than were comparison group offenders. Although the magnitude of difference may appear small, the differences are both statistically significant and substantively meaningful.

At the 12-month period, probation officers had revoked supervision for 10.1 percent of comparison offenders, while they had revoked only 6.6 percent of study offenders. In other recidivism studies conducted by the Bureau, about 20 percent of released inmates were revoked or rearrested within a year of their release. In 1980, the percentage was 19.4; in 1982, 23.9; and in 1987, 19.2.

The differences among study, comparison, and baseline groups indicate several important conclusions:

- ◆ Due to the research design and the matching methodology, there are characteristics of both study and comparison offenders that decrease their likelihood of recidivating.
- ◆ UNICOR work experience and vocational training further increase the likelihood of post-release success.
- ◆ Had we compared the study group to a normal baseline group, even with statistical controls, it is likely we would have exaggerated the differences between offenders who participated in work and vocational training and those who did not.

There is a tremendous amount of variation in post-release wages, which probably explains why most comparisons did not reach statistical significance. Study group offenders were more likely to find employment during any of the 12 months following their release in the community. At the end of 12 months, study group inmates had averaged about \$200 more in wages than comparison group offenders. Although this result was not statistically significant, it appears to be a pattern worthy of continued observation. In summary, inmates who participated in UNICOR work and other vocational programming during their imprisonment showed better adjustment, were less likely to be revoked at the end of their first year back in the community, and were more likely to find employment in the halfway house and community. In addition, they earned slightly more money in the community than inmates who had similar background characteristics, but who did not participate in work and vocational training programs.

## FUTURE ANALYSES AND REPORTS

The analyses discussed in this report represent only the most fundamental differences between study and comparison offenders. Future analyses will address mobility issues

Continued On Page



# State to State

Continued From Page 7

speeding up the process of making an arrest. A NYC police officer must spend 15 hours to complete all the required paperwork that follows an arrest; including arraignment, the entire process takes approximately 25.8 hours. Multiply that time by the number of people arraigned in NYC last year (267,786) and a total of 6,908,878.8 hours were spent simply to process those arrests.

The new system, already in place as pilot programs in Queens and Brooklyn, eliminates the current paperwork burden by creating a computer information network. Suspects' fingerprints, mug shots, and data are entered into a computer in the precinct where an arrest is made, and that information is then accessible from all other precinct computers. According to a report prepared by NYC Police Commissioner William Bratton, the equipment will cost \$10 million and the annual savings will be *threefold*. The reduced paperwork burden will cut the amount of officer overtime pay and will free more officers from the office to perform their patrol duties.

While officers and district attorneys are relieved to shed some paperwork, the Legal Aid Society is also pleased by the reduction in the amount of time that criminal suspects will have to spend waiting for the paperwork to clear while they wait in the holding tank. The speedier booking process will also allow defendants and their legal counsel to prepare their cases more quickly.

Source: *The Christian Science Monitor*, 4 August 1994

# PREP Study Links UNICOR Work Experience With Successful Post-Release Outcome

Continued From Page 6

the impact of prison work and vocational training on changes in occupations before, during and after release from prison. We will also analyze specific occupational work and training effects to the extent the data allow. Every inmate's job or vocational training was classified according to the Department of Labor's Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT). These DOT codes will allow us to look at broad — as well as more refined — classes of occupations, and their impact on post-release outcome.

We have also collected economic climate data including: unemployment statistics, industrial sector information, and information on the demographic characteristics of the areas in which the Bureau released these inmates. Such information will allow us to examine the climate data in relation to work and vocational training.

As part of the data collected on study inmates while they were in prison, researchers gathered work evaluations conducted by the inmates' supervisors, as well as ratings of the inmates' performance in the vocational training courses. This performance information will allow us to examine whether the intensity of the inmate's work performance affects post-release success.

Although the impact of work and vocational training in Federal prisons has produced differences that may appear modest, they are nevertheless substantially and statistically significant effects. It is also possible that further analysis will show us how to optimize our training through specific skills acquisition. It is also likely that the economic climate of an area is an important determinant of an offender's community employment. We are well aware that many ex-offenders not only must overcome low skill levels, but also the local and global conditions that compound the already formidable challenge of finding and keeping a job, given the stigma of past incarceration.

*William Saylor is Office of Research and Evaluation Deputy Director for the Federal Bureau of Prisons.*

*Gerald Gaes is Office of Research and Evaluation Chief for the Federal Bureau of Prisons.*

*[In a recent interview, Saylor said he will continue to study the impact of UNICOR training on released inmates, including a comparison of participating male and female offenders.*

*"I'll probably look more specifically at the types of training, whether there are any greater benefits or lesser benefits in terms of occupational specialty training for both males and females," Saylor said. "In addition, we've collected all the information necessary in order to follow up on the progress of UNICOR participants almost indefinitely." — Ed.]*



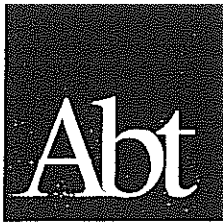
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Correctional Education, sponsored an applied research demonstration project entitled, "Enhanced Vocational Education and Training in Local Correctional Facilities," between July 1991 and December 31, 1993. Three county correctional agencies were selected as demonstration sites: the Hennepin County Department of Adult Corrections in Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Belknap County Department of Corrections in Laconia, New Hampshire; and the Strafford County Department of Corrections in Dover, New Hampshire. The Department of Education contracted with the team of Carter Goble Associates Inc. (CGA) of Columbia, South Carolina, and Community Resource Services Inc. (CRS) of Topsham, Maine, to provide the jails with technical assistance to implement the demonstrations. As part of an interagency agreement, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, arranged for a process evaluation of the three demonstrations. This report presents the results of the NIJ-funded evaluation.

The Department of Education set two broad goals for the demonstration. The first was to integrate academic education and vocational education with private sector work experience. The second was to design and implement activities such as job placement, follow-up services, job development, and family counseling that would help inmates prepare for successful community reentry. However, each of the three demonstration programs started from a different base of existing programs and services, and each represents a different dimension in the development of a comprehensive program of education, work, and transitional services for jail inmates.

The evaluation relies primarily on historical data (documents prepared by the CGA/CRS consulting team and the three demonstration sites themselves) supplemented by interviews and observations conducted during site visits by Abt Associates staff in June and July 1994. While the documentary materials are substantial, the evaluation is limited by the lack of systematic, comparable, quantitative data on service delivery, characteristics of participants, and post-release outcomes. In addition, because of significant differences among the three programs, the evaluation does not compare their achievements. Rather, it examines the implementation experience of each program separately, then seeks to identify common issues and problems.

## **Belknap County Training, Industry, and Education (TIE) Program**

The Belknap County Department of Corrections serves a rural county in central New Hampshire. The facility was extensively renovated in 1989, increasing its capacity from 34 to 50 inmates and then to 80 inmates. The population of the jail includes pre-trial, pre-sentenced, and sentenced inmates, as well as inmates transferred from State or Federal prisons. Sentenced inmates typically serve sentences of four to six months.

At the time the Department of Education grant was awarded, the facility had a limited number of programs and services. These were primarily substance abuse counseling, remedial education, and both paid and unpaid jobs. Individual service plans were not written for new inmates, and there were no specific employment-related services. Inmate work performance was not evaluated. Acknowledging the limited resources available to a small jail and the need to assure that new programs are efficient and sustainable, Belknap County used its demonstration grant to expand and integrate a broad range of services for medium and minimum security inmates at the jail. By design, the TIE program is an enhancement and linkage of programs rather than a separate and therefore vulnerable program.

Belknap County was successful in achieving the Department of Education's goals for the demonstration. To achieve the first goal of linking education and private sector work experience, Belknap County first had to expand private sector work opportunities. Unable to expand the existing industries program because of local economic conditions, Belknap County developed an innovative, wood shop work experience program that simulates private sector employment as closely as possible and is directly linked to an eight-week course in job seeking and job retention skills. Further linkage of education and work experience is provided in the computer lab developed with the demonstration grant. The lab provides a setting where inmates can use personal computers for self-paced instruction in academic subjects, and where they can apply the lessons they are learning in the job seeking skills course to resume writing and writing letters of application for job interviews. Belknap County achieved the second Department of Education goal by expanding drug and alcohol counseling, developing a number of new courses and workshops that offer instruction in a variety of practical skills, and providing opportunities for inmates to improve their work histories through systematic evaluation of all inmate work performance.

## **Strafford County Jail Industries Vocational Education Program**

The Strafford County Department of Corrections serves a rural county in southern New Hampshire. The jail was extensively renovated in 1981, expanding its capacity from 48 inmates to 68. Further expansion and conversion of an adjacent building to provide living quarters for inmates on work release has increased the capacity of the jail to 130 inmates. The population of the jail includes pre-trial, pre-sentenced, and sentenced inmates, as well as inmates transferred from State and Federal prisons. Sentenced inmates typically serve three to four months in jail.

Strafford County was successful in achieving the Department of Education's goals for the demonstration. Strafford County entered the demonstration with a strong industries program that was linked to education and counseling programs in the jail through the requirement that all participants become involved in drug and alcohol counseling and GED preparation as appropriate. The core of the industries program was the JTPA-supported Industries Job Training Program offering vocational assessment, vocational counseling, classroom instruction in job seeking skills and life skills, and post-release support for up to one year of classroom vocational training, three months of on-the-job training, or immediate job placement assistance. With the linkages largely in place, Strafford County used the demonstration grant to expand the enrollment capacity of the industries program by expanding its client base. It added the jail itself as a client by gaining a contract to do laundry for the institution, and it secured significant increases in orders from its primary private sector client, GFS Industries. These two expansions alone brought the industries program to full capacity. Further linkage of education and work experience is provided in the new computer lab located in the converted barn where the industries program is housed. The lab provides a setting where participants can use personal computers for self-paced instruction in academic subjects and where they can apply the lessons they are learning in the job seeking skills course to resume writing and writing letters of application for job interviews. Accessible to participants in the evening, the lab allows them to avoid scheduling conflicts and balance the demands of both work and education.

Strafford County achieved the second Department of Education goal by developing a new family weekend pre-release preparation program for inmates and their families. The program consists of an intensive two-day series of workshops and group discussions held over a weekend, with a one-day follow-up session three weeks later. The weekend program provides a therapeutic setting for inmates and their families to discuss substance abuse, approaches to

treatment and prevention, and resources available in the community. The program also expanded its instructional offerings, particularly evening courses in common software applications. The demonstration benefitted the entire population of the jail through development of a new job classification and evaluation process that offers inmates the chance to improve their work histories through systematic evaluation of all inmate work performance.

### **Hennepin County's Providing Opportunities for Work, Education, and Readiness (POWER) Program**

The Hennepin County Adult Corrections Facility (ACF) serves a large, urban county. The facility is located in Plymouth, Minnesota, about 12 miles west of downtown Minneapolis and has a capacity of about 600 inmates housed in three buildings—one building each for men, women, and work release. The capacity of the men's building is 400 inmates, with an average of 6,640 yearly admissions. The capacity of the women's building is 70 inmates, with 1,075 yearly admissions. The capacity of the work release building is 125 men and women, with 2,262 average yearly admissions. Most sentenced inmates (60-65 percent) have been convicted of misdemeanors. Sentence length cannot exceed one year, and the typical length of stay is between two weeks and five months. The Adult Corrections Facility occupies a building initially built in 1930 as the Minneapolis City Workhouse and Farm.

County policy is that only sentenced offenders 18 years of age and older are housed at the Adult Corrections Facility. Individuals held pre-trial or pre-sentence are housed in a separate sheriff's jail in downtown Minneapolis. However, because the downtown jail is under court-ordered capacity limits, the Adult Corrections Facility also holds overflow from that jail. Staff at the ACF estimate that 15 to 20 percent of the inmates detained at the facility at any given time are pre-trial or pre-sentence.

At the time the Department of Education grant was awarded, Hennepin County offered a broad range of programs and services, a substantial complement of staff, and an active volunteer program. The county had already made a substantial commitment to programs and services for its inmates. After the grant was awarded, a planning group was formed that included members of the county's Corrections Advisory Board and 23 members of the current facility staff, representing all departments: security, industries, social services, education, volunteer services, and staff training units. The planning group determined that the most critical unmet need among inmates was transitional services. As a result, the key features of the



POWER program model are its focus on the transition from the facility to the community and the provision of intensive follow-up services after release.

Hennepin County was successful in achieving the goals of the Department of Education. POWER is a distinct, well-defined program that consists almost entirely of new activities and services developed through the demonstration grant. These are a four-week course in job skills/life skills and a series of post-release services, including job placement assistance and follow-up counseling provided by a staff member based outside the facility, additional support through volunteer mentors in the community, and, at the same time, limited cash stipends for special needs.

The POWER program promotes integration of education, work, and other services in three ways. First, all participants are required to work at full-time jobs in the facility, and attend educational and drug and alcohol counseling activities as needed, based on the results of individual testing and assessment. Second, the program coordinator develops an integrated plan of service, including post-release services, tailored to the needs and circumstances of each participant. Third, the coordinator also functions as a case manager while participants are in the incarceration phase of the program, meeting with them regularly to provide monitoring and support.

### **Common Themes**

The three demonstration programs are so different in focus, scope, content, structure, and funding levels that no conclusive cross-site findings can be drawn, particularly given the lack of quantitative data on service delivery, participant characteristics, and post-release outcomes. Each site designed changes, enhancements, and new components to address unmet service needs and to respond to the realities of its specific local context. Given the substantial differences in size, location, resources, demonstration grant funding level, local labor markets, history, and focus among the three demonstration sites, it would be inappropriate and misleading to compare the results of the three projects. What we can usefully do is to look for common themes and issues in their implementation experiences.

- Providing for a planning period, supported by a high level of technical assistance, produces better program designs and minimizes subsequent implementation problems.

- Even small jails can provide comprehensive counseling and education services, along with realistic work experience, by aggressively reaching out to community resources.
- Small and medium-sized jails need to devote special attention, inventiveness, and resources to developing and sustaining effective post-release programming. These jails need to address the many factors that work against this crucial program component, including the lack of legal authority to maintain contact with inmates after discharge.
- All programs benefit from commitment to a process of continuous program improvement through internal evaluation of their services and activities.
- A computer lab is a key resource, drawing participants into programs, allowing for self-paced education, and linking naturally to assignments in life skills and job seeking skills classes.

### **Policy Implications**

The three demonstration sites represent different phases in the development of comprehensive programs linking education, training, and work experience within correctional facilities along with the provision of job placement assistance, follow-up counseling, and other support services after release. Their experiences show that it is possible for local correctional facilities to implement effectively a comprehensive program irrespective of differences in size, setting, and resources. The demonstration suggests that local facilities should proceed first by building a base of comprehensive services within the facility that includes drug and alcohol counseling; instruction in basic math and literacy skills, linked to GED preparation; a computer lab; classes in life skills and job seeking skills; and meaningful work experience.

All three sites have work release programs and active private sector industries programs, but even the largest of the programs can provide jobs for only a portion of potential participants. All three sites have pursued active business development efforts, but with only modest results. This suggests two courses of action. First, the Federal Government might provide local jails with aggressive technical assistance in business development strategies. Second, local jails can make productive use of work experience programs, such as the wood shop in Belknap County that simulate private sector employment.

Linking programs within the jail to proactive follow-up counseling and support after release, particularly in the first 60 days, may be the most important component in assisting ex-offenders to make the transition back to the community. The demonstration sites indicate that there are a number of different strategies for implementing these services.

The experience of the demonstration programs suggests that effective integration of services depends on effective case management. This includes development of individual service plans based on careful assessment of individual circumstances, regular contact to monitor progress, and timely intervention to resolve problems.

### **Research Implications**

Future demonstrations should include a series of forms to capture basic information on the characteristics of all inmates during the demonstration period. In addition, all program services and activities should have enrollment and termination forms that are linked to basic inmate information and indicate dates of enrollment, date of completion, and date and reason for termination short of completion.

From their inception, future demonstrations should provide for the possibility of independent, follow-up data collection after release so that the subsequent employment, schooling, and criminal arrests can be tracked. Collecting comparable information on all program participants (however "program" is defined) with at least a representative sample of inmates who do not participate in the program satisfies the minimum necessary conditions to measure the impact of these programs on participant behavior after release. Ultimately, the test of program success is whether it makes a difference in how ex-offenders act after they are released from custody.

transportation assistance (bus passes and rides), small stipends for work-related expenses such as uniforms or tools, emergency allowances for utilities, food, and clothing, and follow-up counseling and support.

***To what extent were these services successful in helping participants successfully make the transition to school, training, or employment?***

In the absence of a comparison group that did not participate in the program and without systematic follow-up data for both program participants and the comparison group, it is not possible to determine whether the program had a measurable impact on the transition of participants back to the community. Observation of the level of services provided and partial data on participant outcomes, however, suggest that the program has a substantial, positive effect on the reintegration of ex-offenders.

## Vocational And Academic Indicators of Parole Success

Randall E. Schumacker  
Dennis B. Anderson  
Sara L. Anderson

### Abstract

*This study compared adult releasees who had vocational/academic training to a control group of releasees who did not receive vocational training. A fourth group, those releasees who received only academic coursework while incarcerated, was also studied. All 19 adult correctional institutions in a midwestern state were involved in providing releasee information, as was every Parole District. A total of 760 releasees was studied for 12 months.*

*A data collection instrument was designed to gather relevant information on background variables, vocational enrollment and completion, academic background, employment, and violation status over the 12-month period. Personnel at the correctional institutions completed background, vocational, and educational information on inmates selected for study. A stratified proportional random sampling procedure was used to select and equate inmate groups. Data collection instruments were then forwarded to the proper parole office, where Parole Officers recorded month by month status of each releasee during the time on parole, up to 12 months.*

*The vocational and vocational/academic groups had the highest employment rates and lowest criminal activity rates after twelve months of tracking. The control group had the highest criminal activity rate.*

*Vocational completers were those who finished a vocational course of instruction. When compared with vocational non-completers, data indicated that vocational completers had a higher employment rate and fewer arrests. The vocational non-completers, however, still had higher employment and fewer arrests than the control group.*

*The academic group had the lowest employment rate and second highest criminal activity rate at twelve months. Those who completed a GED or higher had a higher employment rate and lower criminal activity rate at twelve months than those releasees who had less than a GED. The completion of a GED or higher increased post-release success over those with less than a GED.*

### Introduction

It has long been realized that general institutional work

assignments have little practical utility outside the institution and that few inmates use such "skills" upon release. These work activities are geared toward maintenance and meeting daily needs of the institution. This attitude was supported by Oregon's State Board of Control (1969) which found that only 25-34 percent of the men sought jobs similar to institutional work assignments.

Because it is difficult to find meaningful work assignments for incarcerated individuals (actually, many institutions have a substantial percentage of clients who perform no work assignments) and, because many of these people have no significant job skills, it seems logical to deduce that vocational training is not only a required and responsible response to such a situation, but that it also has utility in reducing recidivism. Research by the Corrections Department of Texas (1974) indicated that the emphasis on placement in training related jobs is justified and should be increased. However, they emphasized that the primary objective of vocational training in corrections is not met unless the trainee is ultimately employed in a training related job when released.

An evaluation of training under the Manpower Act (1971) indicated that trainees had significantly lower recidivism rates than control group members. Although the program's impact on post-release employment success of the trainees was not clear, researchers considered the lower recidivism rates a reflection of greater employment success.

Miller (1972) concluded that a relationship between useful vocational training in prison and parole success was found, although parole success was not completely predictable. He concluded that prison training programs should take into account such factors as job training associated with current and future labor needs in the free society, capabilities and interests of inmates, and the social desirability of jobs in terms of their prestige and income for which inmates are to be trained.

Vocational programs and services have grown in recent years, despite only being available for a limited percentage of inmates. Such programs have been concerned with developing specific job skills that are conducive to successful reentry of ex-offenders into society (Halasz, 1982; Pell, 1982). This is accomplished through comprehensive programming that encompasses the development of academic skills, specific occupational training, and job readiness training which includes motivation, good work habits, and job survival skills. At NACVE (1981), former inmates testified at a national hearing, stating that without vocational training in prison, and subsequent job opportunities when released, most would have likely returned to prison. Nelson (August, 1985) states,

"Students today need broad-based information that brings together traditional skills and new techniques to create marketable skills. Offenders should have these marketable skills to attract the attention of perspective employers" (p. 70).

A number of studies have focused on supportive aspects of programs, such as vocational evaluation, placement and

counseling. These services appear to be lacking in most correctional institutions. Halasz (1982), among others, has indicated a need for evaluation of such vocational programs. This is necessary to determine program effectiveness and the areas for program improvement.

Abram and Schroeder (1979) conducted a comprehensive study which recognized the need to develop a reliable data base and describe the status of vocational education in corrections. This study showed that correctional vocational education is in an on-going state of change. The authors found that data describing the status of vocational programs were not routinely gathered. "The state of the art of describing vocational education in corrections... (is) in embryonic stages. Attempts to routinely gather data... must be vigorously undertaken" (p. 28). This need was also supported by Rice, Poe, Hawes and Nerden, (1980).

Linden and Perry (1983) reviewed research studies on the effectiveness of prison education programs and concluded that programs will most likely succeed if they are intensive, if they can establish an alternative community within the prison, and if they offer post-release services to inmates.

There are, however, many contrasting opinions, research reports and related questions that remain. For example, NCCD's Research Center (1972) raised serious doubts about the assumption that unemployment is a major cause of recidivism. This conclusion was also reached by the Corrections Department of Minnesota (1971); Oklahoma's Vocational Rehabilitation Services (1967); the Corrections Department of Michigan (1969); and research in California by Dickover, Maynard and Painter (1971, pp. 4-30, 61-76, 89-100).

The above research offers the following additional conclusions: (1) the need for inmate improvement was not simply in the provision of skills, but in attitudes toward the working situation; (2) that long-term training programs during the transitional period between confinement and release are generally not effective, and responsibility for his or her own rehabilitation and recognition of the need for change must be present or instilled in the inmate if rehabilitation efforts are to succeed; (3) that employment status had little relationship to post release success; (4) following release, when asked what importance vocational training had for them, more of the trainees of one study asserted that it allowed them to do something useful with their time in prison or that it gave them a chance to prove to themselves that they could do something and succeed, than asserted that vocational training gave them a means to earning a good living; and (5) the principal problems of ex-offenders identified by employers were absenteeism, alcohol, and drugs. Lack of skill was cited in only three (out of 33) instances. The principal reason for termination was absenteeism. The problem seemed to be keeping a job as opposed to finding one.

The authors have published research in this area (Anderson, Spring, 1981; Anderson, January, 1981). A five-year follow-up of minimum security institution clients assessed the relationships between academic and vocational

programs and subsequent community adjustments.

-Another state-wide research project, "Assessment for Vocational Program Needs and Development in Illinois Correctional Institutions" (Anderson, 1985), evaluated attitudes and perceptions of juveniles, adult offenders and various administrative staff toward vocational program needs. There were 1,088 subjects included in this research study. Recommendations included the need for placement services and a feedback system between institutional and field services.

Another project requested by staff from the National Institute of Justice concerning program evaluation of the "Phoenix Industries Work Program" for probationers in a major Illinois city was completed in Spring, 1984 (Anderson and Schumacker, 1985). The authors found the CETA-qualified probationers did not respond well to a structured jobs training program.

Dietz (June, 1985) appropriately summarizes concerns regarding integration of adult releasees when he writes:

"Community resources must be marshalled to ensure non-return to criminal activity. To this end, we must dramatically reorder our priorities. Anything less is foolhardy and wastes billions of dollars. Resources and funding must now be allocated to correctional programming and parole reintegration services. Not only are individuals obligated to live within the constraints of community norms and the rule of law, but society itself also has an obligation to assist in the return of those offenders who have earned the privilege to resume their place in society. Parole within this context is not an act of 'do-gooder' largesse" (p. 32).

### Methodology

The major focus of this study was to determine how many releasees obtained employment, especially in areas in which they received vocational training while incarcerated. The study compared releasees who had vocational and vocational/academic training to a control group of releasees who did not enroll in occupational training. A fourth group, those releasees who received only academic coursework while incarcerated, was also studied. All 19 adult correctional institutions in a midwestern state were involved in providing releasee information, as was every Parole District. A total of 760 releasees was studied for 12 months.

### Research Objectives

1. Determine how many releasees were obtaining employment in areas in which they were trained while in correctional institutions.
2. Determine, if releasees, who have received vocational training in corrections, have longer employment and fewer arrests than releasees who have not received vocational training.
3. Determine the impact of academic coursework on post-release employment of vocational and non-vocational releasee groups.

**Definition of Terms**

**Vocational Categories**—The data collection instrument indicated vocational training programs currently in the institutions. For research purposes, these numerous vocational areas were grouped into: agriculture, home economics, health occupations, industrial, business marketing and management, and a miscellaneous category. These major vocational areas corresponded to established state classifications.

**Violation/Non-Violation Status**—Releasee violation status was based upon criteria listed on the first and second page of the data collection instrument. Specifically, monthly violation status was defined as any releasee who was convicted of a new offense, returned to prison because of a technical violation, or AWOL. Monthly non-violation status was defined by remaining items; deceased and out-of-state releasees were omitted.

**Employment/Unemployment/Criminal Activity**—Employment, unemployment, or criminal activity monthly status was defined by criteria listed on the first and second page of the data collection instrument. Criminal activity was defined by whether the releasee was arrested anytime during the month, arrested and in jail at the end of the month, convicted of a felony, charged with a technical violation, or AWOL.

**Research Groups**—Four distinct comparison groups were established based upon program participation during their present sentence. The four groups were defined as: vocational—those enrolled in only vocational coursework while incarcerated; vocational/academic—those enrolled in vocational coursework with some academic coursework; academic—those enrolled in only academic coursework; and control—those not enrolled in any vocational or academic coursework.

**Subject Selection**

During the months of May, June, and July, 1986, every adult correctional institution identified expected releasees as belonging to one of four groups: (1) vocational; (2) vocational/academic; (3) academic; and (4) control. Correctional officials determined group membership status based upon a releasee's current sentence only.

Subjects were selected during May, June, and July, 1986, and were randomly sampled from each institution. Random samples were taken proportional to the number of releasees each month to provide representative groups across institutions. Subjects were tracked for twelve months; therefore, length of follow-up period was the same for all subjects, but did not cover the same calendar months.

For analysis purposes, subject data were combined into months fol-

Group	n	%
Vocational	107	14%
Vocational/Academic	118	16
Academic	248	32
Control	287	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>100%</b>

lowing release (1-12). When compared with state unemployment data, the months of July, 1986 to July, 1987 were used which best represented the 12-month follow-up period.

Sample selection initially yielded 845 subjects, but some releasees were paroled out of state (81) or deceased (4), providing a remaining sample of 760. The sample size of each comparison group is in Table 1.

**Data Collection Instrument**

A data collection instrument was designed to gather relevant information on background variables, vocational enrollment and completion, academic background, employment, and violation status over the 12-month period. A pilot version of the instrument was sent to correctional officials and parole officers for review. These instruments were then sent to the correctional institutions where background, vocational, and educational information was completed on inmates selected for study.

Employment Area	Completers	Non-Completers	% Completers	N
Agriculture	2	12	14%	14
Home Economics	5	8	38	13
Health Occupations	13	3	81	16
Industrial	61	86	41	147
Business Mkt. & Mgt.	11	20	35	31
Other	3	1	75	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>225</b>

Data collection instruments were then forwarded to the proper parole office upon inmates' release to the community. Parole officers recorded a month by month status of each releasee based upon criteria numbered from 1-19 on the first and second page of the data collection instrument. Parts of the follow-up information were reported by the releasee. After the 12-month tracking period ended, forms were sent to the authors for coding and analysis. Releasees' final 12-month violation/criminal activity status was verified with the Department of Corrections Correctional Institution Management Information System (CIMIS) data base.

**Results**

**Descriptive Sample Information**

a. Group data summary

1. vocational enrollment

Enrollment in vocational training programs involved subjects in the vocational group and the vocational/academic group. Therefore, comparisons across the major vocational employment areas included subjects from both groups. Table 2 presents vocational enrollment in the major employment areas by these combined groups. Table 2 also compares vocational completers and non-completers.

2. violation/non-violation

Subjects had either a violation or non-violation monthly status. Table 3 presents violation and non-violation percentage rates for each comparison group at 12 months after release.

3. unemployment/employment

Subjects had either an unemployed, employed, or criminal activity monthly status. Some were discharged off parole supervision. Table 4 presents unemployed, employed, criminal activity, and discharged percentage rates for each comparison

**Table 4**  
**Percent Unemployed, Employed, Criminal Activity and Discharged by Group at 12 Months\***

Group	Unemployed	Employed	Criminal Activity	Discharged
Vocational	38%	30%	25%	7%
Vocational/Academic	31	39	23	7
Academic	47	21	27	5
Control	35	24	32	9

\*Criminal Activity included violations, plus arrested anytime during the month and arrested in jail, which accounts for higher percentages per group.

group at twelve months after release. NOTE: Criminal Activity included violations, plus arrested anytime during the month and arrested in jail, which accounts for higher percentages per group.

**Summary**

**Findings**

Parole officers who completed twelve months of tracking information on the data collection instrument were often only able to indicate whether the releasee was employed or unemployed; the exact nature of the job was not always known. Therefore, only employment and unemployment distinctions were made because specific data regarding employment in area of training was lacking. The vocational and vocational/academic groups combined had the highest rates of employment and a slightly lower combined unemployment rate across the 12-month tracking period. Data indicated that those who were initially employed tended to stay employed.

The vocational and vocational/academic groups had the highest employment rates, lower combined unemployment rate, and lower criminal activity rates after twelve months of tracking. The control group had the highest criminal activity rate.

Vocational completers were those who finished a vocational course of instruction. When compared with vocational non-completers, however, still had higher employment and fewer arrests than the control group.

The academic group had the lowest employment rate, highest unemployment, and second highest criminal activity rate at twelve months.

Academic status was determined upon release and coded into two groups: less than GED and GED or higher. Those who completed a GED or higher had a higher employ-

**Table 3**  
**Percent Violation and Non-Violation by Group at 12 Months**

Group	Violation	Non-Violation
Vocational	21%	79%
Vocational/Academic	19	81
Academic	22	78
Control	28	72



ment rate, lower unemployment rate, and lower criminal activity rate at twelve months than those releasees who had less than a GED.

### Discussion and Recommendations

As burgeoning correctional budgets compete for other state dollars, academic and vocational programs for inmates are under closer scrutiny to prove their worth. Correctional educators and staff must increase their efficacy in such areas as selection, retention, and preparing the inmate for a more effective transfer to the community. This research showed that most inmates avoid parole violation for about 10 weeks after release; after that, the violation rate is steadily upward.

The following recommendations are the results of data and information collected during nearly two years' involvement in this research, and the authors' prior research and years of experiences in corrections.

1. Correctional institutions should provide specific employment information to releasees in their vocational area prior to release.
2. Career counselors should provide needed preparation, testing, and assurance of skills, attitudes, and behavior prior to release to increase employment opportunities.
3. Job placement efforts should occur before release into the community. Responsibility for job placement needs to be clarified and efforts made to provide necessary community agency employment information to the inmate.
4. Vocational coursework should be standardized so that inmates who transfer between institutions can complete vocational programs.
5. Inmates should be aware of programs at each institution. Vocational program booklets should be distributed and reviewed by inmates with staff under the (sometimes false) belief that a particular program is available at the requested institution.
6. Career counselors, or identified staff, should increase their role in determining vocational eligibility, selection, and completion of coursework by inmates.
7. Develop a booklet which targets and identifies transitional support services, e.g. state agencies, job service offices, and community assistance programs.
8. Consider more stringent criteria for enrollment in vocational coursework, e.g. commitment to complete.
9. Encourage inmates enrolled in vocational coursework to also complete a GED. The vocational/academic group had greater post-release success than the academic or control groups; therefore, academic involvement combined with vocational training increased post-release success.
10. Encourage inmates to complete at least a GED prior to release. The completion of a GED or higher increased post-release success over those with less than a GED.

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Ms. Anderson is an instructor at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, and a doctoral student in Health Education at SIUC.

**Region I Conference**

**May 30 - June 1, 1990**

**Location:** Sheraton Hotel  
Stanford, CT

**Contact:** Bill Barber  
35 Buchanan Rd.  
Enfield, CT 06082  
203/566-5517

**Region II Conference**

**May 23 - 25, 1990**

**Location:** Carousel Hotel  
On the Beach at 118th Street  
Ocean City, MD 21842

**Theme:** Broadening Horizons

**Contact Persons:**

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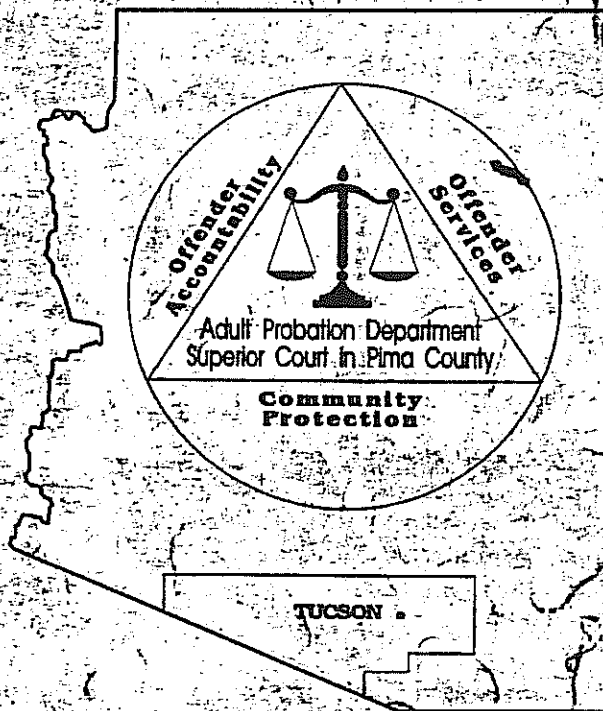
**CE History Vignette**

**Early Treatment for Juvenile Offenders**

During the early years of the United States, juveniles were treated as though incapable of fully understanding their actions in areas like apprenticeships and handling their wages. Juvenile offenders, however, were treated as adults when they committed crimes. Colonial youngsters between the ages of seven and fourteen could be punished for wrongdoing by beatings or even execution. Treatment for them was as harsh as for adults, and when confined in jails juveniles were placed with older offenders.

The first efforts to provide formal management of juveniles were not much more humane. The first U.S. reform school supported by public and private funds was opened in 1825 and was called the New York City House of Refuge. Many children placed there were what we would call neglected or delinquent today. A number of separate institutions for juveniles opened during the period from 1825 to 1865, including the Philadelphia House of Refuge in 1828, the Boston House of Reformation in 1826, and a municipal institution in New Orleans in 1847. The first state reform school in the United States was opened in Massachusetts in 1848. These facilities were first called "Houses of Refuge," then "reform schools," and later "training and industrial schools." The regime focused on work, education, and rigid discipline to help young minds gone astray. It was not until the twentieth century that the juvenile court movement got under way, starting with the first juvenile court law being passed in Illinois in 1899. The passage of this law was largely the work of Julia Lathrop, Lucy Flower, and Jane Addams, all noted for philanthropic work. They exemplified the middle class reformer women of the time (Abbott, C. **The Child & The State, vol II.** 1968, pp. 323-328).

# ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT OF THE SUPERIOR COURT PIMA COUNTY



## LEARN PROGRAM EVALUATIONS AND RESEARCH

Don R. Stiles, Chief Probation Officer  
Gayle R. Siegel, Program Manager



## **History and Background**

The Arizona Supreme Court's involvement in the illiteracy issue has stemmed from the significant correlation between crime and functional illiteracy. By applying the latest adult education programs, software, and models on probationers, the Court has hoped to reduce crime, lower the recidivism rate, and help offenders become productive members of society. Through a statutory fund created to reduce juvenile delinquency and crime, the Arizona Supreme Court installed 31 computerized literacy labs in probation departments and other community settings throughout Arizona. Implementation of these labs began in 1987 and has continued to grow statewide.

The Arizona Supreme Court has perceived that literacy and education standards must be raised in order to lower the crime rate among probationers. Arizona was the first state in the nation to implement this type of literacy and education program in probation. The Adult Probation Department in Pima County was the first probation department in the state to stipulate completion of literacy or GED programs as a condition of probation.

Criminal justice professionals have recognized the need to examine the effectiveness of educational programs in reducing adult involvement with the court system. This study represented an important effort to gather basic but critical data on short-term and longer-term outcomes of the LEARN program.

## **The PALS program**

The PALS component of the LEARN program is an innovative, computer assisted learning program developed by IBM. This interactive instructional approach was designed to significantly improve an individual's reading level in as few as 20 weeks. PALS teaches not only reading and writing, but touch typing and basic word processing as well. This multi-sensory model is intended to promote early success where students experience improved skills and improved self-esteem. The method of teaching utilized in PALS enables an adult to progress more quickly to adult education classes in preparation for GED tutoring and job training programs. PALS and the other components of LEARN incorporate a nontraditional classroom environment. The labs reflect a modern office setting and are designed to enhance performance for students who have failed in traditional classrooms.

## **Adult Education and General Educational Development**

The Adult Probation Department in Pima County's LEARN labs have expanded to include adult basic education, General Educational Development (GED) instruction, GED testing, and Life Skills workshops. Designed to improve basic skills in reading, math, grammar, and writing, these classes help adults prepare for taking GED tests for a high school equivalency degree. In addition, the labs provide students with assistance in composing resumes and coaching for employment interviews.

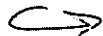
enhanced when management made the decision to commit personnel resources to the program. Additionally, a staff that shared ownership of the vision and mission of a program would be more likely to work together to achieve program success.

The Education Services Unit was staffed by employees of the Adult Probation Department. In addition, Pima County Adult Education provided an adult education instructor 15 hours per week.

The involvement and cooperation of probation staff at all levels was imperative for the successful operation of the Education Services Unit. Education Services staff provided periodic training to probation staff and pre-sentence investigators to ensure appropriate program referrals. Prospective probationers were given a brief educational assessment test during the pre-sentence investigation process. This enabled the investigating officer to make appropriate program recommendations for literacy, adult basic education, or GED instruction. This system also lessened the likelihood of inappropriate court referrals, such as ordering a functionally illiterate defendant to obtain a GED within one year.

Once a student was directed to attend classes, a more in-depth screening took place with one of the instructors. In addition to testing a student's academic ability, a self-esteem inventory was administered to those entering the basic literacy component. A class schedule was developed in conjunction with the probationer, and it then became an enforced regulation of probation that the individual attend classes as directed.

Attendance was closely monitored by the Education Services staff and reported to the appropriate supervising officer each month. Chronic absence problems resulted in a violation notice to the sentencing judge. Education Services staff understood that immediate compliance might be difficult in some cases, so they contacted students and encouraged attendance if students did not appear for classes. This system of close supervision and positive encouragement promoted an early commitment and a high success rate.



## Research Design

### Population and Sample

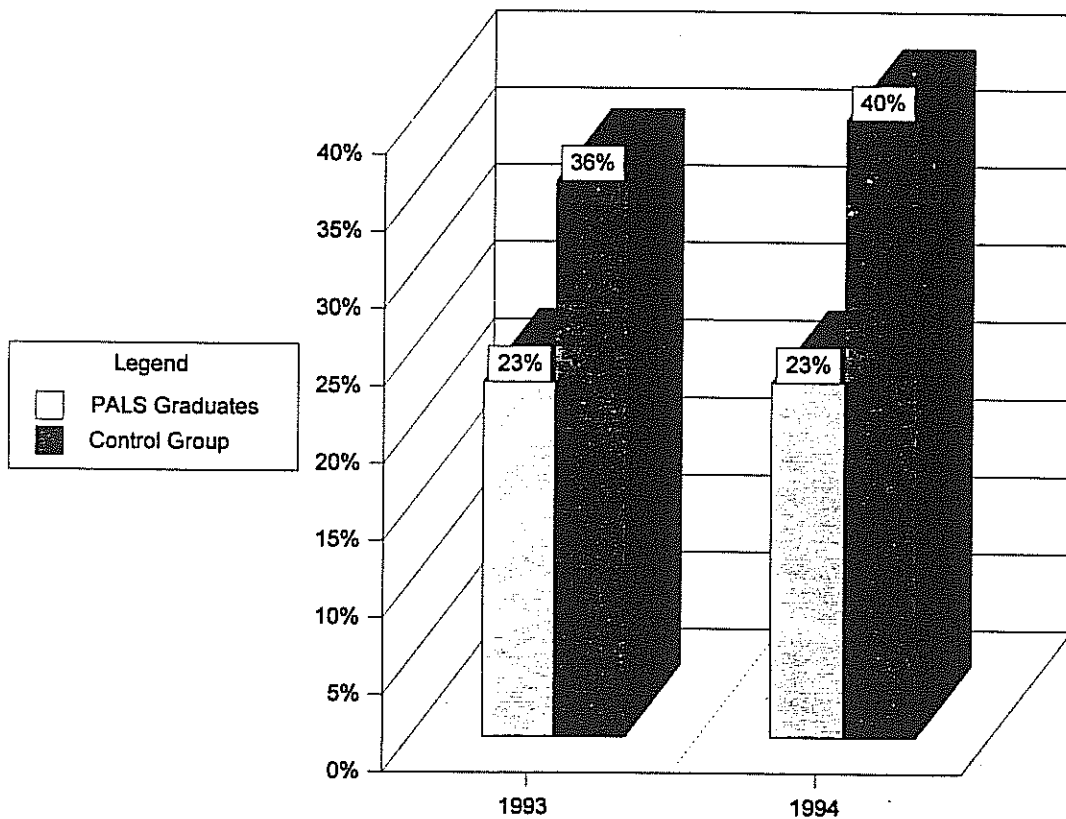
The research was conducted by examining student data from March 1988 through June 1992. Students still on probation were excluded from the study. Ten variables were identified and collected on each probationer: age, how and when probation was completed, gender, race, education level, risk and needs assessment scores, type of probation supervision, length of probation sentence, and date of sentencing. This information was collected for five groups: PALS graduates, PALS dropouts, GED graduates, GED dropouts, and a control group of probationers with similar characteristics who were not referred to the LEARN program.

The target population for this study was composed of male and female adult offenders on probation in Pima County who were between the ages of 18 and 67. PALS students included those who displayed reading scores below the sixth grade level as measured

## 1. New Felony Arrest for PALS Graduates and Control Group

Figure 1 displays the percentages of felony arrests for PALS graduates and the control group for both 1993 and 1994. The PALS graduates had a lower new felony arrest rate compared to the control group for both 1993 and 1994. This indicates a trend in reduced new felony arrest rates for PALS graduates.

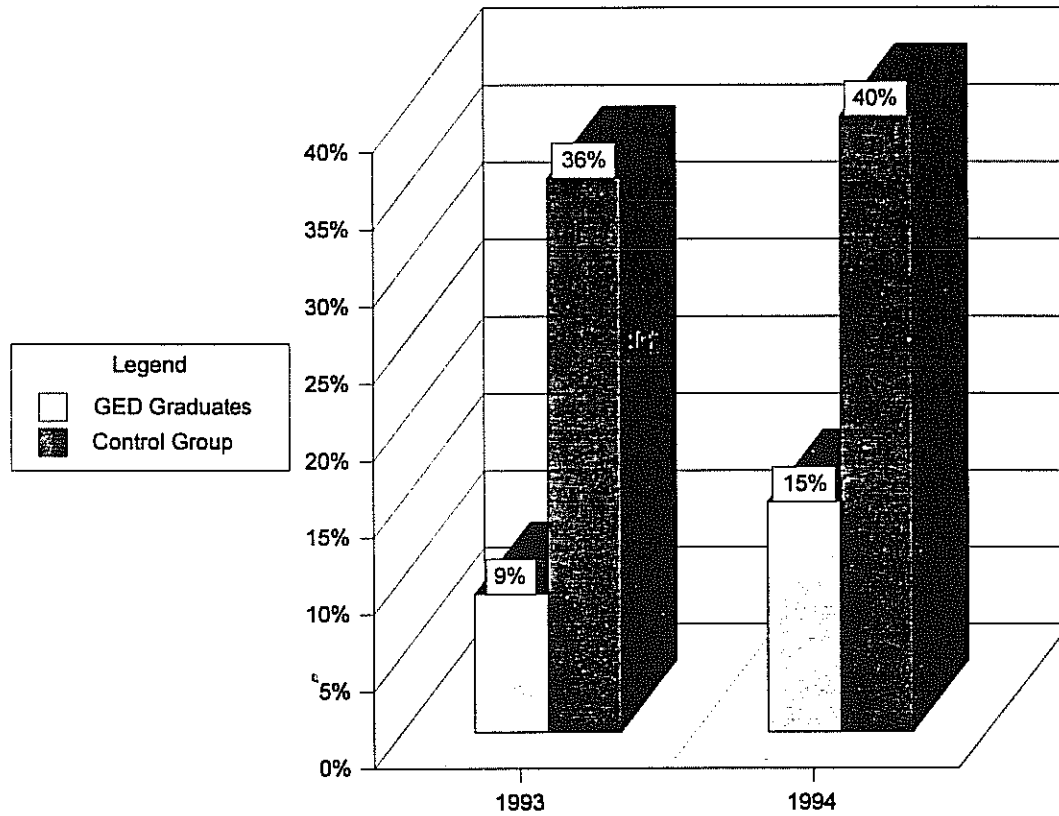
**FIGURE 1**  
**PERCENTAGE OF FELONY ARRESTS FOR PALS GRADUATES AND**  
**CONTROL GROUP**  
**1993 and 1994 Data**



### 3. New Felony Arrests for GED Graduates and Control Group

Figure 3 displays new felony arrest rates for GED graduates and the control group. GED graduates had a lower new arrest rate in 1993 (9%) and 1994 (15%) than the control group (36% and 40%). This continues to demonstrate a trend for higher arrests in the control group.

**FIGURE 3**  
**PERCENTAGE OF NEW FELONY ARRESTS FOR GED GRADUATES**  
**AND THE CONTROL GROUP**

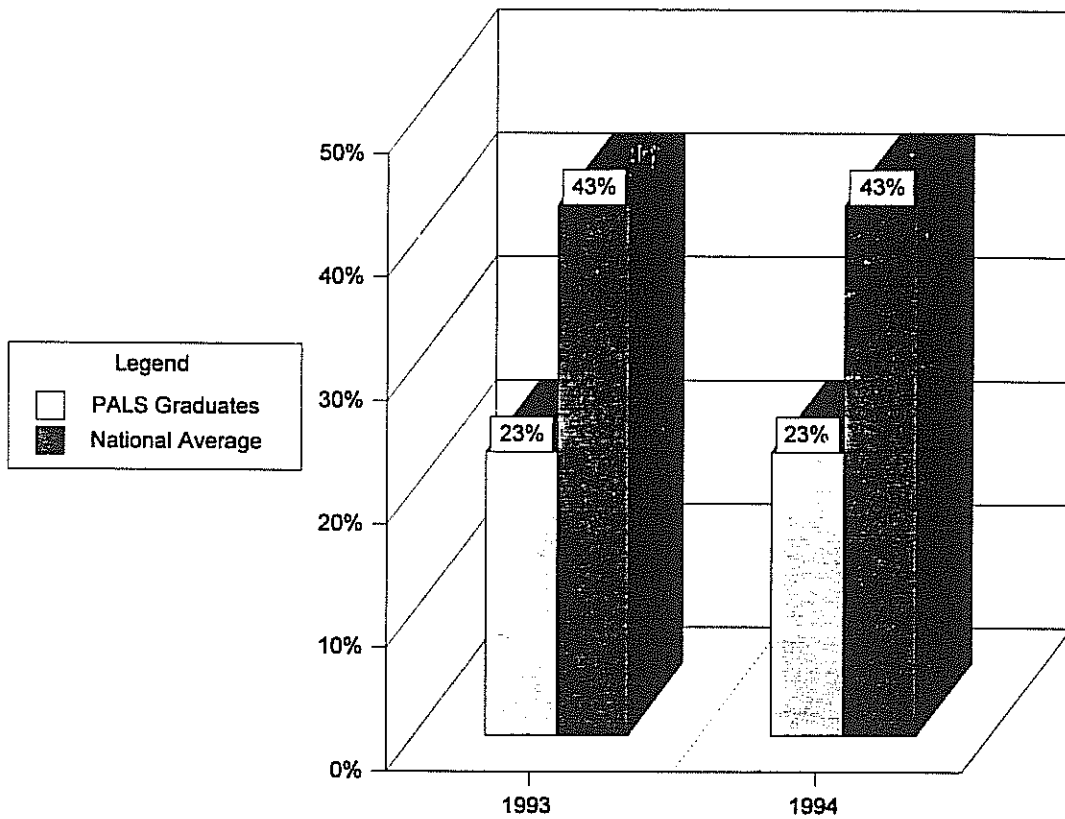




## 5. Percentage of New Felony Arrests for PALS Graduates as compared to the National Average

Figure 5 displays the percentage of new felony arrests for PALS graduates compared to the national average. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports a 43% recidivism rate for adult offenders on probation nationally in 1994 (this figure is based on felony arrests).

**FIGURE 5**  
**PERCENTAGE OF NEW FELONY ARRESTS FOR PALS GRADUATES COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE**



## 6. Percentage of New Felony Arrests for GED Graduates as compared to the National Average.

Figure 6 displays the percentage of felony arrests for GED graduates as compared to the national average. The GED graduates had a recidivism rate of 9% and 15% in 1993 and 1994 compared to the national average of 43 percent.

**FIGURE 6**  
**PERCENTAGE OF ARREST RATES FOR GED GRADUATES AS COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE**

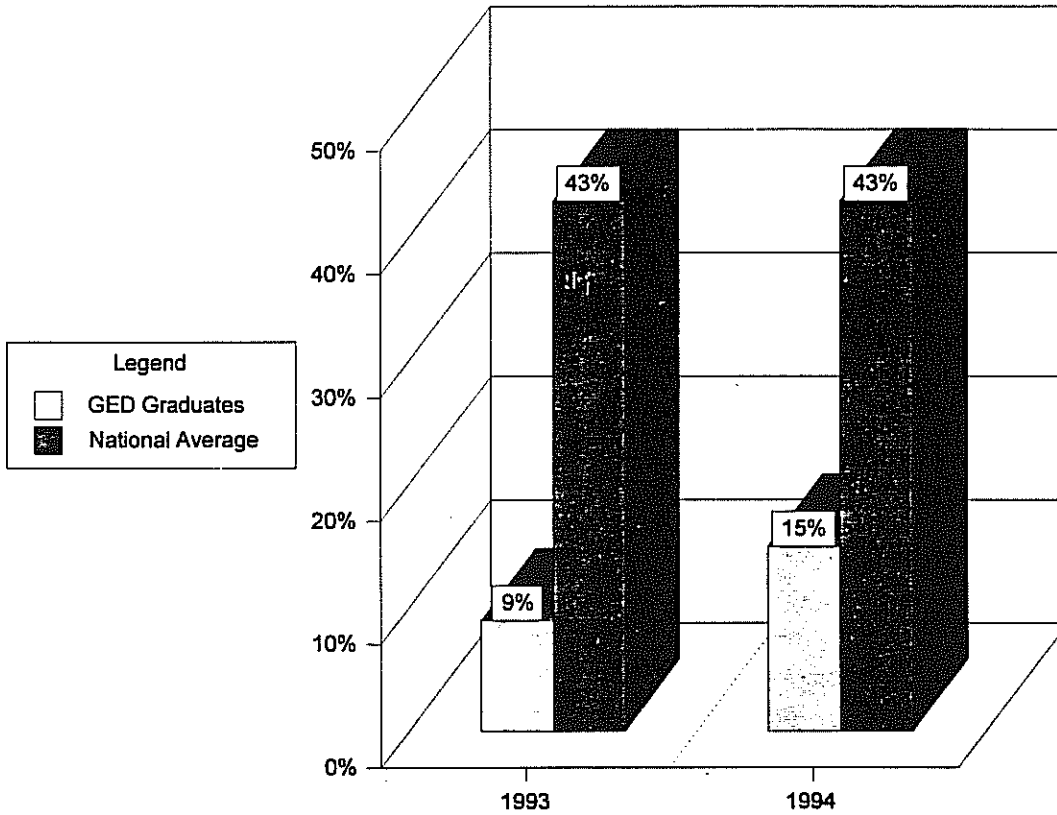


Figure 1 reports the proportion of successful probation completion rates for PALS graduates, PALS dropouts, and the control group subjects.

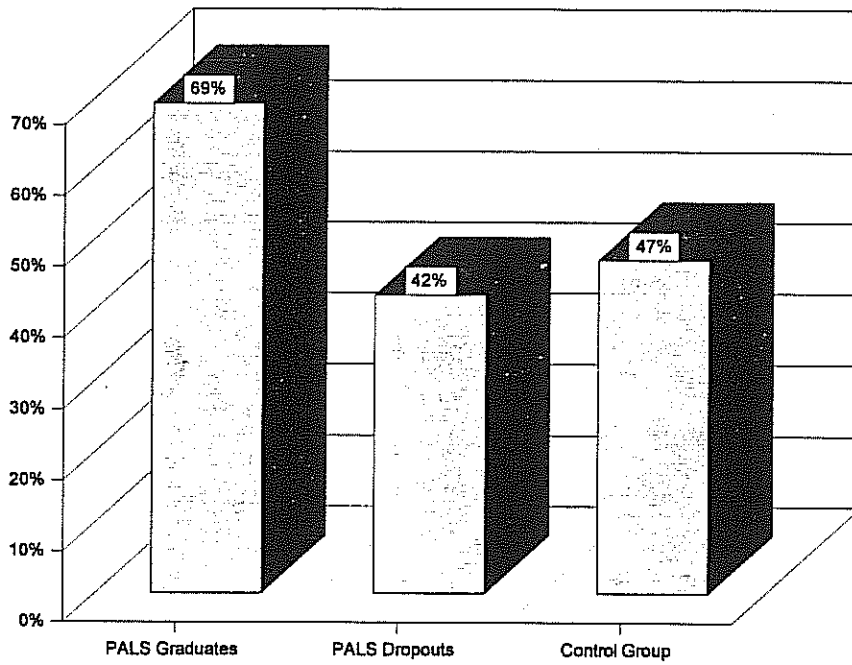
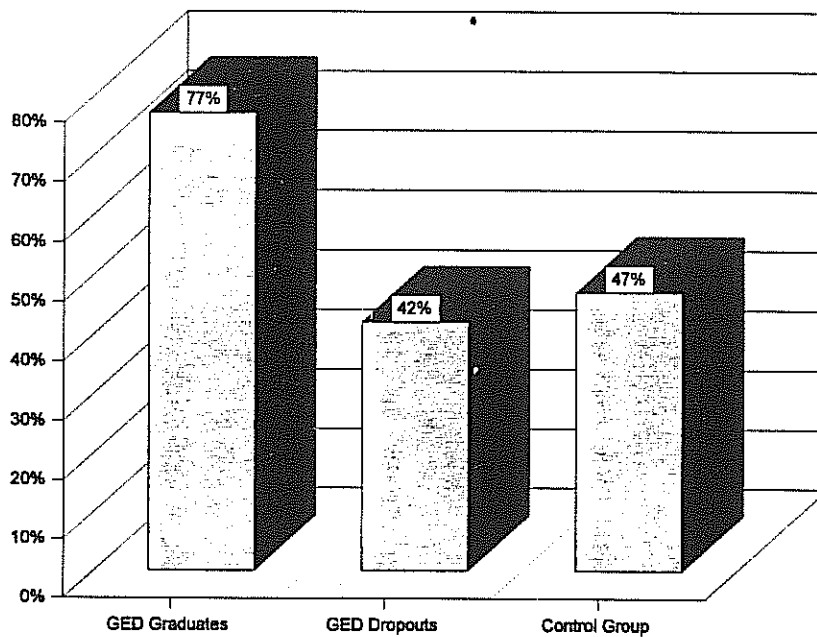


Figure 2 reports the proportion of successful probation completion rates for GED graduates, GED dropouts, and the control group subjects.





**WSS**

**REVIEW OF VARIOUS OUTCOME  
STUDIES RELATING PRISON EDUCATION  
TO REDUCED RECIDIVISM**

WINDHAM SCHOOL SYSTEM  
CHRIS TRACY, ED.D.  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

CHERYL JOHNSON, PH.D.  
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

JUNE 1994



## **REVIEW OF VARIOUS OUTCOME STUDIES RELATING PRISON EDUCATION TO REDUCED RECIDIVISM**

The United States Department of Justice reports that the typical offender is undereducated, unemployed and living in poverty before incarceration. These social factors, along with related psychological traits and certain demographic characteristics, have been demonstrated to be powerful predictors of recidivism. Thus, criminologists and correctional educators alike have sought to establish a scientific link between programmatic activities that address these deficiencies and the successful rehabilitation of offenders. The following annotated bibliography provides the reader with brief descriptions of over forty studies that have scientifically linked prison education programming with reduced rates of recidivism. As the costs of corrections budgets continue to eat up more and more of each state's resources, prison education stands out as one corrections cost that can give the taxpayer a return on that investment. To quote one author's assessment of the importance of prison education, "without effective and efficient rehabilitation programs, the current morass of corrections will develop into a Gordian knot around the neck of society . . . eventually strangling our children's educations, our own health care and the nation's economy."

### **STUDIES ON BASIC EDUCATION AND GED PREPARATION**

A substantial number of studies have focused on adult basic education and secondary level preparation for the GED in an attempt to demonstrate a positive relationship between participation, educational attainment and reduced levels of recidivism. Some examples follow.

#### State of Georgia, Stevens, 1986

Study conducted of GED program participants released from Georgia Correctional System between 1972 and 1978. The study indicated a lower recidivism rate for GED completers as compared to either participants who did not complete or nonparticipants. The participants who did not complete had a lower rate of recidivism than those who did not participate.

#### State of South Carolina, Ramsey, 1988

Study conducted to determine the relationship between receipt of GED credential and reduced rates of recidivism among South Carolina inmates. Findings indicated a significant difference in rates of recidivism between GED completers and non-completers as well as nonparticipants. The researcher further concluded that earning a GED and completing a vocational course were positively related to reductions in recidivism.

State of Illinois. Anderson, Anderson, and Schumacker. 1988

Study conducted of inmates who received a GED, high school diploma or further education. Completers had a lower recidivism rate twelve months after release than those who did not attain these educational milestones.

U.S. Department of Justice. Beck and Shipley. 1989

Study conducted to determine variables related to reincarceration. Findings over a three year period from a study of 16,000 releasees in eleven states demonstrated that attainment of a high school credential and some college hours had as much as a ten percent inverse effect on rising recidivism rates.

The National Institute of Justice. 1989

Resource document describes the levels of educational achievement of all state prison inmates and compares these to recidivism levels. According to data, offenders with a high school diploma recidivated at a lower rate than those with less than a high school diploma three years after release.

State of New York. 1989 and 1992

In 1989, the Department of Correctional Services conducted a follow-up study of offenders who received a GED while incarcerated. Results indicated a reduction in recidivism for completers. Again in 1992, the Department analyzed return rates for program participants and further confirmed reduced recidivism rates among GED completers.

State of Florida. 1990

The Correctional Education School Authority conducted a study of inmates who completed an academic program while incarcerated. Findings demonstrated a reduction in recidivism rates for completers compared to rates for the general prison population.

State of Texas. 1991

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Austin Budget Office, studied the recidivism rate of a sample of parolees released from prison in 1986. In 1991, five years after release, findings showed a twelve percent difference in recidivism between those offenders who had a high school diploma or GED and those who did not have a high school credential. Further, findings revealed that educational attainment could compensate for other negative factors associated with increased recidivism such as age and minority status.



### Correctional Service of Canada, Porporino and Robinson, 1992

Study examined effectiveness of voluntary ABE programs offered in Canadian federal prisons in terms of the impact on recidivism. Subjects were released in 1988 and analysis of reincarcerations was accomplished, on average, one year later. Findings showed differentiated results by type of offender. High risk offenders who completed the program (reached 8th grade level) had lower recidivism rates than offenders who merely participated in ABE programs and lower than general population inmates.

### State of Texas, 1992

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts conducted an audit of the Windham School System, Texas Department of Criminal Justice and published findings in December 1992. As part of that performance review, auditors analyzed a sample of recidivist data from the TDCJ database and concluded that increased educational levels are inversely related to the rate at which inmates return to prison.

### Federal Bureau of Prisons, 1993

The Office of Research and Evaluation of the Federal Bureau of Prisons studied a sampling of offenders leaving the federal prisons during the first half of 1987. Three years after release, those offenders with a higher academic ability level at incarceration recidivated at a lower rate than others. In addition, recidivism rates were inversely related to educational program participation while in prison.

### State of Texas, 1993

The Windham School System, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Institutional Division, studied a group of offenders leaving prison between 1990 and 1991. Two years after release, the recidivism rate for those receiving a GED while incarcerated was approximately 11 percent lower than for those who did not obtain the GED credential. Further, offenders increasing their literacy levels while incarcerated recidivated at rates lower than those for inmate who did not improve their literacy skills.

### State of Texas, 1994

The Windham School System, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Institutional Division, continued to study the same group of offenders leaving prison between 1990 and 1991. Three years after release, the recidivism rate for those receiving a GED while incarcerated was approximately 12 percent lower than for those who did not obtain the GED credential. Further, offenders increasing their literacy levels while incarcerated continued to experience recidivism rates lower than those for inmates who did not improve their literacy skills.

## STUDIES ON SECONDARY LEVEL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

There is support in the literature for the premise that a positive relationship exists between post-release employment, lower revocation rates, lower rates of recidivism and vocational training provided during incarceration. There is, however, considerable conflicting evidence provided by many researchers. The research seems to support a positive effect when the programs being studied share the following common characteristics:

1. Programs train for "real" jobs in the community that are needed and respected.
2. Vocational training is coupled with cognitive/literacy education.
3. Trainees who have greatest potential for completing the program are served.
4. Training includes a job placement link in free world.

Examples of studies that do support a desirable inverse relationship between vocational training and recidivism rates follow.

### Anderson, 1981

Study examined relationship between participation in vocational education while incarcerated during 1972 and 1976 in the Illinois Correctional Center at Vienna and post-release success. Results showed longer post-release periods of employment, fewer arrests, and fewer parole revocations for offenders who participated in programming.

### State of Texas, Alston, 1981

Study conducted to determine the impact of vocational training during incarceration on recidivism. Findings indicated lower recidivism rates and fewer disciplinary infractions for those who participated in training while incarcerated.

### State of Alabama, Cogburn, 1988

Study focused on offenders who completed vocational training offered through the J.F. Ingram Technical College between 1976 and 1986. Offenders who participated in vocational technical programming recidivated at a rate 20 percent less than that of the general prison population.

### State of Florida, 1990

The Correctional Education School Authority conducted a study of inmates released between 1986 and 1988. Those inmates who completed vocational training before release had lower rates of recidivism than did inmates in the general prison population.

#### State of Illinois. Schumacker, Anderson, and Anderson, 1990

Study examined the effect of participating in and completing vocational training on post-release employment and rates of rearrest. Findings showed higher employment rates and lower arrest rates for both completers and participants than for control group offenders.

#### State of Illinois. Anderson, Schumacker, and Anderson, 1991

Studied the effect of participation in vocational programs on parole behaviors. Findings demonstrated a positive correlation between participation and lower rates of recidivism.

#### Federal Bureau of Prisons, 1991

The Post Release Employment Project (PREP) study was conducted to analyze the differences in recidivism rates between federal offenders who received vocational training or industrial work experience while incarcerated and those who did not. Study group subjects were released between 1984 and 1986 and were analyzed through 1987. Findings showed reduced recidivism rates one year after release, higher rates of free world employment and higher earnings among those offenders who received vocational training.

#### State of Texas, 1992

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Austin Budget Office, studied the recidivism rate of parolees who sought employment assistance through Project RIO counselors in September 1990 in an attempt to establish a link between free world employment and recidivism. Twelve months after initial intake, a majority of participants (69%) had secured employment and the recidivism rate for employed offenders was notably lower (14.2% less) than that of unemployed offenders.

#### State of Texas. Public Policy Resources Laboratory, 1992

Study based on one-year follow-up of offenders released from TDCJ between October and April 1991 to determine the relationships between employment and recidivism and between participation in Project RIO and employment. Findings demonstrated a positive inverse relationship between employment and recidivism as well as between Project RIO participation and reincarceration. Both employment and RIO participation were more powerful determinants of successful parole behavior for the higher risk offenders.

#### State of Texas, 1994

Study examined the effect of vocational training on offenders who left the system during a six month period in 1990 and 1991. Three years after release, findings demonstrated a substantially lower recidivism rate for both participants and completers. The recidivism rate for those who received both a GED certificate and completed a vocational trade was over twenty percent lower than for those who did not reach either educational milestone.

## **STUDIES ON POST-SECONDARY LEVEL PROGRAMMING**

Numerous studies have shown a clear and fairly consistent correlation between collegiate studies and recidivism. Some examples follow.

### State of Texas, Gaither, 1980

Master's thesis study to determine the relationship between recidivism and participation in a junior college program. Results indicated lower recidivism rates for college participants as compared to nonparticipants who qualified for but could not participate in the programs.

### State of Maryland, Blackburn, 1981

Study to determine the effect on recidivism of offender participation in at least twelve hours of community college programming. Results verified that study participants were much less likely to recidivate than nonstudent inmates.

### State of Texas, Henderson County Junior College, 1981

Study conducted to determine that post-release employment of inmates who participated in a college level vocational training program was higher than that of nonparticipants. Results indicated that post-release rates of employment were substantial and there was no recidivism in study group at time of analysis.

### State of Texas, Henderson County Junior College, 1983

Study conducted to determine the effect of participation in college academic programming offered at one site on recidivism. Offenders who participated in the courses under study recidivated at a lower rate than that of the general inmate population.

### State of Ohio, Holloway and Moke, 1986

Study analyzed post-release employment history and recidivism data on offenders who participated in college programming and concluded that employment histories were better and recidivism rates lower for study group.

### State of Indiana, Ball State University, 1987

Program planners reported a thirty-five percent reduction in recidivism associated with completion of one year of college training. Participants were compared to general population inmates.

### State of Texas, Lee College, 1988

Study conducted to determine any difference attributable to type of college program participation (certificate or degree) on levels of recidivism. Findings revealed that the recidivism rate for those offenders earning an associates degree while incarcerated was significantly lower than the rate for offenders in the general population and the rate for those who earned a certificate was lower, although not as low, as that of the degreed completers.

### State of Alabama, O'Neil, 1990

Study compared recidivism rates of 1983 Alabama releasees who participated in post-secondary programming while incarcerated with that of releasees who did not participate but qualified. Findings showed a lower rate of recidivism for post-secondary participants than for nonparticipants.

### State of Oklahoma, 1990

Study compared recidivism rates and in-prison disciplinary actions of college participants and nonparticipants involved in distance learning prison college program. Recidivism rates were lower for college participants regardless of numbers of hours credit earned. Disciplinary rates were not different between the two groups.

### State of Wisconsin, 1990

Study examined recidivism and parole adjustment of 526 offenders who enrolled in college vocational or secondary and elementary level programs while incarcerated to determine the effect, if any, of participation. The college attendees adjusted better to parole conditions than nonparticipants. However, the offenders who participated in secondary and elementary level programming recidivated at a lower rate than the college participants.

### State of New York, 1991

Study conducted by the State Department of Correctional Services to analyze the rate of return to prison of inmate college program participants. Three years after earning a college degree in 1986 and 1987, degreed offenders were significantly less likely to recidivate (26%) than non-degreed inmates (45%).

### State of Texas, 1994

Data analyzed to determine recidivism rates for various types of degree holders who left the TDCJ between September 1990 and August 1991. Two years after release, the overall recidivism rate for degree holders was a low twelve percent and inversely differentiated by type of degree (associate, 13.7%; baccalaureate, 5.6%; masters, 0%).

## **STUDIES ON SOCIAL AND COGNITIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

Based on evidence that offenders, as a group, make significantly more "thinking" errors than do members of society at large, social/cognitive programs attempt to teach moral reasoning, problem-solving, and social responsibility.

### Canada, Duguid, 1981

Study conducted to determine the effect of participation in a college sponsored humanities-based cognitive/moral development curriculum on recidivism rates. Findings demonstrated a thirty-seven percent reduction in recidivism after three years that was associated with participation in this particular cognitive-based program.

### Garrett, 1985

Author reviewed 111 programs for delinquents that were operational between 1960 and 1984 to assess the amount of change associated with various treatments. When comparing psychodynamic and behavioral approaches, the greatest effects on recidivism were attributable to the cognitive-behavioral programs.

### Ministry of Correctional Services of Canada, Ross, Fabiano, and Diemer-Ewles, 1987

Study conducted during 1983 through 1985 to determine effect of participation in cognitive skills training program on recidivism. Findings demonstrated a thirty percent reduction in reconvictions nine months after program termination among the high risk probationers who constituted the study group.

### State of California, Larson, 1988

Study conducted to determine effect on recidivism of youthful parolees' participation in social problem solving skills program while incarcerated. Preliminary results (one year after release) have shown reduced rates of reincarceration of fifty percent.

### State of Idaho, Lee, 1988

Study conducted to determine effect of social/cognitive training program on recidivism rate of 289 program completers who were released between 1983 and 1987. Recidivism rate reported was approximately eight percent compared to a fifty percent rate for general population inmates and a rate of twenty-eight percent for inmates earning a high school equivalency diploma.

### Little, Robinson and Burnette, 1991

Study followed the reincarceration of offenders who received cognitive-behavioral programming and those who did not while incarcerated in a therapeutic community facility in Tennessee. Thirty-eight months after release, 24.3% of treated offenders recidivated compared with 36.6% of control subjects.

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ACCN: 112187  
TITL: Maverick Notion About Corrrrectional Education  
JCIT: Journal of Correctional Education, V 39, N 2 (June 1988), P 58-61  
PAUT: Lee, T J  
PDTE: 1988 PAGE: 4 p CLSS: Article  
ORIG: United States LANG: English  
TYPE: Program/project descriptions/evaluations

ANNO: Idaho corrections has reduced recidivism by tailoring its programs to the profiles of Idaho inmates rather than to a national inmate profile.

ABST: The national inmate profile indicates that most inmates are functionally illiterate, come from socioeconomic deprivation, are school dropouts, are members of a minority, were abused as children, have substance abuse problems, and lack adequate job skills. This is not the profile of most Idaho inmates, however. Idaho inmates have traits not attributable to differing ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds, abilities, and experiences. Their most notable traits are the desire for instant gratification of their wants, unrealistic self-esteem, unconventional value systems, self-destructive and ineffective coping behaviors, reluctance to take appropriate risks, and unwillingness to assume responsibility for their own actions. A curriculum designed to address these impediments to social adjustment has yielded a recidivism rate of 8.3 percent among the 289 inmates who completed the program and were released between July 1983 and November 1987. This is impressive when compared to a general recidivism rate of over 50 percent. 6 references.

ACCN: 140196  
TITL: Post-Secondary Education: An Evaluation of Effectiveness and  
Efficiency  
JCIT: Journal of Correctional Education, V 43, N 3 (September 1992),  
132-141  
PAUT: Taylor, J M  
PDTE: 1992 PAGE: 10 p CLSS: article  
ORIG: United States LANG: English  
TYPE: Program/project evaluations

ANNO: With the expansive growth of postsecondary correctional education programs over the past few decades and the controversy surrounding such opportunities, the value of these programs has been questioned.

ABST: The author looks at postsecondary correctional education in terms of rehabilitative effectiveness, postrelease employment effectiveness, institutional effectiveness, cost efficiency, funding efficiency, and return on investment. He contends that postsecondary correctional education programs provide a substantial return on society's investment. Such programming can reduce recidivism, promote civility, develop cognition, and encourage confidence. Postsecondary educational programs can also reduce disciplinary problems in the correctional setting, increase inmate-staff communication, provide incentives for good behavior, facilitate staff recruitment and training, and positively influence the postrelease behavior of inmates. These programs represent a cost-effective rehabilitative and institutional option. 86 references, 13 footnotes, and 3 figures

ACCN: 144992  
TITL: COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS EDUCATION  
CORP: Pima County Adult Probation Department Tucson, AZ 85701;  
Maricopa County Adult Probation Phoenix, AZ 85003  
PDTE: 1993 PAGE: 54 p CLSS: document  
ORIG: United States LANG: English  
TYPE: Program/project evaluations

ANNO: In 1988, the Adult Probation Department in Pima County, Arizona, instituted a program called LEARN (literacy, education, and reading network). This evaluation focused on the PALS (Principles of the Alphabet Literacy System) and GED components of that program.

ABST: A sample of 811 probationers were divided into three groups: those who had completed their term of probation and the literacy or GED component of the LEARN program; those who were ordered to attend LEARN but did not complete the program; and a control group. The findings showed that the GED program participants had received more preimprisonment education than PALS participants. There were no significant differences for gender or race among program participants and the control group. The results indicated that probationers who graduated from PALS had a higher successful probation completion rate than the control group; similar results were found for probationers who completed the GED portion of LEARN. Recommendations for improving the program stressed the need for evaluation tools, ultimate outcome studies, Statewide evaluation processes, data collection, and support from the local judiciary. 1 appendix

ACCN: 139496  
TITL: Reading Writing and Recidivism  
JCIT: State Government News, V 35, N 11 (November 1992), P 10-11  
PAUT: Morison, K P  
PDTE: 1992 PAGE: 2 p CLSS: article  
ORIG: United States LANG: English  
TYPE: Program/project evaluations

ANNO: When John Wood Community College in Quincy, Illinois, prohibited State prisoners from applying for Federal Pell grants this year, the school joined a growing national debate over who should pay for inmates' higher education.

ABST: The college opposed the idea of giving grants to criminals when plenty of law-abiding students needed the money. To corrections departments in Illinois and other States, however, Pell grants represent a needed source of funding at a time when State budgets for correctional education are increasingly tight. The conflict between educating and rehabilitating State prisoners and competing budget interests have forced a re-examination of prison education. The Correctional Education Association estimates that 70 to 75 percent of prisoners nationwide are high school dropouts and that most inmates perform several grade levels below the last grade they completed in school. Prison systems have responded by offering various traditional programs, including adult basic education, GED (general educational development) classes, volunteer literacy efforts, vocational education, and college classes. Several studies have documented that educational achievement, particularly at the postsecondary level, helps reduce recidivism. Additionally, some experts believe that education programs for inmates need to incorporate self-image, decisionmaking, and other social skills. In Illinois, the annual cost of educating a student is significantly less than the annual cost of incarcerating an adult in a State prison (\$4,200 versus \$16,200).

ACCN: 127337  
TITL: Education Program That Lowers Recidivism  
JCIT: American Jails, V 4, N 2 (July/August 1990), P 64-65, 67-68, 70,  
72  
PAUT: Dugas, R G  
PDTE: 1990 PAGE: 6 p CLSS: article  
ORIG: United States LANG: English  
TYPE: Model program descriptions

ANNO: The Lafayette Parish Correctional Facility (Louisiana) uses inmate tutors in a program that enables inmates to receive their high school equivalency diploma.

ABST: The program has been recognized as one of the best Laubach literacy programs in the nation. A local literacy organization, Volunteer Instructors Teaching Adults, trains inmates how to teach. To date, more than 200 inmates in the 700-capacity jail have tutored, allowing instruction to be available 14 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition to providing the General Educational Development (GED) program, the curriculum provides Adult Basic Education classes that teach life-coping skills. Hispanic detainees are taught English, and Sheriff's deputies are taught Spanish. The program has five phases: awareness which involves dissemination of information about the program to inmates; training which involves tutor selection and tutor training; recruitment which consists of the screening of inmates for entrance into the program; application which involves tutor-inmate matching and instruction; and evaluation which consists of documentation of student achievements and the measurement of recidivism among students. Of the inmates who have received their GED diplomas while incarcerated (557), less than 4 percent have returned to the jail compared to a national recidivism rate of 65 percent.

ACCN: 113135  
TITL: Correctional Education: A Way To Stay Out  
PAUT: Hackett, B  
CORP: Anderson and Associates, Murphysboro, IL 62966;  
SPON: Illinois Board of Education Department of Adult, Vocational and  
Technical Education Research and Development Section,  
Springfield, IL 62777; Illinois Department of Corrections,  
Springfield, IL 62706  
SALE: Illinois Council on Vocational Education, 100 Alzina Building,  
100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62702; DO Document.  
National Institute of Justice/ National Criminal Justice  
Reference Service Microfiche Program, Box 6000, Department F,  
Rockville, MD 20850; MF Microfiche.  
PDTE: 1988 PAGE: 81 p  
ORIG: United States LANG: English  
TYPE: Program/project descriptions/evaluations

ANNO: This three-publication series presents the findings of a 1986-1987 study of employment status of 760 Illinois prison releasees, recommendations for improving vocational and educational services in the State's correctional facilities, and a summary of findings and recommendations.

ABST: Data were compared for releases in vocational, academic, and combined training programs and for controls. Results indicate that the vocational and combined training groups had the highest rate of employment and a slightly lower rate of unemployment over time than the other two groups. The control group had the highest rate of criminal activity. The academic group had the lowest employment, highest unemployment, and second highest criminal activity rates. Vocational completers had a higher employment rate and lower arrest rate than did vocational noncompleters, who in turn fared better on these variables than did controls. Vocational enrollment was highest in the industrial training area, but health occupation enrollees had a higher percentage of completions. Results also demonstrate the effectiveness of the offender tracking system in producing educational and vocational training ad hoc reports. Recommendations based on results consider program design and procedures, service coordination, and program monitoring and evaluation. Additional recommendations further consider program planning, funding, objectives, design, and evaluation. Appendixes include forms and data collection instruments. 17 figures.



ACCN: 112711  
TITL: College-Correctional Collaboration in the Treatment of Juvenile  
Offenders: Evaluation of a Program Model in Six Sites, Final  
Report  
PAUT: Grissom, G R; McMurphy, S  
CORP: University City Science Center, Philadelphia, PA 19104;  
SALE: University City Science Center, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia,  
PA 19104; DO Document. National Institute of Justice/ National  
Criminal Justice Reference Service Microfiche Program, Box 6000,  
Department F, Rockville, MD 20850; MF Microfiche.  
PDTE: 1986 PAGE: 73 p  
ORIG: United States LANG: English  
TYPE: Program/project descriptions/evaluations

ANNO: This report presents results of an evaluation of a model  
program featuring collaboration between community colleges and New  
Jersey juvenile correctional education programs at six sites.

ABST: Program goals were to improve students math and verbal  
skills, create more favorable attitudes toward learning, and teach  
meaningful job skills. Data, collected for 104 students, included  
staff ratings, basic skills tests, a student questionnaire, on-site  
observations, and interviews with staff members and students.  
Results indicate that students showed strong gains in both math and  
verbal skills, with improvements being double and triple  
(respectively) their rate of growth prior to program entry. Over 80  
percent of the students learned to use computers and responded very  
positively to them. Success in computer-aided instruction was  
statistically associated with positive behavioral changes as well.  
Involvement by the community colleges contributed to the youths'  
self-image and helped neutralize the effects of labeling. Benefits  
were greatest when classes were conducted on the college campuses.  
Students behavior on campuses was praised by both college and  
correctional staff. Observation and interview data suggest that most  
vocational programs helped students develop good work habits and a  
favorable attitude toward employment. Programs had a positive impact  
on students' attitudes toward learning. Behavioral changes included  
substantial gains in students' impulse control, readiness to accept  
responsibility for oneself, and a diminished tendency to portray  
oneself as a victim. Implications for further model development are  
discussed. Supplemental data are appended. 3 tables and 8  
references.

