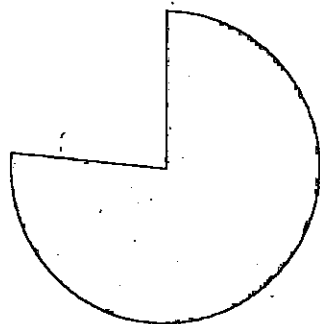


CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION & RECIDIVISM

Of the 404,638 people released from state prisons in 2005,



76.6 %

were rearrested within five years of their release.

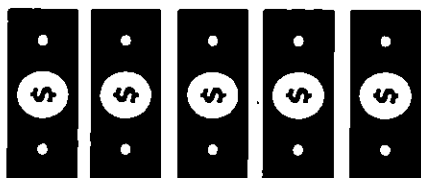


EVERY DOLLAR spent on correctional education saves approximately



saves approximately

FOUR TO FIVE DOLLARS



on future criminal justice costs



In 1994, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act prohibited Pell Grants for incarcerated people. The number of prisoners participating in postsecondary education

DROPPED
BY **44%**



The 2008 recession reduced the budget for correctional education, resulting in further decreases in participation.

INMATES WHO PARTICIPATE IN CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION ARE:

43%
less likely to recidivate



13%
more likely to gain post-release employment



AT LEAST 32 STATES offer postsecondary education or college courses to their adult state prisoners



ONLY 16 STATES reported using state funding to pay for correctional education.

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EXPLAINING THE DATA

The most recent statistics on recidivism from the BJS (2014) show that 76.6% of state prisoners released in 2005 were rearrested within five years of their release. This data does not include people released from federal prison or county jails.

The largest-ever meta-analysis of education and recidivism, conducted by the RAND Corporation (2013), revealed the cost-effectiveness of correctional education: investing \$1 in educational programs for incarcerated people saves the equivalent of \$4 to \$5 on future criminal justice spending. This report also found that inmates who participate in any educational program, whether vocational or academic, are 43% less likely to recidivate and 13% more likely to gain post-release employment than those who do not participate.

A major issue when gathering data on recidivism is state reporting, for different states have different policies on tracking offenders post-release. Additionally, not every state is included in the studies referenced here. 41 states contributed data for the Pew (2011) study and 36 states delivered data to RAND (2014).

Though the majority of states offer postsecondary education or college courses (RAND, 2014), only 16 report using state funding to pay for these programs. Since the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act prevented incarcerated people from receiving Pell Grants, many people are unable to participate in college courses due to financial constraints (RAND, 2014). Thus, by 1995, the number of inmates enrolled in postsecondary education programs dropped by 44 percent (Erisman & Contardo, 2011; Tewksbury, Erickson, & Taylor, 2000).

Within the recidivism data, it is hard to differentiate whether someone was re-arrested for violating their probation or for committing another crime; without more fine-grained analysis of this issue, it is exceptionally difficult to know how to reduce recidivism.

Within the educational data, "correctional education" means different things in different studies. For example, some studies include GED and special education, others just include academic instruction, some are both academic and vocational, and most studies are not able to indicate the amount of education attained. This means that making exact calculations about the education-to-recidivism-reduction ratio is exceptionally difficult.

Finally, it merits notice that post-secondary education in prison, alongside all other caveats noted herein, must be done well to be successful: in the same way that pedagogical excellence increases retention of traditional college students, so education-in-prison programs need to be implemented with the same commitment to educational excellence. This rules out correspondence courses, for-profit online courses, and other forms of predatory education marketing.