



Advancing Correctional Education: A Must for the Future that Works

**Tom Blomberg, Dean and Sheldon L.
Messinger Professor of Criminology**

**ICCA 17th Annual Research Conference
on What Works**

September 13-16, 2009 – Orlando, Florida



Presentation Outline

- I. Introduction: Education as a Must in Corrections**
- II. History of Corrections Without Education**
- III. Prior Research**
- IV. Florida's Story**
- V. Current Status of Correctional Education**
 - National Findings
 - Problems
 - Cost Benefits
- VI. Alliance for the Advancement of Correctional Education**



- **Increasing recognition of financial scarcity, associated competition for employment and economic globalization have contributed to an emerging acknowledgement of the value of education in corrections to successfully reintegrate adult and juvenile offenders into society with competitive academic and vocational skills**



Illustration of Education's Value

- The lifetime economic losses of a high school dropout ranges from \$675,000 to \$1 million
 - High school graduation has also been found to reduce involvement in crime
 - The total economic costs of one youth dropping out of high school for a life of crime and substance abuse ranges from \$4.2 to \$7.2 million
-
- Cohen & Piquero "The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 2009



I – Introduction: Education as a Must Illustration of Education's Value

Relationship between Parental Educational Level and the Educational Attainment of their Children

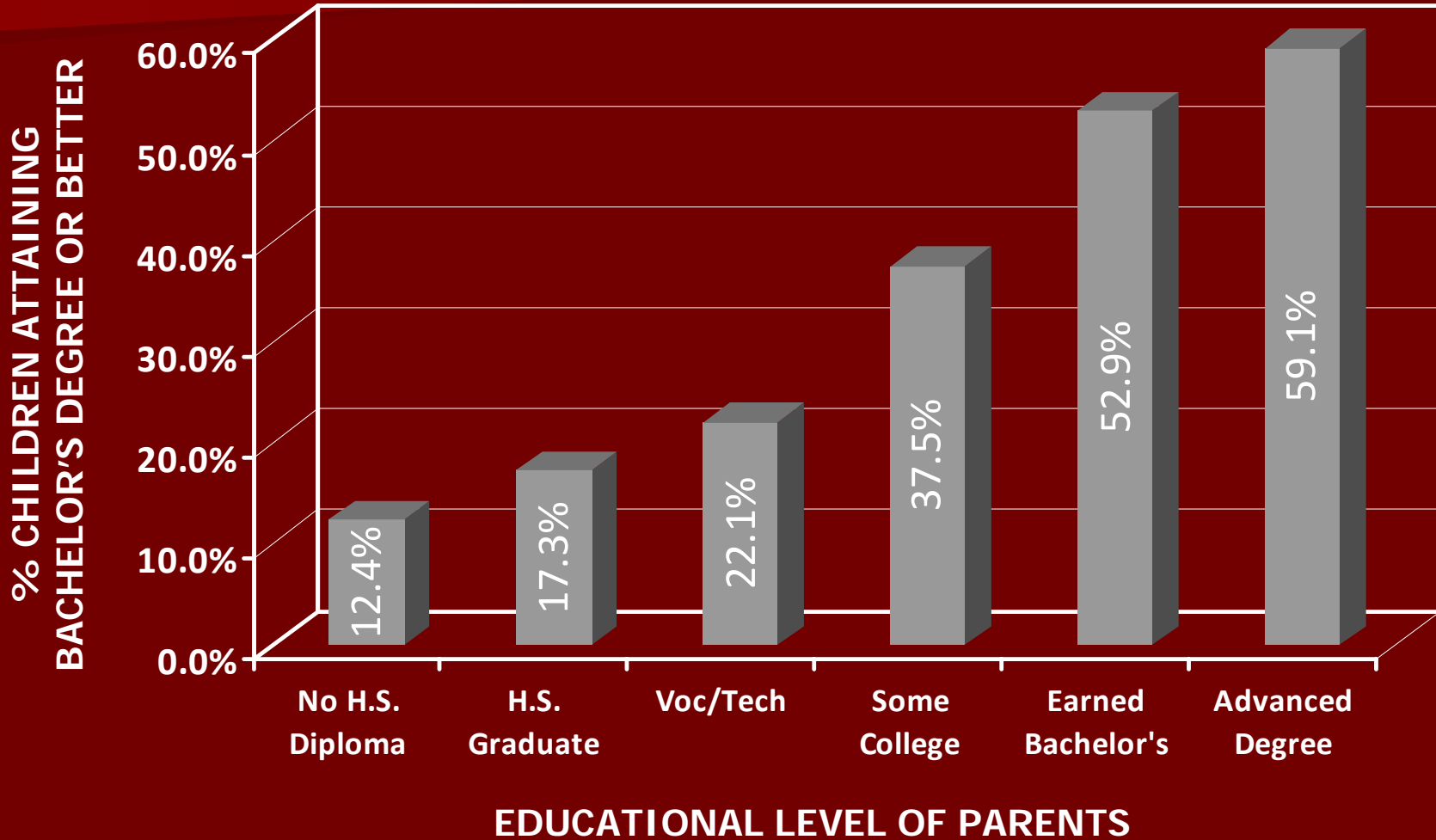
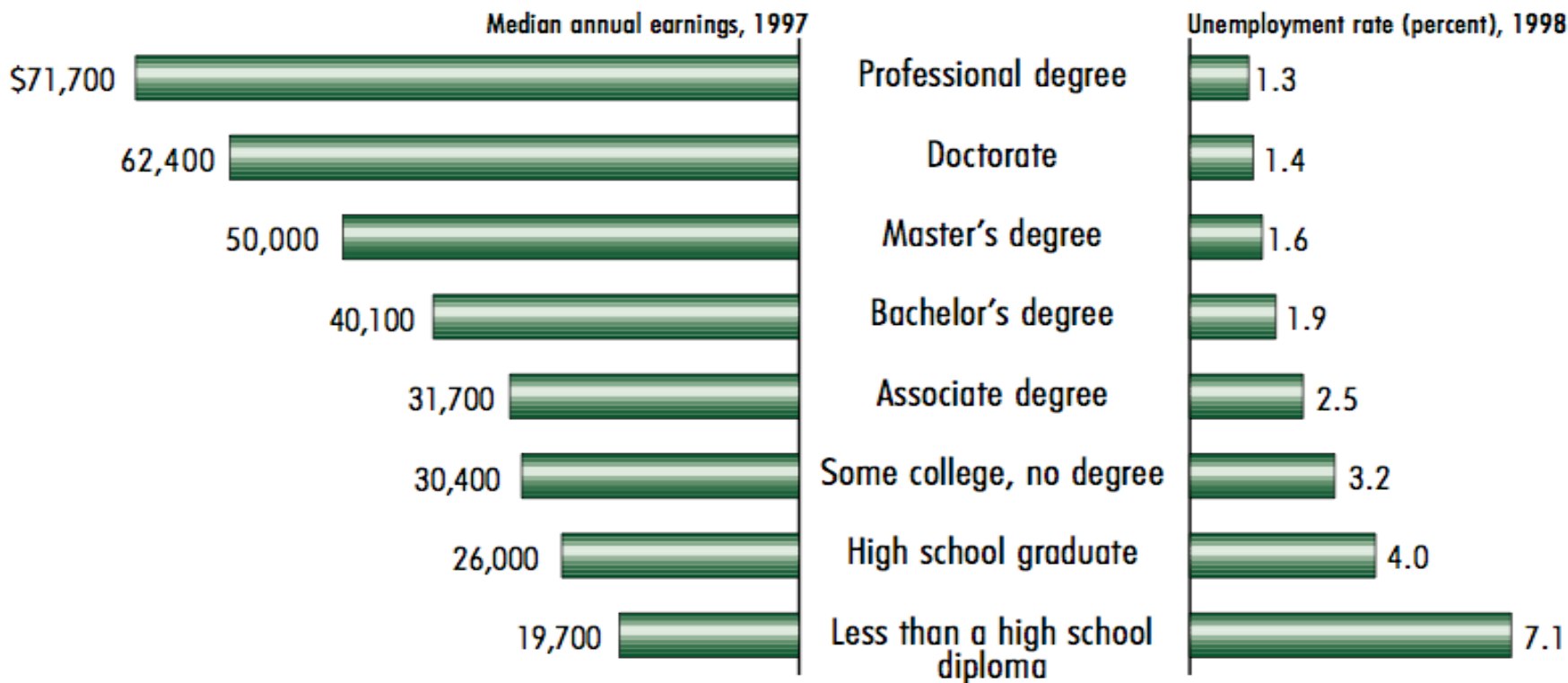




Illustration of Education's Value Education: An Investment in our Country

Earnings and unemployment for year-round, full-time workers age 25 and over, by educational attainment



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, unpublished data from the Current Population Survey (unemployment); Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, PPL-99, Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1998, table 9 (unpublished data), and Current Population Reports, P20-513, October 1998, "Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1998 (Update)" (earnings). For more information, contact Jennifer C. Day or Andrea E. Curry at the Bureau of the Census, (301) 457-4608, or visit the Census website at <http://www.census.gov>.



■ Colonial America and Grim Determinism

- No effort to “correct or educate” wayward individuals, rather respond to them according to religious doctrine
- Reliance upon shaming and/or severe punishment

■ Period of Transition and Free-Will (1790-1830)

- Crime control centered upon apprehending criminals and providing swift and sure adjudication and punishment that was focused upon ensuring greater pain than the pleasure which resulted from the crime
- No concern with rehabilitation or academic education, rather specific deterrence (individual offender) and general deterrence (population at large)



■ Jacksonian Era and Social Determinism (1830)

- The discovery of prisons, asylums, and alms-houses as “good” or socially organized environments
- The policy was to take criminals out of “bad” city environments and place them in a “good” institutional environments to retrain or change them (spiritual-coat-of-armor) with a focus upon work and strict regimen compliance, not academic education

■ 1850 – The Discovery of Recidivism

- Many individuals leaving prison were returning – leading to the belief that to successfully change criminals required earlier and earlier intervention
- This led to the rise of youth reformatories to retrain young criminals who were not as “fixed” in their criminal careers as were adult offenders but with the same focus upon work and compliance, not academic education
- The prevailing belief was that criminals and delinquents did not have the necessary mental skills and discipline to academically achieve
- Consequently, the rehabilitation focus was on training for manual work and associated labor careers for males and homemaking skills for females (Rothman, 1969)



- **1880's to Present – The Rehabilitative Ideal and Rhetoric of Education**
 - Rise of probation and parole for more individualized retraining (1880's)
 - The invention of the Juvenile Court (1899-forward)
 - The official goals involved a shift toward treatment, academic education, and vocational training in both juvenile and adult corrections revealing an emerging effort toward “individual empowerment” and increased societal integration of juvenile and adult offenders in response to a changing society’s economic and industrial structure and needs

- **Throughout 20th Century**
 - Despite the rhetoric of individual treatment, academic education, individual empowerment; treatment and academic education in juvenile and adult corrections has been largely uneven, fragmented, and deficient at best
 - With few exceptions, there has been a focus upon control within prisons and youth reformatories
 - Academic education an afterthought until recent years



- **Is there a positive relationship between education employment and crime for the general adolescent population?**
 - High school graduation has been found to increase employment and reduce involvement in crime
 - Juveniles report significantly less involvement in crime when they are committed and attached to school
-
- **Massey and Krohn, 1986; Cernkovich and Giordano, 1992; Stewart, 2003; Thaxton and Agnew, 2004; Sampson and Laub, 2003; and Bernberg and Krohn, 2003**



- **How does correctional education impact recidivism?**
 - Education programs have an overall significant effect in reducing recidivism
 - Employment training in prison has a greater effect on reducing recidivism when it is followed by post-release education
 - High school graduation or earning a GED while incarcerated lowers the rate of recidivism for youth, but only 7% or so of incarcerated youth graduate from high school or earn a GED while incarcerated
-
- Wilson, Gallagher and Mackenzie, 2000; Harrison and Schehr, 2004; Ambrose and Lester, 1998; and Brier, 1994; Foley, 2001; Haberman and Quinn, 1986; Leblanc and Pfannenstiel, 1991; and Bernberg and Krohn, 2003; JJEEP 2004



- Glaser found that federal prison inmates held high expectations of their post-release experiences, but that their actual experiences involved infrequent employment and low wage jobs
- Federal prisons had a range of 20% to 40% recidivism
- Glaser concluded that employment was the best predictor of avoiding recidivism for adult inmates and that employment was related to long-term education gains while incarcerated, particularly where inmates raised their grade level, became literate or graduated from high school (1966)
- Most youth and adults who are released from institutions have not graduated from high school
- In sum, correctional education has the capacity to contribute to “individual empowerment” for both adult and juveniles, thereby facilitating their post-release success



Recent Research Findings on Juvenile Correctional Education in Florida from the Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program (JJEPP)



- Florida's juvenile justice system came under scrutiny in 1983 through class action litigation regarding poor conditions of confinement and educational services (Bobby M. case)
- As legislatively mandated, in 1995-1996 the newly created Department of Juvenile Justice developed a Quality Assurance system to monitor custody, care, and treatment services
- Simultaneously, the Department of Education developed a Quality assurance system to monitor educational services
- In 1998, DOE contracted with the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice at FSU establishing JJEEP to conduct best practice research, quality assurance, technical assistance, and policy recommendations



- **JJEEP's mission is to ensure that each student assigned to a Department of Juvenile Justice program receives high quality, comprehensive educational services that increase that student's potential for future success.**
- **JJEEP's four main functions are to:**
 - **Conduct research that identifies the most promising educational practices**
 - **Conduct annual QA reviews of the educational programs in Florida's juvenile justice facilities**
 - **Provide technical assistance to improve the various educational programs**
 - **Provide annual recommendations that are ultimately aimed at ensuring the successful transition of students back into community, school, and/or work settings**



- Each year JJEEP hosts educational standards revision meetings
- Participants include teachers and administrators from throughout the state's juvenile justice schools
- The meetings involve incorporating JJEEP's research findings and teachers and administrators' experiences in the effort to identify Quality Assurance areas in need of revision
- These meetings have resulted in continuous quality improvement in juvenile justice education and "moral authority" for JJEEP's multiple functions



- We employed a cohort of 4,147 youth released from residential commitment programs in Florida to assess the relationship between educational achievement and post-release education, employment and crime desistance
- Characteristics of youth in the cohort included 57% minority, 39% with disabilities, over 75% were behind their age appropriate grade level, and many youth had been suspended, expelled or had dropped out of school, but were now subject to compulsory school attendance while incarcerated
- Measures included academic credits earned while incarcerated, age/grade level, prior delinquency, educational disabilities, and youth demographics
- Conducted a 12 and 24 month community follow-up on return to and attendance in school, employment and rearrest



Does Greater Academic Achievement while Incarcerated lead to a Greater Likelihood of Return to School?

- The odds of youth returning to school following release with above average academic achievement while incarcerated were 69% higher than for those youth who achieved below average while incarcerated
 - Older youth, males, and those who were below their appropriate age/grade level were less likely to return to school following release
 - Above average academic achievement had a greater impact on increasing the likelihood that African American males would return to school



Does Returning to and Staying in School following release decrease the Likelihood of Youth being Rearrested?

- Post release return to and attendance in school significantly reduced the likelihood of being rearrested within 12 and 24 months.
 - Youth who spent six months or more in school following release had a 38% reduction in the odds of rearrest within one year post-release compared to those youth who did not return to school.
 - Youth who spent 12 months or more in school following release were 30% less likely to be rearrested within two years post-release compared to those youth who did not return to school.
 - Maintaining above average attendance in school post-release had a significantly greater impact on reducing recidivism for males



Does Return to School Increase the Likelihood of Employment and Crime Desistance?

- Youth who returned to school exhibited a 52% greater likelihood of being employed compared to youth who did not return to school
 - The length of employment also increased for those youth who returned to and stayed in school
- Within the first year following release, each quarter of employment reduced the likelihood of rearrest by 8.7% and 4.1% within the first two years



IV – Overall Findings

- **Academic achievement among incarcerated youth appears to be contributing to stronger school attachment that is leading youth to return to and stay in school following release which, in turn, is increasing their likelihood of obtaining and sustaining employment**
- **Post-release return to and attendance in school and employment are contributing to crime desistance**
- **These findings suggest that youth experiencing academic gains while incarcerated, and then return to school and gain employment may be experiencing a greater bonding to conventional institutions that is leading to a “Turning Point” from a delinquent and or criminal life course to a law abiding life course**



National Findings

- Based on the recognized success of Florida's JJEEP project, FSU's College of Criminology and Criminal Justice received federal funding in 2005 to assist other states in implementing NCLB requirements in their juvenile justice schools
- From the project's national surveys of states, conferences held with the states' key juvenile justice education personnel, and site visits to individual states, FSU found that NCLB requirements have largely improved the juvenile justice education services in many states



National Findings

- However, most states were only partially successful in implementing NCLB requirements
- Because of organizational diversity, lack of consensus on education best practices and, very importantly, patterned difficulty in hiring qualified teachers and general financial scarcity, the states' abilities to fully implement NCLB were limited
- As a result, and despite these efforts, most youth in juvenile justice incarceration facilities across the country remain "lost education opportunities"
- If these youth could receive quality and effective education services, the returns to society would be substantial



The Problem

- Education services and capacities of correctional education settings are insufficient for this population. This results in a pattern of lost education opportunities for these troubled and at-risk populations
- The resulting uneducated youth create a substantial financial burden to society because of their disproportionate unemployment, involvement in crime and substance abuse
- 210,390 incarcerated youth received education services in juvenile justice schools during 2006
- Without education achievement and high school graduation, the life prospects for these incarcerated youth are dismal at best



The Problem

- Previous studies document a positive relationship between education achievement and employment. Graduation from high school has been found to significantly decrease involvement in crime
- Among the tangible economic consequences of our continued failure to effectively educate our at-risk and incarcerated youth is an estimated lifetime economic loss of \$4.2 to \$7.2 million for one student dropping out of high school and subsequently becoming involved in a life of crime and substance abuse



The Problem

- **In 2008, 1 in 100 Americans were behind bars (The PEW; Center on the States, 2008)**
 - The U.S. incarcerates more people than any other country in the world with 2.3 million adults followed by China with 1.5 million
 - From 1987 to 2007 America's prison population has nearly tripled
- **More than 600,000 adult inmates are released from federal and state prisons each year**
- **Nearly 300,000 juveniles exit residential facilities each year (using census data from OJJDP 2006 annual report)**
- **Approximately 900,000 adult and juvenile inmates are released each year from commitment**
- **Combined reconviction rates within one year for both adults and juveniles average 25.3% nationally or approximately 228,000 each year (conservative estimate based on a one year follow-up)**



Cost Benefits

- The U.S. spends more than \$1 Trillion annually on criminal victimization and the operation of the criminal justice system (David Anderson, *The Aggregate Burden of Crime*, "Journal of Law and Economics. Vol. XLII, Oct. 1999 pp. 611-642)
- The total economic costs of one youth dropping out of high school for a life of crime and substance abuse ranges from \$4.2 to \$7.2 million (Cohen & Piquero, "The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*; 2009)
- The average annual cost to incarcerate a student is \$23,876 in contrast to the annual cost of \$8,701 for educating a K–12 student
- Prior research has conclusively established that investments that improve academic achievement and high school graduation rates significantly reduce crime and increase economic competitiveness for both juvenile and adult offenders



Cost Benefits

- **Effective education systems are a critical component of a successful and prosperous society. Education prepares leaders, inspires innovation, opens minds, and changes the trajectory of juvenile and adult lives. It is a necessity for the success of a nation, and it is almost impossible to quantify. If we try to put numbers to it, we find that the cost savings of such a critical part of our culture is, as one would imagine, extraordinary**
- **If you take, for example, the number of juvenile offenders confined in custodial institutions in 2006–210,390—assume varying success rates of that population, and use a lifetime economic gain average of \$5.7 million (average between the estimated \$4.2 to 7.2 million) (Cohen & Piquero 2009) for each individual desisting from a criminal career, you will find the following cost benefits**



Cost Benefits

Education success rate for 210,390 student population	Number of youth prevented from reoffending each year	Economic gain from preventing students from becoming career criminals For 1-year period	Economic gain from preventing students from becoming career criminals For 5-year period	Economic gain from preventing students from becoming career criminals For 10-year period
5%	10,519	59,958,300,000	299,791,500,000	599,583,000,000
10%	21,039	119,922,300,000	599,611,500,000	1,199,223,000,000
20%	42,078	239,850,300,000	1,199,251,500,000	2,398,503,000,000



VI – Alliance for the Advancement of Correctional Education

- **What emerged from the NCLB Collaboration Project's work with states and organizations was the need to enhance communication, visibility, research, and policy development in the field of juvenile as well as adult correctional education**
- **Several organizations already exist in the field of juvenile justice, but they primarily focused upon custody and care issues**
- **While the Correctional Education Association (CEA) focus was on education, its emphasis had been centered upon adult correctional education**
- **In developing the Alliance, therefore, the intent is to bring together juvenile and adult correctional educators and related personnel in the common pursuit to advance correctional education in an era of unprecedented reliance upon incarceration and ever-increasing costs despite our continuing economic recession**
- **As a result, the time is right to advance correctional education as a means to increase public safety in a cost-efficient manner**



- **Increase citizen awareness and legislative support for juvenile and adult correctional education through public relations and legislative advocacy**
- **Provide leadership, direction, and research-driven services to advance education for students in juvenile and adult corrections**
- **Better prepare incarcerated offenders for successful reentry into society through supporting juvenile and adult correctional educators with research-driven education programs**



- Obtain funding as a professional organizational
- Develop partnerships between various juvenile and adult correctional education organizations and associations
- Identify and validate “best practices” in correctional education
- Create national uniformity in the evaluation of juvenile and adult correctional education
- Educate policy makers and the general public about the economic and public safety benefits of juvenile and adult correctional education



Advancing Correctional Education: A Must for the Future

**Tom Blomberg, Dean and Sheldon L. Messinger
Professor of Criminology**

www.criminologycenter.fsu.edu