

What Works in Correctional Education?

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Outline

- Correctional education in USA
- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses of correctional education
- What works in corrections: overview of findings
- Implications for correctional education

Correctional Education

- Originally Religious Instruction
- Reformatory Era
- Mainstay of Rehabilitation
 - Various goals
 - Benefit in its own right
 - Correlation between education and criminal activity



Correctional Education In USA

- Legally Mandated for Juveniles and Youthful Adults
- Offered in Many Facilities
 - 91.2% of state prisons
 - All federal prisons
 - 87.6% private prisons
- Many Participate while Incarcerated
- Programs Available Differ by Facility

Reasons for Emphasis on Education

- Education and criminal activity relationship
- Convicted offenders
 - Less educated
 - Fewer marketable job skills
- Incarcerated adults
 - High illiteracy
 - Less than half have completed high school

Types of Educational Programs

- Basic Education
 - ESL, special ed, literacy
- GED or high school
- Vocational Education
- Postsecondary/College
- Life Skills

Sometimes Included as Education

- Drug Treatment and Education
- Parenting
- Cognitive Skills

Theoretical Rationales: Association Between Education and Recidivism

- **Cognitive Changes**
 - Problem solving, self-efficacy
 - Executive cognitive functioning
 - Maturity/moral development
 - Mitigate pains of imprisonment
- **Employability**
 - Skills need for specific jobs
 - Credentials



Correctional Education and Impact on Recidivism

- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses
- Theoretical meta-analyses
- Meta-analyses of correctional education

Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses

- Summary of best available research
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- Specific question
-
- Synthesizing the results of several studies
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- Clear inclusion/ exclusion criteria
-
- Explicit search strategy
-
- Systematic coding and analysis of included studies
-
- Meta-analysis (where possible)

Theoretical Meta-Analyses

- Ineffective programs
 - Retribution
 - Deterrence
- Effectiveness differs
 - Implementation/ integrity
 - Design
 - Type of participant
- Principles of effective programs

Principles of Effective Rehabilitation

- Skill Oriented
- Multi-modal
- Behavioral or Cognitive-Behavioral Theory
- Integrity
 - Identified rationale consistent with human service literature
 - Qualified and trained staff
 - Proved methods
 - Sufficient dosage

Educational Programs and Principles of Effective Rehabilitation

- Educators credentials and training
- No Focus on Reentry
- Dosage/time-in-program problems
 - Teacher vacancies
 - Prison lockdowns
 - Transfers
 - Incentives
- Target dynamic, criminogenic needs
 - Problematic circumstances at school or work, antisocial attitudes
 - Not self-esteem



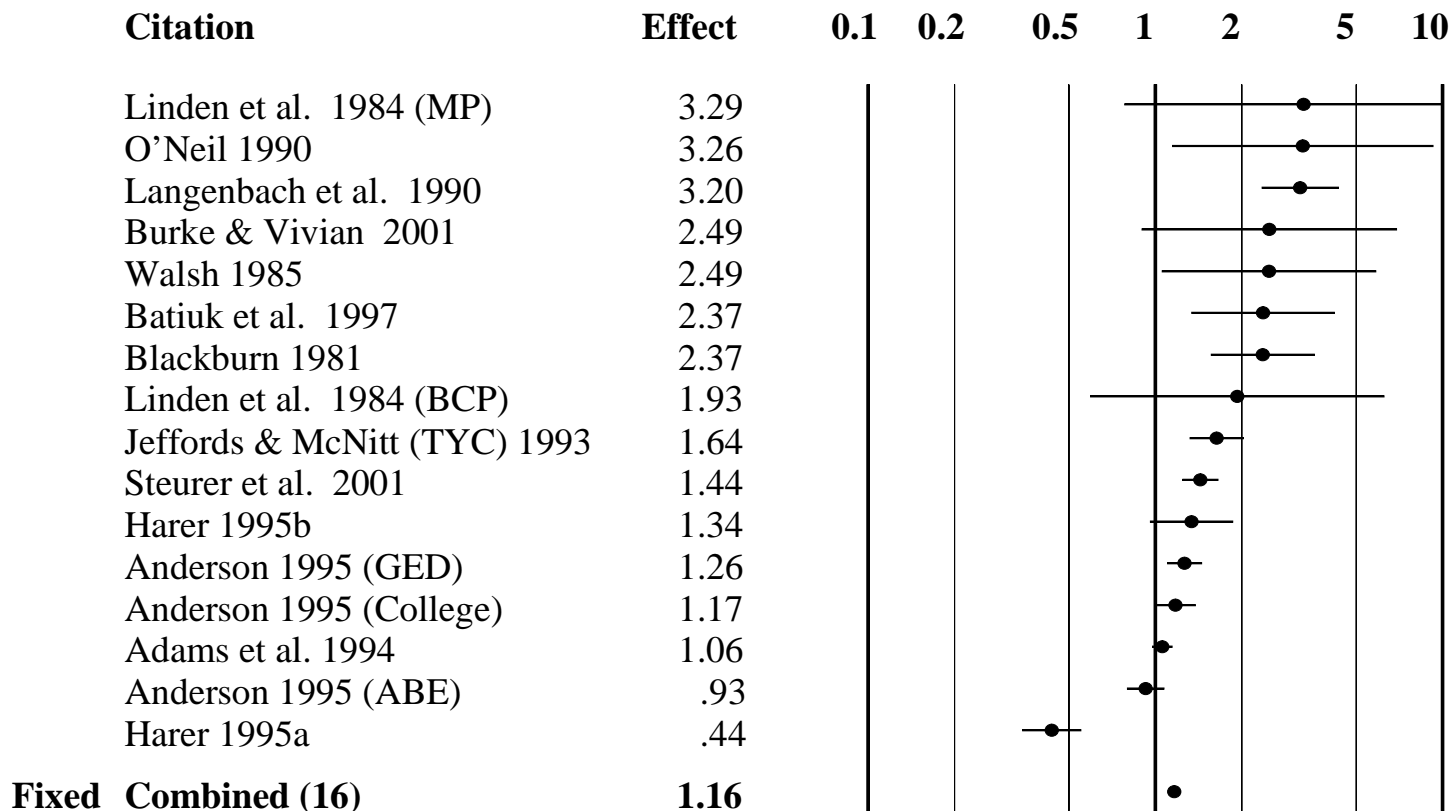
Meta-analysis of Correctional Education, Vocation and Work Program

- Outcome – recidivism
- Study has comparison group
- Published after 1975
- English language

Search Strategy

- Intensive search -- 771 documents
- Identify potentially relevant -- 152 studies
- Locate and evaluate – 144
- Eligible studies – 28
- Independent samples -- 33 studies

Academic Education Treatment Programs



Favors Control Favors Treatment

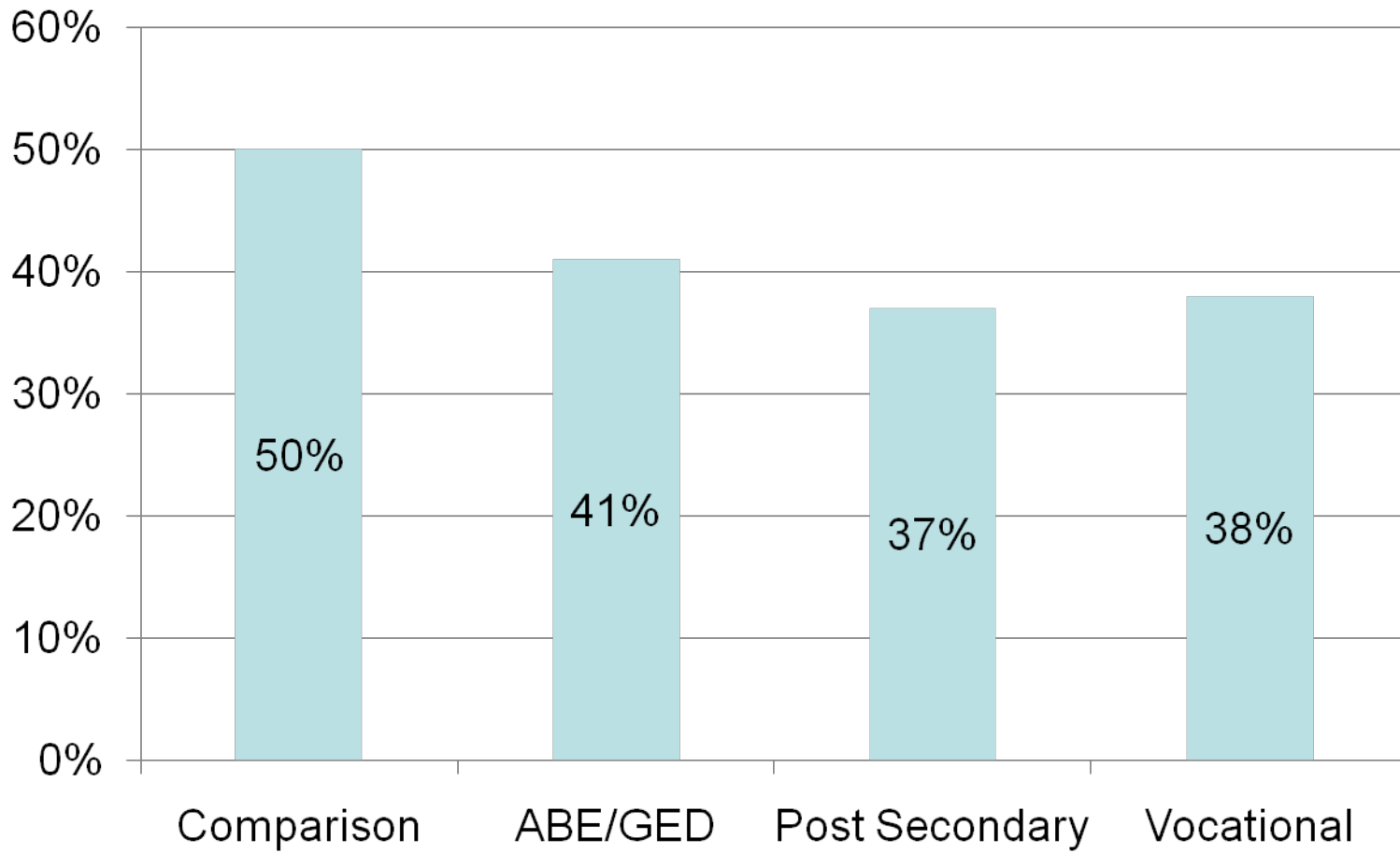
Studies

- 6 Adult Basic Education
- 3 GED
- 5 Combined ABE/GED
- 13 Post Secondary Education
- 17 Vocational Education
- 3 Life skills

Meta-Analyses of Education Programs

ABE, GED	Reduces recidivism
Postsecondary	Reduces recidivism
Vocational	Reduces recidivism
Life Skills	Does not reduce recidivism

Recidivism Rate Estimates



Understanding the Impact

- Details of Characteristics of Programs Unknown
- Details of What Works for Whom Unknown
- Research Relatively Poor in Design (Poor Science)

Issues with Types of Programs

- PSE – Many giving vocational training certificates not opening for future college
- New Life Skills programs often part of a holistic program
- Vocational Education – may help with reentry, may be comprehensive/holistic

The Blackbox of Correctional Education

- ABE, GED, PSE and Voc Ed programs appear to work
- Limited Quality of the Research
- Consistent with Principles of Effective Programs (Cognitive Transformations)

What Works in Corrections: Reducing the Criminal Activities of Offenders and Delinquents



WHAT WORKS IN CORRECTIONS

REDUCING THE CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES
OF OFFENDERS AND DELINQUENTS

DORIS LAYTON MacKENZIE

What Works in Corrections

Doris Layton MacKenzie

Cambridge University Press

2006

Evidence-Based Corrections

- Use of science
 - Evaluate quality of science
- Identify effective correctional programs
 - Use only studies of sufficient quality
- Presented in form usable by decision/policy makers

What Works in Corrections

- Search 1000s of studies
- Reviewed 284 research studies of sufficient scientific rigor
- Effective programs focused on **individual-level change/cognitive transformations**
- Ineffective programs
 - Little Theoretical basis
 - Poorly implemented
 - Emphasize developing opportunities, forming ties or bonds

Examining What Works

- Maryland Scoring Method
 - Quality of design/science
 - Significance
- Systematic reviews and meta-analysis

Maryland Scoring Method

- Report to U.S. Congress
- Evaluation of prevention programs
- Developed assessment method
 - 2 stage assessment

2 Stage Assessment

1. Assess each study
 - Science quality – score 1 (lowest) to 5 (gold standard)
 - Significance
- Examine groups of studies for what works
 - What works
 - What promising
 - What doesn't work
 - What we don't know

Stage 1: Quality and Significance

Study	Methods Score	Recidivism Treated Group	Recidivism Control Group
Jeffords & McNitt 1993	3	41.3	53.5*

Stage 2

Study		Methods Score	Treatment Group	Control Group
Batiuk et al. 1997 (3)	Return to Prison ^a	3	19.9	37.0*
Blackburn 1981 (3)	Rearrest/Return to Prison	3	37.0	58.0*
Burke & Vivian 2001 (3)	Reincarcerated ¹	3	46.8	68.7
Jeffords & McNitt 1993 (3)	Rearrest	3	41.3	53.5*
Langenbach et al. 1990 (3)	Return to Prison	3	40.0	68.0*
Steurer et al. 2001 (3)	Rearrest	3	48.0	57.0*
.....				

Decision Making Rules for “What Works”

- Two (2) studies with
 - Research methods scores of “3” or above
 - Showing the experimental group having significantly lower recidivism rates

Decisions about What Works

- Maryland scoring method
- Meta-analyses

What Works?

- Strategies for reducing crime
- Rehabilitation/human service programs
- Types of offenders
- Substance abusers
- Control and discipline

What Works

- **Adult education**
- **Voc education**
- **Cog/behavior therapy**
- **Sex offender treatment**
- **Drug courts**
- **Drug treatment**
- **Multi-Systemic Therapy**

Unknown/No Evidence

Life skills

Correctional industries

Multi-component work

Psychosocial sex offender treatment

Domestic violence

Victim awareness

Juvenile programs (community supervision and facility)

Scared straight

Boot camps

Intensive supervision

Electronic monitoring

Monetary penalties

Ineffective Interventions: Poor or No Theoretical Basis

- Psychosocial sex offender treatment
 - Psychodynamic model of treatment
- Community supervision
- Residential facilities for juveniles

Ineffective Interventions: Punishment, Deterrence or Control Only

- Boot camps
- Scared Straight
- Arrest for domestic violence
- Intensive supervision
- Electronic monitoring

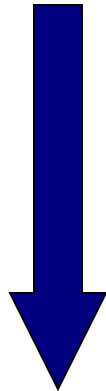
Criminological Theory

- Environmental opportunities
 - Attachments, ties or bonds to social institutions
 - Sampson and Laub's life course theory

- What is mechanism for change?
 - Social environment conducive
 - Fortuitious

Effective Programs: Individual Transformation

Changes within individual



Environmental opportunity

Implication for Education

- Cognitive change important
- Employability secondary

Individual transformation must occur first

- Giordano et al. 2002
- Cullen and Gendreau and Canadian Researchers
- Maruna's interviews with offenders

What Works: Future Research

- More details about program components
- More details about participants
 - Gender, ethnic sensitivity
- Improve quality of research
 - 14% randomized trials
 - Large % education studies scored “2”

Questions



- What works for whom, when, why, what circumstances
- Gender, race-ethnicity sensitive programming
- Cognitive change or combination of cognitive change and increased opportunities
- How to combine with reentry (holistic, multi-modal programs that take participants from institution to community)
- Structural problems in facilities (lockdowns, transfers, movement)
- Internet Use



Summary: What Works

- Reject “Nothing Works”
- Educational programs are effective
- Need cognitive transformations

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