

Evaluation of the Impact of Correctional Education Programs on Recidivism



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ▶ This study looked at all 18,068 inmates that were released from the Ohio prison system in Fiscal Year 1992.
- ▶ Overall, educational involvement - whether actual achievement or meaningful participation - appeared to have reduced recidivism slightly after a two year follow-up period. The most positive impact was for inmates that were female, Black, young, incarcerated for a drug offense and inmates with one prior incarceration.
- ▶ The impact of correctional education programming on recidivism varied by education type: GED programming appeared to have reduced recidivism the most followed by college and vocational programming. ABE programming did not appear to have a positive effect overall.
- ▶ Involvement in GED programming appeared to have had the most positive impact on males, Blacks, young offenders and inmates without any priors incarcerations. GED achievement was particularly effective for less serious offenders, while GED participation without achievement was more effective for the more serious offender.
- ▶ College programming had the greatest impact on offenders that were female, young, incarcerated for first degree felonies, incarcerated for drug offenses, incarcerated for non-violent offenses and inmates with no prior incarcerations in an Ohio prison.
- ▶ Vocational programming appeared to have a more positive impact on female offenders, younger offenders, offenders from rural counties, drug offenders, those incarcerated for non-violent offenses, and inmates without any prior incarcerations.
- ▶ ABE programming tended to have a more positive effect on older offenders, female offenders, first and fourth degree indeterminate felons, inmates who served the longest, sex offenders, and inmates with one prior incarceration.
- ▶ For those that achieved GED certificates or a college degree or certificate, the closer they graduated or received their certificate to their release date, the less likely they were to return to prison.

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INTRODUCTION

This study was designed to evaluate the impact on post-release recidivism of various levels of educational involvement in correctional education programs. Educational involvement means either participation or achievement in one of the four correctional education programs that were addressed, Adult Basic Education (ABE), vocational training, General Education Development (GED) and college.

The offenders that were used to examine the relationship between educational involvement in prison and recidivism were the Fiscal Year (FY) 1992 release cohort. The analysis begins with a discussion of methodology, followed by a short description of the release cohort and the overall recidivism rates. Next, the major findings of the study are presented in an examination of the impact of educational involvement on recidivism. To help explore the relationship between education and recidivism four types of variables were utilized: offender demographics, characteristics of the offender's conviction offense, the offender's criminal history, as well as an examination of the timing of when an offender received his or her education in relation to being released. The analysis ends with a closer inspection of college achievement.

METHODOLOGY

DATA SOURCES

Four sources of data were used to produce this report.

Inmate Progression System (IPS) - A download of the IPS data set was the foundation upon which this analysis was built. It, first of all, was used to determine who was released in FY 1992 and the method of that release (shock parole, parole, shock probation or expiration of sentence). The IPS data set also provided the information on offender demographics, characteristics of the conviction offense and recidivism.

Training, Industry and Education (TIE) - A download of the TIE data base provided offender information on educational participation (type and length of study), level of education (grade) at admission, and a tested grade level from a Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) taken during the intake process.

Ohio Central School System (OCSS) records - The OCSS provided information on the educational achievement of members of the FY 1992 release cohort: high school diploma, GED, vocational certificate, or college achievement.

Inmate Master Pockets - If information was missing from the TIE data base, the inmate's master pocket was used as a supplement.

PARTICIPATION AND ACHIEVEMENT

Educational achievement was defined as the attainment of a vocational certificate, a GED, a high school diploma or a certificate or degree from college during the tenure of an inmate's prison term. (A few of the GED and college achievers actually attained their achievement after being released. It was possible for this to occur, but it should be noted that the offender did the work necessary for achievement while incarcerated. In essence, they just received the official achievement document after being released.) If an offender had more than one achievement, the highest achievement was chosen as the most relevant to this analysis. The achievement deemed highest was college, followed by GED and vocational. (The number of achievers that received a high school diploma was very small. Therefore, they were included in, and analyzed as, GED achievers.)

Educational participation was defined as having an official work assignment in either an ABE, vocational, GED or college program for ninety days or more. If an offender had multiple educational work assignments the highest was judged to be most relevant to this study. The participation level deemed highest was college followed by GED, vocational and ABE.

If an offender had a mix of educational involvement, that is, both achievement and participation, the offender's highest program involvement - whether achievement or participation - was deemed the most appropriate for this study in this order: college, GED, vocational and ABE, with achievement being higher than participation. In other words, each offender involved in education was placed in only one educational involvement category.

In all cases except one achievers were also participants. That is, vocational and college achievers had to participate in a vocational or college program to be able to achieve their certificate or degree. GED achievers, however, may or may not have participated in GED programming. They may have just taken and passed the GED test. Receiving a GED does not necessarily mean that an offender participated in any GED programming.

RECIDIVISM

For the purpose of this study, recidivism was defined as a recommitment to the Ohio prison system within two years of release. The release type categories were shock probation, shock parole, parole and sentence expiration. The reason for return to state prison was either a technical violation of the conditions of parole or probation or recommitment to the Ohio prison system for a new criminal conviction. It should also be mentioned that information with respect to arrests or convictions that did not result in imprisonment in the state system was not available. Knowledge of imprisonments in other states or the federal system was also not available.

COMPARISON GROUPS

Throughout the study are references to comparison groups. Comparison groups are composed of individuals who are similar to the "treatment group" members in important respects but who are selected in a non-random way and have not been exposed to the treatment, in this case, educational participation or achievement in prison.

Distinct comparison groups were constructed for the five groups of offenders that were analyzed in this study; ABE participants, Vocational achievers and participants, GED achievers and participants, college achievers and participants and any achievers and participants. The comparison groups were constructed with the use of three variables, a tested reading score at admission (TABE), highest grade reported at admission and involvement in educational programming while incarcerated.

Table 1 presents how the comparison groups were constructed. The comparison group for ABE participants were those in the FY 1992 release cohort who had a tested reading score less than sixth grade as well as no known history of educational involvement in prison. Vocational participants and achievers had a comparison group made up of those with a tested reading score of fourth grade or higher and either no history of educational involvement in prison or only ABE programming. The comparison group for the GED achievers and participants were those in the FY 1992 release cohort who had a tested reading score sixth grade or higher, did not report a high school degree or GED at admission and were not involved in education in prison, or were only involved in ABE or vocational programming. College achievers and participants were compared to those with a tested reading score higher than seventh grade and either no history of education in prison or only ABE, vocational or GED programming.

Table 1: Comparison Groups

LEVEL OF EDUC. INVOLVEMENT	TABE SCORE	OTHER EDUCATION	GRADE
ABE PARTICIPATION	LESS THAN 6.0	NO OTHER EDUCATION	NO CONSTRAINT
VOCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT	4.0 OR HIGHER	NONE OR ABE	NO CONSTRAINT
GED INVOLVEMENT	6.0 OR HIGHER	NONE, ABE OR VOCATIONAL	LESS THAN 12
COLLEGE INVOLVEMENT	7.0 OR HIGHER	NO CONSTRAINT	NO CONSTRAINT
ANY INVOLVEMENT	6.0 OR HIGHER	NO EDUCATION	NO CONSTRAINT

The comparison group for those who had any educational involvement was constructed with those FY 1992 release cohorts who had a tested reading score of sixth grade or higher and no history of educational involvement in prison.

One other note about the offenders that make up the comparison groups. Unlike offenders that were involved in education (who were placed into one educational involvement type), it is possible for offenders in comparison groups to be in more than one comparison group.

DATA ANALYSIS

This study examined every offender who was released in FY 1992 . It is therefore a study which examined a population (the statistical definition) not a sample. Because this study examined a population, there is not a need to report statistical significance. Statistical significance only applies to studies that are based on samples. This study is based upon a population and therefore the results are true and unbiased. Reported differences (or lack of differences), then, should be interpreted no other way than as real.

The major findings of this study are reported in multivariate format. That is, the tables in the study explore the relationship among more than two variables. The major tables in the study report: (1) the percentage of recidivists in a particular category, (2) education type (ABE, vocational, GED or college), (3) whether the level of educational involvement was achievement or participation or none and (4) some sort of characteristic of the population (e.g., felony level, gender). Comparisons are made between recidivism rates, based on education type, educational involvement and a specific offender characteristic. There are several items that need to be discussed with this method of reporting results.

-In each cell is the percentage of offenders in that specific sub-group that recidivated.

-The number of inmates in a particular cell was not reported because the tables would become overwhelming. To assure the reader that when conclusions were drawn they represented a reasonable number of offenders, an asterisk was placed in the cell to alert the reader that making generalizations on this particular subgroup should be done with caution (N < 30). Even though this study was based on a population and the results reported in cells with small numbers are true, it is not prudent to make generalizations from the results of a few offenders.

-Some of the tables have highlighted cells. These cells were deemed noteworthy and mentioned in the text.

-Differences in the recidivism rates were reported two ways: (1) as a simple percentage point difference (e.g., the return rate for a particular sub-group of offenders who received education in prison was 20.0% and their comparison group had a return rate of 25%. The difference is 20% subtracted from 25% which will be reported as a five percentage point difference [or reduction]; and (2) as a proportional difference (e.g., using the same example, one would take the five percentage point difference and divide it by the comparison group return rate, 25%, which is '.2,' which translates into and will be reported as either a twenty percent or one-fifth reduction in recidivism).

CAVEAT

Many times in the analysis there are sentences with the basic format of: "those in education program 'X' had a 'X' percent lower rate of return than those in their comparison group." The reader is cautioned not necessarily to infer causation from an educational program to a reduction (or increase) in the likelihood of return to prison (even though at times the text may be written to imply that). Other factors that were not measured might have been the real cause for the change in recidivism (e.g., another education program, a work assignment, a stronger support system). That noted, the differences in recidivism the reader notices, are real and unbiased differences.

RESULTS

FISCAL YEAR 1992 RELEASES AND RECIDIVISM

There were 18,068 inmates released from prison in FY 1992. Table 2 shows the distribution of how the inmates were released. Over half (54.2%) of the inmates were released when their sentences expired. Just over a quarter (25.7%) of the inmates were released on parole. Shock probation releases accounted for 16.7% of the exits and shock parolees made up 3.4% of the FY 1992 release cohort.

Table 2: Fiscal Year 1992 Releases by Release Type

RELEASE TYPE	# OF INMATES	PERCENTAGE
SHOCK PAROLE	623	3.4%
SHOCK PROBATION	3,009	16.7%
PAROLE	4,642	25.7%
EXPIRATION OF SENTENCE	9,794	54.2%
TOTAL	18,068	100.0%

Of the 18,068 inmates that were released in FY 1992, 3,969 (22.0%) had some form of educational achievement or participation while they were incarcerated. It is this portion of FY 1992 releases that are the main focus of the study. Table 3 shows the distribution of educational achievers and participators by the type of education program they were involved in. (The reader is here reminded, as mentioned in the Methodology section, that educational achievers and participators with more than one level of educational achievement or participation were put in to the category of education deemed the highest.) Most of the inmates who were involved in educational programming were in GED programming followed by ABE, college and vocational.

Table 3: Offenders Involved in Educational Programs by Program Type

TYPE OF EDUC.	ACHIEVEMENT	PARTICIPANT	TOTAL
ABE	N.A.	1,060	1,060
VOCATIONAL	411	219	630
GED	1,145	158	1,303
COLLEGE	284	692	976
TOTAL	1,840	2,129	3,969

Before the discussion of educational involvement and recidivism begins, a first look at recidivism for all those released in FY 1992 is appropriate. The results are presented by release type in Table 4. The overall recidivism rate for FY 1992 releases who were followed up for two years was 30.2%. Parolees had the highest return rate (38.3%) followed by shock probationers, (28.7%), expiration of sentence offenders (27.3%) and shock parolees (22.8%).

Table 4: Recidivism Rates by Release Type

RELEASE TYPE	RECIDIVISM RATE
SHOCK PAROLE	22.8%
SHOCK PROBATION	28.7%
PAROLE	38.3%
EXPIRATION OF SENTENCE	27.3%
TOTAL	30.2%

EDUCATION AND RECIDIVISM

Table 5 presents the major findings of this study. Overall, offenders who achieved in any educational program recidivated at a rate of 27.9% and those who participated in any educational program returned to prison at a rate of 29.5%. The comparison group for these offenders had a return rate of 30.4%. Educational achievement reduced recidivism slightly (2.5 percentage points) while participating in education lowered recidivism by a small margin (0.9 percentage points).

Table 5: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type

EDUCATION	ACHIEVEMENT	PARTICIPANT	COMP. GROUP
ABE	N.A.	32.3%	30.6%
VOCATIONAL	28.7%	30.1%	31.3%
GED	27.9%	24.1%	32.3%
COLLEGE	26.8%	26.4%	29.8%
TOTAL	27.9%	29.5%	30.4%

The educational program that appeared to reduce recidivism the most was involvement in a GED program. The appropriate comparison group for GED participants and achievers had a recidivism rate of 32.3%. Participants in GED programs had a return rate of 24.1%, a reduction of 8.2 percentage points. The difference represents a reduction in recidivism of one-fourth. Those who achieved a GED recidivated at 27.9%, a decrease of 4.4 percentage points which translates into a fourteen percent reduction in recidivism.

The type of educational programming that showed the next largest level of reduced recidivism was college. Participating in a college program reduced recidivism 3.4 percentage points and achieving a college degree lowered the rate of return 3.0 percentage points. The impact of college participation and achievement represents more than ten percent declines in recidivism. Achieving a vocational certificate resulted in a recidivism rate 2.6 percentage points lower than those in their comparison group (an 8.3% decline). Participating in a vocational program without receiving a vocational certificate resulted in a return rate 1.2 percentage points lower than those with whom they were being compared. Participating in an ABE program resulted in a 1.7 percentage point increase in recidivism.

GED programming reduced recidivism the most followed by college and vocational programming. ABE programming increased recidivism slightly.

(One warning must be noted before the analysis continues. As was noted in the Methodology section, there are quite a few times where the number of individuals in a particular category is small. These cells are marked with an asterisk. The reader is reminded not to make generalizations from trends found in categories with a small number of cases.)

DEMOGRAPHICS, EDUCATION AND RECIDIVISM

The impact of educational programming on post-release recidivism in the context of offender demographics is the next focus of this paper. Table 6 explores the relationship between educational programming and recidivism with respect to gender. Involvement in prison educational programming appears to have helped female offenders reduce their chances of recidivating more than their male counterparts. Overall, female achievers and participants had return rates more than ten percentage points lower (one-third reductions

of recidivism) than those in their comparison group. Male participants had roughly the same recidivism rate as those in their comparison group while male achievers showed slight (a 1.7 percentage point) improvement.

Table 6: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type and Gender

GENDER	EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE				
		ABE	VOC	GED	COLLEGE	TOTAL
MALE	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	29.7%	28.5%	28.5%	28.7%
	PARTICIPATION	33.5%	30.8%	24.3%	27.9%	30.7%
	COMP. GROUP	30.5%	31.3%	32.3%	29.8%	30.4%
FEMALE	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	23.9%	20.2%*	8.3%*	20.1%
	PARTICIPATION	20.6%	12.5%*	20.0%*	16.9%	18.7%
	COMP. GROUP	33.8%	32.1%	28.6%*	29.0%	30.3%

Female offenders who were involved in education showed larger reductions in recidivism than the males in all education programs with respect to both achievement and participation (although generalizations about the impact of some of the education programs should be viewed with caution because of the low number of cases for the females). Notably, female participants in ABE and college had return rates 13.2 and 12.1 percentage points lower than those in their comparison groups. These differences represent an approximately forty percent decrease in the rate of return. Additionally, females that received a vocational certificate had a rate of return 8.2 percentage points lower than those in their comparison group (a one-fourth reduction).

The male offenders who were involved with education while incarcerated showed the most improvement if they participated in a GED program (an 8.0 percentage point decrease which is a one-fourth reduction in recidivism) followed by those who received a GED (a 3.8 percentage point decrease, roughly a ten percent reduction). Male vocational and college achievers and participants showed slight improvements in recidivism. Participating in an ABE program appears to have slightly increased the rate of return for male offenders.

Table 7 shows the relationship between involvement in education, recidivism and race. At first glance, one notices the large disparity in recidivism between Blacks and Whites in all categories. (While not reported below, the return rates for Whites in the FY 1992 release cohort was 23.1% and the corresponding rate for Blacks was 35.9%. The Black return rate was 12.8 percentage points higher than the White return rate.) The important finding evidenced here is that educational involvement for Blacks appears to have at least partially narrowed the large disparity between Blacks and Whites with respect to recidivism. This is best exemplified by examining involvement in a GED program. Black participants in a GED program had a 14.0 percentage point lower return rate (a one-third reduction) than their comparison group. Whites had a 3.4 percentage point improvement (a 14.2% reduction). Similarly, Black recipients of a GED had a return rate 6.7 percentage points lower (a one-sixth

reduction) than their comparison group, while their White counterparts only improved a half of one percentage point.

Table 7: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type and Race

RACE	EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE				
		ABE	VOC	GED	COLLEGE	TOTAL
BLACK	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	33.9%	34.0%	35.2%	34.1%
	PARTICIPATION	36.8%	39.8%	26.7%	31.7%	34.9%
	COMP. GROUP	35.0%	37.4%	40.7%	36.8%	37.0%
WHITE	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	22.5%	23.5%	20.1%	22.8%
	PARTICIPATION	24.5%	20.7%	20.6%	22.0%	22.8%
	COMP. GROUP	22.3%	23.8%	24.0%	23.0%	23.4%

Another notable finding is that Black offenders who participated but did not achieve in college had a return to prison rate 5.1 percentage points lower than those in their comparison group. Their White counterparts' return rate was only one percentage point lower.

The most important finding that comes out of examining the relationship between prison education, recidivism and race is that White offenders had only marginal or slight decreases in recidivism with educational involvement while Black offenders had, in at least some categories, moderate to large decreases in recidivism.

Examining an offender's age at release and the influence of educational involvement on recidivism is presented in Table 8. Although the table is rather overwhelming, several trends were revealed upon further inspection of the data. Specific educational programs appear to have worked best in specific age groups.

ABE participation appeared to have a more positive impact on older offenders. Inmates 31 years or older at release who participated in ABE programming had lower return rates than those in their comparison group. ABE participants in the 31-40 age group had return rates that were 5.2 percentage points lower and those in the 41-50 age group were 6.9 percentage points lower. Respectively, these differences translate into an 18.1% and 29.7% drop in the rates of return. (Offenders older than 50 also followed this trend but the number of inmates in the age groups were low.) ABE programming appeared to have made older inmate's chances of returning to prison less likely.

Table 8: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type and Age at Release

AGE	EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE				
		ABE	VOC	GED	COLLEGE	TOTAL
15-20	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	14.3%*	29.0%	0.0%*	27.8%
	PARTICIPATION	49.6%	50.0%*	50.0%*	30.8%	47.1%
	COMP. GROUP	41.4%	38.7%	43.6%	35.7%	37.6%
21-25	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	24.6%	28.6%	32.4%	28.3%
	PARTICIPATION	35.1%	29.7%	26.2%	27.6%	31.4%
	COMP. GROUP	34.7%	34.5%	35.2%	32.9%	33.8%
26-30	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	24.6%	28.6%	23.3%	26.9%
	PARTICIPATION	38.9%	32.2%	29.5%	24.9%	32.6%
	COMP. GROUP	28.9%	31.0%	31.1%	29.8%	30.1%
31-40	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	35.9%	28.0%	28.2%	30.3%
	PARTICIPATION	23.6%	33.9%	9.7%	28.6%	25.7%
	COMP. GROUP	28.8%	29.1%	30.9%	27.9%	28.2%
41-50	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	23.5%	15.4%	25.6%	21.2%
	PARTICIPATION	16.3%	11.8%*	0.0%*	23.7%	17.3%
	COMP. GROUP	23.2%	22.9%	16.4%	21.5%	22.9%
51-60	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	16.7%*	36.4%*	0.0%*	23.8%*
	PARTICIPATION	13.0%*	0.0%*	42.9%*	14.3%*	16.0%
	COMP. GROUP	19.2%	13.6%	8.7%*	10.6%	9.4%
61+	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	0.0%*	0.0%*	NONE	0.0%*
	PARTICIPATION	0.0%*	0.0%*	33.3%*	0.0%*	4.5%*
	COMP. GROUP	3.4%*	12.2%	10.0%*	15.6%	13.5%

The data appear to show that vocational programming worked the best on offenders that were younger. Receiving a vocational certificate reduced recidivism 6.4 percentage points (a one-fifth reduction) for offenders

in the 26-30 year old age group and 9.9 percentage points (or a 28.7% reduction) for offenders 21-25 years old. Participation without achievement reduced the likelihood of recidivism by 4.8 percentage points (a 13.9% reduction) in the 21-25 year old age group.

Involvement in a GED program for those released in FY 1992 had a general positive impact on the younger offenders. GED participants in the 21-25 year old category had a return rate 9.0 percentage points lower (a one-fourth reduction) than those in their comparison group and GED achievers the same age had a return rate 6.6 percentage points lower (a reduction of nearly one-fifth). Those that achieved a GED in the 15 to 20 year old age group had a 14.6 percentage point lower return rate which is a decrease of one-third. GED participation without achievement helped one age group dramatically. Those in the 31-40 year old age category had a return rate 21.2 percentage points lower than those in their comparison group. The difference translates into a return rate reduction of nearly seventy percent.

College achievement and participation appeared to make the younger offenders' return to prison less likely than the older offenders'. For achievers and participants in the 26-30 year age bracket, return rates were 6.5 and 4.9 percentage points lower (reductions of roughly a fifth and a sixth) than for those with whom they were being compared. Participants in the 15-20 and 21-25 year old groups showed roughly five percentage point decreases in recidivism. College programming for inmates older than 30 did not have a positive impact on post-release recidivism.

Generally, education in prison appears to have had the greatest impact on younger offenders. The one exception is participation in an ABE program which helped older offenders.

Table 9: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type and the Type of County

TYPE OF COUNTY	EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE				
		ABE	VOC	GED	COLLEGE	TOTAL
RURAL	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	24.1%	25.6%	21.7%	24.8%
	PARTICIPATION	29.7%	18.1%	20.0%	24.6%	25.9%
	COMP. GROUP	26.2%	27.2%	28.5%	26.3%	26.6%
URBAN*	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	31.0%	29.3%	28.9%	29.6%
	PARTICIPATION	33.4%	37.5%	25.9%	27.4%	31.3%
	COMP. GROUP	32.6%	33.6%	34.6%	32.0%	32.8%

*The urban counties are Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Montgomery, and Summit

The return rates for inmates involved in prison education, by whether an inmate was committed from an urban or rural county, are presented in Table 9. Analysis of these data revealed that educational programming generally does not impact urban commitments any differently than rural commitments, with one exception. Inmates involved in vocational education, who were committed from rural counties, had moderate (for achievers, 3.1 percentage points) or considerably lower (for participants, 9.1 percentage points) recidivism rates than those with whom they were being compared. The difference in return rate for the rural vocational participants represents a one-third reduction in recidivism.

The discussion of the inmate’s educational involvement, recidivism and level of education at intake begins with a major caveat. Education level at intake is missing for roughly two-thirds of the release cohort. For this reason, conclusions drawn from these data should be interpreted cautiously. That noted, Table 10 presents the

Table 10: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type and Level of Education at Intake

GRADE LEVEL	EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE				
		ABE	VOC	GED	COLLEGE	TOTAL
GRADE SCHOOL	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	0.0%*	30.6%	16.7%*	25.0%
	PARTICIPATION	25.3%	25.0%*	13.3%*	21.4%*	23.4%
	COMP. GROUP	24.6%	20.9%	20.5%	24.2%	19.8%
SOME HIGH SCHOOL	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	36.7%	23.9%	38.9%	27.1%
	PARTICIPATION	32.9%	37.1%	25.5%	29.4%	31.7%
	COMP. GROUP	32.6%	34.2%	33.3%	31.2%	33.1%
HIGH SCHOOL	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	19.2%*	38.1%*	14.6%	21.6%
	PARTICIPATION	20.0%*	17.6%*	16.7%*	12.7%	14.7%
	COMP. GROUP	20.1%	23.5%	NONE	22.7%	23.0%
SOME COLLEGE	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	50.0%*	NONE	10.0%*	15.4%*
	PARTICIPATION	NONE	100.0%*	NONE	9.1%*	13.0%*
	COMP. GROUP	NONE	50.0%*	NONE	100.0%*	50.0%*

MISSING CASES = 11,797 of 18,068

available data. Two trends are apparent in this table. The first is, those inmates entering prison with some high school had the most success in reducing their likelihood of returning to prison with the GED programs. Receiving a GED and participating in a GED program resulted in return rates 9.4 and 7.8 percentage points lower than their comparison group for inmates with some high school education. The other noteworthy finding

is that college programming appeared to work best on inmates who had already graduated from high school before admission to prison.

The impact of prison educational involvement and recidivism in the context of offender demographics can be summed up two ways: (1) education appears to have had a more positive impact on females, Blacks and young offenders; and (2) ABE programming helped older offenders and female offenders, vocational programming helped younger offenders and offenders committed from rural counties, GED programming helped Blacks, young offenders and inmates with some high school, and college involvement helped young offenders, female offenders, and inmates who came to prison with a high school degree.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONVICTION OFFENSE, EDUCATION AND RECIDIVISM

The focus of the impact of education on recidivism now turns to characteristics of the conviction offense. Table 11 explores the relationship between education, recidivism and the felony level of the crime for which the inmates were incarcerated. (The reader is reminded not to make generalizations from trends found in categories with a small number of cases. Because of this, nothing is mentioned about inmates that served life sentences.)

ABE participants with first degree and fourth degree indeterminate sentences both had lower return rates than those in their comparison group. The results for inmates with other felony levels revealed marginal changes in recidivism. Fourth degree offenders who had indeterminate sentences showed a 12.0 percentage point decline in recidivism. First degree felons had a 7.9 percentage point decline. These differences translate into return rate reductions of roughly a third and a fifth. ABE programming appears to have been most effective with inmates incarcerated with indeterminate sentences for the most and least serious felonies.

Vocational programming appears to have helped inmates with the most and least serious felonies and not the inmates incarcerated in the mid-range of felony seriousness. First degree felons who achieved and participated in a vocational program had return rates that were 7.5 and 8.4 percentage points lower (reductions of approximately one-fifth) than those in their comparison group. Fourth degree felons with determinate sentences who participated in a vocational program had a return rate 7.2 percentage points lower than those with whom they were being compared which translates into a return rate reduction of one-fourth. Offenders in the other categories showed marginal improvement in recidivism or mixed results. Vocational programming appears to have been well-suited to offenders who had first and fourth degree determinate sentences.

Involvement in a GED program produced the interesting result that achieving a GED tended to help inmates with shorter (determinate and fourth degree indeterminate) sentences while participating in a GED program tended to help those with longer (indeterminate) sentences. First degree felons who participated in a GED program had a reduction in recidivism of 12.3 percentage points. Second degree felons had a reduction of 18.7 percentage points and third degree indeterminates were 26.1 percentage points lower than their comparison group. These differences translate into remarkable reductions in recidivism of roughly one-third, one-half and two-thirds.

Table 11: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type and Felony Level

FELONY LEVEL	EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE				
		ABE	VOC	GED	COLLEGE	TOTAL
LIFE	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	33.3%*	0.0%*	45.5%*	37.5%*
	PARTICIPATION	0.0%*	NONE	NONE	50.0%*	33.1%*
	COMP. GROUP	16.7%*	28.6%*	66.7%*	20.0%*	35.7%*
1ST	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	29.5%	37.0%	25.3%	31.6%
	PARTICIPATION	28.7%	28.6%*	22.7%	31.7%	29.7%
	COMP. GROUP	36.6%	37.0%	35.0%	36.5%	35.6%
2ND	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	29.3%	33.0%	30.7%	31.7%
	PARTICIPATION	31.2%	38.1%	16.3%	24.3%	27.4%
	COMP. GROUP	31.3%	33.2%	35.0%	31.9%	32.9%
3RD INDETER.	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	60.0%	40.7%	30.4%	43.6%
	PARTICIPATION	37.6%	40.0%*	17.6%	43.3%	38.0%
	COMP. GROUP	35.6%	39.7%	43.7%	40.5%	40.1%
3RD DETER.	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	27.6%	20.9%	33.3%*	22.8%
	PARTICIPATION	34.2%	26.5%	35.1%	18.8%	30.0%
	COMP. GROUP	27.8%	30.3%	32.4%	28.1%	29.1%
4TH INDETER.	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	26.1%*	29.3%	0.0%*	26.4%
	PARTICIPATION	23.4%	66.7%*	20.0%*	41.2%	32.0%
	COMP. GROUP	35.4%	42.9%	47.5%	41.2%	44.0%
4TH DETER.	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	9.1%*	16.9%	8.3%*	15.3%
	PARTICIPATION	31.5%	22.2%	29.6%*	17.3%	26.8%
	COMP. GROUP	30.6%	29.4%	27.7%	27.5%	28.7%

GED achievement appeared to lower the return rate of third degree determinates (11.5 percentage points) and fourth degree determinates (10.8 percentage points) quite substantially. Both differences translate into return rate declines of over one-third. Additionally, offenders who were incarcerated with fourth degree indeterminate sentences demonstrated an 18.2 percentage point lower return rate if they achieved a GED. This represents a nearly forty percent decline in recidivism.

This particular phenomenon may be a function of the length of time an inmate served in prison (this will be examined below). Indeterminate sentence offenders, for the most part, receive longer sentences and are subject to being denied release by the parole board. Therefore, inmates with indeterminate sentences tend to serve longer than those who have determinate sentences. Perhaps achieving a GED is especially well-suited for inmates with shorter (determinate or fourth degree indeterminate) sentences and participating in a GED program is well-suited for offenders with longer (indeterminate) sentences. (Keep in mind here that most of the achievers in this particular education category did not first participate and then achieve; they just achieved, i.e. they just took the GED test.)

There is no clear pattern with respect to college involvement and recidivism looking at felony level. First degree felons appeared to have been helped by both achievement and participation without achievement. In the other felony categories either the achievers or the participators (not both) had at least moderately lower return rates than those with whom they were being compared. Involvement in a college program seems to have produced no distinctive pattern in impacting return to prison rates based upon an inmate's felony level.

Two general patterns, or perhaps tendencies, emerged after looking at the relationship between felony level, educational involvement and recidivism in the aggregate. It appears that: (1) inmates incarcerated for the most serious felonies were helped more by participation than achievement (first, second and third-indeterminate); (2) inmates incarcerated for the least serious felonies were impacted most by achievement (determinate and fourth-indeterminate).

Since there is a strong correlation between felony level and the amount of time an inmate is incarcerated, the examination of prison time served, education and recidivism should produce generally similar findings as the aforementioned analysis of felony level, education and recidivism. Examination of the data presented in Table 12 will provide the answer.

ABE participants with four or more years in prison had a 4.3 percentage point lower return rate than those in their comparison group. This is in line with the analysis of felony level that showed ABE programming appeared to have had a positive impact on first degree felons. ABE programming appeared to have been especially well-suited to inmates that served the longest. (As the reader will recall, fourth degree indeterminates who participated in ABE programming had a 12.0 percentage point lower return rate than those in their comparison group. The effect of that particular group on the time served figures was minimized because of the overwhelming ratio of determinate sentenced offenders to fourth degree indeterminate sentenced offenders who served similar lengths of time in prison.)

The discussion of vocational education's impact on recidivism with respect to time served is constrained because two-thirds of the time served categories had at least one cell with relatively small numbers of offenders in them. That noted, it appears that achieving a vocational certificate lowered the likelihood of recidivism for

everyone except for those that served three to four years. Rather than attempting to over-analyze this particular variable (because of cells with small numbers) perhaps a conclusion already presented should be restated: vocational achievement appears to have reduced recidivism to a greater extent than participation without achievement.

Table 12: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type and Time Served

TIME SERVED	EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE				
		ABE	VOC	GED	COLLEGE	TOTAL
6 MONTHS OR LESS	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	4.5%*	20.1%	0.0%*	17.7%
	PARTICIPATION	27.6%*	50.0%*	50.0%*	20.0%*	30.0%
	COMP. GROUP	30.1%	31.5%	32.9%	30.7%	31.7%
6-12 MONTHS	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	20.0%	15.5%	16.7%*	16.3%
	PARTICIPATION	31.5%	23.5%	26.5%	13.7%	26.7%
	COMP. GROUP	29.2%	27.4%	27.0%	24.8%	25.5%
1-2 YEARS	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	25.3%	28.0%	0.0%*	26.5%
	PARTICIPATION	33.0%	35.5%	26.1%	28.2%	31.3%
	COMP. GROUP	30.7%	32.1%	33.7%	29.6%	31.5%
2-3 YEARS	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	25.5%	30.8%	28.0%*	28.9%
	PARTICIPATION	29.6%	20.8%*	16.0%*	25.0%	25.7%
	COMP. GROUP	31.5%	36.0%	38.0%	31.1%	35.4%
3-4 YEARS	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	37.5%	40.9%	28.6%	37.1%
	PARTICIPATION	37.5%	55.6%*	15.0%*	31.6%	33.5%
	COMP. GROUP	30.4%	37.7%	44.4%	40.0%	36.1%
4 OR MORE YEARS	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	36.6%	41.0%	28.6%	35.9%
	PARTICIPATION	32.6%	45.0%*	28.6%*	31.7%	32.6%
	COMP. GROUP	36.9%	41.0%	42.8%	40.9%	40.7%

Those offenders that served less than one year that achieved a GED had at least an 11.5 percentage point lower return rate than those in their comparison groups. Both differences represent approximately forty percent declines in the likelihood of recidivism. The conclusion reported above, that inmates with less serious felonies had lower return rates if they achieved a GED, is confirmed in the analysis of time served. These results show that as time served increased, the impact of GED achievement on recidivism decreased. Partial explanation of this phenomenon has to do with when an inmate actually achieved the GED (i.e. takes the test) relative to the inmate's release date. This will be developed more fully in a later section of this paper (Table 16). (Hint: as the time between taking the GED test and release increased, the impact on recidivism decreased.)

On first inspection of the relationship between college involvement and recidivism, the data appeared to reveal a general pattern that inmates who served longer had larger decreases in recidivism (offenders that served three or more years and were involved in college had return reductions of at least 8.4 percentage points, all translating into return rate reductions of more than one-fifth). Further inspection shows this pattern to be not entirely consistent. There is the anomaly of an 11.1 percentage point decrease in recidivism for those that participated in college and served between six months and a year (a drop in return rate approaching one-half). Perhaps, as was reported in the discussion of felony level (i.e., no clear pattern emerged), there is no clear pattern with respect to time served and the impact of college involvement on recidivism.

Perhaps interpreting the relationship between college involvement, recidivism and time served and felony level is difficult because seriousness of the crime (as measured by time served and felony level) is not crucial to the interpretation of the data. In the next section it will be reported that the type of crime for which an offender is committed is a crucial variable in exploring the relationship between college involvement and recidivism.

Two trends emerged from examining the relationship between time served, educational involvement and recidivism in the aggregate. It appears that: (1) as the amount of time served decreased, achievement appeared to have greater impact (less than two years) and (2) as the amount of time served increased, participation seemed to be more effective (two years or more).

Table 13 explores the relationship between educational involvement, recidivism and the type of crime for which the offender was committed. Sex offenders who were participants in an ABE program had a return to prison rate 5.4 percentage points lower than those in their comparison group, a reduction of nearly one-third. In the other crime type categories the effect of ABE programming on recidivism was either marginally positive or in fact harmful.

Vocational programming appears to have helped one group of offenders quite markedly. Drug offenders who were involved in vocational programming had at least a 9.3 percentage point lower recidivism rate than those in their comparison group (differences that translate into recidivism reductions of more than a third). Property offenders who achieved a vocational certificate had a moderately (4.1 percentage point) lower return rate.

Participation in a GED program produced roughly five percentage point lower rates for property and drug offenders. Inmates convicted of crimes against persons who participated in a GED had a recidivism rate less than half (a 17.7 percentage point reduction) than those in their comparison group. GED achievement produced a

14.4 percentage point lower return rate for drug offenders (a one-half reduction of recidivism) and a 10.5 percentage point reduction with miscellaneous felonies (a one-third reduction of reduction).

Participation or achievement in college produced decreases in recidivism for drug offenders of at least 8.5 percentage points. The differences both translate into more than one-third reductions in recidivism. Property offenders who participated in college and offenders convicted of crime against persons who achieved in college showed more moderate reductions (slightly less than one-fifth) in recidivism in relation to those with whom they were being compared.

Table 13: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type and Type of Crime

CRIME TYPE	EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE				
		ABE	VOC	GED	COLLEGE	TOTAL
PERSONS	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	33.1%	33.7%	26.1%	31.7%
	PARTICIPATION	32.0%	34.5%	17.0%	29.8%	30.1%
	COMP. GROUP	31.2%	32.2%	34.7%	31.6%	30.8%
SEX	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	29.2%*	19.0%	30.0%*	23.5%
	PARTICIPATION	12.0%	10.0%*	0.0%*	24.2%	14.4%
	COMP. GROUP	17.4%	17.0%	21.3%	14.9%	16.8%
PROPERTY	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	32.0%	31.8%	41.0%	32.5%
	PARTICIPATION	38.6%	40.2%	28.8%	28.2%	35.1%
	COMP. GROUP	34.5%	36.1%	34.0%	34.9%	35.4%
DRUG	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	18.5%	15.5%	16.3%	16.3%
	PARTICIPATION	31.6%	18.6%	24.4%	16.7%	25.7%
	COMP. GROUP	28.8%	27.9%	29.9%	25.2%	26.6%
OTHER	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	7.1%*	21.4%	16.7%*	18.4%
	PARTICIPATION	20.4%	7.7%*	57.1%*	34.8%*	25.0%
	COMP. GROUP	19.2%	24.7%	32.0%	23.6%	25.1%

Except for ABE participants, educational involvement appears to have produced moderate to really quite large reductions in recidivism for drug offenders. On average, the evidence would seem to indicate that prison education programs particularly helped drug offenders decrease their likelihood of returning to prison. The other

major finding that emerges from the analysis of educational involvement, recidivism and the type of crime for which an offender was incarcerated is that, for the most part, sex offenders do not benefit from prison education programs with respect to reducing their likelihood of return to prison after release.

Examining prison education and recidivism with respect to those incarcerated for committing violent crimes compared to those committed with non-violent crimes produced one particularly interesting accumulative finding. Table 14 shows that non-violent offenders who achieved in any education program while incarcerated had a return rate 8.6 percentage points lower than those in their comparison group. This particular finding represents more than a one-fourth reduction in recidivism and reflects a few of the trends that have been presented in the last several pages. It has been shown that inmates who were incarcerated for less serious felonies, who served less time or were incarcerated for a drug offense or another less serious crime, who achieved in any educational program had much lower return to prison rates than those with whom they were being compared. These offenders make up a large portion of the non-violent offender category.

Participating in college was the only type of educational participation that produced more than a slight decrease in recidivism for non-violent offenders (7.2 percentage points). Overall, participation in an education program had very little impact on the likelihood of non-violent offenders returning to prison.

Table 14: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type and the Violent or Non-Violent Nature of the Crime

TYPE OF OFFENSE	EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE				
		ABE	VOC	GED	COLLEGE	TOTAL
VIOLENT	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	31.2%	34.0%	28.6%	32.3%
	PARTICIPATION	29.1%	32.6%	19.5%	29.8%	29.0%
	COMP. GROUP	30.3%	31.1%	34.3%	30.6%	30.3%
NON-VIOLENT	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	25.6%	20.8%	20.9%	21.9%
	PARTICIPATION	34.6%	28.6%	28.4%	22.3%	30.1%
	COMP. GROUP	30.7%	31.4%	31.4%	29.5%	30.5%

The only type of educational involvement that produced more than slight decreases in recidivism for violent offenders was participation in a GED program. GED participants had a return rate 14.8 percentage points lower than their comparison groups', a difference which translates into a more than forty percent decline in the rate of return. For the most part, educational involvement in prison appears to have lowered the return rates of non-violent offenders more than violent offenders.

The impact of prison educational involvement and recidivism in the context of the characteristics of the conviction offense will be summed by looking at trends in reducing recidivism with respect to the specific education programs and then a more general focus on trends. ABE programming appears to have been most helpful to offenders incarcerated with first and fourth degree indeterminate sentences. Inmates with the highest and lowest felony levels, as well as drug offenders were positively impacted by vocational programming. GED achievement reduced the likelihood of returning to prison for inmates with shorter (determinate and fourth degree indeterminate) sentences, drug offenses and those that served a relatively short time in prison. GED participation had the greatest effect on those with indeterminate sentences, property offenders and violent offenders. College involvement reduced the return rates for drug offenders and offenders committed for non-violent offenses.

The four more general trends that have become evident are: (1) those incarcerated for more serious crimes had lower return rates if they participated in education; (2) those incarcerated for less serious crimes had lower return rates if they achieved in education; (3) educational programming had very little impact on the recidivism of sex offenders; and (4) almost any educational programming reduced recidivism for drug offenders.

CRIMINAL HISTORY, EDUCATION AND RECIDIVISM

The influence of an offender's criminal history on the relationship between educational involvement and recidivism is the next subject of analysis. There is only one criminal history variable available in this analysis, the number of prior incarcerations in the Ohio prison system. Those data are presented in Table 15. The most remarkable trend one finds when looking at the data is how much higher the recidivism rates get as the number of priors increases. Although not presented in the table, it is worth noting that the FY 1992 releases without any priors returned at a rate of 25.0%. Inmates with one prior had a rate of 37.2% and offenders with two or more priors recidivated 48.4% of the time.

Educational programming appears to have helped inmates with no priors or just one prior, that is, the less serious offender. Participation or achievement in vocational, GED or college education for inmates without any priors all produced reductions in recidivism. For those inmates with one prior the figures that stand out are those found in the total column. Achievement in any education program produced a 5.4 percentage point lower return rate and participation in any education program had a 4.0 percentage point lower rate. The findings suggest that, on average, inmates with one prior were impacted the most, with respect to decreasing the likelihood of recidivism, by prison education.

Table 15: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and Appropriate Comparison Groups by Education Type and Number of Priors

PRIORS	EDUCATION LEVEL	EDUCATION TYPE				
		ABE	VOC	GED	COLLEGE	TOTAL
NO PRIORS	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	19.9%	24.8%	19.9%	23.2%
	PARTICIPATION	28.9%	22.7%	19.6%	20.0%	24.7%
	COMP. GROUP	25.1%	26.5%	28.3%	24.8%	25.5%
ONE PRIOR	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	32.1%	31.3%	35.0%	32.1%
	PARTICIPATION	33.5%	42.9%	25.5%	33.3%	33.5%
	COMP. GROUP	39.0%	37.9%	34.0%	37.1%	37.5%
TWO OR MORE PRIORS	ACHIEVEMENT	N.A.	47.0%	45.9%	47.4%	46.6%
	PARTICIPATION	45.9%	56.5%	42.1%	45.5%	46.4%
	COMP. GROUP	44.5%	48.1%	47.2%	47.6%	48.4%

THE TIMING OF EDUCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT AND RECIDIVISM

When an offender achieved or participated in an educational program in relation to his or her release date and its impact on recidivism is the next area of interest. The timing issue is important because theoretically one might expect those with achievement or participation dates closer to their release date to have lower return rates. (The rationale being that as the time increases between educational involvement and release from prison, the positive effects of education decrease, i.e., confidence, excitement over improving one's educational level, pride in achievement, etc.)

Before a discussion of the impact of the timing of education involvement in relation to release and recidivism begins, the point must be made that these particular findings only represent a portion of those inmates in the study who were involved in education. For a little more than ten percent of those who were involved in education, the length of time from educational involvement to release date could not be computed. With certain categories, notably GED participation, the rate of unknowns is particularly high (62.0%). Because of this, these particular results might be skewed. (The number and percentage of unknowns are presented at the end of Table 16.)

Table 16: Recidivism Rates for Educational Achievement, Participation and by Education Type and the Amount of Time from the Achievement or Participation to Release

TIME	ABE PART	VOC PART	VOC ACHIEVE	GED PART	GED ACHIEVE	COLLEGE PART	COLLEGE ACHIEVE
1 YR OR LESS	35.2%	31.3%	30.1%	30.4%	22.4%	29.4%	25.8%
1-2 YEARS	24.8%	20.8%*	31.8%	45.5%*	27.3%	35.1%	23.1%
2-3 YEARS	43.8%	50.0%*	30.0%	50.0%*	39.4%	19.4%	34.0%
3 YEARS OR MORE	11.1%*	0.0%*	33.9%	0.0%*	43.9%	0.0%*	39.5%
AFTER EXIT	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	33.3%	NONE	14.7%

Missing cases: ABE = 93 (8.8%); voc ach.=38 (9.2%); voc. part.=24 (11.0%); GED ach.=51 (4.5%); GED part.=98 (62.0%); coll. ach.=6 (2.1%); coll. part.= 118 (17.1%)

The impact of length of time between educational involvement and release with respect to type of education and recidivism is presented in Table 16. Only two types of educational involvement provided clear evidence that timing is a critical element in reducing recidivism. Those that achieved their GEDs clearly did better with respect to recidivism if they received their certificates closer to their time of release. As was reported above, GED achievers had a return rate of 27.9% (their comparison group, 32.3%). If a person achieved his or her GED within one year of being released, the return rate was 5.5 percentage points lower than the average. If an offender achieved his or her GED two to three years before being released, their chances of recidivism were 11.5 percentage points higher. If GED achievement was three or more years before release, the return to prison rate was 43.9%, a 16.0 percentage point increase over the average GED return rate. The timing of GED achievement in relation to release was clearly an important factor in determining the future likelihood of recidivism.

Although not quite as dramatic as the findings of GED achievement, the timing of when an offender achieved a college degree in relation to being released was relevant. Those who received their degree within a year of being released had a return rate of 25.8%. Those in the one to two year timeframe had a return rate of 23.1% Over a third of all college achievers whose graduation date was more than two years before their release date recidivated. Receiving a college degree produced lower return rates for offenders who graduated closer to their release dates.

In the other educational involvement types, the timing of involvement in relation to release did not appear important.

SUMMARY RESULTS: EDUCATION AND RECIDIVISM

- ▶ Overall, educational achievement appeared to have reduced recidivism slightly while educational participation lowered recidivism by a small margin.
- ▶ Overall, GED programming appears to have reduced recidivism the most followed by college and vocational programming. ABE programming appears to have increased the rate of return.
- ▶ Overall, educational involvement appeared to produce lower return rates for offenders that were female, Black, young, incarcerated for a drug offense and inmates with one prior incarceration.
- ▶ ABE programming tended to have a more positive effect on older offenders, female offenders, first and fourth degree indeterminate felons, inmates who served the longest, sex offenders, and inmates with one prior.
- ▶ Vocational programming appeared to have a more positive impact on female offenders, younger offenders, offenders from rural counties, those incarcerated with the most and least serious felonies, drug offenders, those incarcerated with non-violent offenses, and inmates without any priors.
- ▶ GED programming appears to have had the most positive influence on male offenders, Black offenders, young offenders, those inmates who had some high school education before admission, and inmates without any priors.
- ▶ GED achievement appears to have reduced the rate of return for the less serious offender while GED participation appears to have reduced the rate of return for the more serious offender (as measured by felony level and time served).
- ▶ College programming had the greatest impact on offenders that were female, young, high school graduates at admission, incarcerated for first degree felonies, incarcerated for drug offenses, incarcerated for non-violent offenses and inmates with no prior incarceration in an Ohio prison.
- ▶ Participation in an education program appeared to have a greater impact on reducing recidivism for offenders incarcerated for more serious crimes (as measured by felony level and time served).
- ▶ Achievement in an education program appeared to have a greater impact on reducing recidivism for offenders incarcerated for the less serious crimes (as measured by felony level and time served).
- ▶ For those that achieved GED certificates or a college degree or certificate, the closer they graduated or received their certificate to their release date, the less likely they were to return to prison.

COLLEGE ACHIEVEMENT

This section of the paper will focus on the 284 inmates released in FY 1992 that achieved a college degree. As was reported above, the comparison group for these offenders had a return to prison rate of 29.8%. This group of offenders had a rate of 26.8%, a 3.0 percentage point improvement. It was also reported that, with respect to lowering recidivism, these groups or categories of offenders were influenced the most positively by achieving a college degree - females, Blacks, younger offenders, inmates who were high school graduates at admission, first degree felons, drug offenders, non-violent offenders and inmates without priors. It was also reported that the closer a college achiever was to release when he or she received the degree the less likely the offender was to recidivate.

Table 17 provides the return rates for college achievers by type of degree. Unfortunately it is not possible to construct comparison groups for the individual degree types. However, keep in mind that the comparison group constructed for the entire college achiever group had a return rate of 29.8%.

Table 17: Recidivism Rates for College Achievers by Degree

DEGREE TYPE	RECID. RATE	# OF ACHIEVERS
ASSOCIATE	26.7%	225
BACHELOR	30.3%	33
CERTIFICATE	15.4%	13
LETTER	30.8%	13
TOTAL	26.8%	284

Before the discussion of recidivism by college degree type begins it must be emphasized that making generalizations about those that achieved a Bachelor's degrees or those that received a college certificate or letter is dangerous. The number of people in those particular college programs is probably not large enough to draw inferences about the success of those particular college programs. That noted, those offenders that received college certificates had the lowest return rate (15.4%). Those who received A.A.'s had a 26.7% return rate. Those who received a Bachelor's degree had a return rate of 30.3% and those who received a letter of recognition had a return rate of 30.8%. The only college degree program that had a notably lower return rate than the comparison group was for those that received college certificates (14.4 percentage points lower). Those that graduated from one of the Associate degree programs had a slight decrease in recidivism (3.1 percentage points).