

The Effects of Prison Education

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Introduction and Background

“Prison education in America was born a century after the creation of the earliest prison in 1791. New York State worked prisoners at mass production jobs, education was a way to get away from hard Labour. After the Great Depression, higher education was offered in prisons after the Title IV of the Higher Education Act was passed” as stated in the federal defense attorney website on the controversial history of prison education. During this time, there was a growing recognition that education could help reduce recidivism rates and prepare incarcerated individuals for successful reentry into society. The American prisons have over time developed as a place to punish convicted criminals and this is illustrated by how different educational aims were manifested in a prison setting. “Some saw the goal of punishment as transformative and tended to focus on the moral instruction of offenders to teach them how to live non-criminal lives (Goldsmith, 1997, p.12)”.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the U.S. prison population was 1,204,300 at year end 2021, a 1% decrease from 2020 (1,221,200) and a 25% decrease from 2011 (1,599,000). About 700,000 incarcerated individuals leave federal and state prisons yearly to return to their local communities where they will have to compete with individuals in those communities for jobs. In today’s economy, a college education is a necessity to compete for jobs. Incarcerated people are mostly at a disadvantage without college education or any higher education plans. According to Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, two-thirds of job postings will require some level of college education by 2020” (Carnevel et al., 2013, p.12). The Bureau of Labor Statistics lists 174 occupations as having a typical entry- level education, requirement of a bachelor’s degree, and it projects that employment in these occupations will grow by 10 percent over the next decade (Torpey, 2018). Nonetheless, returning unprepared, uneducated, and

unusually bitter individuals to the community could represent a further threat to public safety and enhance recidivism levels (Stevens, 1997a, 1997c, 1997f; BJS, 1995).

Historically, prison-based education has been the product of both the private and public sector. The Quakers, a private sector religious group that was influential in the development of the Pennsylvania Prison Model, sought to create an environment that would foster self-reflection in those who were imprisoned by providing offenders with Bibles to facilitate their “moral” education, (Pollock, 1997). As the public sector, Federal and state fundings support and expand prison education in the hopes to reduce its rapidly growing prison population.

In the years since, “there has been a historical tendency to emphasize different types of prison-based education depending upon the dominant correctional goal of a given time period” (Ryang Hui Kim, David Clark, 2013, P1). Incarcerated individuals are less educated than the general population in a free society. Education can be a transformative experience providing those convicted of criminal behavior with a gateway into the law-abiding world (Gaes, 2008). Believing that education provides the means for people to live fulfilling and law-abiding lives, the criminal justice system provides various educational programs to offenders such as substance abuse programs, behavioral change programs, religious programs, educational or vocational programs, and so on (Ryang Hui Kim, David Clark, 2013, P2). Therefore, the role of correctional education is to: (1) function as an agent of change for both the inmate and the system; (2) maintain its integrity in terms of its basics commitment to freedom of inquiry; and (3) study, evaluate, and respond to all variables in the individual, the system, and society that are to be

benefited by the educational concerns with process, product and social reform (Reagen & Stoughton, 1976. P.15).

According to the New York department of corrections and community supervision, Fishkill Correctional Facility, located in New York State, is one example of a prison that has implemented a robust education program for its inmates. The facility offers a range of educational programs, including adult basic education, high school equivalency classes, college courses, and vocational training. These programs are designed to help inmates acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the job market upon release

According to a report by the Vera Institute of Justice (July 14, 2020), inmates who participate in educational programs are 43% less likely to return to prison within three years of release. Additionally, the report found that every dollar invested in prison education programs saves taxpayers between \$4 and \$5 in reduced recidivism cost.

Literature Review

“Progress reforming the criminal justice system by providing mandatory minimum sentencing reforms, expanding drug rehabilitation programs, and keeping the incarcerated closer to home. Correctional facilities providing higher education opportunities to those who are incarcerated results in a positive outcome upon the students participating as well among the population inside the prison. According to Rockinist.org “College-in-prison” programs are run by accredited universities and colleges and also offer the chance for participants to earn their college degrees in order to succeed in the real world outside of the criminal justice system. Education has been proven to be the most effective program when it comes to reducing recidivism and the higher

level of education that is attained by the individual, they will more likely succeed in gaining stable employment while being less likely to participate in further illegal activities.

According to [Nyassembly.gov](http://nyassembly.gov) these programs provided that target rehabilitation can decrease the rate of recidivism which can increase public safety. The Department of Corrections and Community Supervision maintains a budget of approximately \$2.7 billion. They spend around 9% of their budget on programs for inmates and claim to have an “Extensive array of programs and services for inmates to redirect their lives and become productive, law-abiding members of society. Programs include educational and vocational training, substance abuse treatment, parenting skills, anger management, domestic violence counseling, health education, sex offender treatment, religious services, and many more.” as stated on their website.

A few rising concerns we have questioned include topics such as “Are prisoners less likely to recidivate if they receive post secondary education? What determines eligibility for prisoners looking to participate in education programs? What social services are being provided in upstate prisons such as Fishkill? And do they offer the same financial aid options?” According to www.prisonpolicy.org those who are incarcerated and participating in prison education programs are actually 43 percent less likely to recidivate. This also provides them with the preparation, motivation, and opportunity to progress in their lives after their release. Studies show that even basic level education such as literacy and other basic skills can reduce the rate of recidivism giving inmates the chance to pursue post-secondary educational opportunities. The chances of recidivism reoccurring decreases as those who are incarcerated achieve higher levels of education.

According to <https://studentaid.gov> those who are incarcerated are not eligible to receive student federal loans. If they are in a federal or state facility they can not receive a federal pell grant, however they may be eligible to to receive a Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant or a Federal Work study but it is unlikely. Priority of these grants must be provided to the students who will also be receiving federal Pell grants which they are not qualified for and also the difficulties of performing a Federal Work study while being incarcerated. Funding for education programs in prison come from the state budget in which American taxpayers pay approximately \$80 billion yearly to fund. These programs even reward prisoners by offering them an earlier release resonating with the degree they are pursuing. For example if they earn their GED they may be eligible for a six month early release. If they earn their associates they can get a year off, and two years if they earn their bachelors. Eligibility for prisoners to participate in education programs may also vary depending on several factors. These factors can include the prisoner's past criminal history, their behavior while in custody, and the availability of resources and funding for education programs. Generally, prisoners who have demonstrated good behavior, a desire to learn, and a commitment to rehabilitation are more likely to be eligible for participation. In addition, some programs may have specific academic or skill-based requirements, such as a certain level of literacy or proficiency in a particular area. Ultimately, eligibility for education programs is determined by the individual facility and its policies, as well as the specific program being offered.

According to <https://www.corrections.sa.gov>. Social workers play a great role in working with offenders on an individual or group basis. Social workers are employed in prisons and in Community Correctional Centres working on complex cases that provide professional

development opportunities and skills. This can be done through assessments and intervention services provided for inmates. Social workers can also conduct individual counseling, treatment assessments, and facilitate group programs. The purpose of this is to enhance and support rehabilitation to further improve the lives of those who are incarcerated. They address factors that are affiliated with offending behaviors as well as assisting them with their process. Responsibilities of a social worker include identifying the offender's social development needs, monitoring the responses of the offenders to conditions of the court, and preparing comprehensive reports to facilitate the inmates release plans. Correction or criminal Justice related social work includes providing mental health and substance abuse counseling as well as finding other alternatives to incarceration. They can provide a variety of services in corrections and usually support demographic groups that need more attending to. Social workers usually work on interdisciplinary teams in order to establish rehabilitation programs and treatment in order to discharge plans for those incarcerated.

Additionally, social workers can work with prison staff to identify and address any systemic barriers to education, such as a lack of resources or funding. They can also help design and implement educational programs that are specifically tailored to the needs of the prisoner population, ensuring that they are effective and engaging. By working collaboratively with other professionals and stakeholders, social workers can help to ensure that prisoners have access to high-quality education opportunities that can make a real difference in their lives.

The Fishkill Facility Education Program is an initiative that aims to provide educational opportunities to individuals who are incarcerated at the Fishkill Correctional Facility in New

York. The program offers a range of courses that cover various subjects, including history, literature, mathematics, science, and more. The program serves as a means for prisoners to develop useful skills and knowledge that can help them reintegrate into society upon release. Additionally, it helps individuals feel a sense of purpose and fulfillment during their time in prison. It also promotes personal growth and development, which can have positive effects on mental health and well-being. Their education program is an important initiative that can help reduce recidivism rates by providing prisoners with the tools and resources they need to succeed after their release. It also helps to promote more comprehensive and supportive rehabilitation efforts within the criminal justice system.

Need for Educational Programs for Prisoners

Education is an essential tool for personal and professional growth, but access to educational opportunities can be limited for incarcerated individuals. One of the primary needs for educational programs for prisoners is to reduce recidivism rates. According to Batiuk et al. (2019), education programs can provide prisoners with the skills and knowledge they need to successfully reintegrate into society. Studies have shown that prisoners who participate in educational programs are less likely to reoffend after release (Davis et al., 2020). Another need for educational programs for prisoners is to improve employment prospects. Davis et al. (2020) note that education and training programs can improve prisoners' job prospects and increase their chances of finding employment after release. These programs can provide prisoners with industry-specific skills that are in demand in the job market. Incarcerated individuals often come from disadvantaged backgrounds and may have limited educational opportunities prior to incarceration. Educational programs for prisoners can address these disparities by providing

opportunities for academic and personal growth (Batiuk et al., 2019). By providing access to higher education, prisoners can obtain degrees and certifications that can improve their job prospects and provide a pathway to long-term success. Overall, the literature suggests that there is a significant need for educational programs for prisoners. These programs can help reduce recidivism rates, improve employment prospects, and address educational disparities. By providing access to educational opportunities, prisoners can develop the skills and knowledge they need to successfully reintegrate into society and lead productive lives after release.

Purpose Of Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the advantages and results of prison education. Based on the purpose, the following questions will be answered: How do Fishkill Educational Programs Benefit by Improving Inmates' Lives? Do Educational Programs in Prison Offered by Alliance University at Fishkill Correctional Facility increase hope among inmates. These research questions speak to the main issue at hand. We will be able to answer the research questions and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of prison education by performing this research, which will enable us to collect data that supports the research questions. The number of prisoners who profit from a prison education and those who do not will be determined by quasi-experimental research, which will be conducted. With the help of quasi-experimental research, we will be able to identify the strengths and limitations of prison education, as well as how these implementations affect the study's findings.

The current research points out that even though educational programs greatly benefit prisoners by raising their self-esteem and decreasing recidivism. When prisoners leave prison, it is not certain they will have a job. We found it difficult that while there are educational programs

for prisoners, they cannot afford to pay for them. We found out that the Higher Education Act (HEA Act) prohibits the act for prisoners. This is difficult because most prisoners do not have jobs or financial means. Therefore, how are they supposed to pay for their education? It's believed that educational programs in prison can be very helpful for the inmates, but I have noticed that the articles don't indicate whether the educational programs include training for job interviews and resumes for prisoners. I do wonder if inmates receiving jobs after their reentry into society will improve if they take part in job training like "dress for success," "job interview practice," and "field experience" seminars.

Research Design

To measure the effectiveness of hope in prison education, a randomized controlled trial will be used. This would involve randomly assigning participants to two groups. First group will receive the hope intervention while the second group (control group) will receive the standard prison education. Pre- and post-intervention measures of hope will be collected and compared between the groups.

If the randomized controlled trial shows that hope-focused education is effective in improving outcomes for incarcerated individuals, then it could have a significant impact on the future of prison education programs. According to a study published in the Journal of Correctional Education, hope-focused education programs were found to be associated with a 14% reduction in recidivism rates among participants.

This outcome could lead to the development of more comprehensive and effective programs that can focus on building skills, fostering hope, and promoting positive behavioral change. Another study published in the *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* found that such programs were effective in improving self-esteem, hope, and problem-solving skills among incarcerated individuals, which could contribute to a reduced risk of reoffending. These findings could be used to advocate for increased funding and support for related programs.

If hope-focused education is found to be effective in improving outcomes for incarcerated individuals, it could shift societal attitudes towards rehabilitation and punishment. Rehabilitation and education programs could become a more prominent focus of the criminal justice system, rather than solely focusing on punishment and retribution. This could lead to a more compassionate and just approach to criminal justice, which recognizes that individuals can change and offers them the resources they need to do so.

Data Collection Method

For studies on hope-focused education programs. Surveys or questionnaires will be used to collect self-reported data on factors such as levels of hope, self-esteem, and problem-solving skills before and after participation in the program. Additionally, data will be collected on things like disciplinary infractions or instances of reoffending among program participants compared to a control group. Qualitative data will be collected through interviews or focus groups with program participants to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences and perspectives on

the program. Ultimately, the specific data collection method chosen will depend on the research questions being addressed and the resources available.

Research Measurement

Qualitative data collection through interviews or focus groups with program participants will be helpful in addressing the research questions. Questions are related to the subjective experiences and perceptions of program participants. Research questions will look at

- How participants view the program's impact on their lives,
- What they found most helpful about the program,
- What challenges they faced during their participation,
- How program participants apply the skills and knowledge learned in the program to their daily lives outside of the correctional facility.

Overall, the use of qualitative data can provide a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives, which can inform program development and evaluation efforts.

Conceptualization	Operationalization	
<p>Hope (Dependent variable) is a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. It is the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best</p>	<p>This can involve participants identifying specific behaviors, thoughts, or emotions that are associated with hope, and creating standardized measures or assessments to quantify these factors.</p> <p>A Questionnaire with a 5-point scale ranging from 1</p>	

	<p>(not likely) to 5 (very likely) is employed and considered as a motivation for the impact of hope on various outcomes, such as mental health, well-being, and resilience.</p> <p>This 48-item measure utilizes 4- and 5-point toward meaning, purpose, and a scale ranging from 1 (always) to 5 (never) and from life worth living" (Psychology (total agreement) to 4 (no agreement at all).</p>	
<p>Post-secondary Education (Independent Variable) Post-secondary education describes any education that takes place after high school, such as college, university, trade schools, and other professional programs. Post-secondary education typically involves completing a course of study that leads to a diploma or degree.</p>	<p>Higher levels of hope can lead to better academic performance, improved psychological well-being, and better physical health. Response from survey participants using 5-point Likert scale with 1 (strongly disagreed) to 5 (strongly agree)</p> <p>Research outcomes show participants with higher levels of hope are more resilient to adversity, have better coping strategies, and are better able to manage difficult emotions. All qualities good for continued education.</p>	

Effectiveness of Hope in Prison Education

Hope is an important concept and emotion that can have a constructive effect on individuals in prison settings. Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between hope and successful reintegration into society once an individual has completed their sentence.

Educational programs that focus on instilling hope and providing educational opportunities for inmates can lead to significant benefits for the inmates and society. We study the importance of hope in educational programs for prisoners and explore how it can contribute to successful reintegration after their sentence is completed. We also explore various methods of implementing hope-based prison education programs and the challenges they face. We have discovered there are even positive effects and outcomes of hope-based educational programs in prisons.

Paley, Elianne. "Correctional Education as a Path to Opportunity and Hope." *Policy Research Associates*, 22 Sept. 2022, <https://www.prainc.com/gains-correctional-education/>.

Options in prison and jail education programs include opportunities for members to gain literacy and marketing skills. This can help them focus on gaining employment after their release. All institutions under the authority of BOP offer literacy programs and English as a second language. They also offer parenting, wellness classes, GED, tech programs, and more that can apply to the general labor market and labor demands.

Fishkill Corrections Survey

Name: Kenton James

Age: 38

Race: Black/ Indian

Height: 6'1

DOB: 8-27-1985

When did you enroll in the fishkill education program & what is the name of the program?
September 2022

How many classes did you take and how long was the program and courses?

Three classes a semester is what the program starts you off with. He stayed for two semesters then discontinued due to his interest in a major not being offered.

What are you majoring in?

Did basic classes during the program. He did not complete a major. He switched to a volunteer teacher's aide. No money is provided or credits but it takes time off the sentence.

How does prison education differ from outside education?

“Prison education is free. It gives you motivation to do something productive until release.”

Are there any aspects that are better inside the correction facility?

“Not really”

Data Analysis Plan:**1.Descriptive Statistics**

There is a sample size N-20 inmates that will participate in this research.

A dependent measures t-test, commonly known as a paired t-test, would be the best statistical test for this study. Since we want to determine whether post-secondary education has an impact on an inmate's hope, we would like to measure the inmate's hope level prior to enrolling in a post-secondary education program and again after completing the program. This is why researchers prefer to use this statistical test. The sample will remain one group during the entire procedure. due to the fact that we are not running an experimental group with two separate group members.

Conclusion

This study aims to demonstrate the beneficial effects of postsecondary education on prisoners' hope. Due to the vulnerability of inmates, having access to post-secondary education paves the way for offenders to find employment upon their reentry into society. Additionally, prisoners' mental health and self-esteem benefit when their hope levels rise. The hope of having a bright future

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APPENDIX A

Title of Research Study

Principal Investigators

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Purpose of this Research Study

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Risks

There are no risks involved in this research study. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

Benefits

It enhances the prisoner's quality of life, challenges their minds, gives them something to aim for, and frequently has the extra benefit of allowing the prisoner to use his or her newly acquired abilities for the benefit of others. Whether you are free or incarcerated, it is always necessary to give back.

Confidentiality

All responses received will be completely anonymous. Please note that your personal information is not requested anywhere on this form.

Contact Information

If you have questions at any time about this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Consent

I read ___ and I understand ___ the information provided. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without any repercussions. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.