

A List of Recommended Readings for Correctional Education

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide education to Incarcerated Adults

Rand Corporation- and Bureau of Justice Assistance 2013

Lois M. Davis, Robert Bozick, Jennifer L. Steele, Jeremy N.V. Miles

www.rand.org

- **Most definitive study so far on how education reduces recidivism. The RAND Corporation is independent of government and internationally very well respected.**

After conducting a comprehensive literature search, the authors undertook a meta-analysis to examine the association between correctional education and reductions in recidivism, improvements in employment after release from prison, and learning in math and in reading. Their findings support the premise that receiving correctional education while incarcerated reduces an individual's risk of recidivating. They also found that those receiving correctional education had improved odds of obtaining employment after release. The authors also examined the benefits of computer-assisted learning and compared the costs of prison education programs with the costs of reincarceration.

Evolution of Correctional Education

Evaluations and Directions for Future Research

Elizabeth Drake and Danielle Fumia

Criminology and Public Policy May 22 2017

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1745-9133.12291> and;

[The-Effectiveness-of-Reentry-Programs-for-Incarcerated-Persons-Findings-for-the-Washington-Statewide-Reentry-Council_Report.pdf](#)

<http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1667/Wsipp>

- **WSIPP has conducted research on the benefit-costs of government programs (adult justice services including correctional education) since 2006. They continually review and update their research. Data comes from their own State and other jurisdictions (including Australia). ACEA is in contact with Beth Drake.**

A series of recent public policy reforms has moved Washington State toward the use of “evidence-based” programs. The central concept behind these reforms is to identify and implement strategies shown through rigorous research to improve state-wide outcomes (for our reducing recidivism, lowering crime rates or increasing high school graduation rates in a cost-effective manner.

Research Approach. WSIPP has developed a three-step process to draw conclusions about what works and what does not to achieve particular outcomes of legislative interest. First, they systematically assess all high-quality studies from the USA and elsewhere to identify policy options that have been tested and found to achieve improvements in outcomes. Second, determine how much it would cost Washington State taxpayers to

produce the results found in Step 1, and calculate how much it would be worth to people in Washington State to achieve the improved outcome. That is, in dollars and cents terms; compare the benefits and costs of each policy option. It is important to note that the benefit-cost estimates pertain specifically to Washington State; results will vary from state to state. Third, is the assessment of the risk in the estimates to determine the odds that a particular policy option will at least break even.

Vocational education and training for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) 15 October 2007

By Susan Dawe

<http://www.ncver.edu.au>

- This NCVER book of readings was compiled from input and information from correctional education staff from each jurisdiction. ACEA assisted with the editing of the final version.

This book of research readings composed with the assistance of ACEA and other interested educationalists provides clear evidence that adult prisoners and offenders who participate in vocational education and training (VET) during their sentence are less likely to re-offend. A reduction in recidivism represents safer communities and significant cost savings to the State. This book highlighted improvements in the delivery of VET for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia.

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH

A Future Beyond the Wall: improving Post-Release Employment Outcomes for People Leaving Prison February 2018

Authors

Eileen Baldry, David Bright, Jesse cale, Andrew day, Leanne Dowse, Margaret Giles, Lesley Hardcastle, Joseph Graffam et. al.

<http://unsworks.unsw.edu.au/fapi/datastream/unsworks:51556/bin0ae90f8c-51ca-48a6-87bc-c78f5e32cb3b?view=true>

Employment is recognised as a pathway out of offending, and yet few ex-prisoners are able to find meaningful work. This study examines the outcomes of Australian prison and post-prison education, vocational training and employment programs to provide new understandings of employment pathways for ex-prisoners and to inform evidence-based and effective practice. The study is a partnership among key academics in the field, peak national bodies and correctional and employment organisations.

National Strategy for Vocational Education & Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia March 2001

http://acea.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/National_Strategy_VET_Corrections.pdf

- **ACEA staff from each jurisdiction contributed to this Strategy.**

The Commonwealth, State and Territory vocational education and training authorities and correctional education staff in the States and Territories.

The aim of this report was to develop a national strategy for vocational education and training for adult prisoners in Australia which clearly articulates objectives, takes account of recent changes and priorities in the vocational education and training sector.

Study in prison reduces recidivism and welfare dependence: A case study from Western Australia 2005–2010

Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice no. 514

Margaret Giles

Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, May 2016

http://www.aic.gov.au/media_library/publications/tandi_pdf/tandi514.pdf

- **This is one of a series of Dr. Margaret Giles has produced in cooperation with correctional education staff in the Education and Vocational Training Unit of the WADoJ.**

This paper describes the effectiveness of correctional education in improving post-release outcomes. The report shows that the more classes completed by prisoners the lower the rate of re-incarceration and the less likely they are to increase the seriousness of their offending. These, and other personal and societal benefits such as a reduction in welfare dependence, were positively associated with the number of classes prisoners successfully completed.

The study confirms the usefulness of correctional education in reducing reoffending and improving post-release outcomes. Specifically:

- ex-prisoners who have upskilled in prison are less likely to commit more serious offences over time;
- the more classes prisoners successfully complete, the less likely they are to reoffend; and
- ex-prisoners who successfully complete classes in prison are more likely to remain in the community for longer.

Vocational education and training provision and recidivism in Queensland correctional institutions

National Centre for Vocational Education Research 25 July 2005

By Victor Callan and John Gardner

<http://www.ncver.edu.au>

- **This was an important research project for correctional education in Australia. It was supported by NCVER and made it clear that more research needed to be done locally in our field of education. It helped open the door for the NCVER correctional education studies which followed.**

This report examines links between prisoners' participation in the vocational education and training programs available within the Queensland prison system and their chances of returning to prison. The findings reveal that being involved in VET before initial release decreases the chances of returning to prison from 32% to 23%. The research supports efforts to promote the value of VET and its role in prisoner rehabilitation, and to reduce barriers to accessing VET in corrections.

The role of art education in adult prisons: The Western Australian experience

Margaret Giles • Lisa Paris • Jacqui Whale

https://socialsciences.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/SOSSFile/Giles_Paris_and_Whale_2016.pdf

- **While there is an almost total focus by government on the VET leads to employment paradigm, as that is the way expenditure on correctional education is justified publically, there was a dearth on how non-traditional VET studies areas like art fit into the rehabilitation model. There was, and continues to be, work required to be done in this area. How do we correctly assess and evaluate outcomes? Can expenditure in this area be justified? This study discusses the current situation.**

Correctional education administrators are increasingly directed to invest their limited human and material resources on units, courses and qualifications which have achieved what research studies have identified as the best results, such as improved labour market outcomes which can bring about a reduction in reoffending. Training to help secure sustainable employment, which has the capacity to minimise re-imprisonment, can make communities safer while reducing incarceration costs to the State.

Curriculum offered by correctional education service providers to student-prisoners include adult basic, vocational and higher education, plus personal development courses and art studies. The two-tiered question this paper asks is: Do art classes and courses produce these measurable outcomes and, if not, are there other reasons why they should continue to be funded?

Addressing these issues, the authors argue that:

- (1) these measurable outcomes are too narrow and do not reflect the complex but less quantifiable benefits to the individual and the community of studying art in prison, and
- (2) better measures of all impacts of art studies in prisons are needed, including qualitative and humanitarian aspects.

Vocational Education and Training: A Pathway to the Straight and Narrow...Crime Reducing effects of VET Participation.

Melbourne Institute Working Paper No. 21/16. 2016

Nikhil Jha & Cain Polidano

<http://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/publications/working-papers/search/result?paper=2156606>

In the twenty first century, education is seen as central to enabling people to work and contribute positively to community life. Those without necessary skills and qualifications face diminished life prospects and risk alienation from mainstream society. In this study, it

shows that increasing access to vocational education and training does significantly reduce property crime, drug crime and crime against the person. Importantly the crime-reducing effects of VET appear to be greater among prime and mature-age people generally (26-44) and among females.

These results of the study suggest that expanding access to VET to up-skill and re-skill people through-out a 'life-course' can have considerable associated public benefits as in reduced crime (this study refers to drug rehab as the 'life-course'- we might use the SSG course for the study as we refine and expand it) Although the magnitude of the property crime effects appear small relative to increased schooling, given the high costs of crime, small reductions are still estimated to have substantial cost savings for the community (in the millions of dollars).

Without evidence on the overall 'spillover benefits' of VET, as provided in this study, it is difficult for governments to justify expanded funding in tough economic times. A case in point is the pairing-back of public-funding to VET that occurred in Victoria since 2013 following the expansion in 2010-2012.

This report adds weight to previous studies that showed high rates of crime in areas with relatively few job opportunities and among unemployed people. Although we cannot identify the mechanism of the negative relationship between VET and crime, our findings raise the prospect that drug rehabilitation programs may benefit from the inclusion of vocational training.

International Research Studies

Doing Time Wisely: The Social and Personal Benefits of Higher Education in Prison The Prison Journal 2018

Jillian Baranger, Danielle Rousseau, Mary Ellen Mastroilli, and James Matesanz

Journals.sagepub.com/home/tpj

Much of the research on postsecondary education effects on incarcerated individuals has focused on men. In this qualitative study, the authors assess the social and personal benefits of participating in higher education while incarcerated in a women's prison. Data gathered with both program participants and education staff suggest that students in the program experienced a reduction in criminogenic attitudes and behaviours as well as positive changes in self-perception.

This was the first large scale rigorous study to review education's impact on ex-prisoners' recidivism rates. The report evaluated outcomes from three (3) American States in the USA and found that education, independent of other programs, could have significant impact on the behaviour of prisoners post release. Education participants had a 29% overall drop in recidivism when compared to the control group of non-participants. In addition and quite importantly, for each of the three years wage earnings were reported, data showed that education participants had higher earnings than non-participants

Evaluation of Effect of Correctional Education Programs on Post- Release Recidivism and Employment: An Empirical Study in Indiana

Journal of Correctional Education 2012

John Nally, Susan Lockwood, Katie Knutson, Taping Ho

- Susan Lockwood, made a presentation at the Hobart ACEA conference in 2015. Susan is the President-Elect of the Correctional Education Association in the US.

The 2011 study “Evaluation of Effect of Correctional Education Programs on Post- Release Recidivism and Employment”, evaluated the outcome measures of 2155 ex-prisoners and revealed that the recidivism rate was 29.7% for prisoner/students while the recidivism rate reached 67.8% among those who had not engaged in education. The study revealed education and employment were the most important predictors of an ex-prisoner’s post release recidivism.

A number of the findings from this rigorous research study were comparable to what was revealed by the Rand Corporation study in 2013 and so, together they strongly support the value of quality correctional education programming for prisoners.

How and Why People Stop Offending: Discovering Desistance

Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services 2012

Fergus McNeill, Stephen Farrall, Claire Lightowler and Shadd Maruna

<http://www.iriss.org.uk/sites/default/files/iriss-insight-15.pdf>

- **As research increasingly reveals that correctional education must strongly consider providing a more holistic program of learning for prisoners to maximise its efforts to be truly successful. A program that is not focussed solely on adult basic, vocational and higher education but also includes the personal development of the student. Teachers by the nature of our programs have more access to prisoners and so can make learning a transformative experience for the student.**

This paper provides a brief introduction to the research evidence about the process of desistance from crime. It also explores some of the potential practice and policy implications emerging from this evidence. It has been prepared as part of a wider project.

Discovering Desistance (<http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/>), which aims to share and extend knowledge about desistance and how criminal justice supervision can better support individual efforts to change. In this project, forms of evidence involved include not just academic research but also the knowledge of ‘desisters’, of people subject to supervision, of the ‘natural’ supporters of desistance within family and social networks, of criminal justice practitioners and managers, and of policy makers.

Integrated Re-entry and Employment Strategies: Reducing recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness.

Council of State Governments Justice Centre 2013

Le’Ann Duran, Martha Plotkin, Phoebe Potter and Henry Rosen

http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Final.Reentry-and-Employment.pp_.pdf

The Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies white paper was written to address the challenges that service providers cannot successfully serve every adult on probation or leaving prison who needs a job. There are simply not enough resources and attempting to serve everyone would be largely ineffective. Also, some individuals require intensive services and programming, while others perform better with lighter interventions and supervision.

The white paper can help policymakers, system administrators, and practitioners collaboratively determine whether resources are focused on the right people, with the right interventions, at the right time.

Ministry of Justice Education and Employment Strategy for adult prisoners

UK Ministry of Justice May 24 2018

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice Hon David Gauke MP

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-and-employment-strategy-2018>

This strategy released by the Secretary of State for Justice sets out how the UK will tailor its approaches on education and employment to help prisoners develop their learning and skills, and secure and sustain employment after they leave custody. The vision at its heart is when an offender enters prison they should be put, immediately, on the path to employment on release.