

PRISON ARTS RESOURCE PROJECT

An Annotated Bibliography

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THE PRISON ARTS RESOURCE PROJECT: An Annotated Bibliography

WORKING PAPER

Submitted to the National Endowment for the Arts

Updated August 2025
(originally published May 2014)

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ABSTRACT

The Prison Arts Resource Project (PARP) is an annotated bibliography of evidence-based studies that evaluate the impact of arts programs in U.S. correctional settings. Each of the 91 entries includes information about the arts program as well as the study research goals, methods and a summary of findings. Adult offender and juvenile offender programs are identified. While not an exhaustive list, this collection of annotated impact studies represents publicly available evidence that can be accessed by individuals and organizations seeking to develop their own evaluation or research, or who are seeking evidence of impact for the purposes of program development and policy improvement.

Keywords: prison arts, policy, arts impact

INTRODUCTION

The Prison Arts Resource Project (PARP) is an annotated bibliography of studies which provide evidence of the benefits of arts programs in correctional settings for adult and juvenile offenders. This compilation seeks to provide, for the first time, a collection of prison arts impact studies in the United States. While not an exhaustive list, the impact studies that follow represent publicly available materials and so may be accessed by individuals and organizations seeking to develop their own impact studies, or provide evidence of impact for the purposes of program development and policy improvement.

Background

Evidence-based studies did not begin with arts programs themselves. The use of the arts in correctional settings in the U.S. has been ubiquitous since prisons were established in this country, but most of these early efforts were informal rather than organized.

In the 1840s, Charles Dickens, as a social critic of prisons, was invited to the United States to analyze new models of prisons being created on the East Coast. His *American Notes for General Circulation-1842* provided insights into early arts-in-prisons. While Dickens generally was highly critical of the U.S. prison experiments, he discovered when he visited inmates in the "silent system," which provided no contact with other human beings, that what inmates did was create art:

The first man I saw was seated at his loom, at work. . . . He had ingeniously manufactured a sort of Dutch clock from some discarded odds and ends; and his vinegar bottle served for the pendulum. Seeing me interested in this contrivance, he looked up at it with a good deal of pride, and said that he hoped the hammer and a little piece of broken glass beside it 'would play music before long.' He had extracted some colors from the yarn with which he worked and painted a few poor figures on the wall. One of a female over the door, he called 'The Lady of the Lake.' (Dickens, pps 117-118)

The breadth of prison arts experiences included both individual participation and also peer-organized arts experiences. When William Sydney Porter (aka O. Henry) was incarcerated in the Ohio Federal Penitentiary from 1898-1901, he organized a Sunday recluse club in which a group of men in the prison would share their creative writing and stories in an organized manner. At that same time, O. Henry was also playing in the prison band. Prison

musical bands, typically brass and patriotic in nature, appeared throughout prisons of that era. Another trend in prison programs was toward religious training and character building, and these early patriotic prison choirs emerged as a common type of prison arts program in the early part of the twentieth century. In the Southern U.S., with the emergence of agricultural production on prison farms like Parchman in Mississippi and Angola in Louisiana, both African-American and White prisoners used songs, "hollers," call-and-response and narrative to make work pass by less tediously. The prison system didn't organize the singing; whether it was hoeing fields, cutting wood or picking cotton, music was part of the prison culture. Lead Belly, incarcerated in both Texas and Louisiana, was renowned as the most productive of cotton pickers at Angola in the 1930s, and became a popular musician and radio star after his release. Alan Lomax recorded the songs which are now available through the [Association for Cultural Equity](#).

At the same time that O. Henry was serving his time for embezzlement in the Ohio Federal Prison, another movement, albeit not a correctional movement but a community arts movement, began with the settlement houses such as Hull House in Chicago and Henry Street Settlement in New York City. Many of these settlement houses provided cultural education for youth and adults as a method of assimilating new immigrant populations.

At the start of the twentieth century in the United States, the settlement houses provided an example of the possibilities for youth offender education and cultural development through the arts. The first community arts initiative created by the National Endowment for the Arts was the Poets-in-the-Schools, pioneered by Kenneth Koch. With the growth of gangs and serious substance abuse by youth, society's response was to create new detention facilities, both short-term, municipal and long-term "reformatories." Many of the studies that we find in the bibliography have seen much success with youth arts programs, some of them curricular and others community-based programs within institutions.

In the 1950s and 1960s, one element of "rehabilitation" of inmates was the institutionalization of prison libraries so that literature would build the character and intellect of inmates and "correct" them in a bibliotherapeutic manner. The establishment of prison libraries created individual opportunities for personal growth and literary skills which blossomed in the 1960s and 1970s with notable figures like Eldridge Cleaver, Malcolm Braly, Etheridge Knight, Ricardo Sanchez, Raul Salinas and Michael Hogan.

Starting in 1972, inmates were offered the opportunity to obtain education including baccalaureate and post-graduate education through Pell grants. If enough inmates were organized to create a class, community colleges and

universities would provide the classes for credit. It was at this time that the evidence-based studies on the positive or negative effects of arts and literature programs which are detailed in this bibliography emerged. Many of these were a direct result of the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), implemented by the Department of Labor in 1973, which provided funding to hire unemployed or underemployed workers in community service. Many local and state arts councils and organizations utilized this funding to employ artists in almost every community arts venue possible, including schools, museums, prisons, jails, detention centers, hospitals, and rural communities. One of the early studies in this bibliography is Project CULTURE, which was undertaken by the American Correctional Association (ACA) with funding through the Corrections Division, Office of Criminal Justice Programs. Project CULTURE was a national project which underwrote 21 successful prison arts programs selected with evaluations in place.

Pell grants for inmates were eliminated in 1994, virtually removing the reformative degree-granting presence of community colleges and universities from the prison system. This, along with the growth in private prisons, which had no rationale for providing arts or educational programs, has resulted in the reduction of prison arts programs across the U.S. Juvenile correctional institutions are more likely to have arts programs as a stable component of treatment philosophy and juvenile correctional populations continue to expand.

Methodology

Our mandate in receiving this *Research:Art Works* grant from the National Endowment for the Arts was clear: to examine existing data, identifying and compiling a bibliography of studies of the impact of correctional arts programs.

Our methodology was to illuminate papers, reports, surveys and presentations, which were evidence-based documents. We scoured scholarly databases and the internet, relied on personal and institutional archives and directly contacted via phone or email established prison arts programs such as *Rehabilitation Through The Arts* and *Changing Lives Through Literature* to locate additional evaluations.

If the article, chapter or paper presented itself specifically as an evaluation or impact study, it was included in the bibliography. The range of outcomes presented is wide and varying and includes societal impact (cost/benefit analyses), individual impact (self-esteem, social skills, mental health) and, occasionally, impact on the institution or artists providing the program. Results were reported as they were presented by the individual authors; we

did not attempt to interpret any findings. A number of the published studies that are included in the bibliography reference the same data sets. In these cases, we included each individually published study, trying to note nuances in the reported results.

We should also note that the rubrics or methodologies are not consistent across the studies. Sample sizes, specific populations, and data-collection methods vary greatly. The annotations reflect the details available in the individual studies and evaluations.

The art forms represented in the impact studies follow the standard arts disciplinary categories of music, dance, visual arts, creative writing and theater and as well as bibliotherapy. Richards, et.al. (2000), explored the role of writing on the health of inmates diagnosed with psychiatric illnesses and confined in the psychiatric wing of a correctional facility. Although the intervention was not labeled an “arts” intervention, it was described as a creative form of writing, and so was included in the bibliography. Art therapy programs differ from art programs per se but have many of the qualities of arts programs. For that reason, we also integrated art therapy evaluations.

This bibliography does not present individual programs or state or national initiatives. An excellent survey of individual programs can be found in Krista Brune's *Creating Behind the Razor Wire* (2008). Studies evaluating juvenile offender programs included only adjudicated youth, or youth already involved with the court system. As with arts education, much has been written elsewhere about the effects of the many arts-based community prevention and intervention programs for youth who are at risk of delinquency but who have not yet encountered the justice system.

Finally, this bibliography incorporates evaluations of U.S. programs only. The *Arts Alliance*, a coalition of arts organizations working in the British criminal justice system, has compiled an excellent [Evidence Library](#) of research on the impact of arts programming in correctional facilities in the United Kingdom. Our methodology and final document are complementary to that database.

We have tried to keep entries as consistent as possible. In the majority of cases, evaluations involved ongoing prison arts programs, both long-term and short-term, and each entry starts off with program name, description and location. If the study was not part of a larger arts program, adaptations to the format have been made as needed. Program information is followed by details on methodology and results of the specific study. Keywords reflect both art forms and outcomes.

Entries are divided into two sections, juvenile and adult, which correspond to the two types of correctional institutions and arts programs.

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SECTION I:

ADULT OFFENDER ARTS PROGRAM: EVIDENCE-BASED STUDIES & EVALUATIONS

1. Alghadban, Lujain (2025). "Art as a Rehabilitation Tool." The Annual Review of Criminal Justice studies, Vol. 3.

Author Affiliations: John Jay College

Artforms: Creative arts programs

Program: N/A

Program Description: N/A

Program (Study) Location: N/A

Study Published: 2025

Participant Type: N/A

Data Type: Meta-analysis

Evaluation Focus: Impact of creative art programming in correctional institutions on participants' mental health, recidivism, likelihood of rehabilitation and social-support networks.

Summary of Impact: Findings revealed that creative arts programming in correctional institutions:

- Fostered social cohesion and rehabilitation inside
- Had positive effects on emotional regulation and personal growth of prisoners
- Had the ability to reduce recidivism and promote education among prisoners
- Strengthened emotional regulation and enabled personal growth

KEYWORDS: community, creative arts program, education, emotional regulation, personal growth, rehabilitation, recidivism

2. Arizona State University College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (2013). "Calculating Impact: doing the numbers." *Prison English News*, 1(1), 2.

Author Affiliations: Arizona State University

Artforms: Creative writing, drama, literature, poetry

Program: Arizona State University [Prison English Program](#) (now Prison Education Programming)

Program Description: Arizona State University (ASU) offers two university-level English courses at the New Mexico state penitentiary. One-hundred-fifty inmates are linked with ASU undergraduates who provide critique of inmate creative writing.

Program (Study) Location: Penitentiary of New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Study Published: Summer 2013

Participant Type: Maximum-security adult male inmates

Data Type: Quantitative

Evaluation Focus: Cost-savings

Summary of Impact: Depending on number of interns and assuming average hourly teaching wages, the New Mexico Corrections Department receives program savings of

\$27,000-\$40,500 per semester as a result of the Prison English Program.

KEYWORDS: adult, cost-savings, creative writing, drama, linguistics, literature, poetry, prison education, Prison English Program, university

3. Blinn, C. (1995). Teaching Cognitive Skills to Effect Behavioral Change Through a Writing Program. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 46(4), 146-154.

Author Affiliations: Emerson College

Artforms: Bibliotherapy, literature, writing

Program: *Writing for Our Lives*

Program Description: *Writing for Our Lives* used daily journal entries, weekly writing assignments and weekly classroom discussions to shift offenders' self-identity from pro-criminal to pro-social, and to enhance problem-solving skills and impulse control. Short stories were used as "a basis for discussion of point of view regarding empathy, how the characters' peer associations impact their lives, the life changes exhibited by the characters, and possible alternative solutions to problems encountered by the characters" (p. 147). The curriculum was designed to complement the [Correctional Recovery Academy](#) (CRA) program of the Massachusetts Department of Correction.

Program (Study) Location: Northeastern Correctional Center, Concord, Massachusetts

Study Published: 1995

Participant Type: Adult male inmates

Sample Size: 54

Data Type: Qualitative: instructor observations, participants' written evaluations

Evaluation Focus: Research questions:

- Will offenders record prosocial behaviors on a daily basis? Will they demonstrate increased prosocial behaviors after self-monitoring?
- Will participating in *Writing for Our Lives* enable offenders to change their self-identities from procriminal to prosocial? Will participation raise their sense of self-efficacy as writers? Will participants' appreciation for the prosocial activity of writing increase?
- Will offenders master a model for concrete problem solving [THINK FIRST]? Will offenders demonstrate consequential thinking after learning the THINK FIRST method?
- Will offenders develop social perspective-taking skills through discussing the point(s) of view from which the assigned short stories are told?
- Will offenders make use of their knowledge of reading - or writing-related community activities after their release (p. 150)?

Summary of Impact:

- Offenders recorded prosocial behaviors on a daily basis and appeared to demonstrate increased prosocial behaviors with regard to this assignment (p. 150).
- Participation enabled offenders to begin (or continue) the process of changing their self-identities from procriminal to prosocial (p. 151).
- Significant increase in offenders' sense of self-efficacy as writers (p. 151).
- Many offenders appeared to have mastered a model for concrete problem-solving and the ability to think consequentially (p. 151).
- Participants exhibited some measure of social perspective-taking skills when discussing the point(s) of view from which the assigned short stories were told (p. 152).

KEYWORDS: adult, behavior, bibliotherapy, consequences, identity, literature, problem-solving, pro-criminal, pro-social, writing, *Writing for Our Lives*

4. Brewster, L. (2010). [The California arts-in-corrections music programme: A qualitative study](#). *International Journal of Community Music*, 3(1), 33-46.

Author Affiliations: University of San Francisco

Artforms: Guitar-building, music

Program: Arts in Corrections (AIC) (now [Transformative Arts](#))

Program Description: AIC was one of the first prison arts program in the nation, operating from 1977-1981 under the auspices of the William James Association, and from 1981 to 2003 under the California Department of Corrections. Individual and group instruction were offered in the visual, performing, literary and media arts and fine-craft disciplines in California correctional institutions. The California Department of Corrections resumed funding of the program in 2014.

Program (Study) Location: Adult correctional facilities, California

Study Published: 2010

Participant Type: Former adult male inmates

Sample Size: 6

Data Type: Qualitative: In-depth interviews

Evaluation Focus: Impact of the AIC program on lives of inmates during and after incarceration

Summary of Impact: Participants in AIC reported increased self discipline, self-esteem, self-respect, sense of purpose, and reconnection with family as a result of the program. Participants also reported reduced racial tension in the correctional facility. The evaluation follows up on ex-offenders 25 years after participation in the *Arts in Corrections* program, and the publication of Brewster's 1983 cost-benefit analysis of the California AIC program (see bibliography entry # 5).

KEYWORDS: adult, *Arts in Corrections*, discipline, family, guitar-building, music, race, self-esteem, self-respect, sense of purpose

5. Brewster, L. (2014). [The Impact of Prison Arts Programs on Inmate Attitudes and Behavior: A Quantitative Evaluation](#). *Justice Policy Journal*, 11(4).

Author Affiliations: University of San Francisco

Artforms: poetry, theater, visual arts, writing

Programs/Sponsors: [The Actors' Gang](#), *Arts in Corrections (AIC)* (now [Transformative Arts](#)), [California Lawyers for the Arts](#), [Marin Shakespeare](#), [Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission](#), [William James Association](#)

Program Description: AIC was one of the first prison arts program in the nation, operating from 1977-1981 under the auspices of the William James Association, and from 1981 to 2003 under the California Department of Corrections. Individual and group instruction were offered in the visual, performing, literary and media arts and fine craft disciplines in California correctional institutions. The California Department of Corrections resumed funding of the program in 2014. This study incorporated evaluations of AIC as well as post-AIC prison arts programs in California.

Program (Study) Location: The evaluation was conducted at four California correctional facilities:

- California Rehabilitation Center, Norco (*The Actors' Gang*)
- New Folsom State Prison (Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission)
- San Quentin State Prison (*Marin Shakespeare*)

- Correctional Training Facility, Soledad (William James Association)
Study Published: 2014
Participant Type: Adult male inmates
Sample Size: 110
Data Type: Pre- and post-surveys: Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ) measuring time management, social competence, achievement motivation, intellectual flexibility, emotional control, active initiative and self-confidence
Evaluation Focus: Changes in inmates' attitudes and behavior

Summary of Impact:

- Pre- and post-test survey results of inmates with no previous arts education and practice showed positive and statistically significant correlation between participation in theater, writing and visual arts classes and improved time management, achievement motivation, intellectual flexibility, active initiative and self-confidence.
- A significant majority of former AIC inmates attributed the arts program with giving them greater confidence and self-discipline to pursue other academic and vocational opportunities. This was especially true for those who had participated in AIC for two or more years.
- Reduction in self-reported disciplinary reports while involved in the arts classes; 61% of those who participated in AIC for 5 or more years reported improved behavior.
- Most AIC inmates reported better relations with other inmates and with prison staff.
- A significant majority of participants reported that the arts program helped them relieve stress, feel happier and gain valuable insights.
- 58% of arts-program participants said art brought them closer to family, enriched their conversations and nurtured a new identity as artist rather than convict.
- Positive though not statistically significant change in participants' feelings of social competence and emotional control; this improvement was statistically significant for those who participated two or more years in AIC.

KEYWORDS: academic, achievement motivation, active initiative, *The Actors' Gang*, adult, *Arts in Corrections*, attitudes, behavior, California Lawyers for the Arts, disciplinary reports, discipline, emotional control, family, happiness, identity, intellectual flexibility, *Marin Shakespeare*, personal growth, poetry, self-confidence, self-discipline, social competence, social relations, stress, theater, time management, visual arts, vocational, writing

6. Brewster, L. (1983). *An Evaluation of the Arts-in-Corrections Program of the California Department of Corrections*. Santa Cruz, CA: William James Association.

- Author Affiliations:* San Jose State University
Artforms: Ceramics, fine crafts, guitar-making, literary arts, media arts, music, painting, performing arts, printmaking, sculpting, visual arts, writing
Program: *Arts in Corrections* (AIC) (now [Transformative Arts](#))
Program Description: AIC was one of the first prison arts program in the nation, operating from 1977-1981 under the auspices of the William James Association, and from 1981 to 2003 under the California Department of Corrections. Individual and group instruction were offered in the visual, performing, literary and media arts and fine craft disciplines in California correctional institutions. The California Department of Corrections resumed funding of the program in 2014.
Program (Study) Location: The author evaluated the following four AIC locations:
- California Medical Facility at Vacaville
 - Deuel Vocational Institution, Tracy
 - San Quentin State Prison
 - Correctional Training Facility at Soledad
- Study Published:* 1983

Participant Type: Adult male inmates

Sample Size: AIC programs at four California Department of Corrections facilities

Data Type: Quantitative

Evaluation Focus: Costs and benefits of the California Arts in Corrections program from three perspectives: social, taxpayer and individual

Summary of Impact:

- \$228,522 in measurable social benefits (including \$105,406 in taxpayer benefits and \$123,116 in individual benefits) compared with a cost to the California Department of Corrections of \$162,790 (p. 41).
- 35.9% of the AIC participants at the California Medical Facility and 65.7% of those at the Correctional Training Facility had fewer disciplinary actions while participating in the program (p. 29).
- 75% of AIC participants at the California Medical Facility and 80.6% of those at the Correctional Training Facility had fewer disciplinary infractions when compared with nonparticipants (after excluding inmates who received no disciplinary citations while at the institution) (p. 29).
- The decrease in disciplinary actions reduced disciplinary administration time by 4,553 hours with a concomitant cost savings of \$77,406 (p. 29).

KEYWORDS: adult, *Arts in Corrections*, ceramics, cost, cost-benefit, disciplinary reports, discipline, fine crafts, guitar-making, incidents, literary arts, media arts, music, painting, performing arts, printmaking, relationships, sculpting, self-confidence, self-esteem, skills, taxpayers, violence, visual arts, writing

7. Brewster, L. (2010). [A Qualitative Study of the California Arts-in-Corrections Program](#). Santa Cruz, CA: William James Association.

Author Affiliations: University of San Francisco

Artforms: Ceramics, fine crafts, guitar-making, literary arts, media arts, music, painting, performing arts, printmaking, sculpting, visual arts, writing

Program: *Arts in Corrections* (AIC) (now [Transformative Arts](#))

Program Description: AIC was one of the first prison arts program in the nation, operating from 1977-1981 under the auspices of the William James Association, and from 1981 to 2003 under the California Department of Corrections. Individual and group instruction were offered in the visual, performing, literary and media arts and fine craft disciplines in California correctional institutions. The California Department of Corrections resumed funding of the program in 2014.

Program (Study) Location: Northern California

Study Published: 2010

Participant Type: Adult male and female former inmates

Sample Size: 18 (16 male and 2 female)

Data Type: Qualitative: In-depth interviews

Evaluation Focus: Impact of AIC on lives of inmates during and after incarceration

Summary of Impact: Inmates revealed that participation in the AIC program enhanced their self-esteem, work ethic, discipline and identity as artists. All interviewees successfully completed parole, and 31% (5 of 16) self-identify as artists, earning all or part of their living through art.

KEYWORDS: adult, *Arts in Corrections*, ceramics, fine crafts, guitar-making, identity, literary arts, media arts, music, painting, performing arts, printmaking, purpose, rehabilitation, sculpting, self-esteem, visual arts, work ethic, writing

8. Brewster, L. (2012). A Qualitative Study of the California Arts-in-Corrections Program. Santa Cruz, CA: William James Association.

Author Affiliations: University of San Francisco

Artforms: Ceramics, fine crafts, guitar-making, literary arts, media arts, music, painting, performing arts, printmaking, sculpting, visual arts, writing

Program: Arts in Corrections (AIC) (now [Transformative Arts](#))

Program Description: AIC was one of the first prison arts program in the nation, operating from 1977-1981 under the auspices of the William James Association, and from 1981 to 2003 under the California Department of Corrections. Individual and group instruction were offered in the visual, performing, literary and media arts and fine craft disciplines in California correctional institutions. The California Department of Corrections resumed funding of the program in 2014.

Program (Study) Location: Northern California

Study Published: 2012

Participant Type: Adult male and female former inmates

Sample Size: 30 (28 male and 2 female)

Data Type: Qualitative: In-depth interviews

Evaluation Focus: Impact of AIC on lives of inmates during and after incarceration

Summary of Impact: Inmates revealed that participation in the AIC program enhanced their self-esteem, work ethic, discipline, identity as artists and relationships with family. Three-quarters of those interviewed self-identified as artists.

KEYWORDS: adult, Arts in Corrections, ceramics, fine crafts, guitar-making, identity, literary arts, media arts, music, painting, performing arts, printmaking, purpose, rehabilitation, sculpting, self-esteem, visual arts, work ethic, writing

9. California Department of Corrections. (n.d.). [Arts-in-Corrections Research Synopsis on Parole Outcomes for Participants Paroled December 1980-February 1987](#).

Author Affiliations: California Department of Corrections

Artforms: Ceramics, fine crafts, guitar-making, literary arts, media arts, music, painting, performing arts, printmaking, sculpting, visual arts, writing

Program: Arts in Corrections (AIC) (now [Transformative Arts](#))

Program Description: AIC was one of the first prison arts program in the nation, operating from 1977-1981 under the auspices of the William James Association, and from 1981 to 2003 under the California Department of Corrections. Individual and group instruction were offered in the visual, performing, literary and media arts and fine craft disciplines in California correctional institutions. The California Department of Corrections resumed funding of the program in 2014.

Program (Study) Location: Adult correctional institutions, California

Study Published: 1987

Participant Type: Adult inmates who participated in at least one class per week for six months

Sample Size: 177

Data Type: Quantitative: Review of parole data

Evaluation Focus: Parole outcomes, recidivism

Summary of Impact: The research showed that as time since release increased, the difference between the percentage of favorable outcomes for AIC and all CDC parolees becomes greater.

- Six months after parole AIC participants showed an 88% rate of favorable outcomes

(no parole difficulties, technical parolee infractions, misdemeanor convictions only) versus 72.5% for all releases (p. 1).

- Over a one-year period, the AIC participant favorable outcome was 74.2% versus 49.6% for all parolees (p. 1).
- Two years after release, 69.2% of AIC parolees retained their favorable status, versus 42% for all releases (p. 1).
- After six months, AIC favorable rate was 15.7 percentage points higher than rate for all CDC releases. Two years after release, the difference climbed to 27.2 percentage points (p. 1).

KEYWORDS: adult, *Arts in Corrections*, ceramics, fine crafts, guitar-making, literary arts, media arts, music, painting, parole, performing arts, printmaking, recidivism, sculpting, visual arts, writing

10. California Lawyers for the Arts and A.R.C.H. Collective. (2023). Evaluation of Arts-in-Corrections Pilot Project: at the Orleans Justice Center, August 31, 2023

Author Affiliations: A.R.C.H. Collective and California Lawyers for the Arts

Artforms: spoken word

Program: Spoken Word class provided by A.R.C.H for women at the Orleans Justice Center

Program Description: Twice weekly classes each lasting 90 minutes to two hours

Program (Study) Location: Orleans Justice Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Participant Type: Adult female

Sample Size: 10 of 16 initial participants completed the program

Study Published: 2023

Data Type: Pre- and post-surveys

Evaluation Focus: Program effective on creativity, skills development, social skills and self-confidence

Summary of Impact: The 10 participants who completed the program reported enjoying the course, learning to be more creative, adding new skills to the art repertoire, learning how to work with others and gains in self-confidence

KEYWORDS: adaptability, artistic expression, communication, creativity, emotional control, empowerment, involvement, leadership, productivity, self-belief, skills acquisition, social competence, spoken word, stability, time management, wellbeing, women

11. California Lawyers for the Arts in collaboration with Dr. Larry Brewster of the University of San Francisco, the William James Association, Fresno Arts Council, Community Works West, Jail Guitar Doors, Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, Nevada County Arts Council, and Yuba Sutter Arts Council. (2016, revised 2019). *Arts in Corrections County Jails Project*.

Author Affiliations: N/A

Artforms: guitar, music, mixed-media collage, theater, movement, music, song poetry, writing

Program: California Arts in Corrections (AIC) (now [Transformative Arts](#))

Program Description: In the wake of federal court mandates to reduce the overcrowding in California's state prisons, more people are being confined for longer periods in county jails. Working with local arts agencies affiliated with county governments and other arts organizations, CLA began a multi-year project in 2015 to evaluate the effectiveness of arts engagement for inmates held in county jails throughout California. The first phase of the study, which was completed in January 2017, measured participants' behavior at the end of programs in five counties. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Quentin Hancock Fund, CLA's team established the project in five additional counties in 2017 and identified an additional eight that were included in the 2018 update. The report was again updated in 2019, this time with results of surveys completed by 193 men and women.

Program (Study) Location: Sixteen county jails in California: Santa Cruz Main Jail (William James Association, mixed-media collage); Fresno County Jail (Fresno Arts Council, beginning guitar); SF County Jail #5 - San Bruno Complex (Community Works West, theater/movement); MCJ Twin Towers Correctional Facility (L.A.) (Jail Guitar Doors, music/songwriting); Wayne Brown Nevada County Correctional Facility (Nevada Arts Council, theater); Sutter County Jail (Yuba Sutter Arts Council, drawing); Yuba County Jail (Yuba Sutter Arts Council, drawing); Sacramento County Jail - Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center (Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, drawing); Las Colinas Detention and Reentry Facility in San Diego County (California Lawyers for the Arts, drawing); Marsh Creek Detention Facility in Contra Costa County (Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County, drawing/watercolor); Robert Presley Detention Center in Riverside (Riverside Arts Council, theater/performing arts); the Intake Release Center in Orange County (Mariposa Arts Council, conflict resolution through dialogue and narrative writing); Mariposa County Adult Detention Facility (Mariposa Arts Council, poetry); the Day Reporting Center in Siskiyou County (Mariposa Arts Council, drawing/painting); and Maple Street Correctional Center in San Mateo County (San Mateo County Arts Commission, drawing/watercolor).

Study Published: Organizational publication, 2016, revised 2018 and 2019

Participant Type: Adult men and women, average age 36; varied educational backgrounds; 36% Hispanic/Latin American, 29% Caucasian.

Sample Size: 193

Data Type: Inmate surveys

Evaluation Focus: Behavioral and attitudinal changes experienced by program participants.

Summary of Impact: Overall, inmates reported attitudinal and behavioral changes that led to reduced disciplinary incidents. Benefits extended to families, communities and general public. The authors concluded, "The overwhelming majority of participants found the art program to be potentially life changing as they learned to feel better about themselves and others. They felt respected by their teachers, and they were able to express their emotions and communicate better with others. In the art classes, they experienced safer, less racially charged environments. Their engagement with making art reduced the tension and frustration often associated with their life experiences, including incarceration." Specific findings of the revised 2019 report:

- 88% of participants "strongly agreed" that arts instructors showed respect for each student; 11% "agreed".
- 91% said that they looked forward to art classes more than any other activity.
- 96% said they felt better about themselves.
- 94% said the program provided a safe environment for them to explore their creativity.

- 96% “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that “I Am Better Able to Communicate With Others.”
- 92% said they were “. . . Less Stressed and Frustrated When Working On My Art.”
- 87% felt better able to express their emotions.
- 85% felt there was less racial tension in the arts program than elsewhere in the facility.
- 81% said they “interacted differently” inside the arts program than elsewhere in the facility.
- 90% reported better relationships with other inmates since involvement with the program.
- 73% reported better relationships with jail staff since involvement with the program.
- 68% “strongly agreed” and 22% “agreed” that they had tried things in the arts programs that they never expected.

KEYWORDS: adult, attitudes, behavior, California Arts in Corrections, communication, community, discipline, emotional control, family, guitar, incidents, identity, intellectual flexibility, interpersonal skills, Jail Guitar Doors, male, mixed-media collage, movement, music, peer relations, poetry, prosocial, race, relationships, respect, self confidence, sense of self, songwriting, stress, theater

12. California Lawyers for the Arts and Houston Museum of African American Culture. (2024). Evaluation of Arts Education Courses at Harris County Jail provided by the Houston Museum of African American Culture and California Lawyers for the Arts. (2024), May 31, 2024.

Author Affiliations: Houston Museum of African American Culture and California Lawyers for the Arts

Artforms: creative writing, poetry, visual arts

Program: Houston Museum of African American Culture arts education program at the Harris County Jail Women’s Empowerment Center

Program Description: twice weekly sessions in creative writing, poetry, and visual arts lasting six weeks

Program (Study) Location: Harris County Jail Women’s Empowerment Center, Houston, Texas

Participant Type: Adult female

Sample Size: 22 of 51 participants completed the course

Study Published: 2024

Data Type: pre- and post-surveys administered at the first and last of 12 sessions taking place over six weeks; surveys adapted from Life Effectiveness Questionnaire

Evaluation Focus: productivity, time management, social competence, creativity and artistic expression, adaptability, emotional control, wellbeing, stability, involvement, self-belief, confidence, leadership, communication

Summary of Impact: Overall, the majority of participants reported enjoying the course, learning how to be more creative, discovering previously unknown talents and feeling a sense of accomplishment. Participants also reported positive attitudes and gains in the areas of involvement, self-belief, confidence, wellbeing, stability, self-belief, communication and artistic expression, time management and adaptability.

KEYWORDS: adaptability, artistic expression, communication, creative writing, creativity, emotional control, empowerment, involvement, leadership, poetry, productivity, self-belief, social competence, stability, time management, visual arts, wellbeing, women

13. California Lawyers for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts and Woodstock School of Art. (2022). New York Arts in Corrections Demonstrations Projects at Ulster and Adirondack Correctional Facilities (2019-2021), May 18, 2022

Author Affiliations: California Lawyers for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts and Woodstock School of Art.

Artforms: drawing, watercolor

Program: Arts in Corrections Demonstration Projects

Program Description: Two 12-week courses

Program (Study) Location: Ulster and Adirondack Correctional Facilities, New York State

Participant Type: Adult male

Sample Size: 14 completed preprogram surveys and 12 completed post-program surveys

Study Published: 2022

Data Type: Pre- and post-program surveys administered at beginning and end of each course

Evaluation Focus: Effects of the program on participant attitudes, behaviors, time management, productivity, concentration, emotional control, mental flexibility, coping skills, relationships and hope for the future

Summary of Impact: Overall, participants reported more positive attitudes and behaviors as a result of taking the program. They also reported better time management, productivity, concentration, emotional control, mental flexibility, coping skills, relationships, hope for the future

KEYWORDS: attitudes, behavior, concentration, coping skills, creativity, drawing, emotional control, men, mental flexibility, productivity, relationships, time management, watercolor, wellbeing

14. Campbell, Natalie. (2018). On the Inside: Evaluating Arts Education Programs in Prison. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Author Affiliations: University of Alabama at Birmingham

Artforms: Acting, animation, creative ensemble, drawing, knitting, mixed media, mural painting, printmaking, Shakespeare, watercolor and more

Program: NA

Program Description: NA

Program (Study) Location: Arts-education programs in Alabama, Illinois, Kansas, Ohio

Participant Type: Prison-arts program administrators

Sample Size: Online survey was distributed to administrators at 22 organizations;

four (18%) completed the survey

Study Published: Unpublished

Data Type: Online survey distributed to active prison-arts program administrators

Evaluation Focus: Prevalence of hands-on art education to inmates in correctional facilities, specifically reporting how many people prison-arts programs serve, how often and under what conditions as well as perceptions of benefit.

Summary of Impact: Respondents reported that:

- Programs were conducted in various types of facilities: men's only maximum- or minimum-security, men's and women's maximum-, medium- and minimum-security facilities
- Majority of students were African American, followed by white non-Hispanics or Hispanics; students ranged from age 18 to 60 but were primarily clustered between 30 and 45
- All program courses were taught by university professors
- Funding came from grants, donations, state funds and university funds
- Respondents felt that the programs improved quality of life for participants

KEYWORDS: acting, animation, creative ensemble, drawing, knitting, mixed media, mural painting, watercolor, writing

15. Cleveland, W. (1992). Geese Theater: America's National Prison Theater Company. in Cleveland, W. *Art in Other Places: Artists at Work in America's Community and Social Institutions*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, p. 51-73.

Author Affiliations: Center for the Study of Art & Community

Artforms: Drama, dramatherapy, theater

Program: Geese Theater

Program Description: Drama workshops in correctional settings

Program (Study) Location: Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility, Iowa

Study Published: 1992

Participant Type: Adult male inmates

Sample Size: unspecified

Data Type: Quantitative

Evaluation Focus: The study evaluated relationship outcomes among inmates who participated in a month-long residency program called "Theater in a Month." The original study, on which this article is based, (*Outcomes for Inmate Participants in Drama Programs*. Mount Pleasant, Iowa: Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility, Iowa Department of Corrections, 1982), was not available.

Summary of Impact: 70% of men who participated for the entire program showed "significant positive change in their relationship with peers and authority figures over a three-month period" (p. 61).

KEYWORDS: adult, authority figures, drama, drama therapy, peers, relationships, social, theater

16. Cohen, M.L., (2009). [Choral singing and prison inmates:](#)

influences of performing in a prison choir. *Journal of Correctional Education.* 60(1), 52-65.

Author Affiliations: University of Iowa

Artforms: Choir, music, singing

Program: *Therapeutic Community Inmate Singers* (TCIS)

Program Description: "The therapeutic community program's goals focused on changing participants' addictive behavior through cognitive restructuring" (p. 55). This included a community inmate choir. Weekly ninety-minute rehearsals culminated in a community-inmate performance.

Program (Study) Location: Substance-abuse treatment center at a minimum-security correctional facility in U.S. Midwest

Study Published: 2009

Participant Type:

- Experiment 1: Adult male inmates aged 23-60 performing in an inmate-only choir inside the correctional facility
- Experiment 2: Adult male inmates aged 23-60 performing in a joint inmate/volunteer choir outside the correctional facility

Sample Size:

- Experiment 1: 20 (10 in choir and 10 in control)
- Experiment 2: 48

Data Type: Experimental, Quantitative: Friedman Well Being Scale (FWBS)

Evaluation Focus: The study asked: Are there differences in well-being measurements between the TCIS and the control group before and after a choral performance at the prison facility? Control and experimental groups were measured pre- and post- participation in a choral singing group and a choral performance. The Friedman Well-Being Scale (FWBS) measured composite well-being and five subscales: (a) emotional stability, (b) sociability, (c) joviality, (d) self-esteem, and (e) happiness (p. 55).

Summary of Impact: The experiments found no significant differences between experimental and control groups in composite well-being scores. In addition, the author found:

- Experiment 1: Tendency toward negative responses during containment; positive choir-related responses at final two rehearsals; overall choral experience reflections related to a sense of well-being.
- Experiment 2: Significant differences between experimental and control groups with experimental group showing improvements on four subscales: emotional stability, sociability, happiness and joviality.

KEYWORDS: adult, choir, emotional stability, happiness, joviality, music, self-esteem, singing, sociability, well-being

17. Cohen, M.L. (2012). 'Safe Havens': The Formation and Practice of Prison Choirs in the US. In Cheliotis, L. K. (Ed.) *The Arts of Imprisonment: Control, Resistance and Empowerment*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate.

Author Affiliations: University of Iowa

Artforms: choir, music, singing

Program: NA

Program Description: Community-member and prison choir

Program (Study) Location: Kansas, Ohio, Minnesota

Study Published: 2012

Participant Type: Adult male inmates, volunteer choir conductors, audience members

Sample Size: 7 volunteer prison-choir conductors, 35 audience members, unspecified number of male inmates.

Data Type: Quantitative, Qualitative: Multiple case studies using open-ended questionnaires completed by seven prison choir conductors; observations of rehearsals and performances; informal interviews with inmates; data from an online survey completed by 35 audience members; field notes, and researcher reflections. Open coding, axial coding, and selective coding were used to analyze data.

Evaluation Focus: Perceived impact of five U.S. male prison choirs

Summary of Impact: In addition to developing choral singing skills such as body alignment, breath management, tonal placement and diction, the choral experiences provided a means for inmates to develop self esteem, promote positive social interactions, and increase sense of group responsibility.

KEYWORDS: adult, choir, group responsibility, music, self-esteem, singing, social interactions

18. Cohen, M.L. (2007). Explorations of inmate and volunteer choral experiences among a prison-based choir. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 1, 61-72.

Author Affiliations: University of Iowa

Artforms: Choir, music, singing

Program: NA

Program Description: Community-member and prison choir

Program (Study) Location: Minimum-security state prison, Midwest U.S.

Study Published: 2007

Participant Type: Adult male inmates aged 21-53, adult volunteers aged 35-82

Sample Size: 44 (20 inmates and 24 volunteers)

Data Type:

- Quantitative: Survey instrument consisting of: (a) demographic questions; (b) seven Likert-scale items on perception of intonation, sense of accomplishment, choir participation upon release, self-reflection; (c) four open-ended items about participants' most positive and negative experiences and their reasons for joining; and (d) any further comments
- Qualitative: Interviews with 29 participants (17 inmates and 12 volunteers), participant observations, field notes

Evaluation Focus: Participants' experiences in a joint inmate-community volunteer choir

Summary of Impact:

- Quantitative: Both inmates and volunteers indicated that their participation afforded: "(a) means to a peak experience with momentary disappearance of stresses and (b) a sense of accomplishment. Inmates perceived more improvement in intrapersonal skills than volunteers while volunteers reported more success in identifying out-of-tune singing than inmates" (p. 61).

- Qualitative: "Choral music education experiences, approached more comprehensively than simply promoting interaction between individual singers and a musical score, may carry potential for transformative personal and interpersonal change in prison choir contexts" (p. 61).

KEYWORDS: adult, choir, intrapersonal skills, music, sense of accomplishment, singing, stress

19. Cohen, M.L. (2012) [Harmony within the walls: Perceptions of worthiness and competence in a community prison choir.](#) *International Journal of Music Education*, 30(1), 46-55.

Author Affiliations: University of Iowa

Artforms: Choir, music, singing

Program: Community-member and prison choir

Program Description: Joint inmate-community volunteer choir at a medium-security prison. Choir program met for twelve consecutive weeks and concluded with two community-prison performances in the prison gymnasium.

Program (Study) Location: Medium-security state prison, Midwest U.S.

Study Published: 2012

Participant Type: Adult male inmates aged 20-70, community singers aged 20-64

Sample Size: 44 (22 inmates and 22 community members)

Data Type: Mixed Method. Quantitative (Attitudes Toward Prisons Scale); and Qualitative (Open-ended questionnaire)

Evaluation Focus: This study measured changes in community singers' attitudes toward inmates, and documented changes in inmate singers' perceptions of their social competence (p. 46). Changes in community singers' attitudes toward inmates, and changes in prison singers' perceptions of their social competence were measured using the Attitudes Towards Prisoners Scale (ATPS) in pre and post participation measurements.

Summary of Impact: The pre and post measurements of the community singers' attitudes towards inmates showed significant improvement. The data indicates that participation in the choir had a positive impact on the community members' attitudes toward the inmates, changing previously held stereotypes. Open-ended responses from inmates revealed they felt respected, made friends, increased connections outside the prison, and improved family relationships. Among significant variations between participant responses: (a) inmates perceived more improvement in intrapersonal skills than volunteers and (b) volunteers reported more success in identifying out of tune singing than inmates.

KEYWORDS: adult, choir, music, perceptions, public perceptions, relationships, respect, self-esteem, self-gratification, singing, social competence

20. Cohen, Mary L. and Wilson, Catherine, M. (2017). [Inside the fences: Pedagogical practices and purposes of songwriting in an adult male U.S. state prison.](#) *International Journal of Music Education*, February 3, 2017, 1-13.

Author Affiliations: University of Iowa, Iowa City

Artforms: Music, singing, songwriting

Program: NA

Program Description: 35-week program comprised of two 13-week, 60-minute workshops and one nine-week 90-minute workshop

Program (Study) Location: Midwest U.S. male medium security state prison

Study Published: 2017

Participant Type: Adult males

Sample Size: 17

Data Type: Qualitative: Grounded theory analyzing four types of data: 42 sets of original lyrics, written reflections, transcriptions of four workshop sessions and narrative data from participants

Evaluation Focus: self-worth, purpose, social adjustment

Summary of Impact: "Our findings indicated that the collaborative and social nature of the songwriting workshops provided a supportive atmosphere where participants generated new songs for enjoyment and expression. Participants wrote about struggles and hardships, especially relationship problems, and our data suggested that the discussions about song topics help them cope with their incarceration."

KEYWORDS: adult, music, relationships, singing, social, songwriting

21. Donham-Stradling, Mackenzie. (2025). [Beyond Stigma: Role Theory and Drama Therapy in Reentry and Rehabilitation.](#) Unpublished senior thesis. Lesley University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Author Affiliations: Lesley University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Artforms: Drama therapy

Program: NA

Program Description: Three two-hour drama therapy sessions over three weeks using role-based interventions (integrating Jones' core processes, Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, the CoATT model, psychodrama and Landy's Role Theory and role assessment)

Program (Study) Location: Transitional living facility for formerly incarcerated women, Massachusetts

Study Published: 2025

Participant Type: Formerly incarcerated women with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

Sample Size: 8

Data Type: Direct observation, field notes, and artistic responses

Evaluation Focus: Patterns in role transformations and engagement

Summary of Impact: Results "indicate that drama therapy fosters increased empathy, self-reflection, and personal empowerment, while also challenging internalized stigma and external labels imposed by society. . . [allowing [participants] to redefine their identities, adopt new relational perspectives, and develop a greater sense of community and support" (p. 35). "The results suggest that drama therapy can serve as a powerful tool for identity reformation and social reintegration among system-impacted individuals" (p. 2).

KEYWORDS: adult, drama therapy, identity, roles, reentry, women

22. Dum, Christopher P., Socia, Kelly M., George, Bengt and Neiderman, Halle M. (2021). ["The Effect of Reading Prisoner Poetry on Stigma and Public Attitudes: Results from a](#)

Multigroup Survey Experiment.” *The Prison Journal*.

Author Affiliations: Kent State University (Dum, George), University of Massachusetts-Lowell (Socia), American University of Beirut (Neiderman)

Artforms: Poetry, writing

Program: [ID-13 Prison Literacy Project](#)

Program (Study) Description: Study includes poetry written by participants in [ID-13 Prison Literacy Project](#) operating in several prisons in northeast Ohio.

Program (Study) Location: National/northeast Ohio

Study Published: 2021

Participant Type: Non-incarcerated U.S. adults 18 years and older

Sample Size: 1800 survey respondents, 450 from each of four different racial/ethnic groups: non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian and Hispanic

Data Type: Survey responses

Evaluation Focus: How engagement with written information about or by currently incarcerated people influences public opinion regarding stigmatization and reentry support. Respondents were exposed to one of five sources of written information: A CBS news story, a Huffington Post Story, a Research Brief, a set of two poems about incarceration written by a member of a prison writing group and a set of two “humanizing” poems written by a participant in a prison writing group.

Summary of Impact: The study yielded three main findings: 1. a negative correlation between stigma and reentry support; 2. a significant reduction in stigmatization associated with exposure to humanizing poems compared with other information sources; 3. Non-significant increased support for reentry among respondents exposed to any written information except the CBS News Story.

KEYWORDS: attitudes, poetry, public opinion, reentry, stigma, writing

23. Dunphy, K. (1999). [A creative arts performance program for incarcerated women](#). *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 26(1), 35-43.

Author Affiliations: Community arts dance specialist, Melbourne, Australia

Artforms: Movement, music, singing, visual arts, writing

Program: *Keeping the Faith - The Prison Project*

Program Description: *Keeping the Faith*, a program of the Pat Graney Company, is a multi-arts performance program consisting of sessions in dance, creative writing, singing and visual arts: “The Prison Project is an arts-based educational residency program designed to enable incarcerated women and girls to discover a sense of identity and to develop that identity within the context of community—through the vehicles of performance, video documentation and a published anthology of their writings. The Pat Graney Company has conducted this three-month program of movement, writing, and visual art in Washington State Corrections Centers for the past 15 years” Each workshop lasts three months (meeting twice a week) and culminates in a series of performances open to prison inmates, families, staff, and selected visitors.

Program (Study) Location: [Washington Corrections Center for Women](#), Gig Harbor, Washington

Study Published: 1999

Participant Type: Adult female inmates aged 15 to 40

Sample Size: NA

Data Type: Qualitative/interpretive inquiry: Interviews conducted with program director, staff and participants; questionnaires administered to inmates and staff; participant observations; analysis of inmates’ creative writing

Evaluation Focus: Benefits of participation in the program for inmates, artist facilitators, and staff, particularly in self-esteem, positive and creative life skills, and in the meaning of dance involvement.

Summary of Impact: Inmate participants self-reported increased self-esteem as a result of mastery of new skills. Other benefits reported were bonding with others, shared meaningful experiences and deepened friendships. Improved skills in conflict resolution, bonding, trust, and intimacy were reported by inmates and corroborated by staff. Staff also reported an increase in group collaboration. The program provided positive links with the outside world including, family and friends. Improvements benefited individuals, the general prison population as well as the wider community.

KEYWORDS: adult, creative writing, dance, *Keeping the Faith*, music, self esteem, singing, visual arts

24. Gussak, D. (2004). Art therapy with prison inmates: A pilot study. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 31(4), 245-259.

Author Affiliations: Florida State University

Artforms: Art therapy, drawing, visual arts

Program: NA

Program Description: A four-week pilot program during which inmates met twice a week in group art therapy sessions

Program (Study) Location: Medium-to-maximum-security correctional institution, Florida

Study Published: 2004

Participant Type: Adult male inmates aged 21-63

Sample Size: 39

Data Type: Quantitative, case studies: Quasi-experimental, pre- and post-survey by mental-health counselors; standardized art therapy assessment using the Format Elements Art Therapy Scale (FEATS).

Evaluation Focus: Changes in inmate behavior and attitude including improvement in mood, socialization and problem-solving abilities; inmates' interactions and compliance with prison rules and expectations

Summary of Impact: Improvements in attitude, mood, compliance with staff and rules and socialization skills were noted as well as a decrease in depressive symptoms. No improvement was indicated in problem-solving skills.

KEYWORDS: adult, art therapy, attitude, behavior, compliance, depression, drawing, mood, problem-solving, socialization, visual arts

25. Gussak, D. (2009). Comparing the effectiveness of art therapy in depression and locus of control of male and female inmates. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 36(4), 202-207.

Author Affiliations: The Florida State University

Artforms: Art therapy, drawing, visual arts

Program: NA

Program Description: Visual art therapy program

Program (Study) Location: Two medium-to-maximum-security adult correctional facilities, Florida

Study Published: 2009

Participant Type: Male and female adult inmates, aged 20-51

Sample Size: 147 female, 72 male

Data Type: Qualitative, Quantitative: Control group pre- and post-test design; psychological assessments using The Beck Inventory-Short form (BDI-II) and Adult

Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale (ANS)

Evaluation Focus: The study evaluated changes in mood and locus of control among both male and female inmates who participated in the arts program. It also looked at differences in outcomes between male and female participants.

Summary of Impact: Both male and female participants showed improvements in mood and locus of control. The data indicated a trend towards greater improvement in mood and internal locus of control for female inmates as a result of the participation in the visual art therapy program (p. 202).

KEYWORDS: adult, art therapy, depression, drawing, locus of control, mood, visual arts

26. Gussak, D. (2007). [The Effectiveness of Art Therapy in Reducing Depression in Prison Populations](#). *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 51(4), 444-60.

Author Affiliations: Florida State University

Artforms: Art therapy, drawing, visual arts

Program: NA

Program Description: A four-week pilot program during which inmates met twice a week in group art therapy sessions

Program (Study) Location: Medium-to-maximum-security adult male prison, Florida

Study Published: 2008

Participant Type: Adult male inmates, aged 21-63

Sample Size: Unspecified

Data Type: Quantitative, Qualitative: Control group pre-test/post-test assessments using Formal Elements Art Therapy Scale (FEATS), Beck Depression Inventory-Short Form (BDI-II) and Adult Nowicki Strickland Locus of Control Scale (ANS)

Evaluation Focus: The study evaluated changes in mood and locus of control among inmates.

Summary of Impact: This study combined data from two earlier studies by the same author: "Art therapy with prison inmates: A pilot study" (2004) and "The effects of art therapy with prison inmates: A follow-up study" (2006), both published in *The Arts in Psychotherapy*. The author concluded that while FEATS was more effective as a measurement tool in the pilot study than in the follow-up study, "ultimately, the results reflected a significant decrease in depressive symptoms in those inmates who participated in the program" (p. 444).

KEYWORDS: adult, art therapy, depression, drawing, locus of control, mood, visual arts

27. Gussak, D. (2009). [The effects of art therapy on male, female inmates: advancing the research base](#). *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 36(1), p. 5-12.

Author Affiliations: Florida State University

Artforms: Art therapy, drawing, visual arts

Program: NA

Program Description: Visual art therapy program

Program (Study) Location: Two medium-to-maximum-security adult correctional facilities, one female and one male, Florida

Study Published: 2008

Participant Type: Adult male and female inmates, aged 20-51

Sample Size: Unspecified

Data Type: Quantitative, Qualitative: Control group pre-test/post-test assessments using Formal Elements Art Therapy Scale (FEATS), Beck Depression Inventory-Short Form (BDI-II) and Adult Nowicki Strickland Locus of Control Scale (ANS)

Evaluation Focus: The study evaluated changes in mood and locus of control among both male and female inmates.

Summary of Impact: Results from FEATS did not yield supportive data; results of BDI-II and ANS supported the hypothesis that art therapy was effective in reducing depression and improving locus of control in the adult male and female inmates.

KEYWORDS: adult, art therapy, depression, drawing, locus of control, mood, visual arts

28. Gussak, D. (2006). [Effects of art therapy with prison inmates: A follow-up study](#). *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 33(3), 188-198.

Author Affiliations: Florida State University

Artforms: Art therapy, drawing, visual arts

Program: NA

Program Description: Visual art therapy program

Program (Study) Location: Medium-to-maximum-security correctional facility, Florida

Study Published: 2006

Participant Type: Adult male inmates aged 21-59

Sample Size: 16

Data Type: Qualitative, Case Study: Pre- and post-survey assessments by mental health counselors; standardized art therapy assessment using the Formal Elements Art Therapy Scale (FEATS), and psychological assessment using the Beck Depression Inventory-Short Form (BDI-II). Volunteers were randomly assigned to either the control group or the experimental group. The control group received no art therapy sessions. The experimental group attended group art therapy sessions over an eight-week period.

Evaluation Focus: Changes in inmate behavior and attitude, including changes in mood, socialization and problem-solving abilities; inmates' interactions and compliance with prison rules and expectations.

Summary of Impact: Results from the different assessment instruments were mixed. There was a marked improvement in mood as measured by BDI-II, but not as measured by FEATS. No changes in socialization or problem-solving abilities were indicated.

KEYWORDS: adult, art therapy, attitude, behavior, compliance, depression, drawing, mood, problem-solving, socialization

29. Halperin, R., Kessler, S. & Braunschweiger, D. (April 2012). [Rehabilitation Through the Arts: Impact on Participants' Engagement in Educational Programs](#). *The Journal of Correctional Education*, 63(1), 6-23.

Author Affiliations: Department of Psychology, Purchase College, State University of New York (SUNY)

Artforms: Drama, theater

Program: [Rehabilitation Through the Arts](#) (RTA)

Program Description: RTA was founded in 1996 at Sing Sing Correctional Facility in

New York State and now operates programs in theater, dance, creative writing, voice and visual arts in five New York State correctional facilities. In addition to developing inmates' reading, writing, and leadership skills, *RTA* claims that participants benefit by being part of a social network (p.10). Since its inception, over 200 inmates have participated in *RTA's* Sing Sing program.

Program (Study) Location: Sing Sing Correctional Facility, Ossining, New York

Study Published: 2012

Participant Type: Adult male inmates

Sample Size: 116 *RTA* participants, 118 controls

Data Type: Quantitative: Comparison (*RTA* participants) and control group data: entry date, birth date, race, crime category, educational degree at entry, first and second math and reading scores, educational degrees earned during imprisonment and enrollment in various educational programs over time.

Evaluation Focus: Impact of *RTA* on inmate participation in voluntary educational programs, and academic degree completion. *RTA* participants were compared to a sample of incarcerated men matched on age, ethnicity, crime, date of entry into prison, time served, and earliest release date.

Summary of Impact: The study found that arts programs may motivate those with long sentences to pursue educational degrees. Specifically, based on the experimental and control group findings:

- 57.6% of those who participated in the *RTA* program earned degrees beyond the GED while incarcerated, compared with 28.6% and 39.6% in control groups (p. 14).
- *RTA* participants spent about the same proportion of time engaged in GED programs as comparisons, but less time after joining *RTA* (due to degree attainment) (p. 15).
- *RTA* participants with a high-school diploma who were incarcerated spent proportionally more time engaged in college programs, but only after joining *RTA*, versus the comparison group (p. 15).

KEYWORDS: academic, adult, college, drama, education, GED, *Rehabilitation Through the Arts*, theater

30. Hart, M., Soape, E., Barlow, C., Torrech-Perez, M., Gussak, D.E. & Schubarth, A. (2023). [Expanding the IDEA: Ongoing- and Evolving-Evaluation of an Art Therapy in Prisons Program.](#) *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, first published online November 26, 2023, 1-14.

Author Affiliations: Florida State University (Hart, Soape, Barlow, Torrech-Perez, Gussak), Florida Department of Corrections, Tallahassee (Schubarth)

Artforms: Art therapy, drawing, visual arts

Program: Florida State University/Florida Department of Corrections Art Therapy in Prisons Program

Program Description: Art therapy services for prisoners with emotional and behavioral disabilities to help them overcome educational struggles

Program (Study) Location: Nine state prisons in Florida

Study Published: November 26, 2023

Participant Type: Male and female prisoners, ages ~18-49 (*This study included both adult and juvenile prisoners.)

Sample Size: 308

Data Type: Empirical, descriptive and qualitative inquiry of inmates' participation incorporating progress notes from art therapists, semi-structured discussions with institutional personnel and participants, disciplinary reports

Evaluation Focus: To "increase program participation and decrease incident and

disciplinary reports, [thus] removing the impediments that make obtaining an education inside the institution challenging.

Summary of Impact: Results varied by institution but overall researchers noted decreases in all categories of disciplinary reports while prisoners participated in the program versus when they did not. Type and number of settings was expanded

KEYWORDS: academic, adult, art therapy, attendance, drawing, disciplinary reports, education, juvenile, visual arts

31. Hart, S. (Ed.). (1983). *The arts in prison*. New York: Center for Advanced Study in Theater Arts, The City University.

Author Affiliations: Center for Advanced Study in Theatre Arts, Graduate School of the City University of New York

Artforms: Dance, drama, jewelry and miscellaneous arts and crafts, film, music, painting, sculpture, theater, video, writing

Program: *The Theater in Prisons Project (TTIPP)*

Program Description: From its inception in 1980, TTIPP worked to develop a comprehensive archive concerning arts programs and artist practitioners working with prison inmates and ex-inmates (p. 36). This study was designed to be the first of its kind to provide evidence of the impact of the arts in corrections.

Program (Study) Location: All U.S. states, except Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Massachusetts, Ohio, West Virginia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

Study Published: 1983

Participant Type: State and local correctional departments, individual correctional institutions

Sample Size: 88 institutions

Data Type: Survey

Evaluation Focus: Survey questions were designed to establish how much art and what type - specifically theater - was available through performances, workshops and residencies in institutions across the U.S. Questions related to the following areas of inquiry: (1) What programs are available, how did they develop, and how supported? (2) In what ways do the programs continue with the inmate-participant after he or she leaves the prison? and, (3) Are arts programs in correctional facilities perceived as beneficial? The report provides detailed data from survey results from each participating state and agency, including history of programs, funding, types of activities, and attitude towards the arts (p. 23-24).

Summary of Impact:

- Virtually all respondents viewed the arts programs positively, reporting that they reduced tension within the institution, enhanced interpersonal and vocational skills for inmate and ex-inmate participants and strengthened the participants' self-confidence and expanded their range of options in dealing with their world, both inside the institution and after release.
- Evidence of types of arts programs within correctional institutions included dance, drama, jewelry and miscellaneous arts and crafts, film, music, painting, sculpture, theater, video and writing.
- Fewer than 10 respondents knew whether inmates continued with arts programs after release.

KEYWORDS: adult, crafts, dance, film, interpersonal skills, jewelry, music, painting, sculpture, self-confidence, tension, theater, *The Theater in Prisons Project*, video, vocational skills, writing

32. Hassett, R. (n.d.). [Lynn-Lowell Statistics: 1992 through March 2002](#). *Changing Lives Through Literature*.

Author Affiliations: Assistant Chief Probation Officer, Lowell District Court, Massachusetts

Artforms: Bibliotherapy, literature

Program: [Changing Lives Through Literature](#) (CLTL), Lynn-Lowell Women's Program

Program Description: The Lynn-Lowell program, established in 1992, was the first CLTL program for female offenders. Two programs are run per year. Groups meet every other week for 14 weeks (seven sessions) at Middlesex Community College in Lowell, Massachusetts.

Program (Study) Location: Lowell and Lynn, Massachusetts

Study Published: Unpublished study, data collected 1992 through March 2002

Participant Type: Adult female probationers aged 19-48 years

Sample Size: 108

Data Type: Quantitative

Evaluation Focus: Recidivism, criminal activity

Summary of Impact:

- Reduced recidivism among CLTL participants: 40% of program graduates re-offended versus 48% of non-completers.
- Types of crimes differed between graduates and non-graduates:
 - 29.6% of new offenses committed by graduates were against people, versus 37.5% among non-graduates.
 - 25.9% of new crimes committed by graduates were property offenses, versus 43.75% among non-graduates.
 - 62.9% of graduates violated alcohol/drug laws versus 62% of non-graduates.
 - 44.4% of new crimes among graduates were misdemeanors vs 37.5% among non-graduates.

KEYWORDS: adult, bibliotherapy, *Changing Lives Through Literature*, criminal activity, literature, recidivism

33. Hongo, A., Katz, A. & Valenti K. (2013). [Art: Trauma to Therapy for Aging Female Prisoners](#). *Traumatology*.

Author Affiliations: University of Southern California

Artforms: Art therapy

Program: N.A.

Program Description: Six art-therapy expression workshops conducted by a volunteer group of therapist interns

Program (Study) Location: California women's prison

Study Published: August 3, 2015

Participant Type: Female prisoners aged 50 to 76

Sample Size: 20

Data Type: Qualitative—pre- and post-questionnaires, thematic analysis

Evaluation Focus: The effect of creative projects on trauma

Summary of Impact: Analysis of the questionnaires revealed five general themes regarding the effect of art therapy workshops on participants: potential to dream (ability to imagine life on the outside); feeling connected; mutual understanding; releasing feelings; and unselfish concern (including fostering teamwork and social interaction).

KEYWORDS: adult, aging, art therapy, community, elderly, emotions, social, teamwork, women

34. Im, Vitalis and Pinto, Rogério M. (2024). [Expanding Knowledge About Music and Well-Being in Carceral Settings: A Methodological Review](#). *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, January 9, 2024, 1-18.

Author Affiliations: School of Social Work, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Artforms: Music

Program: Multiple previously evaluated programs on the role and influence of musical practices on well-being in carceral settings

Program Description: N/A

Program (Study) Location: N/A

Participant Type: Mostly adult inmates; one study involved incarcerated juveniles

Sample Size: 55 previous studies

Study Published: 2024

Data Type: Review of existing literature base using ProQuest, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and PsycInfo

Evaluation Focus: Key methodological procedures used in all 55 studies

Summary of Impact: The “review indicates that there is difficulty in conducting research in prisons due to limitations imposed on researchers, a paucity of randomized-control trials, and limited generalizability of results due to the heterogeneity of methodological approaches. We suggest that the literature base would benefit from increased attention to issues related to sampling procedures, research questions related to race and gender identity, as well as the delineation between the types of musical practices utilized by music interventions.”

KEYWORDS: adult, juvenile, methodology, music

35. Im, Vitalis and Pinto, Rogério M. (2023). [Music and well-being in carceral settings: a scoping review](#). *Art & Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice*, published on line September 12, 2023.

Author Affiliations: School of Social Work, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Artforms: Music

Program: Multiple previously evaluated programs on the role and influence of musical practices on well-being in carceral settings

Program Description: N/A

Program (Study) Location: N/A

Participant Type: Mostly adult inmates; one study involved incarcerated juveniles

Sample Size: 55 previous studies

Study Published: 2023

Data Type: Review of existing literature base using ProQuest, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and PsycInfo

Evaluation Focus: The impact of musical practices on the well-being (defined as life satisfaction, autonomy and purpose) of incarcerated individuals.

Summary of Impact: The authors found that musical practices hold the potential to improve well-being and identity formation but also to harm incarcerated participants. Specifically, musical practices:

- “positively influence self-esteem and sociality which may facilitate processes of identity transformation” (p. 8)
- “may be conduits of conflict of disciplinary power . . . a source of social disconnection” (p. 9)

KEYWORDS: adult, identity, juvenile, music, social connectedness, well-being

36. Inzana, Victoria (2023). “[Performing rehabilitation: Reentry, art, and identity](#).” *Punishment & Society*, Vol. 3.

Author Affiliations: Sam Houston State University (research completed while doctoral candidate at University of Missouri-St. Louis)

Artforms: Drama, theater

Program: Prison Play Program

Program Description: PPP is "a community-based nonprofit theater program . . . that provides performance art involvement for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people."
Program (Study) Location: Mid-sized, Midwestern city
Study Published: 2025
Participant Type: Adult individuals recently released from prison
Sample Size: 15
Data Type: In-depth and semi-structured interviews
Evaluation Focus: Implications of theater role-taking on identity transformation for recently released individuals

Summary of Impact: Study found that "theater role-taking provides the gateway to personal identity role-taking at three levels: the self, the family, and the broader society. At each level individuals are simultaneously accessing the roles of the 'agentic self,' 'the responsible family member' and 'the productive citizen.'" This, in turn, has implications on presentation of self when reentering society.

KEYWORDS: adult, drama, identity, role-taking, social roles, theater

37. Jarjoura, R. G., & Krumholz, S. T. (1998). Combining Bibliotherapy and Positive Role Modeling as an Alternative to Incarceration. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 28 (1/2), 127-139.

Author Affiliations: Indiana University (Jarjoura); University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth (Krumholz)
Artforms: Bibliotherapy, literature
Program: *Changing Lives Through Literature* (CLTL), University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth
Program Description: CLTL provides an alternative to incarceration for repeat, high-risk offenders and "seeks to build self-esteem by enhancing participants' communication skills, sharpening their analytical skills and providing them with a forum for discussing personal concerns without having to recount personal experiences. Participants selected by the court receive intensive probation, pre-employment/job placement services and meet every other week on a university campus to discuss contemporary literature. The readings and the discussions mirror themes the participants may be dealing with in their own lives, such as violence, masculinity and individual identity. At the conclusion of the bibliotherapeutic portion of the program, local businesspeople meet with participants to share their own life experiences and stories of success.
Program (Study) Location: Southeastern Massachusetts
Study Published: 1998
Participant Type: Male adult high-risk probationers
Sample Size: 72 (32 participants, 40 controls)
Data Type: Quantitative, Qualitative: Analysis of criminal records
Evaluation Focus: Recidivism, individual growth, self-esteem

Summary of Impact:

- Recidivism rate of 18.75% in study group compared with 45% in control group.
- Participants self-reported that the program had a long-term positive impact on their lives.

KEYWORDS: adult, attitude, behavior, bibliotherapy, *Changing Lives Through Literature*, communication, individual growth, literature, reading, recidivism, reconviction, self-confidence, self-esteem, sense of accomplishment, tolerance

38. Kartikaningsih, N. et al. The Impact of an Expressive Writing and Storytelling Program on Ex-Offenders: A Pilot Study, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, published online July 19, 2023

Author Affiliations: The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Artforms: writing, storytelling

Program: Six-week writing and storytelling program

Program Description: Pilot storytelling and expressive writing program

Program (Study) Location: Offender Alumni Association, Birmingham, AL

Participant Type: Community living ex-offenders

Sample Size: Nine adults

Study Published: 2023

Data Type: Quantitative, mixed-method, pre- and post-test

Evaluation Focus: Psychological recovery as measured by Recovery Assessment Scale, well-being, hope, social support, and loneliness.

Summary of Impact: "Significant increase in participants' psychological recovery." Participants also expressed that the program provided a safe space for processing and expressing inner feelings, for connecting with peers, and for adjusting their way of thinking.

KEYWORDS: adult, expressive writing, hope, loneliness, psychological recovery, social support, storytelling, well-being

39. Kelly, W. R. (n.d.) An Evaluation of the Changing Lives Through Literature Program. Submitted To: Dr. Lawrence Jablecki, Director Brazoria County Community Supervision and Corrections Department.

Author Affiliations: University of Texas

Artforms: Bibliotherapy, literature

Program: Brazoria County Community Supervision and Corrections Department

Changing Lives Through Literature (CLTL) Program

Program Description: The CLTL program in Brazoria County, Texas was adapted from the original Massachusetts program and "uses literature as a vehicle for cognitive and behavioral change." The Texas program lasts six weeks and consists of weekly, two-hour meetings during which participants engage in facilitated discussion of a reading assignment "focused on the development over time of cognitive skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, as well as self examination, insight, awareness, etc." Meetings take place on the campus of a local community college. Reading assignments differ by gender; males typically read philosophy such as Plato and Socrates, and females read contemporary gender-targeted works such as Toni Morrison and Zora Neale Hurston.

Program (Study) Location: Brazoria County, Texas

Study Published: n.d.

Participant Type: Probationers, Probation Officers, and Judges

Sample Size: 49 Probationers, 8 Probation Officers, 2 Judges

Data Type: Qualitative: focus groups

Evaluation Focus: Perceptions of CLTL program by former inmates focusing on how CLTL changed or impacted their lives. For Probation Officers and Judges, the focus of the evaluation was on the overall perception of the CLTL program.

Summary of Impact:

- Respondents' rating of program and components of program on a 1 to 10 scale (1 = poor, and 10 = excellent):
 - Overall Program: 9.4.
 - Assigned Readings: 8.5.
 - Class Discussions: 9.4.
 - Program Format (location/length): 9.0.
 - Participants: 8.9.
 - Instructor: 9.7.
- Participants reported:
 - Increased interest and motivation to read and learn.
 - Increased tolerance and self-esteem.
 - A sense of accomplishment.
 - Better control over impulsive behaviors.
 - Increased awareness and understanding of the consequences of their behavior.

KEYWORDS: adult, behavior, bibliotherapy, *Changing Lives Through Literature*, consequences, impulsive behavior, learning, literature, perceptions, reading, self-esteem, sense of accomplishment, tolerance

40. Kennedy, J. Hampo, M. Rising, S., Grommon, E. (2020). [Process Evaluation of the Indiana Prison Writers Workshop: A report to the Indiana Prison Writers Workshop](#). Center for Health and Justice Research, Indiana University Public Policy Institute and Indiana Department of Correction.

Author Affiliations: Center for Health and Justice Research, Indiana University Public Policy Institute

Artforms: Creative writing, playwriting

Program: Indiana Prison Writers Workshop

Program Description: IPWW offers a "12-week creative workshop to correctional facilities and communities impacted by violence." Curriculum includes basic writing skills, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, rhetoric and playwriting

Program (Study) Location: Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop Minnesota; Prison Writing & Critical Practice Internship, New Mexico; Prison Arts Project, California; Prison Writes Initiative, Mississippi; InsideOUT Writers California; Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project Alabama

Study Published: 2020

Participant Type: IPWW program facilitators; formerly incarcerated adult male IPWW participants

Sample Size: Two facilitators; six participants

Data Type: 12-item pre- and post-survey, 10 of which use Likert scale; data related to recruitment, attendance, program curriculum, fidelity of activities to program model, participant demographics, program participation and case notes

Evaluation Focus: assess program fidelity, develop new survey tools, collect program data

Summary of Impact:

- Program served at least 84 male participants, a larger proportion of Black or African American and Hispanic/Latinx relative to racial and ethnic makeup of Indiana's general prison population. Average age late 30s with a high school diploma or equivalency
- Participants motivations for joining vary
- Participants report that "writing is important, allows communication that cannot be said in other ways, and brings joy. Participants [also] seek an opportunity to write on their own in a structured setting and to seek feedback

- Participants report that the program “provides a break from daily routines, serves as an outlet for expression, and creates a sort of micro-family in which participants can share their work and show vulnerability.”
- Secondary analysis indicated increased enrollment in addiction recovery services, steady employment in-prison or post-release, 38% reduction in disciplinary infractions among participants

KEYWORDS: addiction recovery, adult, behavior, creative writing, employment, Indiana Prison Writers Workshop, male

41. Kerchner, Jody L. (2024). Documentary songwriting in prison: ‘I am good ‘bout myself,’ *International Journal of Community Music*, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 233-248.

Author Affiliations: Oberlin College & Conservatory of Music

Artforms: music, songwriting

Program: Oberlin Music at Grafton (OMAG) Prison Choir

Program Description: Five-day workshop involving Documentary Songwriters (DocSong) collaborative songwriting pedagogy

Program (Study) Location: Grafton Correctional Institution, Grafton, Ohio

Participant Type: Adult male

Sample Size: 14

Study Published: 2024

Data Type: Qualitative case-study portraiture design

Evaluation Focus: Prison residents’ songwriting experiences while participating in DocSong group method and the role of the group in the DocSong songwriting experience in a prison

Summary of Impact: Residents participating in program “experienced individual actualization and collective liberation and liberated and restorative music creativity. . . The individuals’ interactions within the group suggested that confidence, patience and the willingness to share were also practised within the songwriting context.”

KEYWORDS: confidence, documentary Songwriters, patience, songwriting

42. Littman, Danielle Maude and Sliva, Shannon. (2021). “The walls came down:” A Mixed-Methods Multi-Site Prison Arts Program Evaluation. *Justice Evaluation Journal*, 1-23.

Author Affiliations: University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work

Artforms: Creative writing, literature, movement, music, theater

Program: [University of Denver Prison Arts Initiative](#) (DU PAI)

Program Description: DU PAI is a partnership between the University of Denver and the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) and currently offers programming at 11 CDOC facilities. Programs are semester-long and include a newspaper program, arts-based workshops (theater, creative writing, music, literature, movement, dance and cross-disciplinary), full-length production processes and a podcast. The DU PAI program strives to create “creative and collaborative learning experiences that enrich the lives of incarcerated people” and “build collaborative communities that serve as spaces for therapeutic healing and innovative thinking” (p. 4).

Program (Study) Location: 8 Colorado Department of Corrections facilities

Study Published: January 7, 2021

Participant Type: Male and female adult offenders

Sample Size: 146 pretest; 117 posttest

Data Type: Mixed methods quantitative and qualitative pre- and post-test evaluations

Evaluation Focus: Impact of the arts program particularly on artistic identity, connection and community, skill attainment and social emotional growth

Summary of Impact: Quantitative findings included statistically significant improvements in measures of self-efficacy, community connection and skill attainment. Qualitative results indicated that participants experienced learning, growth and discovery; opening up; authentic self-expression; empathy and perspective taking; belonging and connection; creative collaboration; and joy and freedom. The results indicated that the programs fostered participation, caring, respect, and emotional involvement.

KEYWORDS: adult, artistic identity, belonging community, conflict resolution, connection cross-disciplinary, creative writing, emotional growth, empathy, identity, literacy, movement, music, participation, problem solving, respect, self-efficacy, skill attainment, social relations, theater, University of Denver Prison Arts Initiative

43. Littman, Danielle; Sliva, Shannon; & Lin, Jeffrey (2021). [Closer to the problem: can a virtual prison arts event foster psychological proximity to the issue of incarceration?](#) *Contemporary Justice Review*.

Author Affiliations: University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work (Littman, Sliva); University of Denver Department of Criminology and Sociology (Lin)

Artforms: Drama, fine arts, music, theater

Program: University of Denver [Prison Arts Initiative](#) (DU PAI)

Program Description: DU PAI is a partnership between the University of Denver and the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) and currently offers programming at 11 CDOC facilities. Programs are semester-long and include a newspaper program, arts-based workshops (theater, creative writing, music, literature, movement, dance and cross-disciplinary), full-length production processes and a podcast. The DU PAI program strives to create "creative and collaborative learning experiences that enrich the lives of incarcerated people" and "build collaborative communities that serve as spaces for therapeutic healing and innovative thinking" (p. 4)

Program (Study) Location: A/Live Inside, a three-hour virtual event on YouTube hosted by DU PAI in November 2020. The event featured pre-recorded and live musical and dramatic performances by incarcerated people, a fine arts exhibit and conversations with incarcerated people.

Study Published: 2021

Participant Type: Incarcerated and non-incarcerated viewers

Sample Size: 339 viewers completed the pre-test portion, 227 completed the post-test survey

Data Type: Systematic methods, pre- and post-test surveys. "The survey used a

seven-point Likert scale to assess whether attendees felt incarceration was harmful (1) versus beneficial (7), and unnecessary (1) versus necessary (7).” (p. 8)

Evaluation Focus: To address how the program theory of change was realized in relation to the live event, the authors considered two broad questions:

Does attending the A/Live Inside virtual arts event foster psychological proximity to incarcerated individuals and issues of incarceration among the general public?

Is increased psychological proximity associated with shifts in attitudes towards, and intentions to act regarding, issues of incarceration?

Summary of Impact: The authors state that “following the event, A/Live Inside attendees demonstrated statistically significant increases in cognitive proximity (on two of three measures) and emotional proximity, found incarceration less necessary and more harmful, and reported increased intentions to act on reshaping issues of incarceration in the future. Those who had not previously visited prison experienced significantly greater changes in cognitive and emotional proximity than those who had, but reported similar levels of change related to attitudes and intended behaviors as other attendees.” The authors conclude that they “found compelling evidence that virtual arts events do increase psychological proximity, shift attitudes, and shape intentions to act – particularly among attendees who had never been inside prisons before.”

KEYWORDS: adult, drama, fine arts, music, psychological proximity, theater

44. Melnick, M. (1984). Skills through drama: The use of professional techniques in the treatment and education of prison and ex-offender populations. *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama and Sociometry*, 37(3), 104-117.

Author Affiliations: New York City-based private consultant at time of study, presently at New York State Psychiatric Institute/Columbia University

Artforms: Drama, psychodrama, theater

Program: *Skills through Drama*

Program Description: The *Skills through Drama* program employed professional theater techniques to teach reading, writing, grammar and communication skills. Specifically, participants were instructed to:

- Create an improvisational set-up with a partner
- Act out the set-up
- Transcribe one’s own scene
- Edit the scene
- Help another student transcribe or edit
- View another student’s scene

Program (Study) Location: Adult Learning Center, Queens House of Detention

Study Published: 1984

Participant Type: Adult inmates and ex-offenders

Sample Size: 300+

Data Type: Quantitative

- Pre- and post-participation administration of California Achievement Test
- Enrollment rates between 1975 and 1976 Fiscal Years
- Recidivism rates of 1978-79 drama workshop participants seven months after workshop

Evaluation Focus: Participation and effectiveness of the *Skills through Drama*

program related to basic educational skills and outcomes.

Summary of Impact:

- Number of students participating in the GED program more than doubled (from 121 students in 1975 to 349 in 1976) while the total number of student hours spent in the program increased from 22,880 hours in 1975 to 47,376 hours in 1976.
- 69% of participants stayed with the workshop even after it terminated its affiliation with the Adult Learning Center.
- At the end of the seven months, 7.15% of participants had been convicted on a first charge; 14.30% fled to avoid trial; 7.15% returned to jail on a second post-workshop charge; 71.40% were regularly employed and not charged with a second offense. This is compared with a national average of 85% of those released from prison experiencing rearrest within a year, most of those within the first four months of release.

KEYWORDS: academic achievement, adult, attendance, communication, drama, employment, psychodrama, reading, recidivism, *Skills through Drama*, theater, writing

45. Messerschmidt, Edward, D. (2017). [Change Is Gonna Come: A mixed methods examination of people's attitudes toward prisoners after experiences with a prison choir](#). Boston University College of Fine Arts, Boston, MA.

Author Affiliations: Boston University

Artforms: Choir, music, singing

Program: Doctoral Dissertation

Program Description: Community-member and prison choir

Program (Study) Location: A Midwestern prison choir concert and the internet

Study Published: 2017

Participant Type: Non-incarcerated volunteer singers from four prison choirs; community choir members with no prior prison experience (controls); non-incarcerated adult audience members at a prison choir concert.

Sample Size: 41 non-incarcerated volunteer singers; 19 community controls 78 non-incarcerated audience members.

Data Type: Mixed-method-qualitative/quantitative using Attitude Toward Prisoners Scale (ATPS). In part 1 of the study, the volunteer singers completed the ATPS and answered open-ended questions after performing with a joint community-prison choir. The control group completed the ATPS after performing with a non-prison-based choir. In part 2, audience members completed the ATPS before and after attending a community-prison choir concert. They also answered open-ended questions regarding their experience.

Evaluation Focus: "The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of (a) singing with incarcerated choir members and (b) listening to a live prison choir performance, on non-incarcerated people, focusing particularly on the effects of such experiences on participants' attitudes towards prisoners." Research questions were:

- How do the ATPS scores of the volunteer prison choir singers compare to the ATPS scores of the control group? What is the relationship between participation in a prison choir and ATPS scores?
- What relationship, if any, is there between the number of concerts the volunteer singers have sung with a prison choir and their ATPS scores?

- What changes, if any, are there between audience members' pre-test and post-test responses to the ATPS (Melvin et al., 1985)?
- What effects, if any, do volunteer singers and audience members report regarding their experiences with a prison choir?

Summary of Impact: The research found that non-incarcerated people can change their attitudes toward prisoners through experiences with a prison choir. Specific findings include:

- Part 1: A non-significant difference between the ATPS scores of non-incarcerated volunteer prison-choir singers and non-prison-based community choristers; 69.2% of the volunteer prison choir singers reported that their attitudes toward prisoners had grown more positive since joining a prison choir.
- Part 2: ATPS scores of audience members were significantly more positive after attending the prison choir concert.

KEYWORDS: adult, choir, music, singing, social interactions, stigma

46. Moller, L. (2011). Project Slam: Rehabilitation through Theater at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. *The International Journal of the Arts in Society*, 5(5), 9-30.

Author Affiliations: John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, NY

Artforms: Drama, theater

Program: *Rehabilitation Through the Arts* (RTA).

Program Description: RTA conducts theater, dance, creative writing, voice and visual art programs in five New York State prisons. The theater component consists of two productions mounted each year, one original play written by an inmate and one established play. Plays are performed for the inmate population as full-scale productions complete with costumes, lighting, and set, with roughly 400 inmates in attendance at each performance (p.14).

Program (Study) Location: Sing Sing Correctional Facility, Ossining, New York

Study Published: 2011

Participant Type: Adult male inmates

Sample Size: 65 (36 participants, 29 control)

Data Type: Quantitative: Coping Responses Inventory, Adult Form Manual, and the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory

Evaluation Focus: The study examined the impact of RTA on the attitudes and behavior of inmate participants.

Summary of Impact: Findings suggested that:

- The longer the inmate was in the RTA program, the fewer violations he committed.
- RTA participation was associated with a significant decrease in frequency and severity of infractions, as reflected in institutional records (p.23).
- RTA participants had security classifications lowered more often, and they participated in more programs through the duration of the study.
- The amount of time inmates were active in RTA was correlated with both negative and positive outcomes:
 - A longer period of participation predicted a higher level of social responsibility.
 - Those who participated intensively in RTA had higher positive-coping scores at both pre- and post-test points; however, the differences were not

- statistically significant.
- Increases in positive-coping scores approached significance for inmates who participated less intensively in the program and for the control group.

KEYWORDS: adult, anger, coping skills, disciplinary infractions, discipline, drama, *Rehabilitation Through the Arts*, rules violations, social responsibility, theater, violence

47. Okelola, Valerie and Irvine, Angela. (2015). Impact Justice: Evaluating the Actor's [sic] Gang.

Author Affiliations: Impact Justice

Artforms: Theater, Drama

Program: [The Actors' Gang Prison Project](#)

Program Description: The Prison Project is the outreach arm of The Actors' Gang, the theater troupe founded by actor Tim Robbins. The program conducts at least three eight-week programs each year inside California's prison system.

Program (Study) Location: Selected California correctional facilities

Study Published: 2015

Study Published: Unpublished research

Participant Type: Adult inmates: 41% Black, 33% Hispanic, 16% White, 10% "other" male maximum-security psychiatric inmates, 47% sex offenders, 53% non-sex offenders, mean age 34.5 years

Sample Size: 49

Data Type: Quantitative. This study "analyzed data from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on individuals who participated in The Actors' Gang Prison Project between November of 2010 and February of 2015. Impact Justice conducted preliminary analysis to develop a demographic profile of program participants and conducted statistical tests to explore changes in the number of disciplinary incidents over time (called '115's')."

Evaluation Focus: Effect on disciplinary infractions among participants.

Summary of Impact: "Results indicate that the mean number of 115 incidences decreases over time. The number of 115 incidents varies among participant (between 0 and 34 incidents) but overall the number of incidents decreases over time. Prior to participation, prisoners that participated in Actor's [sic] Gang were punished for an average of 5.31 disciplinary incidents. After participating, prisoners participating in Actor's [sic] Gang were punished for .59 disciplinary incidents. The results illustrate an 89% decrease in disciplinary incidents over time."

KEYWORDS: adult, disciplinary infractions, drama, theater

48. Olson, L. Des Vignes, D., McLean, A., Wester, B. Nwatu, U. (2025). "[Indiana Prison Writers Workshop: The Power of Gorup Cohesion and Creative Expression among Incarcerated Individuals](#)." *Journal of Prison Education Research*.

Author Affiliations: University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa (Olson); Indiana Prison Writers Workshop (Des Vignes); University of Alabama (McLean, Wester, Nwatu)

Artforms: Creative writing, playwriting

Program: Indiana Prison Writers Workshop

Program Description: IPWW offers a "12-week creative workshop to correctional facilities and communities impacted by violence." Curriculum includes basic writing skills, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, rhetoric and playwriting

Study Published: 2025

Program (Study) Location: Nine correctional facilities in three states

Study Published: Journal of Prison Education and Research

Participant Type: Incarcerated adults

Sample Size: 149 participants answered questions on workshop expectations and goals prior to workshop beginning, 115 responded to questions at workshop conclusion

Data Type: Open-ended qualitative surveys

Evaluation Focus: technical writing skills, group cohesion

Summary of Impact: "Quantitative data demonstrates the effectiveness of IPWW in teaching wiring skills and reflects participants agreement that the workshops provide opportunities to share their work and receive feedback from peers and the facilitator. Five themes emerged from the qualitative data: 1) self-expression, 2) skill development, 3) self-reflection, 4) perspective, and 5) therapeutic.

KEYWORDS: adult, creative writing, fiction, group cohesion, nonfiction, perspective, playwriting, rhetoric, self-reflection self-expression, self-reflection, skill development

49. Parker, Dana. (2022). "[How do Arts Programs Facilitate Emotion Regulation in the Prison Setting?](#)" Unpublished senior thesis. Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut.

Author Affiliations: Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut

Artforms: general arts

Program: N/A

Program Description: N/A

Program (Study) Location: N/A

Study Published: 2022

Participant Type: Formerly incarcerated adult male and female participants who had participated in arts programs while incarcerated

Sample Size: 29 individuals; 24 had participated in arts programs while in prison, five after release

Data Type: Participant responses to three validated measures: the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire Short-Form (CERQ-Short), the Emotion Regulation Strategies for Artistic Creative Activities (ERS-ACA) and Self-expression and Emotion Regulation in Art Therapy Scale (SERATS)

Evaluation Focus: Effects of arts-based interventions on emotion regulation (ER), specifically the impact of time in prison/arts programs, gender and specific art forms on emotion regulation.

Summary of Impact: The study found that "[r]entry and prison arts programs provide an opportunity for rehabilitation that for rehabilitation that facilitates healthier emotion regulation (ER), relationship building, and self-esteem." Women employed ER strategies more often than men and all arts participants used positive refocusing but there was no significant difference between more years spent in an arts program and ER.

KEYWORDS: adult, emotion regulation, prison arts programs, reentry, rehabilitation, relationship building, self-esteem

50. Pecenco, Laura (2015). "[Paint in the Can: Creating Art and Doing Gender in Prison.](#)" University of California, San Diego.

Author Affiliations: University of California, San Diego.

Artforms: Visual arts (mural making, painting, drawing, bookbinding, block printing), music

Program: Prison arts programs across California.

Program Description: The arts program that was the subject of this ethnography was created by the researcher/author. The class met twice per week for three hours at a time (a minimum of six hours per week) at the prison.

Program (Study) Location: Adult medium/maximum correctional facility, Southern California (ethnography); California (interviews)

Study Published: 2015

Participant Type: Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated adult male participants, prison arts program instructors, former prison arts program instructors

Sample Size: 56 incarcerated individuals (participant observation), 52 interviewees (31 incarcerated and eight formerly incarcerated adult males and 13 prison arts program staff members), 264 publicly available artworks created by incarcerated artists

Data Type: Mixed qualitative methods: Ethnography/participant observation (450+ hours), in-depth interviews, content analysis

Evaluation Focus: Impact of participation in prison arts programs on performance of gender

Summary of Impact: Prison arts programs provide safer environments within the prison, allowing incarcerated participants to shed the hypermasculine imperative that is present in more public areas of the prison. Through the process of "artistization," they adopt an alternative artist identity, which encourages protecting the arts program and growing as an artist via sharing supplies, thoughts and emotions across gender, racial, class, age, disability, sexual orientation and other boundaries.

KEYWORDS: adult, age, class, disability, gender hypermasculinity, hypermasculine imperative, identity, intersectionality, music, visual arts

51. Reiter, Sherry. (2010). ["Poets-behind-bars: A creative "righting" project for prisoners and poetry therapists-in-training."](#) *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, 23(4), 215-238.

Author Affiliations: Creative Righting Center, New York City and Touro College, Hofstra University, Long Island, NY

Artforms: Creative writing, poetry

Program: Poets-Behind-Bars (PBB)

Program Description: PBB is a long-distance writing program in which poetry therapy trainees mentor poets-behind-bars.

Program (Study) Location: Indiana State Prison, Michigan City, IN

Study Published: December 2010

Participant Type: Male adults incarcerated in male maximum-security facilities

Sample Size: 8

Data Type: Qualitative: pre- and post-questionnaires. This study was designed to "assess changes in personal growth, emotional balance, and increased self-expression over a period of a year and a half" among inmates participating in the poetry program.

Evaluation Focus: Changes in personal growth, emotional balance and self-expression

Summary of Impact: Researchers noted a "slight increase in emotional balance" but concluded that "the number of questionnaires completed [were] too few to show any scientific validity. "Soft evidence" came from participant commentary on final

questionnaires, which reflected perceptions of enhanced creativity, expressiveness, emotional release, communication and poetry skills.

KEYWORDS: adult, creative writing, creativity, emotions, poetry

52. Richards, J. M., Beal, W. E., Seagal, J. D., & Pennebaker, J. (2000). [Effects of Disclosure of Traumatic Events on Illness Behavior Among Psychiatric Prison Inmates](#). *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 109(1), 159-60.

Author Affiliations: Department of Psychology, Stanford University (Richards); Forest Institute of Professional Psychology (Beal); Department of Psychology, University of Texas at Austin (Seagal and Pennebaker)

Artforms: Creative and trauma writing

Program: NA

Program Description: This study examined the effects of trauma writing on maximum-security, psychiatric prison inmates. Maximum-security psychiatric inmates, a group noted for high use of health services, were offered writing sessions over the course of three days.

Program (Study) Location: Psychiatric correctional venue, Midwest U.S.

Study Published: 2000

Participant Type: Adult males in a maximum-security psychiatric facility: 47% sex offenders, 53% non-sex offenders, mean age 34.5 years

Sample Size: 98

Data Type: Quantitative: participants in the writing conditions completed a Symptom and Emotion Self-Report Survey after each day's writing. This study was designed to test the hypothesis that "psychiatric prison inmates who wrote about traumatic events for 3 consecutive days would show a decrease in infirmary visits from 6 weeks pre- to 6 weeks post-writing; and that participants who either wrote about trivial topics or did not write at all would not evince such health improvement" (p.157). Participants were assigned to one of three conditions. Those in the first group were asked to write about their deepest thoughts and feelings surrounding upsetting experiences (trauma writing condition). Those in the first control group were asked to write about an assigned trivial topic (trivial writing control). Participants in the second control group went about their daily routine without writing (no-writing control). Both writing groups wrote for 20 minutes a day for three consecutive days.

Evaluation Focus: Health effects of writing for psychiatric prison inmates

Summary of Impact: This study extends previous research on the health benefits associated with writing about traumatic events to a psychiatric population of maximum-security prison inmates (p. 159). Results of the study found that:

- Trauma-writing participants visited the infirmary less often after writing compared with the two control groups.
- Those incarcerated for sex crimes were significantly more likely to show health improvement after trauma writing than non-sex offenders.
- A decrease in infirmary visits pre-to post-writing.

KEYWORDS: adult, creative writing, emotions, health, psychiatric, sex offenders, symptoms

53. Rojiani, R., Junn, A., Wood, M., Gordon, K.L. and Sells, D. (2021). [Group drumming for incarcerated men may improve community](#)

reintegration: a mixed methods pilot study. *Journal of Experimental Criminology.*

Author Affiliations: Harvard Medical School, Yale School of Medicine, Yale Program for Recovery and Community Health

Artforms: Drumming, music

Program: NA

Program Description: Eight weeks of group drumming sessions, each weekly session lasting approximately one hour.

Program (Study) Location: Two halfway house work-release programs, New Haven, Connecticut

Study Published: May 13, 2021

Participant Type: Adult male probationers

Sample Size: 28

Data Type: Quantitative and qualitative exploratory pilot investigation. Twenty-eight residents were randomized to the group drumming treatment arm or to treatment as usual. Interviews to assess self-reported benefits took place after completion of eight-week session.

Evaluation Focus: Halfway house retention rate, self-reported benefit

Summary of Impact: Average attendance was 6.9 (out of a total of 8). Retention rate in the drumming group was 100% compared with 63.3% in the control group. Post-session interviews revealed that drumming served as a method for coping with stress, as an opportunity for connection through building relationships and experiencing communion and as an avenue for personal growth, particularly toward re-humanization and self-empowerment.

KEYWORDS: adult, community, drumming, halfway house, music, parole, probation, personal growth, relationship, retention rate, reintegration, self-empowerment, stress

54. St. Pierre, W. (n.d.). Changing Lives through Literature: New Bedford Evaluation.

Author Affiliations: Probation Officer, New Bedford District Court

Artforms: Bibliotherapy, literature

Program: New Bedford, Massachusetts Changing Lives Through Literature (CLTL)

Program Description: The New Bedford CLTC program has completed six cycles of students since 2001. Seminars involve 8-10 weekly sessions each lasting two hours and involving six-10 single-gender students, most of whom are court-involved. Some programs are with halfway houses. Texts include *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros and *The Rules of the Road* by Joan Bauer for girls and *Brian's Winter* by Gary Paulsen and *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien for boys. Seminars usually end with a class project.

Program (Study) Location: New Bedford, Massachusetts

Study Published: n.d.

Participant Type: Adult male probationers

Sample Size: 68

Data Type: Quantitative: Analysis of criminal activity

Evaluation Focus: Misdemeanors, felonies, criminal activity, recidivism

Summary of Impact: The analysis of 10 consecutive CLTL seminars that took place from April 1991 through January 1995 found:

- Overall 68% decrease in criminal activity by probationers after completing the program
- Reduction in number of felonies ranged from 70.8% to 100% depending on the

- group
- Reduction in the number of misdemeanors ranged from 24% to 100%

KEYWORDS: adult, bibliotherapy, *Changing Lives Through Literature*, felonies, literature, misdemeanors, recidivism

55. Schutt, R., K., Deng, X. and Stoehr, T. (2013) Using Bibliotherapy to Enhance Probation and Reduce Recidivism. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 52, 181-197.

Author Affiliations: Department of Sociology, University of Massachusetts Boston

Artforms: Bibliotherapy, literature

Program: *Changing Lives Through Literature* (CLTL)

Program Description: CLTL provides an alternative to incarceration for repeat, high-risk offenders and seeks to build self-esteem by "enhancing participants' communication skills, sharpening their analytical skills and providing them with a forum for discussing personal concerns without having to recount personal experiences." Participants selected by the court receive intensive probation, pre-employment/job placement services and meet every other week on a university campus to discuss contemporary literature. The readings and the discussions mirror themes the participants may be dealing with in their own lives, such as violence, masculinity and individual identity. At the conclusion of the bibliotherapeutic portion of the program, local businesspeople meet with participants to share their own life experiences and stories of success.

Program (Study) Location: Massachusetts

Study Published: 2013

Participant Type: Adult male and female probationers, probation officers, instructors, judges

Sample Size:

- Observation of program process: 28 program participants, 20 probation officers, instructors and judges
- Impact analysis of recidivism: 1,218 adult male and female probationers (604 participants, 614 controls)
- Impact analysis of offense severity: 678 adult male and female probationers (283 participants, 395 controls)

Data Type: Quantitative, Qualitative

- Observation of program process, including: focus group, class observations, semi-structured interviews, structured phone survey
- Impact analysis: recidivism data 18 months pre-program and 18 months post-program for participants was compared with recidivism data for a group of matched controls

Evaluation Focus: Impact of CLTL on participant recidivism

Summary of Impact:

- Observational study of program process: increased pride, self-esteem, social relations, problem-solving, trust and sense of accomplishment; cognitive reframing of issues.
- Recidivism impact: Among an admittedly small cohort (30 participants and 40 non-participants), researchers found a reconviction rate of 19% for program participants versus 45% for the comparison group.
- Impact analysis: During the 18 months prior to CLTL participation vs 18 months post-participation, participants showed a 59.5% decline in incidents versus a 26% decline among controls. Authors also noted a decline in the most serious charges pre- to post-program. For both measures, the amount of change was greater for the program participants than for the control group.

KEYWORDS: adult, bibliotherapy, *Changing Lives Through Literature*, cognitive reframing, literature, pride, probation, problem-solving, recidivism, self-esteem, sense of accomplishment, social relations, trust

56. Soape, E., Barlow, C., Gussak, D., Brown, J. and Schubarth, A. (2021). [Creative IDEA: Introducing a Statewide Art Therapy in Prisons Program](#). *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 1-18.

Author Affiliations: Florida State University and Florida Department of Corrections, Tallahassee

Artforms: Art therapy, drawing, visual arts

Program: Florida State University/Florida Department of Corrections Art Therapy in Prisons Program

Program Description: Art therapy services for young inmates with emotional and behavioral disabilities to help them overcome educational struggles

Program (Study) Location: Two prisons in North Florida and two in Central Florida

Study Published: May 11, 2021

Participant Type: Young male and female offenders, ages 17-22 (* This study included both adult and juvenile prisoners.)

Sample Size: 64

Data Type: The original research was designed as a descriptive and qualitative inquiry of offenders' participation, progress notes from art therapists, semi-structured interviews with institutional personnel and disciplinary reports

Evaluation Focus: The original study aimed to assess number of disciplinary referrals, time spent in solitary, attendance at academic services, change in mood, focus, locus of control, problem solving and socialization. The pandemic necessitated changes to a "mental health triage" model wherein the program and research goals pivoted to decreasing anxiety and fear caused by the uncertainty of the pandemic; improving frustration and anger management; and facilitating socialization and connection with people outside all through provision of remote art therapy services via distributed and collected workbooks

Summary of Impact: Due to Covid-19, the researchers could not determine the effectiveness of the program in reducing disciplinary reports and time in seclusion or the ability of participants to focus on educational programming. Instead, participant feedback indicated that participants did find some relief from anxiety, fear and extended boredom.

KEYWORDS: academic, adult, anxiety, art therapy, Covid-19, drawing, education, fear, juvenile, pandemic, visual arts

57. Soape, E., Barlow, C., Pérez, M.T., Hart, M., Gussak, D., Schubarth, A. and Sumner, C. (2023). [Art Therapy in Prisons Program Exhibition: Implementation and Benefits](#), *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, published online May 19, 2023, 1-6.

Author Affiliations: Florida State University/Florida Department of Corrections (FSU/FDC) Art Therapy in Prisons Program (Soape, Barlow, Pérez, Gussak and Hart); Florida Bureau of Education, Florida Department of Corrections (Schubarth)

Artforms: art therapy

Program: The Florida State University (FSU)/Florida Department of Corrections Art Therapy in Prisons Program

Program Description: Art therapy services for young inmates with emotional and

behavioral disabilities to help them overcome educational struggles.

Program (Study) Location: Two prisons in North Florida and two in Central Florida

Participant Type: Young inmate artists aged 17-22, "outside" exhibit attendees (* This study included both adult and juvenile prisoners.)

Sample Size: 57 of 58 "outside" attendees completed online surveys; number of artists unknown

Study Published: 2023

Data Type: Survey data and discussions

Evaluation Focus: Whether an annual art exhibition of participants' work at an annual state-wide conference for prison educators provided opportunities for participants "to feel that they were being seen and heard on the outside."

Summary of Impact: Prisoner artists felt that they were seen by people outside the prison. More than 78% of "outside" attendee survey respondents found the exhibit "enjoyable" and 82% "educational." The "exhibition served as a bridge between those inside and outside," the study concluded.

KEYWORDS: adult, art exhibit, art therapy, drawing, education, juvenile, visual arts

58. Weber, Amanda Kate. (2018). "Choral Singing and Communal Mindset: A program evaluation of the Voices of Hope women's prison choir." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota.

Author Affiliations: University of Minnesota

Artforms: choral singing, music

Program: Voices of Hope

Program Description: Women's prison choir at Minnesota Correctional Facility in Shakopee. The choir was formed in 2015, has 50 members, rehearses once a week, collaborates with "outside" musicians and performs within the prison walls several times a year.

Program (Study) Location: Minnesota Correctional Facility, Shakopee, MN

Participant Type: incarcerated singers and collaborators

Sample Size: 94 (23 singers and 71 collaborators)

Study Published: Unpublished

Data Type: Case study evaluation employing surveys and interviews

Evaluation Focus: "The ways in which choral singing creates a communal mindset – developing skills of listening, empathy, and advocating for one another." Specific research questions included:

- How singers described their experience of choral singing in prison, including any perceived emotional, behavioral and social impacts
- How collaborators describe their experience of choral singing in prison, how their view of incarceration has changed and the likelihood that action will spark further action
- Does the experience of Voices of Hope singers align with the organizational mission?
- What is the role of the Voices of Hope in the wider community?

Summary of Impact: Responses from participants indicates that singers "found that choral singing invoked inward healing, positivity, empowerment and a sense of community for incarcerated singers" while "[C]ollaborators found the experience to be educational, transformative, positive, humbling and difficult."

KEYWORDS: adult, advocacy, behavioral impact, choral singing, community, empowerment, music, social impact, women

59. Worrall J., & Koines, M. (1978). *Project CULTURE*. Alexandria, VA: American Correctional Association.

Author Affiliations: American Correctional Association

Artforms: Arts and crafts, ceramics, chorus, clowning, creative writing, dance, design, drama, drawing, drums, guitar, leather, macrame, movement, music, oil painting, piano, sculpture, sketching, string art, theater, visual arts, weaving, woodburning, wood-carving

Program: *Project CULTURE*

Program Description: *Project CULTURE* (Creative Use of Leisure Time Under Restrictive Environments) was the first comprehensive national program of leisure-time activities inside correctional facilities. Twenty-one projects were implemented at 54 sites across the U.S. Four programs were included in the evaluation:

- California Institution for Women at Fontera: A theater workshop provided by the Los Angeles-based non-profit organization *Artists in Prison and Other Places, Inc. (AIPOP)* included writing, dance and theater components and culminated in an original theater piece created and performed inside the institution before an audience of more than 1,000 community members. The final production involved 28 inmates in varying capacities. Participants received college credit in dance, creative writing and theater production through LaVerne College in LaVerne, California.
- The New Jersey Correctional Institution for Women program included creative writing, dance, music/chorus, music/movement/theater, art program and a clown workshop
- The Sheridan Correctional Center *Project CULTURE* program was operated by Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC). A part-time arts-and-crafts instructor taught 14 six-week mini-courses focusing on nine media: leather, oil painting, drawing and sketching, string art, macrame, wood-carving, woodburning, weaving and ceramics. A part-time music instructor taught four 10- or 11-week mini-courses including lessons on the electric and acoustic guitar, drums and piano. Participants displayed their arts-and-crafts projects
- Oklahoma Prison Arts Program: Three-month workshops were offered in leather, writing, drawing, painting, design, sculpture, drama and opera. Participants were involved in performances and exhibits.

Program (Study) Location: Evaluations were conducted at the following four facilities:

- California Institution for Women at Fontera, (program administered by *Artists in Prison and Other Places, Inc.*)
- New Jersey Correctional Institution for Women (CIW), Clinton, New Jersey
- Sheridan Correctional Center, Sheridan Illinois (program administered by Illinois Valley Community College)
- Oklahoma Prison Arts Program in five state institutions: McAlester, Granite, McLeod, Quachita and Strongtown (program administered by the Oklahoma Arts and Humanities Council)

Study Published: 1978

Participant Type: Adult male and female inmates

Sample Size: 5,000+

Data Type: Quantitative, Qualitative: Self-evaluations of individual projects

conducted by individual contractors; national evaluation conducted by an independent evaluator; pre- and post-program incident rates; interviews with inmates, artists and correctional officials.

Evaluation Focus:

- California Institution for Women: discipline, commitment, creative self-expression, self-worth and sense of accomplishment, cooperation
- New Jersey Correctional Institution for Women: self-worth, self-motivation, release of emotions, positive peer group interaction, positive communication between staff and offenders
- Sheridan Correctional Center: cognition, attendance, self-concept, project completion, incident rates
- Oklahoma Prison Arts Program: Incident reports; self-respect, writing, interpretation, vocabulary, listening, reasoning, communication and critical analysis skills; self-respect

Summary of Impact:

- National Results:
 - 61.4% program completion rate (p. 6)
 - Only 16.8% of participants dropped out or were removed for poor behavior or attendance (p. 6)
 - Reduced tension levels
 - Incident rates reduced between 54% and 100% depending on the location (p. 7)
 - Involvement of female offenders
 - Greater community awareness of offenders
 - Increased self-worth on part of participants
- California Institution for Women:
 - Increased discipline, commitment, creative self-expression, self-worth and sense of accomplishment
 - Cooperation between artists and California Institute for Women staff
- New Jersey Correctional Institution for Women
 - Increased self-worth and respect for others
 - Negative feelings towards staff and community became positive.
 - Increased respect of correctional staff towards inmates
 - No behavioral problems during the workshops
 - Incident reports of incorrigible inmates markedly decreased after enrollment
- Sheridan Correctional Center:
 - Participants scored higher than anticipated on cognition tests:
 - Music students exceeded the objective of 80% by 2.2%, arts and crafts students by 14% (p. 13)
 - 82% program completion rate (p. 13)
 - Improved self-concept as measured by skill acquisition, completion of projects and statistically significant results on the Tennessee Self-Concept inventory
 - Arts projects were displayed though few were sold (because participants wanted to keep them)
 - Individual educational plans for each student were developed
 - Incident rates declined from 2.4 per year per inmate prior to *Project CULTURE* to 1.2 per year (p. 13).
- Oklahoma Prison Arts Program:
 - Original program objectives achieved at 88% level (p. 15)
 - Drop in behavioral infractions in women's unit from 90% to 57% during program participation [as cited in Hillman, G. (Spring/Summer 1994). Kerouac's Town, Dickens and Prison Art. *Texas Journal of Ideas, History and*

Culture, 16(2), p. 27]

- Development of skills including but not limited to writing, interpretation, vocabulary, listening, reasoning, communication, critical analysis and publishing processes
- Increased positive verbal interaction among class and staff
- Increase in participant self-respect and subsequent enhancement of general institution atmosphere

KEYWORDS: adult, arts and crafts, behavior, ceramics, chorus, clowning, commitment, community, creative writing, dance, design, disciplinary, discipline, drama, drawing, drums, guitar, incident rates, leather, macrame, movement, music, oil painting, piano, *Project CULTURE*, sculpture, self-respect, self-worth, sense of achievement, sketching, string art, theater, visual arts, weaving, woodburning, wood-carving

SECTION II: JUVENILE OFFENDER ARTS PROGRAM: EVIDENCE-BASED STUDIES & EVALUATIONS

60. Baker, S. and Homan, S. (2007). Rap, Recidivism and the Creative Self: A Popular Music Programme for Young Offenders in Detention. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 10 (4), 459-476.

Author Affiliations: University of Leeds, UK (Baker); Cultural Industries & Practices Research Centre, University of Newcastle, Australia (Homan)

Artforms: Guitar, hip-hop, keyboard, music, rapping, song-writing

Program: *Genuine Voices*

Program Description: *Genuine Voices* conducts music programs for youth in juvenile detention centers and other educational and institutional settings in the U.S. and worldwide. Its mission is to prevent youth violence and crime and foster youths' ability to plan and make "positive life decisions." The juvenile offender program consists of piano, guitar, rap and sequencing lessons, both group and individual, twice weekly. Youths who have earned good-behavior privileges may volunteer to participate in the program (p. 464).

Program (Study) Location: Short-term (90-day) secure treatment center in Massachusetts

Study Published: September 2007

Participant Type: Juvenile male offenders

Data Type: Qualitative: Ethnographic methodology including observation, interviews and program evaluation.

Evaluation Focus: Benefits of popular music programs in fostering individual creativity, self-esteem, identity and social communication

Summary of Impact: Researchers concluded that the program aided individual and collective communication and community-building and improved participants' organizational skills, self-esteem, self-control, focus and sense of achievement. Participants produced a CD recording at the end of the program.

KEYWORDS: communication, community, focus, hip-hop, identity, juvenile, music, rapping, self-control, self-esteem, sense of achievement, youth

61. Bruland, Ragnhild. (2021). "The Flex Dance Program - Exploring Pathways to Resilience: A Program Evaluation." The New School for Social Research, New York, NY.

Author Affiliations: The New School for Social Research

Artforms: Dance

Program: Doctoral Dissertation, Flex Dance Program

Program Description: The Flex Dance Program provides instruction in Flex, "a unique form of street dance that originated in Brooklyn in the 1990s [which] 'confronts issues of social injustice through the exploration of personal narratives'" (p. 17). The program utilizes mentor/teaching artists to interact with students.

Program (Study) Location: Brooklyn, NY

Study Published: Doctoral Dissertation, 2021

Participant Type: Nonviolent juvenile offenders aged 11 to 18

Sample Size: 53 teaching artists/mentors (35 in the dance intervention and 18 in the talk intervention); youth participants

Data Type: Mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) relying on interviews as well as validated questionnaires (Reflective Functioning Questionnaire or Q-RF and Working Alliance Inventory or WAI)

Evaluation Focus: The evaluation explored "qualities and efficacy of dance mentoring programs, specifically whether there were trends in different mentorship modality groups (dance/non-dance mentoring) with regards to reflective functioning and working alliance" (p. 58).

Summary of Impact:

- Non-dance mentors had higher scores on the Reflective Functioning Questionnaire and higher education levels than dance mentors, suggesting that Q-RF scores may be related to education and that access to educational resources for dance mentors could be valuable.
- Dance mentors had higher reflective functioning scores from one-on-one interviews than non-dance mentors "underscores their deep commitment to the intervention work they are involved in, and their capacity for autonomous and meaningful interactions with the youth they serve" (p. IV).
- Evaluations with students found that 95% felt more focused and 85% less stressed after a dance-mentoring session."

KEYWORDS: dance, Flex Dance Program, juvenile, mentoring, relationships, resilience

62. Center for the Study of Art & Community. [n.d]. *CORE Arts Program Report: 1999-2007. Prepared for the Mississippi Arts Commission by the Center for the Study of Art & Community.*

Author Affiliations: Center for the Study of Art and Community

Artforms: Biography, ceramics, collage, drawing, charcoal, furniture decoration, instrument making, mask-making, metal sculpture, music, painting, papier-mache, performance, poetry, watercolor, woodworking, writing

Program: CORE Arts Program, administered by Communities in Schools

Program Description: CORE Arts provided ceramics, creative writing, music, visual

and other arts programs to Mississippi youth, both adjudicated and non-adjudicated, in correctional settings, aftercare programs, and in alternative school settings. The program focused on "educational enhancement and workforce training through arts-based curricula" (p. 6). The *CORE Arts* initiative grew to include nearly 2500 students (2005-07) statewide, benefitting young people in communities throughout Mississippi. The report documents the program's development and summarizes research studies conducted between 1999 and 2007.

Project (Study) Location: 25 sites (2 youth corrections facilities, 1 detention center, 8 adolescent offender programs, 7 alternative schools and 7 Boys & Girls Clubs) in 15 Mississippi counties

Study Published: 2007

Participant Type: Youth 12-18 years who had committed status offenses; staff members

Sample Size: 308 participants and 101 staff members

Data Type: Quantitative, Qualitative: interviews with program participants and administrators, teachers, counselors and correctional officers; surveys, review of reports, publications and documentary information from both the Mississippi Arts Commission and program sites; data on academic and behavioral progress

Evaluation Focus: Program's impact on critical success indicators for both youth justice/services and arts program providers. From 1999-2007, the program evaluation addressed:

- What goals do the various partners and participants have for the *CORE Arts* program?
- To what degree have these goals been achieved?
- What *CORE Arts* program characteristics (i.e. curriculum, staffing, and program design) advanced or inhibited achievement of these goals?
- How can the Core Arts partners improve their efforts to evaluate the accomplishment of these goals?
- How can the partners sustain the *CORE Arts* program beyond the initial research development phase supported by the Mississippi Arts Commission?

Summary of Impact: Evaluations were conducted from 2002-2007, and included: tracking impact on students, impact on staff, and the program characteristics that supported the articulated outcomes. Results showed a decrease in the incidences of violence, and improvements in behavior. Participants demonstrated a "connection between being in control of an artistic product and taking control over their lives" (p. 6). The summary of the evaluations revealed the following additional impacts:

- 71% improvement in attendance (p. 18)
- 58% reduction in referrals for behavioral problems (p. 18)
- Counselor ratings were 5.07% higher than during the three prior months of regular program offerings (p. 18)
- Positive correlation between time spent in program and improved attitudes and behavior
- Improved overall academic performance
- 15% improvement in grade average compared with pre-program performance (p. 19)
- Improved writing scores
- Improved reading skills:
 - 83% of students at one site improved their reading skills by at least one grade level
 - 50% at this site improved their reading skills by two-to-four grade levels (p. 19)

- Improved English grades:
 - 75% of students at one site improved grades by at least one letter grade, significantly more than the control group which did not receive creative writing (p. 19)
- Enhanced self-control and cooperation
- Decreased violent behavior and idle time
- Reduced tensions between students and staff
- Improved communication, planning and cooperation between staff members
- 86% of participating artists reported positive impact on them and their work
- Improved program work environments
- Staff viewed youth more positively
- Reduced tension for both staff and participants
- Opportunities for positive staff/student interaction

KEYWORDS: academic performance, attendance, attitude, behavior, biography, ceramics, collage, *CORE Arts*, drawing, charcoal, furniture decoration, instrument making, juvenile, mask-making, metal sculpture, music, painting, papier-mache, performance, poetry, self-control, self-esteem, violence, watercolor, woodworking, writing, youth

63. Clawson, H. and Coolbaugh, K,. (2001). [YouthARTS Development Project Program Evaluation](#). U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs: Juvenile Justice Bulletin, May 2001.

Author Affiliations: Caliber Associates, Fairfax, VA

Artforms: The project's three sites included:

- Atlanta: ceramics, computer graphics, drama, furniture design and application, mosaics, photography
- Portland: drama, photography, poetry, printmaking, videography
- San Antonio: creative writing, dance, drama, storytelling, visual arts

Program: [YouthARTS Development Project](#)

Program Description:

- Atlanta: Art-at-Work provided one group of truant youth aged 14 to 16 with art instruction, job training, and literacy education over a two-year period
- Portland: youth produced and administered a public-arts project from design to production and public exhibition
- San Antonio: after-school arts education program for youth at seven schools

Program (Study) Location:

- Atlanta, Georgia: Art-at-Work/Fulton County Arts Council
- Portland, Oregon: Youth Arts Public Art/Regional Arts and Culture Council
- San Antonio, Texas: Urban smARTS/San Antonio Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs

Study Published: May 2001

Participant Type:

- Atlanta: truant youth first-time offenders aged 14-16 referred by probation officers
- Portland: adjudicated youth (excluding sex-offenders) aged 14-16 referred by probation officers
- San Antonio: non adjudicated, at-risk youth aged 10-12 referred by teachers, principals and self-referrals

Sample Size:

- Atlanta: 15 participants per program period; 7 in participant group and 10 in control group completed evaluation
- Portland: 15 youth per unit per session; findings provided for 21
- San Antonio: 60 youth at each of 7 schools; five schools participated in evaluation; complete data available for 22-112 participants

Data Type: Qualitative: Cross-site evaluation using participant and probation officer/caseworker feedback, skill assessment instruments, focus group interviews, academic data, court data. Data collected pre- and post-program on participants and control group.

Evaluation Focus:

- Outcome component of evaluation assessed program effects on art knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of participants
- Process component looked at program implementation and operations

Summary of Impact: Separate evaluations were completed at each of the three sites:

- Atlanta:
 - 85.7% of youth were communicating effectively with peers at the end of the program, up from 28.6% at the beginning of the program.
 - Program participants had, on average, fewer court referrals during the program period than the non-arts comparison group (1.3 and 2.0 respectively). This was despite the fact that arts program participants had, on average more court referrals than the comparison group at the start of the program (6.9 and 2.2 referrals, respectively).
 - 50% of program participants had committed new offenses during the program period versus 78.6% in the control group.
- Portland:
 - 100% of program participants demonstrated an ability to cooperate with others at the end of the 12-week program versus 43% at the start of the program.
 - 31.6% of program participants' attitude towards school improved compared with 7.7% in the comparison group.
 - 22% of program participants had a new court referral compared with 47% of comparison group.
 - The level and type of offense committed during the program period were less severe than prior offenses.
- San Antonio:
 - 85% of participants were able to work on tasks from start to finish at the end of the program versus 72% at the beginning.
 - 82% demonstrated the skills necessary to produce quality artwork up from 65% at the start of the program.
 - 16.4% of the arts program participants had a decrease in delinquent behavior compared with 3.4% of the control group.

KEYWORDS: ceramics, computer graphics, creative writing, dance, drama, entrepreneurial skills, furniture design and application, juvenile, life skills, mosaics, photography, poetry, printmaking, prosocial skills, storytelling, videography, visual arts, vocational skills, youth, *YouthARTS Development Project*

64. Cleveland, W. (2001). *An evaluation of the Jackson County Children's Services Coalition Core Arts Program 2001-2002.*

Minneapolis, MN: Center for the Study of Art & Community.

Author Affiliations: Center for the Study of Art & Community

Artforms: Ceramics, creative writing, music, visual arts

Program: Jackson County Children's Services Coalition, [CORE Arts Program](#)

Program Description: CORE Arts provided ceramics, creative writing, music and visual arts programs to Mississippi youth.

Program (Study) Location: Detention center, public and private schools, community-based organization, religious institution, recreation center, arts organization, Jackson County, Mississippi

Study Published: 2001

Participant Type: Youth offenders, middle- and high-school students

Sample Size: 89 program participants and 22 staff members

Data Type: Quantitative, Qualitative: Non-experimental consisting of Interviews/focus groups and survey/questionnaires with participants, administrators, teachers, counselors and correctional officers; daily student incident reports.

Evaluation Focus: Goals of participants and partners; extent to which goals had been achieved; which program characteristics advanced or inhibited achievement of goals

Summary of Impact:

- 15% improvement in participants' grade average compared with pre-program performance
- Improvements in student behavior including cooperation and self-control
- 58% reduction in behavior referrals compared to pre-program performance
- Student interest in other programs
- High student satisfaction with programs
- Overall "positive impact" on students

KEYWORDS: academic performance, behavior, ceramics, *CORE Arts Program*, creative writing, juvenile, music, violence, visual arts, youth

65. Ecford, O.L. and Horn, M.S. (2025). [To Be or Not to Be: A Study on Shakespeare, Incarcerated Youth and Future-Orientation](#). International Society of the Learning Sciences 2025 Proceedings.

Author Affiliations: Northwestern University

Artforms: Drama, theater

Program: Shakespeare Behind Bars

Program Description: "SBB engages participants in creating original artistic performances based on Shakespearean works, adapting them into modern contexts through podcasts, songs, plays, and films."

Program (Study) Location: Midwestern youth prison

Study Published: 2025

Participant Type: Youth aged 16-18

Sample Size: 5

Data Type: Mixed Methods: quantitative, qualitative and ethnographic data

Evaluation Focus: How "SBB arts education program impacts future orientation development" among participants and "examines how personal narrative-based creative projects contribute to participants' ability to envision and plan for their futures in four domains of future orientation we have identified: Professional, Educational, Social Emotional, and Survival-Based Future Orientation."

Summary of Impact: Preliminary "findings suggest that artistic engagement creates unique opportunities for processing past experiences while developing future-oriented thinking." The analysis is part of a larger study "investigating how interdisciplinary arts education influences incarcerated youths' socio-emotional development across multiple domains."

KEYWORDS: drama, emotion, family, future-orientation, roles, social, theater

66. Ezell, M., & Levy, M. (2003). An Evaluation of an Arts Program for Incarcerated Juvenile Offenders. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 54(3), 108-114.

Author Affiliations: Academia (Ezell) and social work administration (Levy)

Artforms: Cartoon art, collage, creative writing, drama, film, graphic design, multimedia, murals, music, papier-mache, photography, poetry, television, visual arts, wood sculpture

Program: *A Changed World*

Program Description: *A Changed World (ACW)* facilitates teaching and interaction between artists and institutionalized juvenile offenders. The purpose of the program is to reduce recidivism of juvenile offenders (p. 109). Major objectives include: 1) to inculcate cultural and community awareness; 2) to lessen the risks of inappropriate behavior within the institutional environment; 3) to develop vocational and academic skills that will motivate and assist the student with the search for employment/career; and 4) to reduce the likelihood to reoffend after release (p.109-110). Artists conduct workshops ranging from two weeks to two months. During the first and second evaluation years (1996 and 1997), participants created a touring multimedia exhibit that included curriculum materials for use by teachers and counselors. During the third year of the evaluation (1998), participants produced a film for television.

Program (Study) Location: Juvenile correctional facilities, Washington State

Study Published: 2003

Participant Type: Institutionalized juvenile offenders

Sample Size:

- First-Year Evaluation (1996): 86
- Second-Year Evaluation (1997): 57
- Third-Year Evaluation (1998): 41

Data Type: Mixed Method: Quantitative and Qualitative

- First-Year Evaluation: Youth self-reports and staff reports using a pre- and post-test multi-item scale design to measure changes in self-esteem, peer relations, cultural awareness, and community identity
- Second- and Third-Year Evaluations: open-ended survey of participants; teacher assessments; artist observations; staff reports on misbehavior; court records.

Evaluation Focus: The evaluation sought to examine the potential of the arts to impact youth behavior during incarceration and after release. The evaluation asked: "1. Do students learn new academic and vocational skills from the art workshops? 2. Does institutional behavior of program participants improve during their workshops? 3. How does the recidivism rate of program participants compare to nonparticipants (p.110)?"

Summary of Impact:

- First-Year Findings:
 - No statistically significant change in youth's self-esteem, peer relations or cultural awareness during the two weeks' duration of the program
 - Ability to differentiate between life in and out of an institution improved in

- 31.7% of participants
 - Moderate or substantial progress on all learning goals, especially academic goals including increases in 86 different academic skills
- Second- and Third-Year Findings:
 - Artists perceived that almost all of youth had accomplished almost all of their goals.
 - 61.3% of youth said they learned concrete vocational skills.
 - 70.3% reported positive feelings about their projects.
 - 17.6% had feelings of accomplishment.
 - 63% reduction in behavioral incidents pre-workshops versus during workshops.
 - Of 24 youth followed for recidivism, 16.7% recidivated within six months versus 32.9% for a control group of youth released in 1992.

KEYWORDS: academic, *A Changed World*, attitude, behavior, cartoon art, collaboration, collage, community, confidence, creative writing, cultural awareness, drama, employment, film, graphic design, identity, juvenile, misbehavior, multimedia, murals, music, papier-mache, peer relations, photography, poetry, recidivism, reentry, rules violations, self-esteem, skills development, television, visual arts, vocational skills, wood sculpture, youth

67. Fulwider, Mikalya. (2022). "[Music Programs with Teens in Correctional Settings in the United States: A Scoping Review](#)."
Unpublished Master's thesis, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Author Affiliations: Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas

Artforms: Music

Program: N/A

Program Description: N/A

Program (Study) Location: N/A

Study Published: Unpublished

Participant Type: Incarcerated juveniles

Sample Size: Three studies

Data Type: Scoping review

Evaluation Focus: Synthesis of available research on all music and arts-based programs in youth detention facilities, focused on:

- strengths and weaknesses of programs
- types of evidence
- demographics of participants
- key features of programs
- gaps and limitations in available literature

Summary of Impact: Evaluation of three studies showed positive results of music programs including providing opportunities for individuals in juvenile detention to create and increase in pro-social behavior

KEYWORDS: adolescents, arts, juvenile, music, teens

68. Greenbaum, Chloe A. and Javdani, Shabnam. (2017). [Expressive writing intervention promotes resilience among juvenile justice-involved youth](#). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 73(C), 220-229.

Author Affiliations: New York University, New York City

Artforms: Expressive writing

Program: [WRITE ON](#) (Writing and Reflecting on Identity To Empower Ourselves as Narrators)

Program Description: Started in 2014, "WRITE ON is a writing-based mental health intervention designed for youth in confinement . . . WRITE ON encourages reflection and self-expression within a supportive group setting." The program involves 12 sessions over six weeks, each session 90 minutes long and each week focusing on a specific theme such as emotions, self-expression, relationships, past self, present self, future self.

Program (Study) Location: Short-term, non-secure juvenile detention cities in New York City (NYC); program initiated in partnership with the NYC Division of Youth and Family Justice

Study Published: 2017

Participant Type: Incarcerated adolescents aged 12 to 17

Sample Size: 53 (31 girls, 22 boys) total; 30 (18 girls, 12 boys) in intervention group; 23 (13 girls, 10 boys) in control group

Data Type: Quantitative, using Brief Resilience Scale, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, Ego Resilience Scale, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule - Short Form, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, State Shame and Guilt Scale-Revised

Evaluation Focus: participant satisfaction and mental-health outcomes of youth including resiliency

Summary of Impact:

- Participants reported high levels of satisfaction, although numbers (roughly 85%) were the same between intervention and control groups.
- Negative mental-health outcomes of shame, guilt and negative affect did not significantly change over time across or within groups. Marginally significant increases in shame for WRITE ON participants with authors noting that symptom exacerbation may actually be a part of the recovery process.
- Significant increase in positive mental health attributes, notably resilience

KEYWORDS: expressive writing, juvenile, mental health, resilience, WRITE ON, youth

69. Hickey, Maud. (2018). "[We all Come Together to Learn About Music](#)": A Qualitative Analysis of a 5-Year Music Program in a Juvenile Detention Facility. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, published online March 21, 2018, 1-21.

Author Affiliations: Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois .

Artforms: Music composition, rapping

Program: Music-composition program in youth detention center.

Program Description: Participants created at least one original music composition (mostly rap) after attending multi-lesson composition sessions

Program (Study) Location: Cook County Juvenile Temporary Juvenile Detention Center, Chicago, Illinois

Study Published: 2018

Participant Type: Court-detained juveniles and adults, both men and women, aged 13-18

Sample Size: 717

Data Type: Qualitative content analysis of written feedback and interviews.

Evaluation Focus: "The purpose of this study was to uncover evidence that might support components of PYD [positive youth development] in a music composition

program at an urban youth detention center." Research questions were:

- "What reasons and evidence emerge that support positive aspects of the music program at an urban youth detention center, and how do these align with self-determination theory?"
- "What characteristics from the program might help to inform practices of programming in juvenile detention?"

Summary of Impact: The research found that "The three SDT [self-determination theory] constructs of competence, autonomy and relatedness are essential for the positive development of juvenile [participants in detention]." The creation of music seemed to especially boost participant sense of competence and joy for learning.

KEYWORDS: adult, autonomy, competence, music, music interactions, rapping, relatedness, positive feeling, positive youth development, self-determination theory

70. Kennedy, J. R. (2002). The Effects of Musical Performance, Rational Emotive Therapy and Vicarious Experience on the Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem of Juvenile Delinquents and Disadvantaged Children. In Deasy, Richard J., (Ed.), *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership, pp 119-120.

Author Affiliations: Department of Music and Dance, University of Kansas, Lawrence

Artforms: Guitar, music

Program: Doctoral Dissertation

Program Description: Students were divided into five groups. All received 30-minute weekly guitar instruction and all but the control group also received 30 minutes of additional instruction, depending on the group. The groups were:

- *Performance Only* group received 30 minutes of instruction performance etiquette, strategies for achieving peak performance, memorization and musical expression then gave solo performances to their peers.
- *Performance/Cognitive Strategy* group received 30 minutes of cognitive instruction (instruction in mental strategies for performing) and musical-performance instruction (how to deal with performance anxiety) then gave solo performances to their peers.
- *Cognitive Strategy* group received 30 minutes of the same cognitive instruction as the Performance/Cognitive group but were given no chance to rehearse these techniques or give solo performances.
- *Vicarious Experience* group received 30 minutes of watching performances followed by discussion of successful and failed performances.
- *Control group* received no arts instruction.

Program (Study) Location: Residential homes and juvenile detention centers

Study Published: April 2002

Participant Type: Male juvenile offenders 8-19 years

Sample Size: 45

Data Type: Quantitative: Pre- and post-test using Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale, and musical self-efficacy (how confident participants felt about their musical ability)

Evaluation Focus: Effects of musical training and performance on self-efficacy and self-esteem of participants

Summary of Impact: Scores in Performance and Performance/Cognitive groups improved significantly. "The study demonstrated that guitar training coupled with repeated performance experiences improves both musical self-efficacy and self-esteem of these youth" (p. 119). Musical performance and musical performance coupled with cognitive strategies improve self-efficacy in at-risk youth. The study further suggests that "music

training improves self esteem because the opportunity to perform helps youth overcome fears and helps them see that they can succeed" (p. 119).

KEYWORDS: guitar, juvenile, music, self-efficacy, self-esteem, youth

71. Lauby, J. L., LaPollo, A. B., Herbst, J. H., Painter, T. M., Batson, H., Pierre, A. & Milnamow, M. (October 2010). Preventing AIDS through Live Movement and Sound: Efficacy of a Theater-Based HIV Prevention Intervention Delivered to High-Risk Male Adolescents in Juvenile Justice Settings. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 22(5), 402–416.

Author Affiliations: Public Health Management Corporation, Philadelphia (Lauby, LaPollo, Batson, Pierre, Milnamow); Prevention Research Branch, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta (Herbst, Painter)

Artforms: Movement, sound, theater

Program: Preventing AIDS through Live Movement and Sound (PALMS)

Program Description: PALMS is a theater-based HIV prevention intervention designed for groups of 8 to 20 adolescents and led by a trained health educator. Trained actors portray dramatic performances of real-life situations often faced by adolescents and young adults. Games and role-playing exercises provide opportunities for participants to learn and practice communication and condom-use skills.

Program (Study) Location: Two juvenile justice facilities, Philadelphia, PA

Study Published: 2010

Participant Type: Institutionalized juvenile male offenders aged 12-18

Sample Size: 298

Data Type: Quantitative: nonrandomized concurrent comparison group design; assessment data collected at baseline immediately after the intervention

Evaluation Focus: Effect of intervention on HIV and condom-use knowledge, changes in attitude towards HIV testing and persons living with HIV/AIDS, changes in condom use, changes in number of sexual partners (p. 404).

Summary of Impact: At 6-month follow-up, PALMS participants demonstrated greater increases in HIV and condom use knowledge and improved attitudes toward HIV testing and toward persons living with HIV/AIDS than did those in the comparison condition. PALMS participants were also significantly more likely to use a condom during their last sexual contact with a non-main female partner than comparison participants.

KEYWORDS: AIDS, condom use, drama, HIV, HIV testing, juvenile, movement, Preventing AIDS through Live Movement and Sound, sound, theater, youth

72. Lazzari, M.M., Amundson, K.A., & Jackson, R.L. (2005). "We Are More Than Jailbirds": An Arts Program for Incarcerated Young Women. *Affilia: Journal of Women & Social Work*, 20(Summer), 169-185.

Author Affiliations: Tacoma Social Work Program, University of Washington

Artforms: Painting, poetry, sculpture, writing

Program: NA

Program Description: Arts workshops culminating in works produced for museum

display

Program (Study) Location: Juvenile detention center, Western United States

Study Published: 2005

Participant Type: Juvenile female offenders aged 11-17

Sample Size: 31

Data Type: Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews with youth participants and in-depth interview with teaching artist

Evaluation Focus: Social skills, violent behavior, self-identity

Summary of Impact: The study found improved relationship of participants to the artist, other participants, their artwork, their families and communities and themselves; increased empathy, caring, sense of community; shared responsibility; greater sense of self; reduced violent behavior

KEYWORDS: behavior, caring, community, empathy, juvenile, painting, poetry, relationships, sculpture, self-esteem, self-identity, social skills, violence, writing, youth

73. Lear, Tereze. (2010). [Why Are We Doing Art: The Impact of Sustained, Standards Based Art Instruction for Incarcerated Youth](#). Unpublished Master's thesis, California State University, Sacramento.

Author Affiliations: California State University, Sacramento

Artforms: Visual arts

Program: Master's thesis

Program Description: Teacher action research project for Masters of Art in Education

Program (Study) Location: Three maximum-security juvenile housing units

Study Published: Unpublished.

Participant Type: Incarcerated juvenile male offenders

Sample Size: 105

Data Type: Quantitative, Qualitative: Pre- and post-test reading scores; two housing units had sustained, standards-based visual art, one did not and served as the control group

Evaluation Focus: Impact of standards-based, sustained visual-art instruction on reading achievement in incarcerated youth

Summary of Impact: Participants in the sustained, standards-based visual art course showed an average 11 months more growth in reading comprehension than the control group (21 months versus 9 months, respectively).

KEYWORDS: art instruction, juvenile, reading comprehension, visual arts, youth

74. Little, Stephanie A. (2013). *The Effects of an Arts Intervention on Recidivism*. Abstract presented at Society for Research on Child Development Biennial Meeting, Seattle, Washington.

Author Affiliations: Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio

Artforms: Performing arts, visual arts

Program: [Project Jericho](#)

Program Description: "Project Jericho provides in-depth performing and visual arts camps and workshops with a goal to make art and cultural experiences available to all youth and families in [the] community."

Program (Study) Location: Clark County Juvenile Detention Center, Springfield, Ohio
Study Presented: 2013

Participant Type: Incarcerated adolescents

Sample Size: 457: 254 in art therapy group (74% male, 57% Caucasian, mean age 16.96) and 203 in control group (66% male, 62% Caucasian, mean age 16.59)

Data Type: Quantitative

Evaluation Focus: Recidivism rates

Summary of Impact: Recidivism rates for youth offenders participating in *Project Jericho* were lower than offenders who did not participate in the program. The effect was larger in males than females. The difference in recidivism rates were not statistically significant but it is important to note that youth referred to *Project Jericho* had a history of more stays in detention.

KEYWORDS: art therapy, juvenile, performing arts, *Project Jericho*, recidivism, reentry, visual arts, youth

75. Maschi, T., Miller, J., Rowe, W., and Morgen, K. (2013). [An Evaluation of a Cultural Arts Program for Youth in a Juvenile Justice Program: Technical Report](#). National Endowment for the Arts working paper.

Author Affiliations: Fordham University (Maschi); Community Research Center, Inc. (Miller); University of South Florida (Rowe); Centenary College (Morgen)

Artforms: Media arts, music, performing arts, visual arts

Program: Prodigy Cultural Arts Program, University of South Florida

Program Description: The Prodigy Cultural Arts Program is a diversion program for youth aged 7-17 who have been adjudicated in the juvenile justice system, offering classes in the visual, performing, musical and media arts as an alternative to court. Classes are taught by master artists. The program runs for eight weeks, with youth attending three hours per week. Goals are to build pro-social skills and reduce recidivism. Prodigy also has a prevention program geared to non-offending at-risk youth in the community.

Program (Study) Location: 7 counties, West Central Florida

Study Published: December 2013

Participant Type: Adjudicated and at-risk youth aged 7-17

Sample Size: 85 (53 in the intervention group)

Data Type: Mixed Method: Structured interviews, classroom monitoring tool, comparison group composed of students who had been suspended twice; pre- and post-test with standardized measures assessing social skills, mental health, risk behavior, self-regulation skills

Evaluation Focus:

- Changes in mental health and social skills among youth who had participated in the program versus those who had not
- Whether individual characteristics such as age, gender, race and ethnicity are related to any changes in mental health symptoms and social skills
- What mental health variables and social skills are more and less likely to be positively influenced by the art programming

Summary of Impact: Trends towards improvement (especially in females) but no significant differences in pre- and post-test between groups in social skills or mental health

improvement. The authors conclude that “a short term art program impact on social skills and mental health is modest at best” (p. 31). They speculate findings may have been the result of sample size and/or selection bias.

KEYWORDS: identity, juvenile, media arts, mental health, music, performing arts, *Prodigy Cultural Arts Program*, risk behavior, self-regulation, social skills, visual arts, youth

76. Miner-Romanoff, Karen. (2014). [Voices From Inside: Preliminary Results of a Transformational Justice Art Program for Incarcerated Youth](#). *Internet Journal of Restorative Justice*, October 2014.

Author Affiliations: Franklin University, Columbus, Ohio

Artforms: Visual art

Program: *Voices From Inside*

Program Description: Three exhibits of inmate art held in 2012, 2013 and 2014 as a partnership of Franklin University and Ohio Department of Youth Services

Program (Study) Location: Ohio

Study Published: 2014, ongoing study

Participant Type: Incarcerated adolescents

Sample Size: 15 (Youth Exhibitor Survey); 59 (Community Attendee Survey)

Data Type: Qualitative and Quantitative including one-on-one interviews and the following surveys: Youth Exhibitor Survey and Interview Survey consisting of nine Likert-type questions and one narrative for juvenile offender-artists; Community Attendee Survey with adaptations from Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ) for community attendees.

Evaluation Focus: Changes in juvenile offender and community attitudes

Summary of Impact:

- 2013 survey of youth participants found that 81% cited as benefits cooperation with others, task completion and increased self-esteem.
- 2014 survey of youth participants found that 93% cited decreased stress along with increase in self-esteem, pride and recognition of the ability to reach a goal from completing, exhibiting and selling their art to benefit a charity for at-risk youth.
- In different surveys, 40%-53% of community attendees reported positive attitude changes toward juvenile offenders.
- Qualitative responses were similarly positive.

KEYWORDS: attitudes, community, confidence, goal achievement, identity, juvenile, respect, restorative justice, self-esteem, stress, visual art, youth

77. Miner-Romanoff, Karen. (2016). [Voices From Inside: The Power of Art To Transform and Restore](#). *Journal of Correctional Education*, 67(1), 58-74.

Author Affiliations: Franklin University, Columbus, Ohio

Artforms: Visual art

Program: *Voices From Inside*

Program Description: Three exhibits of inmate art held in 2012, 2013 and 2014,

partnership of Franklin University and Ohio Department of Youth Services

Program (Study) Location: Ohio

Study Published: 2016, ongoing study

Participant Type: Incarcerated adolescents

Sample Size: 183 (unclear if any duplicates)

Data Type: Qualitative and Quantitative including one-on-one interviews and the following surveys: Youth Exhibitor Survey and Interview Survey consisting of nine Likert-type questions and one narrative for juvenile offender artists; Community Attendee Survey with adaptations from Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ) for community attendees.

Evaluation Focus: Changes in juvenile offender and community attitudes

Summary of Impact:

- 2013 survey of youth participants found that 81% cited as benefits cooperation with others, task completion and increased self-esteem.
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- In different surveys 40%-53% of community attendees reported positive attitude changes toward juvenile offenders.
- Qualitative responses were similarly positive.

KEYWORDS: attitudes, community, confidence, goal achievement, identity, juvenile, respect, restorative justice, self-esteem, stress, visual art, youth

78. Nelson, D. (1997). *High-risk adolescent males, self-efficacy, and choral performance: An investigation.* Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

Author Affiliations: Arizona State University

Artforms: Choirs, music, singing

Program: Doctoral dissertation

Program Description: Juvenile choir

Program (Study) Location: Adolescent residential treatment facility, Arizona

Study Published: 1997

Participant Type: Adjudicated males aged 11-17

Sample Size: 40 (21 in intervention group, 19 in control group)

Data Type: Qualitative: Bandura's Social Learning Theory of Self-Efficacy, research was augmented by the use of the Sherer and Maddux Self-Efficacy Scale

Evaluation Focus: Music as an affective intervention for high-risk adolescent males

Summary of Impact: The author stated that the choral program was found to be an affective intervention for this population. Participants reported that performing in the choir was a special experience, that moments in the choir were "wonderful, difficult to verbalize and . . . deeply personal" (p. iv). They also reported that the relationships developed in choir were different than those with other residents of the facility.

KEYWORDS: affect, choirs, juvenile, music, singing, youth

**79. Oakey, M.K. (1980). Evaluation: Lorton Art Program, Inc.
Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice/National Criminal
Justice Reference Service.**

Author Affiliations: Office of Resource Management, District of Columbia Department of Corrections

Artforms: Fine arts

Program: District of Columbia Department of Corrections

Program Description: *The Lorton Art Program, Inc.* is a comprehensive fine arts program which uses art education and individual skills development to rehabilitate participants. Classes are conducted four days a week for a minimum of two and one-half hours per session at the Lorton maximum-security facility and youth centers I and II.

Program (Study) Location: Lorton Correctional Facility, District of Columbia

Study Published: January 1980

Participant Type: Juvenile offenders (the program may have also included an adult component)

Sample Size: 372

Data Type: Quantitative, Qualitative

Study Design: Data were obtained from the art director's files and her evaluation of each student's performance, District of Columbia Department of Corrections records (inmate characteristics, parole violations, and new convictions), results of an institutional staff survey, and participant questionnaires.

Evaluation Focus: Recidivism, student characteristics, student program performance, institutional staff opinions of the program, and student attitudes toward the program

Summary of Impact:

- A comparison of program participants and nonparticipants provided no conclusive evidence that participation in the arts program reduced recidivism (p. 29).
- After four months, a lower percentage of "failure" for program participants (30%) released through a community correctional center, compared to nonparticipants (41%)
- Evaluation of program by treatment and administrative staff was highly favorable (Executive Summary, no page number).
- Anonymous survey of participants showed less enthusiasm for the program but overall favorable response (Executive Summary, no page number).
- The only measure for which a correlation could be established with performance on parole was "student's reaction to the program." Degree of involvement, prior training, interest level, progress achieved, and talent were not related to post-release performance (Executive Summary, no page number).
- Authors concluded that the program was sufficiently effective for the Department of Corrections to consider assuming all or a major portion of the program's funding.

KEYWORDS: fine arts, juvenile, *The Lorton Art Program, Inc.*, parole, recidivism, reentry, youth

**80. Rapp-Paglicci, L., Stewart, C., and Rowe, W. S. (Winter 2009).
Evaluating the Effects of the Prodigy Cultural Arts Program on
Symptoms of Mental Health Disorders in At-Risk and
Adjudicated Youths. *Best Practices in Mental Health: An***

International Journal, 5(1), 65-73.

Author Affiliations: School of Social Work, University of South Florida

Artforms: Cultural arts, media arts, music, performing arts, visual arts

Program: *Prodigy Cultural Arts Program*

Program Description: The *Prodigy Cultural Arts Program* is a diversion program for youth aged 7-17 who have been adjudicated in the juvenile justice system, offering classes in the visual, performing, musical and media arts as an alternative to court. Programs, taught by master artists, run for eight weeks, with youth attending three hours per week. Goals are to build pro-social skills and improve indicators of mental health. *Prodigy* also has a prevention program geared to non-offending at-risk youth in the community.

Program (Study) Location: West Central Florida

Study Published: Winter 2009

Participant Type: Adjudicated male and female juvenile offenders 11-18 years

Sample Size: 337

Data Type: Quasi-experimental pre- and post-test using MAYSI-2 (Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument), Family Assessment Device to measure symptoms of mental health disorders (subscales: anger/irritability, somatic complaints, depression/anxiety, suicidal ideations, substance use), and Delinquency Index.

Evaluation Focus: Program's effect on participants' mental health-disorders controlling for demographic factors

Summary of Impact:

- Significant decrease in symptoms of mental-health disorders, notably anger/irritability and anxiety/depression
- Changes in somatic complaints, hypothesized to be related to mental-health issues or stressful environmental conditions
- Females, who tended to score higher pre-test on depression/anxiety scores, may have experienced a greater reduction in anxiety/depression symptoms than their male counterparts.

KEYWORDS: cultural arts, delinquency, family functioning, identity, juvenile, media arts, mental health, music, performing arts, *Prodigy Cultural Arts Program*, visual arts, youth

81. Ross, J. Art and Community: Creating Knowledge Through Service in Dance. In Deasy, R. J. (Ed.), [Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development](#) (p. 23). Washington, D.C.: Arts Education Partnership.

Author Affiliations: NA

Artforms: Dance

Program: NA

Program Description: Jazz and hip-hop dance classes

Program (Study) Location: NA

Study Presented: 2000

Participant Type: At-risk and incarcerated adolescents aged 13-17

Sample Size: 60

Data Type: Qualitative: Teacher observation, interviews, reflection journals, in-class discussions, written syntheses

Evaluation Focus: This study sought to address the following questions: How does dance instruction affect self-perception and social development for at-risk and incarcerated adolescents? How does participant/observation research by undergraduates in a dance-centered service-learning project affect perceptions of the purposes of arts generally and dance specifically in the undergraduates' and the lives of others? (p.12)

Summary of Impact: The "study produced hypotheses about why dance may be a medium particularly well suited to fostering positive self-perception and social development for disenfranchised adolescents. Hypotheses include the influence of teachers and teaching styles generally employed in dance . . . culturally valued leisure activities; the release of physical and psychological stress in which 'expression, not conquest' is the activity's goal (in contrast to team sports); the focus of instruction on practicing non-linguistic bodily expression, which is a primary vehicle through which maladaptive social behaviors are conveyed; and the need and opportunity in dance to express individuality within a group, which provides practice with issues central to developing positive social identity and adaptability" (p.23).

- Congruence of dance, service (providing data to prison administration about the dance program's effectiveness), and research (placing college dance students in a social/therapeutic context and requiring reflection about impact and uses of the discipline) is an effective tool for advancing college students' learning.

KEYWORDS: dance, hip-hop, jazz, juvenile, self-perception, service learning, youth

82. School Board of Palm Beach County Department of Alternative Education. (2001). *Analysis of Student Self-Assessments of Their Social Talents and Art Skills Taken Before and After Attending the "Artists-in-Residence" Programs at the Detention and Corrections in Palm Beach County.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs. October 29, 2001.

Author Affiliations: NA

Artforms: Dance, drama, music, visual arts

Program: *Artists-in-Residence Alternative Arts Program*

Program Description: Artists-in-Residence programs awarded to juvenile justice programs from Very Special Arts (VSA) of Florida in partnership with the Florida Education Foundation.

Program (Study) Location: Roosevelt Full-Service Center, FIG, Palm Beach Youth Center, Palm Beach Half-Way House, all in Palm Beach County, Florida.

Study Published: 2001

Participant Type: Incarcerated and adjudicated youth

Data Type: Pre- and post- self-assessment questionnaires, one for Social Talents and the other for Art Skills.

Evaluation Focus: Participants' social and artistic ability.

Summary of Impact:

- Roosevelt Full-Service Center:
 - Substantial increase in social behavior

- increase in art skills reported by most students
- Florida Institute for Girls:
 - Overall decrease in both negative and positive responses; fear of authority figures decreased

KEYWORDS: attitudes, community, confidence, goal achievement, identity, juvenile, music, respect, self-esteem, stress, visual art, youth

83. Seroczynski, A.D., Evans, William, Jobst, Amy D., Horvath, Luke and Carozza, Guiliana. (2016). ["Reading for Life and Adolescent Re-Arrest: Evaluating a Unique Juvenile Diversion Program."](#) *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 35(2): 662-682.

Author Affiliations: University of Notre Dame (Seroczynski, Evans, Horvath, Carozza), Reading for Life, Inc. (Jobst)

Artforms: Bibliotherapy, literature, writing

Program: Reading for Life

Program Description: Reading for Life is diversion program in a medium-sized Midwestern town which "allows nonviolent, often first-time juvenile offenders to study works of literature in small groups led by trained volunteer mentors.... the intervention attempts to reduce recidivism through character education and moral development" (p. 663).

Program (Study) Location: Medium-sized Midwestern town

Study Published: 2016

Participant Type: Nonviolent juvenile offenders aged 11 to 18

Sample Size: 194 offenders were randomized to the RFL treatment group and 214 to the control group.

Data Type: Randomized controlled trial

Evaluation Focus: Impact of program on recidivism, writing

Summary of Impact: Authors reported a 13.2% reduction in reoffending of any type within two years of starting the program among RFL program participants. This represented a 36% reduction over the control group. RFL proved particularly successful at reducing serious offenses, reducing the likelihood of arrest for a prosecuted felony by 51% compared with the control group.

KEYWORDS: bibliotherapy, character, juvenile, literature, reading, *Reading For Life*, recidivism

84. Simmons, Lisa. (2017). [The Relationship between Delinquency and Creative Writing for Detailed Adolescent Males](#). Auburn University, Auburn, AL.

Author Affiliations: Auburn University, Auburn, AL

Artforms: Creative writing, poetry, prose

Program: *Writing Our Stories: An Anti-Violence Creative Writing Program (WOS)*

Program Description: Writers teach poetry- and prose-writing skills to incarcerated youth in Alabama

Program (Study) Location: Alabama

Study Published: Doctoral dissertation, 2017

Participant Type: Incarcerated juvenile offenders grades 8-12.

Sample Size: 461: 231 participating in WOS, 230 in control group

Data Type: Quantitative: pre- and post-testing using oppositional and unruly subscales of the Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MACI) and the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence.

Evaluation Focus: Delinquency, intelligence, IQ

Summary of Impact: Statistically significant difference in pre- and post-treatment scores for WOS participants on the oppositional subscale of delinquency. No statistically significant scores from pre- and post-treatment on the unruly subscale of the MACI for either WOS participants or controls. No statistically significant difference in scores from pre- to post-detainment on the oppositional subscale in control group.

KEYWORDS: creative writing, delinquency, intelligence, IQ, juvenile, poetry, prose, writing, *Writing Our Stories*, youth

85. Simpson, McKenna. (2025). [Art and Crime: Analyzing the Relationship Between Creative Arts Participation and Juvenile Arrests](#). Georgetown University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Washington, D.C.

Author Affiliations: Georgetown University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Artforms: Creative arts

Program: Master of Public Policy thesis

Program Description: N/A

Program (Study) Location: N/A

Study Published: 2025

Participant Type: Non-incarcerated juveniles

Sample Size: Nationally representative sample of 8,984 men and women aged 12 to 16 participating in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' National Longitudinal Survey of Youth; while the survey includes interviews conducted between 1997 and 2011, this paper focuses on surveys completed in 2003-2004

Data Type: Quantitative

Evaluation Focus: Relationship between participation in creative arts and juvenile arrest rates.

Summary of Impact: Juveniles taking a creative arts course in high school were tk less likely to be arrested. The findings lose their significance when adjusted for sex and environment, suggesting that creative arts is one of many influences on juveniles.

KEYWORDS: arrest rates, creative arts, juvenile

86. Smitherman, T. & Thompson, J. (June 2002). ["Writing Our Stories": An Anti-Violence Creative Writing Program](#). *The Journal of Correctional Education*, 53(2), 77-83.

Author Affiliations: Alabama Department of Youth Services School District (Smitherman); Alabama Writers' Forum, Inc. (Thompson)

Artforms: Creative writing, poetry, prose

Program: *Writing Our Stories: An Anti-Violence Creative Writing Program*

Program Description: Writers teach poetry- and prose-writing skills to incarcerated youth in Alabama

Program (Study) Location: Alabama

Study Published: 2002

Participant Type: Incarcerated juvenile offenders aged 12-18

Sample Size: Unspecified number

Data Type: Qualitative: pre- and post-testing, anecdotal data

Evaluation Focus: Self-esteem, writing skills

Summary of Impact: Impact information was anecdotal only, with inconsistent results found on pre- and post-testing in different groups. Students submitted revised work for inclusion in the school's anthology. Anthologies were considered "outcomes in themselves" (p. 79). As of Fall 2001, nine anthologies were in print from "Writing Our Stories" programs. Juvenile court judges, social workers, therapists, psychologists and teachers have responded positively to the anthologies.

KEYWORDS: creative writing, juvenile, poetry, prose, writing, *Writing Our Stories*, youth

87. Stewart, C., Rapp-Paglicci, L., and Rowe, W. (2009). Evaluating the efficacy of the Prodigy prevention program across urban and rural locales. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 26(1), 65-75.

Author Affiliations: University of South Florida School of Social Work

Artforms: Cultural arts, media arts, music, performing arts, visual arts

Program: *Prodigy Cultural Arts Program*

Program Description: The *Prodigy Cultural Arts Program* is a diversion program for youth aged 10-17 who have been adjudicated in the juvenile justice system, offering classes in the visual, performing, musical and media arts as an alternative to court. Programs, taught by master artists, run for eight weeks, with youth attending three hours per week. Goals are to build pro-social skills and reduce recidivism. *Prodigy* also has a prevention program geared to non-offending at-risk youth in the community.

Program (Study) Location: West Central Florida

Study Published: 2009

Participant Type: Adjudicated and at-risk youth aged 10-17

Sample Size: 350 adolescents and their parents

Data Type: Quantitative: Quasi-experimental pre- and post-test

Evaluation Focus: Mental health symptoms, delinquency, family functioning

Summary of Impact:

- Significant improvement in family functioning overall
- Statistically significant changes in mental health symptoms including depression/anxiety, somatic and suicidal symptoms for both males and females
- Females seemed to especially benefit from the program in these domains.

KEYWORDS: cultural arts, delinquency, family functioning, identity, juvenile, media arts, music, performing arts, *Prodigy Cultural Arts Program*, visual arts, youth

88. Uhler, Bethany Shaune (2020). Beyond the Corner: Incorporating Music Into a Juvenile Detention Center. University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Author Affiliations: University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Artforms: Chamber music, string instruments

Program: Chatham Strings Program

Program Description: Detention-center youth are taught how to play violin, viola and

cello in weekly group classes. They also perform in a chamber group as a way to learn new skills, have new experiences, practice pro-social behavior and have a positive outlet for emotions.

Program (Study) Location: Chatham Youth Development Center, Siler City, North Carolina

Study Published: unpublished doctoral dissertation

Participant Type: Adjudicated youth aged 13-17

Sample Size: 8 teens: 1 White female, 3 Black females, 1 Hispanic female, 2 Black males and 1 White male

Data Type: Qualitative: personal interviews with youth and facility staff, field notes

Evaluation Focus: To explore the role music may play in rehabilitation and, specifically, to document any benefits experiences by members of a string ensemble

Summary of Impact: The data analysis revealed four themes:

- Exposure and New Experiences: All participants reported that the string ensemble was an entirely new experience.
- Pride and Recognition: The youth reported "experiencing satisfaction in their success, realizing their potential to do something positive, receiving positive reinforcement from others and making people they loved proud."
- Personal and Interpersonal Development: "Youth reflected that participation in the string program improved emotional release, behavior regulation, frustration tolerance, time management, communication skills and willingness to help others."
- Collaborating to Help Youth: Staff reported "that the string program contributed to the community effort of restorative justice."

KEYWORDS: accomplishment, cello, chamber music, emotional release, juvenile, performing arts, pro-social behavior, string instruments, viola, violin, youth

89. Warner, Susan (1999). *Arts Programs for Incarcerated Youth: A National and International Comparative Study.* (Unpublished Master's thesis). Antioch University, Seattle, WA.

Author Affiliations: Experimental Gallery, Seattle

Artforms: Collage, drama, photography, poetry, video

Program: Experimental Gallery is a partnership between the Children's Museum Seattle and the Department of Social and Health Services, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration

Program Description: Arts programs for adjudicated youth

Project (Study) Location: While the program operates in six locations in Washington State, the evaluation focused on three: Echo Glen Children's Center, Maple Lane and Green Hill juvenile facilities

Study Published: 1999

Participant Type: Juvenile female offenders (Echo Glen) and juvenile male offenders (Maple Lane, Green Hill)

Sample Size: Unspecified number

Data Type: Qualitative: Observations, interviews, assessment forms from participants and visiting artists

Evaluation Focus: Research question: How do arts-based, community programs educate and benefit incarcerated juvenile offenders?

Summary of Impact:

- Improved behavior within confining institution
- Increased feelings of self-awareness or self-esteem
- Improved vocational skills

KEYWORDS: behavior, collage, drama, Experimental Gallery, juvenile, photography, poetry, self-awareness, self-esteem, video, vocational skills, youth

90. Warner, S. (2000). Final Survey Report. In Hillman, G., Warner, S. and Shute, J. (Eds.), [Arts Programs for Juvenile Offenders in Detention and Corrections: A Guide to Promising Practices](#), (pp. 33-37). Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and National Endowment for the Arts.

Author Affiliations: Experimental Gallery, Seattle

Artforms: Dance, drama, literary arts, multimedia, performing arts, visual arts

Program: NA

Program Description: Survey of juvenile-offender arts programs

Program (Study) Location: National U.S.

Study Published: 2002

Participant Type: Juvenile-offender arts programs

Sample Size: 120 surveys mailed out, 24 returned: 20% response rate

Data Type: Quantitative: Survey instrument

Evaluation Focus: Art disciplines utilized, number of youth involved, kinds of artists employed, products generated, budgets, founding dates, challenges facing field, impediments to growth

Summary of Impact: Evaluation focused on institutional characteristics and benefits rather than benefits to offenders and found that:

- Most programs offered a multidisciplinary arts education model using a combination of contracted professional artists, art teachers from the local school district and volunteers.
- 43.2% of programs were founded in the 1990s
- 3 programs had a history of 30 years or more
- Slightly less than half the programs employed some kind of formal evaluation process to measure success
- 18 out of 23 programs requested technical assistance with the evaluation, making evaluation the most requested service; fund-raising and curriculum and program design were the next most requested; the lowest response for assistance was in community relations
- Evaluation was considered the weakest area for most programs
- Slightly less than half the programs offered academic credit for their participants but three programs had no means in place to measure the success of this provision
- About half of programs had budgets of \$100,000 or more while half had budgets of less than \$50,000
- 16.8% of arts programs received funding support from a correctional facility
- Reports of numbers of youth served fluctuated between 3,000 — 12; actual numbers of youth being served by all 24 programs could not be determined.

KEYWORDS: dance, drama, Experimental Gallery, juvenile, literary arts, multimedia, performing arts, visual arts, youth

91. Williams, R. Marie-Crane. (June 2008). [The Status and Praxis of Arts Education and Juvenile Offenders in Correctional Facilities in the United States](#). *The Journal of Correctional Education*, (59) 2, 107-126.

Author Affiliations: University of Iowa

Artforms: Dance, music, theater, visual arts

Program: NA

Program Description: NA

Program (Study) Location: U.S., and "Northeastern Training School" (pseudonym)

Study Published: June 2008

Participant Type: Public residential juvenile correctional facilities

Sample Size: 175 respondents

Data Type: Quantitative and Qualitative: survey, interviews, case study; survey sent to all (478) public residential juvenile correctional facilities in U.S.

Evaluation Focus: Summary of results of a national study conducted in 2001 sponsored by the National Art Education Association which explored the intersection of arts education and corrections in residential detention facilities for juvenile offenders. Research questions were:

- What is the status of arts education in public juvenile correctional facilities?
- What do programs that combine art with juvenile justice and community re-entrance look like?
- Why do the arts matter to juvenile offenders?

Summary of Impact:

- 36.6% (175) of 458 facilities responded to the survey
- 57.14% of responding institutions had arts programs
- 42.86% had no arts programming
- 69% had long-term arts programming, most meeting daily
- 23% had short-term programs, 35% of these met weekly
- Most program sessions, both long-term and short-term, lasted less than one hour but more than 30 minutes
- 73% of arts programs focused on visual arts
- 9% focused on music/theater
- 75 focused on visual arts/music
- 4% focused on music/theater/dance
- 3% focused on visual arts/theater
- 2% focused on visual arts/dance
- 1% focused on theater.
- 1% focused on music only
- 65% used a written curriculum
- Certified art teachers created over 55% of written curricula.
- More than 50% of programs received funding from state sources
- 20% of programs received funding from state arts programs
- 10% were funded by state monies with private grants
- Donations or petty cash funded less than 5%
- 86% of respondents did not indicate whether the budget included the cost of a teacher/artist/facilitator
- 34% of programs participated in some form of evaluation
- 62% had no formal evaluation data
- More participants were male but, proportionally, more participants were female
- 22% had mandatory participating
- 20% participation was recommended by a teacher, counselor or staff member.

Staff and volunteers of the "Northeastern Training School" stated in interviews that the arts provided students with an appropriate outlet for their feelings.

KEYWORDS: dance, emotions, juvenile, music, theater, visual arts, youth

92. Wolf, Dennie Palmer and Holochwost, Steven. (2015). [Our Voices Count: The Potential Impact of Strength-Based Music Programs in Juvenile Justice Settings.](#)

Author Affiliations: WolfBrown

Artforms: Choir, music, songwriting

Program: Our Voices Count

Program Description: Juvenile offenders in detention facilities participated in a 12-session program spanning two weeks during which they participated in a choir performing a traditional repertoire while also writing their own songs and lyrics. Our Voices Count was a collaborative project between Carnegie Hall's Musical Connections program and the New York City Administration for Children's Services.

Program (Study) Location: Two secure juvenile detention facilities in New York City

Study Published: Organizational publication, 2015

Participant Type: Male and female youth offenders, average age 15 years

Sample Size: 54

Data Type: Mixed-methods design using pre- and post-residency assessment.

Evaluation Focus: Whether ensemble-based music could create a more positive environment inside secure detention facilities as well as stronger social relations, more constructive behavior and a changed sense of self among participants.

Summary of Impact:

- At both facilities, reduction in participants' externalizing, or acting-out behaviors following participation in program
- Across facilities, 75% of participants completed the program, earning a half-course credit toward high-school graduation from their on-site or future New York City high school.
- Nearly two-thirds of young people across both facilities reported spending time between sessions working on music in their free time, thus "acting as agents to set and work towards a longer-term goal."
- More than two thirds of residents reported working with other offenders, professional artists, and facility staff, during rehearsal and during free-time activities.
- Nearly half of participants reported changes in multiple areas of personal well-being including positive emotional state, sense of achievement, self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Participants at one facility had statistically higher rates of earning high-school credit, built stronger social networks, were more likely to complete the program and exhibited lower levels of disengaged or disruptive behaviors than at the other facility.
- The facility where youth demonstrated these gains had steadily reduced use of involuntary room confinements and physical restraints, versus the second facility.

KEYWORDS: choir, confidence, juvenile, music, sense of self, social skills, voice, youth

APPENDIX: PROGRAM EVALUATION RESOURCES

The following references present information on program implementation as well as methodologies to effectively evaluate the impact of prison arts programs. These may serve to guide future researchers when studying how and how well prison arts programs work. They may also aid in the design and implementation of future programs.

Balfour, M. and Poole, L. (1998). "Evaluating Theater in Prisons and Probation" in Thompson, J. (Ed) *Prison theatre: Perspectives and Practices*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, p. 217-230.

Argues for the benefits and necessity of evaluating the effectiveness of arts in prison and probation. Presents theories and methodologies of evaluation.

Hillman, Grady (2000). [Evaluation, Advocacy and Sustainability in Arts Programs for Juvenile Offenders in Detention and Corrections: A Guide to Promising Practices](#). Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and National Endowment for the Arts, p. 23-25.

"Advocacy and evaluation activities that generate program recognition are critical components both to community acceptance and to the financial sustainability of juvenile justice arts programs" (p. 23).

Miller, Jerry and Rowe, William S. (Winter 2009). "Cracking the Black Box: What Makes An Arts Intervention Program Work?" *Best Practices in Mental Health*, 5(1), p. 52-64.

A review of "the limited literature on arts programming to identify a core set of practices that may be linked to positive outcomes [for arts programming for at-risk youth]. A template that identifies key components was developed to guide program implementation as well as future research" (p. 52).

Ploumis-Devick, E. (2011). "Foreword" in Shailor, J. (Ed.) *Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, p. 7-15.

Identifies three essential elements of effective arts-based programs as a mutually beneficial partnership with correctional professions; replicable and compatible program architecture; result-focused programming and implementation consistency (p. 7).

Williams, R.M. (2003). "Evaluating Your Arts-in-Corrections Program" in Williams, R.M. *Teaching the Arts Behind Bars*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, p. 167-180.

Why evaluation is important, how to plan for an evaluation, what to look for when hiring an external evaluator, what to expect in a final report, and a way to do your own evaluation (p. 167).

YouthARTS Development Project (1998). [Evaluation](#) in [YouthARTS Handbook: Arts Programs for Youth At Risk](#). Americans for the Arts, p. 123-177.

How to conduct your own process and outcome evaluation, benefits and challenges of a well-planned program evaluation, a step-by-step approach for evaluating arts program outcomes and other best practices from the field.

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