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Perspectives on Postsecondary Correctional Education from the Previously Incarcerated Student: An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design Study

Ana C. Maria

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Perspectives on Postsecondary Correctional Education From the Previously Incarcerated

Student: An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design Study

By:

Ana C. Maria

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education
and School of Criminal Justice in Partial
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Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Ana Maria, under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the School of Criminal Justice, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education, and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved: Steven Hecht Date: 08/7/2020
Steven Hecht, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

Approved: Marcelo Castro Date: 8/7/2020
Marcelo Castro, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Approved: Ronald J. Chenail Date: 8/18/2020
Ronald J. Chenail, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Approved: Jammy Kushner, PsyD. Date: 8/7/2020
Jammy Kushner, Psy.D.
Executive Associate Dean

Statement of Original Work

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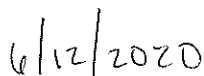
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Name: Ana C. Maria



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Abstract

Perspectives on Postsecondary Correctional Education From the Previously Incarcerated Student: An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design Study. Ana C. Maria, 2020: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischer College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: correctional education, incarcerated student, postsecondary education

The United States is currently housing 2,220,300 inmates. At least 90% of these inmates will eventually be released and expected to successfully reintegrate into society. While it is in the nation's best interest that these individuals are prepared to become contributing members of society, the academic experiences of those in prison, regardless of their sentence, is important. The success of educational correction has been traditionally measured by the reduction in recidivism and by the increased likelihood of successful reintegration. However, we know little about what makes these programs successful to participants, as there is a gap in the literature regarding their satisfaction with postsecondary education programs while incarcerated. This dissertation focuses on understanding the perspectives and experiences of previously incarcerated students through information gathered from paroled individuals who engaged in postsecondary correctional education. Specifically, it explores the availability of postsecondary education, their access to class materials, as well as the roadblocks they faced. Participants were previously housed in one of the seven correctional facilities in Rhode Island.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

One of the most influential strengths of the American prison system is the educational programming it provides to inmates across the country. The primary reasoning behind this is the data gathered through studies which suggest that education serves as a buffer to criminality. Studies conducted by the Justice Policy Institute show that states that had higher levels of education attainment also had crime rates lower than the national average. Additionally, nine out of the ten states with the highest percentage of population who had attained a high school diploma were found to have lower crime rates than the national average, compared to just four of the 10 states with the lowest educational attainment per population (Justice Policy Institute: Education and Public Safety, 2007). This suggests that the more education an individual obtains, the less the probability that he or she will exhibit criminal behavior. As far as educational programs offered in prisons is concerned, this data is relevant to demonstrate that educational programs are very likely to reduce the likelihood of recidivism among inmates. Access to postsecondary education, in particular, has a variety of benefits which reverberate through to their families, as well as our communities and the nation's taxpayers as a whole.

Providing prisoners with opportunities to participate in postsecondary education programs has interests in public safety, facility safety, taxpayer savings, and family/community development. Incarcerated individuals who participate in postsecondary prison education programs have been found to be 43% less likely to recidivate than those who do not (Davis et al., 2013). As such, public safety concerns are

diminished significantly by the incarcerated individual's participation in any postsecondary education, making it imperative that the incarcerated student's perspective on correctional education is a positive one. Additionally, incarcerated individuals who engage in postsecondary education programs are less likely to be involved in violent incidents behind the walls, therefore creating a safer environment for their peers and prison staff (Correctional Association of New York, 2009).

The taxpayer is also likely to financially benefit from incarcerated individuals participating in postsecondary education. Due to the decrease in likelihood of recidivism, every single dollar invested by the taxpayer in postsecondary education in prisons reduces incarceration costs by \$4 to \$5 dollars in the first three years after an individual is released (Davis et al., 2014). Lastly, family/community development benefits drastically from the incarcerated individual's participation in postsecondary education while imprisoned. When parents receive a postsecondary education, their children are much more likely to do the same. As such, it follows that incarcerated parents who participate in postsecondary education increase the chances of their children receiving the very education which has been statistically proven to reduce the likelihood of exhibiting criminal behavior (Correctional Association of New York, 2009).

Educational systems have also been proven to increase the interest of inmates in a particular subject matter and to inspire them to further their education. Many inmates also feel that the knowledge received from the educational programs they have involved themselves with will be useful in the workforce. The Prison Education Project, an organization that expands educational opportunities for inmates in California, for example, illustrates this in data received from surveys given to inmates after they

complete courses provided to them (The Prison Education Project, 2009). One hundred and ninety-eight inmates who completed Philosophy, Public Speaking, English as a Second Language, and Business courses were asked the following questions: (1) did this course increase your interest in the subject matter? (2) did this course inspire you to further your education? and (3) will you be able to use the information that you learned in this course when you are paroled? About 98% of inmates responded to these questions in the affirmative (The Prison Education Program, 2009). Many other educational programs in other states have comparable effects. This data suggests that the satisfaction of the incarcerated student is integral to success of correctional education, thereby integral to the decreased likelihood of recidivism.

Background: Access to Postsecondary Education in the Prison and After Release

The beginnings of education in the American prison system date back to 1787, when a group of citizens began advocating for the education of inmates in Pennsylvania (Prigg, 2017). Since then, there has been a continuous debate regarding the educational rights of the nation's 'wrong-doers.' Some argue that those who commit crimes do not deserve the privilege of an education, while others argue that education is a human right and imperative to both rehabilitation and reintegration. In accordance with the latter sentiment, roughly 350 prison college programs had been established by 1995 (Prigg, 2017). This number dwindled down to only 12 by 2015, largely as a result of the decision by the Clinton administration to make inmates ineligible for Pell Grants in 1994 (Prigg, 2017).

The Clinton administration was largely memorialized by its tough-on-crime objectives. During his presidency, Bill Clinton signed the Violent Crime Control and

Law Enforcement Act, which among other things stripped Pell Grant eligibility from people who are incarcerated (Smith, 2017). The justification for this decision was said to be that the government should not take money away from families across the country already struggling to pay for an education to give it to individuals who had committed crimes. However, incarcerated students received less than \$35 million of the total \$5.6 billion granted in Pell Grants (Smith, 2017). Because the Pell Grant provides financial support for the cost of books, tuition, and fees, colleges began to discontinue their services in prison due to lack of funding. Consequently, the decision to make incarcerated inmates ineligible for Pell Grants directly impacted the educational infrastructure in prisons, leaving many inmates without access to educational opportunities.

This is even more alarming when one considers the magnitude of the incarcerated population in the United States. While the United States composes only 5% of the world's population, it houses about 25% of the world's prisoners (Aalai, 2014). In the year 2014, approximately 1.6 million adults were incarcerated on any given day (Carson, 2015). Additionally, 7 million were involved in some form of supervision such as parole, probation, and electronic tracking (Kaeble, Glae, Tsoutis, & Minton, 2016). Further startling, is the fact that black and Hispanic individuals are imprisoned at staggering higher and disproportionate rates than their white counterparts.

The eligibility for incarcerated students to receive Pell Grants changed under the Obama administration. In 2016, the Pell Grant program was established, which provided funding to twelve thousand inmates to enroll in approximately 67 higher learning institutions to pursue postsecondary education (Delaney, Subramanian, & Patrick, 2016).

Despite this breakthrough for the incarcerated students in America, there are multiple issues which have made the education provided to these students substandard, at best. A number of programs catering to the postsecondary student while incarcerated or after release have been developed to combat this issue. Of these programs, there are two in Rhode Island: (1) the Reentry Campus Program, which serves as the study site; and (2) the College Unbound Prison Education Program. Both programs will be discussed in detail below.

The Reentry Campus Program is a three-part program designed to guide incarcerated students toward a college degree through the use of the DSST program, which is a nationally recognized program providing individuals the opportunity to take exams in over 30 different subject areas which are transferred into educational institutions as college credit. The Reentry Campus Program, through a partnership with Roger Williams University, provides students with the opportunity to transfer the credits gathered from DSST exams to Roger Williams University with ease, and to then enroll in the institution at a very low rate of tuition.

The first phase of the Reentry Campus Program takes place behind the walls. It focuses on providing incarcerated students with the resources they need to prepare for DSST exams, free of charge (Reentry Campus Program, 2016). Students are mailed a course packet containing course instructions, directions for assignments, and a customized learning plan. The work assigned consists of review exercises, practice questions, and supplemental readings designed to enhance the student's understanding of the material that will be tested in the DSST exam they plan to take. Students are then expected to mail the packets back to instructors, who grade the work submitted and send

it back to students for them to revise and edit. Instructors are available at the institution four times per semester to provide feedback and guidance, and also go to the institution to proctor midterms and final exams which serve as practice for the DSST exam to ensure the student's success.

The second phase of the Reentry Campus Program consists of transitional planning (Reentry Campus Program, 2016). Services providing incarcerated students with assistance in planning for their lives outside of prison begin six months prior to the incarcerated students release. The services include: short and long term goal setting; securing housing, mental health counseling, and substance abuse programs; applying for medical, financial, and/or food assistance through the Department of Human Services; obtaining birth certificates, social security cards, and state identification; applying for financial aid for school; requesting official transcripts from prior education attained; resume and cover letter preparation; bus passes; and entry into the Reentry Campus support network.

The third phase focuses on life outside of the walls. With affordability as an objective, the Reentry Campus focuses on guiding students through DSST exams to earn college credit prior to enrolling in a traditional educational institution (Reentry Campus Program, 2016). The Reentry Campus prepares students for DSST exams free of cost, and then pays for the DSST exam fees during their first semester outside of the walls. Released students are required to spend their first semester studying DSST courses through structured, in-person classes held at the Roger Williams University campus. Requiring that students spend their first semester outside of the walls taking DSST prep classes prior to enrolling in traditional college courses reduces the risk that the students

will begin taking college courses without being fully prepared to commit and then accumulate Financial Aid debt prior to being prepared to handle the emotional, mental, and challenges associated with reentry.

Students who successfully complete the transitional semester taking DSST exams are then given the opportunity to enroll at Roger Williams University at a rate of \$750.00 per course, which is the lowest rate available at a four-year academic institution in the state of Rhode Island. Additionally, 90% of students registering at Roger Williams University are eligible for up to \$5,000 worth of aid in Pell awards, and \$10,000 in Financial Aid to be used for books, materials, transportation, and off-campus housing living expenses (Reentry Campus Program, 2016). The Reentry Campus Program also provides guidance in obtaining previous transcripts, navigating the Financial Aid process, and course registration.

College Unbound, founded in 2009, focuses on adult learners who have faced significant challenges while attempting to obtain postsecondary education (College Unbound, 2016). Students who participate in College Unbound develop and implement projects which combine their personal interests with credit-bearing coursework, ultimately leading to the completion of a Bachelors in Arts degree (College Unbound, 2016). College Unbound developed its Prison Education Program with the objective of increasing postsecondary graduation rates for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated adult learners (Hummel, 2018). Incarcerated students participate in College Unbound's Prison Education Program by completing personalized, individualized projects that combine credit-bearing coursework with their interests (College Unbound, 2016). This program is built on the premise that developing authentic projects keeps students

motivated through completion (Hummel, 2018). Incarcerated students participating in College Unbound's Prison Education Program are provided support throughout incarceration through connections with peer learning communities and mentors that encourage them to embrace self-directed learning (College Unbound's Prison Education Program, 2016). Students set long and short-term goals for their education with realistic implications, which enables them to develop projects relevant to their communities and lives.

While incarcerated, students work through a 15-credit curriculum of coursework (College Unbound's Prison Education Program, 2016). Once this is complete, incarcerated alumni remain connected to the program by becoming recruiters and mentors to incoming participants. Prior to release, participants are provided with access to a course that readies them to take courses on the outside (College Unbound's Prison Education Program, 2016). When students are released, they may transfer their credits to College Unbound and continue on the pathway to their obtaining their bachelors degree (College Unbound's Prison Education Program, 2016). College Unbound's Prison Education Program caters to the needs to previously incarnated postsecondary students by identifying and addressing the barriers often posed to reentry. The program provides participants with a case manager who connects them to the resources they need to successfully reenter society. These resources include access to housing, employment, financial literacy, financial aid counseling, substance abuse counseling, and community and family reunification (Hummel, 2018).

While College Unbound's Prison Education Program requires students to complete their coursework through personalized projects, the Reentry Campus Program

provides classroom instruction which most resembles traditional postsecondary education. For this reason, the Reentry Campus Program was chosen as the site for this study.

Defining the Problem

Correctional access to postsecondary education, and the quality of the postsecondary education provided in carceral settings, is lacking in many aspects. Firstly, not nearly enough educational programs offered in the carceral setting are postsecondary, largely due to the decline in funding (Smith, 2017). Secondly, incarcerated students face an abundance of roadblocks when attempting to complete their work, impeding them from learning from the lessons provided at the same caliber as their non-incarcerated counterparts (Thomas, 1995).

While vocational programs have proved to reduce recidivism, and increase the rates of successful reintegration in their own right, not nearly enough educational programs offered in the carceral setting are postsecondary. The results from a study conducted by Georgetown University in 2013 suggest that half of all jobs created this decade will require some level of postsecondary education (Skorton & Altschuler, 2013). Lois Davis, a senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation, shared in an interview with Rhode Island Public Radio that through the studies conducted at the RAND Corporation, it has been found that incarcerated students who participated in any kind of educational program while incarcerated, whether it be at the GED level, vocational, or postsecondary, are 13% less likely to recidivate than if they were not to participate in any educational program (Westervelt, 2015). However, the Corporation has also found that incarcerated students who participate in postsecondary education programs are 16% less

likely to recidivate than those who do not participate in postsecondary education programs (Westervelt, 2015). As such, it can be determined that postsecondary education has proven itself to reduce recidivism rates more effectively than General Education Equivalency (hereinafter, “GED”), vocational, and other non-postsecondary education programs provided in the carceral setting.

The roadblocks posed to the incarcerated student as a result of the carceral setting can impede them from benefiting from educational programs as much as their non-incarcerated counterparts. For starters, the unpredictability stitched into the prison culture makes it difficult to create lesson plans which depend on completion. A prison lockdown could disrupt incarcerated students at any moment. Additionally, class materials may be difficult to keep, as they may be confiscated or stolen at any moment (Thomas, 1995). In conjunction with an unreliable class schedule and the difficulties associated with maintaining class materials, incarcerated students may find it difficult to engage with prison educators, as correspondence through letters and/or email and communication between prison educators and incarcerated students outside of class hours is prohibited. Prison educators do not have office hours, and the regimented prison schedule does not allow students to stay after class and discuss topics and ideas, or ask questions; both of which are encouraged in the non-carceral educational context.

Inherent to, and inextricable from, human identity is the fact that education impacts dignity. Education is a human right, and having access to an education is fundamental to human identity and integrity. Ensuring that the correctional education experience is a positive and productive one upholds this notion, promoting the beliefs and values on which this country stands.

As discussed above, to address the problem presented the perspective of the incarcerated student must be understood. In order for this perspective to be sound, the incarcerated postsecondary student must experience postsecondary education after release. This will allow the individual to compare their postsecondary educational experiences while incarcerated to the normalized standard.

Research Problem Statement

The research problem for this study lies in the lack of literature currently available which explores the perceptions of how incarcerated students feel regarding the education they received while they were incarcerated. This gap in the literature and practice limits administrators in their efforts to make the changes and improvements needed for the incarcerated student to reach their full academic potential. While previous studies conducted suggest that the effectiveness of correctional education should be strictly measured by lowered rates of recidivism and increased ease in reentry, it is imperative that the experience of those engaging in correctional education be documented to better understand how these individuals interpret the usefulness and quality of the instruction they were provided while incarcerated. Exploring their experiences in the Reentry Campus was necessary because in order have a valid perspective of their experiences with postsecondary education programs while incarcerated, they must experience postsecondary education after release, which allows them to have a standard to which to compare it to. The reason for this is that only having participated in postsecondary education programs while incarcerated would not provide participants with the reference needed to assess their experiences. Additionally, exploring this data was likely to aid in efforts made to improve the experiences of the participants and the outcomes of the

programs. The experiences of the participants in postsecondary educational programs after release influence their perception of postsecondary programming offered to them while incarcerated, thereby influencing their perceptions regarding preparation for employment and the development of personal relationships. This study aimed to assess the experiential aspect of postsecondary correctional education with the objective of filling a void in the literature regarding postsecondary correctional education, and possibly exploring areas in which postsecondary correctional education may be improved to ensure that the benefits of correctional education are maximized.

Review of Methodology

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. This explanatory sequential mixed methods approach involved two phases. The researcher collected quantitative data in the first phase, analyzed the results, and then used the results in the qualitative phase to explain the quantitative results. Due to the design of the study, which involves a survey followed by a semi-structured interview, the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach was the most appropriate methodology for this study.

Research Question

Quantitative Research Questions

1. What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities (access to instructions, time, etc.) they received in prison compared to that they received in prison compared to that they received after incarceration, as part of a Reentry Campus Program?

2. What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated (attempting to attend educational programs, complete coursework outside of class, etc.) compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program?
3. What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?
4. What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?

Qualitative Research Questions

1. How do previously incarcerated students perceive their level of satisfaction regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities they received in prison compared that they received after incarceration, as part of the Reentry Campus Program?
2. How do previously incarcerated students perceive barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting they have been in since release?
3. How do previously incarcerated students perceive how the Reentry Campus Program has aided or impaired their quality of life insofar as employment?
4. How do previously incarcerated students perceive how the Reentry Campus Program has impaired their quality of life insofar as personal relationships?

Mixed Method Research Question

1. How do the participants explain their quantitative ratings concerning their perceptions, feelings, and expectations while participating in education programs both in prison and in the Reentry Campus Program?

Definition of Terms

Carceral setting: setting inside of a jail and/or prison.

General Equivalency Diploma: certificate equivalent to the traditional high school diploma.

Incarceration: the state of being confined in prison.

Prison educator: individual who teaches incarcerated students.

Recidivism: the act of a convicted criminal reoffending.

Vocational program: programs geared toward equipping participants with the tools and skills needed to successfully participate in a particular occupation.

Organization for Remaining Sections of This Dissertation

Chapter Two will discuss the literature on correctional education with a focus on postsecondary education, beginning with the history of correctional education in the United States and ending with the current state of correctional education both inside and outside of prison. Chapter Three will focus on the methodology which explores the mixed methods approaching utilizing a generic quantitative inquiry, followed by a generic qualitative inquiry (Percy et al., 2015). Chapter Three also discusses the role of the researcher, the research questions listed above, the data collected, an analysis of the data, as well as the validity and ethical aspects.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Literature Review

This chapter will explore the literature on correctional education in the United States by first discussing the history of correctional education, followed by the recent studies conducted on correctional education. The characteristics of the average incarcerated student are discussed, as well as the educational programs offered to the incarcerated students in Rhode Island. The effects correctional education has on recidivism and reintegration will be discussed, and the gap in literature concerning the incarcerated student's experience will be revealed. Lastly, the conceptual framework of the study on which this dissertation is based will be described.

History of Correctional Education in America

Correctional education in the American prison system, established in 1790, began with religious teachings. Prison administrators believed that educating prisoners, especially the ones who had committed more serious offenses, would benefit from reading the bible and repenting. As such, literate prisoners were provided with a bible with the objective of aiding them in finding their lost souls. This religious approach transcended into the prison culture, as prisoners could not receive visitors in the sixteenth century prison; they were only allowed to visit with religious counselors and preachers (Warburton, 1993).

By 1818, prison overcrowding had led to the construction of two new prisons: the Western and Eastern penitentiaries, both of which operated under very different ideals. The Eastern penitentiary was run under the Pennsylvania system, which believed that prisoners should be kept completely isolated and not be provided with any literary

materials or academic instruction. Alternatively, the Western penitentiary was run under the Auburn system, which condoned work groups and encouraged prisoners to work in silence. The system became popular due to the inexpensive labor provided by prisoners.

The first prison system to emerge which provided vocational and academic opportunities to its prisoners was the Elmira penitentiary, established in 1876. This penitentiary had a focus on reforming its prisoners through education and skills training (Gehring, 1997). Professors were hired to hold courses in geography, moral education, ethics, economics, and history (Gehring, 1997). The Elmira prison was the first to use the parole system, with the objective of aiding and guiding the rehabilitative effect of prison on prisoners.

The value of vocational and educational programs in prison became evident in the 20th century. Among the first courses offered were those by correspondence. By the 1920s, the correspondence courses were offered through U.S. land grant colleges. These colleges offered courses in agriculture, real estate, and salesmanship for prisoners in Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (Silva, 1994). Classes in grammar, mathematics, and foreign language skills were also offered. In 1953, the first degree program for incarcerated students was developed, which allowed 25 inmates from Menard State Prison to graduate from the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (Silva, 1994). Illinois developed two more correctional education programs within the next few years. However, the development of prison education programs diminished by the 1950s, at which time less emphasis was placed on correctional education (Silva, 1994).

In the 1960s, the Rehabilitation Research Foundation at the Draper Correctional Institution in Alabama sponsored Dr. John McKee to conduct research on correctional education (Silva, 1994). After a few years of research, enough data was compiled to encourage legislative action to aid in the availability of correctional education in prisons. In 1965, Title IV of the Higher Education Act was passed, from which the Pell Grant evolved (Hrabowski & Robbi, 2002). The Pell Grant allowed inmates access to financial aid funds to participate in postsecondary educational programs while incarcerated. By 1968, 13 out of 50 states provided correctional education programs to their inmates, and by 1970, such programs expanded to 33 states. By 1973, 182 correctional education programs had been developed in prisons, and by 1982, there were a total of 350 correctional education programs offered in American prisons (Silva, 1994).

Amongst the primary focuses of this study is to highlight the need for measurements which do not involve recidivism or reentry. This, as discussed above, is largely due to both the fact that many incarcerated students will never leave prison, and the fact that educational access affects individuals on a much more intimate level than the practical level on which recidivism and reentry pivot. However, the studies most commonly referenced when discussing the success of correctional education programs, the vast majority of which focus on recidivism rates and successful reentry, will be briefly discussed below.

Recidivism and Successful Employment Reentry Studies

Statistics support the notion that inmates who participate in correctional education studies are less likely to recidivate. Among the most credible studies conducted exploring recidivism rates in America is a longitudinal study conducted by The Bureau of

Justice Statistics conducted over a 5-year period (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014). The participants in the study were composed of individuals released from prison in 2005 from thirty different states (Durose et al., 2014). The results show that 67.8% of these individuals were rearrested for either a felony or serious misdemeanor within three years after release, and 76.9% were rearrested within five years after release (Durose et al., 2014). In regards to those who participate in correctional educational programs, only 13% of released individuals will recidivate (Durose et al., 2014). Several conclusions can be made from these results. Firstly, this data suggests that reducing recidivism rates would drastically impact the overall crime rate in America. Secondly, providing inmates with academic opportunities would greatly reduce recidivism rates. It then follows that imposing programs which reduce the likelihood of recidivism is in the best interest of both the citizen taxpayer, and the criminal justice system.

Statistics also support the notion that incarcerated individuals who participate in correctional educational programs are most likely to find employment upon their release than those who do not participate in correctional education programs. A study conducted by the RAND Corporation concluded that the odds of obtaining employment post-release among inmates who participated in correctional education was 13% higher than the odds for those who did not participate in correctional education (Davis et al., 2013). These results support the notion that providing incarcerated individuals with access to correctional education would increase their likelihood of reentering society after their release.

Characteristics of the Average Incarcerated Student

In order to understand the participants of this study, we must explore their average characteristics. Each incarcerated (and recently incarcerated) individual has their own unique background. Firstly, it must be noted that 40% of the adult correctional population has not completed high school, as demonstrated by studies using existing data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities (SISFCF) (Ewert & Wildhagen, 2011). Secondly, many incarcerated individuals have learning disabilities (Austin & Hardyman, 2004). These two aspects combined contribute to the incarcerated individual's likelihood of success both inside and outside of the prison walls; incarcerated individuals with these setbacks who will eventually be paroled are less likely to experience successful reentry, and incarcerated individuals who will never leave prison are less likely to exhaust any forms of legal relief, as they usually have a difficult time navigating the legal system and understanding legal documents.

Thirdly, family relationships are greatly influential in the development of the incarcerated individual's beliefs (Austin & Hardyman, 2004). Most incarcerated students mirror what they have been exposed to. As such, the educational, employment, and criminal histories of family members impact the way the incarcerated individual views the importance of school and has an effect on how desensitized the incarcerated student is to incarceration. Fourthly, poor employment records are common amongst the incarcerated student (Austin & Hardyman, 2004). Lack of employment often leads to an increased likelihood of exhibiting criminal behavior, as crime becomes more attractive when legitimate pathways to livable income are obstructed, as they can be when an

individual has a criminal record (Lageson & Uggen, 2013, p. 202). Lastly, substance abuse is a commonly shared characteristic among incarcerated students (Austin & Hardyman, 2004). Substance abuse often participates in the cycle which leads to individuals lacking the ability to maintain employment, which leads to a lack of income which is only compounded by the effort to sustain a drug addiction.

Each of these five characteristics is instrumental in shaping the character of the incarcerated student and thus, the parolee. Despite the view that these characteristics are detrimental to the likelihood that the incarcerated student will successfully complete any given correctional education program, it is imperative to all notions of morality and to America's best interest that they are afforded the opportunity to try.

Correctional Facilities: How Staff Perceives Postsecondary Correctional Education

The aforementioned studies proving lower recidivism rates among parolees who participated in correctional education programs suggest that correctional education programs lessen the likelihood of an individual exhibiting criminal or reprehensible behavior. Many corrections officials feel that postsecondary education can produce improved communication between correction staff and inmates, improved peer role models for prisoners, and reduced disciplinary infractions (Taylor, 1992). A study conducted in an Indiana prison demonstrated that prisoners enrolled in postsecondary courses committed 75% fewer infractions than the average inmate (Taylor, 1994). Similarly, a study conducted in Bedford Hills, a maximum security prison for women in New York, analyzed how corrections officers felt about providing incarcerated individuals with access to postsecondary education. The corrections officers who participated in the study reported that offering college classes in the facility both reduced

disciplinary problems and enhanced the prisoners' self-esteem and ability to communicate effectively (Fine et al., 2001).

Implications of Postsecondary Correctional Education Accessibility on Families

The positive impacts of postsecondary correctional education go beyond those experienced by the incarcerated student and the overall safety of the communities they belong to. The families of incarcerated students who participate in postsecondary correctional education benefit greatly. Due to the fact that more than half of incarcerated individuals have minor children at the time of their incarceration, and of these, 44% of men and 64% of women in state prisons lived with their children prior to being incarcerated, obtaining a postsecondary degree sets an admirable example. The Bedford Hills study discussed above, for example, found that the children of women enrolled in the postsecondary educational program expressed pride in their mothers' academic achievements and became more motivated to attend college themselves (Fine et al, 2001). As previously discussed, a postsecondary degree also aids in the ability of the parolee to reenter the workforce, therefore allowing the parolee to make an income. This financial independence allows the parolee to support their family, thereby having positive implications on their economic wellbeing.

Educational Programs Offered to the Incarcerated Student in Rhode Island

Rhode Island provides a variety of educational services to its inmates. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment (hereinafter, "CASAS") is utilized. CASAS is a non-profit organization which provides assessments of basic skills to youth and adults. The assessments provided by CASAS are approved and validated by both the United States Department of Education and the United States Department of Labor

(CASAS.org). They assess the reading and mathematics levels of incoming inmates and the inmates are placed in educational programs best suited for their needs based on the results. An Adult Basic Education/Special Education program is provided to inmates scoring at or below the 6th grade level (CASAS.org). GED classes are provided to inmates scoring at or above the 6th grade level (CASAS.org). Postsecondary and vocational courses are provided through the Community College of Rhode Island (hereinafter “CCRI”) to inmates with a GED or high school degree (CASAS.org).

Other educational programs are also offered to inmates who do not fit into any of the abovementioned categories. Those programs include English as a Second Language, Inmate Literacy, and General Reading (DOC.RI.gov). Additionally, the recreational reading and law libraries within the prisons are managed by the Education Unit, overlooking all correctional educational programming (DOC.RI.gov).

Current Practices in Other States

There are several programs in various states successfully providing postsecondary educational programs to incarcerated students. Each program is unique in structure, course offerings, and funding. While there is very limited data on postsecondary education in prison, the Prison Studies Project, ran out of Harvard Law School’s Charles Hamilton House Institute for Race and Justice, has compiled an online directory of prison education programs in the United States (Strait & Eaton, 2017). The variety in structural dynamic between the programs discussed below supports the notion that there is not a concrete format meant to be followed and speaks to the experimental nature of postsecondary prison education programs.

The Bard Prison Initiative, ran out of New York, was created in 1999 by a group of students who gathered tutors who volunteered to go to local prisons to help inmates refine their literacy and basic arithmetic skills (Noguchi, 2017). The Bard Prison Initiative has grown into an academic program that offers a liberal arts education to prisoners in five of New York's correctional facilities. In 2016, Bard granted 275 postsecondary degrees to incarcerated students and enrolled over 500 incarcerated individuals in their prison education programs (Noguchi, 2017). Their success is illustrated by the fact that less than 4% of previous Bard Prison Institute students return to prison (Noguchi, 2017).

The Boston University Prison Education Program, funded primarily by Boston University, has been offering credit-bearing college courses to incarcerated students housed in the Massachusetts Correctional Institute since 1972 (Matesanz, n.d.). In 1989, the program expanded into other mens correctional institutions in Massachusetts, and by 1991, the program offered its services to women in the state's only correctional institution for women (Matesanz, n.d.). The program offers over 600 courses in a variety of disciplines and awards a Bachelor of Liberal Arts to graduates. While 12,000 incarcerated students have participated in the program since its inception, only approximately 300 have been awarded bachelor degrees (Matesanz, n.d.). Thirty-nine have received master's degrees (Matesanz, n.d.).

The Freedom Education Project, founded in Washington State in 2011, began by offering college courses, but no degrees (Freedom Education Project Puget Sound, 2018). Courses are taught by professors from the University of Puget Sound. It provides its services exclusively to women imprisoned in Washington Corrections Center for Women

(Freedom Education Project Puget Sound, 2018). In 2014, in a partnership with Tacoma Community College, the Freedom Education Project began offering associate degrees (Freedom Education Project Puget Sound, 2018). The first four women to be granted associate degrees through the Freedom Education Project graduated in 2016 (Freedom Education Project Puget Sound, 2018).

The Prison University Project, located in San Quentin Prison in California, was founded in 1996 (Westervelt, 2015). It offers courses in humanities, social sciences, math and science and awards associate degrees through Patten University, a private university in Oakland (Westervelt, 2015). The courses are taught by over 100 volunteer professors from various educational institutions in the area (Westervelt, 2015). Many of the courses offered are eligible for transfer to many of California's public universities and colleges. The California Department of Corrections compiled and published data in 2012 which demonstrated that the recidivism rate for both new offenses and parole violations among Prison University Project's graduates who are paroled is 17%, compared to 65% of all individuals paroled in California overall (Westervelt, 2015).

University Beyond Bars, located in Washington State, was established in 2005 by two volunteers who began teaching small business management, creative writing, and African American history inside Washington State Reformatory (University Beyond Bars, 2018). They developed into a non-profit organization which offers college preparatory courses to over 1,100 incarcerated male students each semester (University Beyond Bars, 2018). The University Beyond Bars program works closely with the Black Prisoners Caucus, created in 1972 by African American men incarcerated at Washington Reformatory at Monroe (University Beyond Bars, 2018).

Recent Political and Policy Context

In May of 2015, United States democratic representative, Donna Edwards, introduced the Restoring Education and Learning (REAL) Act, which proposed restoring access to Pell grants for prisoner students (Strait & Eaton, 2017). While it won 26 sponsors, it was never brought up for vote. A similar bill was introduced in September of 2016, but was never passed. Strides were made in the postsecondary correctional education community in July of 2015, when President Obama announced a \$30 million pilot program, through the Department of Education, called the Second Chance Pell Pilot (Strait & Eaton, 2017). The Second Chance Pell Pilot proposed providing 12,000 incarcerated people access to Pell grants (Strait & Eaton, 2017). It also outlined collaborations with 67 colleges and universities in the United States (Strait & Eaton, 2017). The selected schools are public two-year and four-year institutions which have agreed to offer both classroom-based and online instruction at the correctional facilities (Strait & Eaton, 2017).

The Second Chance Pell Pilot experiment provides Pell grant eligibility to only 12,000 incarcerated individuals (Green, 2018). An attempt to permanently reinstate Pell grants for incarcerated student is being made. Senator Lamar Alexander, chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, said the committee would consider reinstating Pell grant eligibility through the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act currently underway (Green, 2018). It is predicted that the act will have the support of key conservative leaders who see rehabilitating prisoners as a logical and ethical policy (Green, 2018).

Despite various efforts to advance prison education programs, many are opposed to the financial commitment required from the federal government. Many individuals feel that the money would be better spent if dedicated to services benefiting children or those who have not been convicted of crimes (Strait & Eaton, 2017). Due to public opposition, governmental support is not always guaranteed. As such, private support from funders is necessary in order to maintain educational programming in prisons until the public opinion begins to consider the collective value of providing incarcerated students with postsecondary education (Strait & Eaton, 2017).

Second Chance Pell Experiment

The Second Chance Pell Experiment was established to test whether participation in postsecondary correctional education programs increases when incarcerated individuals are given access to financial aid. The experiment was established in light of the finding by a RAND Corporation study conducted in 2013 which found that incarcerated individuals who participated in correctional education were 43% less likely to return to prison within three years than incarcerated individuals who did not participate in any correctional education programs (Davis et al., 2013). The program pivots on strong partnerships between postsecondary institutions and correctional institutions, a robust academic, career, and social services support system, a magnified focus on reentry, and on overall college affordability (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The partnerships between postsecondary institutions and correctional institutions facilitate strong academic and career support services recognizing that the incarcerated student requires additional support, focusing on a wholistic approach, in order to be successful (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The sites chosen demonstrate a strong focus on

reentry by evaluating the local labor market and catering to the needs shown by developing postsecondary instruction which adequately prepared students to reenter the work force (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Lastly, many of the participating postsecondary institutions are focusing on college affordability by making institution-based aid available and guiding students in applying for federal aid, all while committing to maintaining a fixed, often discounted, tuition price (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

The Pell Grant application and award process will not differ for the incarcerated students from that of the non-incarcerated student (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Incarcerated students who wish to receive the Pell Grant must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine their eligibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). The Pell Grants awarded during this experiment are determined using the standard Pell Grant disbursement rules and will not be pro-rated, and will not charge incarcerated students differently than they would non-incarcerated students (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). While the participating postsecondary institutions may charge different tuition for different programs, they may not charge incarcerated students a different amount than non-incarcerated students who are enrolled in the same program (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

The Vera Institute of Justice, with the support of the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance, trained to properly participate with corrections departments, colleges, and policymakers to ensure that the participating educational programs are providing quality postsecondary education both in prisons and post-release (Vera Institute of Justice, 2017). The participation of various agencies is essential to the

success of experimental programs, which are essential in the process of informed policymaking. Experimental programs, such as the Second Chance Pell pilot program, are developed with the objective of gathering the data needed to determine the factors which aid in the prevention of recidivism (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Through these programs, the Department of Education is better able to determine its role in ensuring that this objective is met.

The Role of the Taxpayer in Postsecondary Correctional Education

Due to taxpayer's concerns regarding cost in the context of postsecondary correctional education, it is imperative that the taxpayer's role in postsecondary correctional education is explored. The Vera Institute of Justice conducted a study, in which 40 states participated, to determine the cost of incarceration for the average taxpayer. The study, released in 2012, demonstrated that the aggregate cost of prison in 2010 was \$39 billion. The cost allocated to taxpayers per year totaled an average of \$31,286 per inmate.

In light of the high cost of keeping each prisoner in prison, many policymakers have proposed alternatives to incarceration. These suggestions include supervised treatment programs, rehabilitation services, programs for drug offenders and domestic violence offenders, higher use of community service, and work-release programs (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, 2012). Providing postsecondary education to incarcerated individuals is another potential solution. An analysis conducted by Chappell from 1990-1999, published on the Journal of Correctional Education, found that out of 15 studies concerning the correlation between postsecondary education and recidivism, 14 of them demonstrated reduced rates of recidivism for former prisoners who had participated in

postsecondary correctional education (2004). On average, recidivism rates for ex-offenders who had participated in postsecondary correctional education programs were 46% lower than for ex-offenders who had not (Chappell, 2004). These findings clearly demonstrate a drastic decrease in the likelihood of engaging in recidivism for those parolees who participated in postsecondary correctional education while incarcerated. Therefore, it follows that providing postsecondary correctional education to incarcerated individuals saves the taxpayer money, as it makes it less likely that an individual will return to prison.

Critics of postsecondary correctional education argue that the abovementioned studies concerning the correlation between postsecondary correctional education and recidivism reflect prisoners who make the choice to pursue higher education, suggesting that individuals who have this motivation are less likely to relapse into criminal behavior. Studies which have been conducted to derail this argument compare individuals who participated in educational programming while in prison with those of similar background and motivation levels who did not. A study conducted by Steurer, Smith, and Stacy, included over 3,000 ex-offenders from three states over a period of three years (2001). The ex-offenders were tracked, and the researchers found that ex-offenders who had participated in education programs were 29% less likely to have been sent back to prison within the three years (Steurer et al., 2001). Studies such as this one suggest that it is the participation in correctional education itself, not the characteristic of the offender, which was responsible for the lessened likelihood of the exhibition of recidivistic behavior.

Studies which focus on postsecondary education suggest that participating in postsecondary correctional education, in particular, is extremely effective in reducing the likelihood of recidivism. A study conducted in 2005 including 1,000 inmates from prisons in Ohio compared the reduction in recidivism between incarcerated students who completed postsecondary programs with those who completed other educational programs, such as GED or vocational programs. The results showed that while earning a GED or completing a vocational program did in fact reduce the likelihood of an individual exhibiting recidivistic behavior, those who completed an associates degree demonstrated a particularly lesser likelihood of exhibiting recidivistic behavior, having found to be 62% less likely to recidivate (Batiuk et al., 2005). As suggested by this study, postsecondary correctional education is particularly imperative in the reduction of recidivism.

When comparing the costs to the taxpayer associated with each inmate to the cost to the taxpayer associated with providing the incarcerated with access to educational programming, it becomes impractical to suggest that the taxpayer is negatively affected financially by postsecondary educational programming. Only a small fraction of approximately 6% is used to pay for all prison programming, including educational programming at any level (American Correctional Association, 2003). Steurer, Smith, and Tracy, government analysts from Maryland, used the results of various studies assessing recidivism to calculate that providing correctional education programs saved taxpayers over \$24 million dollars annually, which is more than twice what Maryland spends on funding correctional education programs due to the effect such programs have on recidivism (Steurer, Smith, and Tracy, 2001).

Philanthropic Influence

The postsecondary educational experience is significantly influenced by the funding that is provided to the efforts being directed toward increasing access (Strait & Eaton, 2017). Without funding, student prisoners are not likely to have the tools they need to successfully participate in, and/or graduate from, postsecondary educational programs. As such, the success of correctional postsecondary education programs relies heavily on philanthropic influence. An example of philanthropic influence is the Ford Foundation's aid in establishing a fund specifically for the purpose of developing postsecondary programs operated by Bard College, the Prison University Project, and Wesleyan University's Center for Prison Education (Strait & Eaton, 2017). The Open Society Foundation and the Sunshine Lady Foundation are also examples of foundations taking part in the philanthropic influence in postsecondary correctional education (Strait & Eaton, 2017).

Research Questions: Theoretical Framework and the Correctional Education

Experience

The conceptual framework used for this study is based on the level of satisfaction with correctional postsecondary programs experienced by the incarcerated student, studied through the perspective of previously incarcerated students. There are numerous theories that explain why providing postsecondary correctional education reduces the probability of recidivism. The most pertinent are the Moral Development Theory, the Social Psychological Development Theory, and the Opportunity Theory (Ubah & Robinson, 2003). Collectively, they represent the Theories of Individual Change.

Theories of Individual Change focus entirely on the individual, opposed to society as a whole (Ransome, 2010).

Developed in 1962 by George Herbert Mead, the Moral Development Theory supports the notion that there are rehabilitative qualities to postsecondary correctional education (Morris, 1962). It poses that prison-based educational programs which offer teachings in philosophy, sociology, and literature can be rehabilitative, as they strengthen the consciousness of the individual. These teachings, which have traditionally been offered at a postsecondary level, heighten consciousness. They are imperative to the inmate population because sharpened consciousness, in theory, lessens the likelihood of criminality. It then follows that correctional education has a direct impact on recidivism. Social theorists have also suggested that moral-reasoning programs produce attitudinal change in inmates, and that moral education can enable individuals to look at themselves in ways which lead them to begin making decisions based on moral reasoning opposed to self-satisfaction (Lockwood, 1991; Hobler, 1999).

Social Psychological Development Theory focuses on the transformative and liberating processes triggered by educative experiences. It poses that cognitive processes play a prominent role in the development of new patterns of behavior (Ubah & Robinson, 2003). Social Psychological Development theory assumes that individuals exhibit new patterns of behavior through exposure to certain modes of entertainment; in this context, postsecondary correctional education programming (Ubah & Robinson, 2003). Those studying correctional education through the perspective of the Social Psychological Development Theory believe that each inmate who participates in correctional education programs enhances their psychological well-being through their development of

cognitive and physical abilities (Reagen & Stoughton, 1976). This could encourage relaxation and the release of tension more maturely and constructively, opposed to impulsively and destructively. Consequently, inmates develop a more positive image of themselves, leading to an increase in self-esteem (Ubah & Robinson, 2003). Pendleton (1988), who developed a model for building self-esteem around prison educational programming, notes that inmates earning a postsecondary degree tend to look at the world more positively, set higher standards and goals for themselves, and develop time management skills. These characteristics and shifts in behavior are conducive to the inmate's ability to be a productive member of society without exhibiting criminalistic behavior.

Lastly, Opportunity Theory is often referenced in support of postsecondary correctional education. Opportunity Theory originated with Merton's (1938) strain theory, which suggests that obtaining postsecondary education while incarcerated will provide inmates with legitimately acquired human capital, which results in increased likelihood of gaining employment. According to Merton, this leads to building special bonds that protect against criminal behavior. On the basis of the well-established finding that education credentials increase the likelihood of acquiring employment, and due to the fact that poverty often provides motive for crime, it can be argued that postsecondary education while in prison reduces criminalistic behavior, thereby reducing recidivism (Merton, 1938). Opportunity Theory suggests that most crimes are committed by individuals who live in poverty due to the fact that they do not have access to opportunities which provide upward economic mobility (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). Concisely, it poses that criminal behavior can be explained by a lack of employment, and

thereby lack of income. Hershberger (1987) suggests that inmates' educational successes in prison increase the likelihood of the inmate pursuing postsecondary education once they are released. Inmates who participate in postsecondary education programs develop a stronger sense of self and often experience a dramatic increase in motivation, pushing them to continue their education outside the walls (Hershberger, 1987).

While each abovementioned theory rests on a distinct premise, they all support the notion that postsecondary correctional education reduces the likelihood of recidivism. However, the theories which most adequately relate to the inmate's postsecondary correctional education experience, and which serve as the theoretical framework for this study, are the Moral Development Theory and the Opportunity Theory. Moral Development Theory poses that postsecondary teachings heighten consciousness, lessening the likelihood of criminality, impacting recidivism. Figure 1 depicts the short-term results, medium term results, and ultimate impact of the Reentry Campus Program. One of the ultimate impacts listed is a decrease in the likelihood of exhibiting recidivistic behavior. This impact directly correlates with the Moral Development Theory. Another ultimate impact listed is an increased possibility of gaining employment. Opportunity Theory suggests most crimes are committed by individuals who live in poverty due to lack of opportunity for upward economic mobility. Obtaining postsecondary education while incarcerated will provide inmates with legitimately acquired human capital, which results in increased likelihood of employment. As such, the Moral Development Theory and the Opportunity Theory most adequately serve as the foundation for this study, which fulfills answers to the research questions listed below.

Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework, demonstrating how the experiences of the postsecondary incarcerated student while engaging in postsecondary correctional education programs offered in prison, followed by participation in postsecondary courses offered through the Reentry Campus Program, leads to increased satisfaction with the postsecondary experience, and correlates with the Moral Development and the Opportunity Theory. Several assumptions may be made in regards to the context, mechanism, and outcomes illustrated in the framework. Firstly, the assumption made regarding the experiences of the postsecondary incarcerated student while engaging in postsecondary correctional education programs offered in prison (context) is that postsecondary correctional education programs are not satisfactory. Secondly, the assumption made regarding the postsecondary correctional education experience after release (mechanism) is that postsecondary correctional education programs offered through the Reentry Campus Program are satisfactory to the previously incarcerated postsecondary student. Thirdly, two assumptions are made regarding the impact of participating in postsecondary educational programs while incarcerated and then participating in postsecondary programs after release (outcome): (1) postsecondary educational programming in prison is not satisfactory to the incarcerated student as opposed to postsecondary educational programming provided upon release, through the Reentry Campus Program; and (2) increased satisfaction with postsecondary correctional programming incentivizes participation, thereby decreasing the likelihood of recidivism.

The research questions chosen for this study were developed in line with the beliefs of both the Moral Development Theory, focusing on rehabilitative qualities, and the Opportunity Theory, focusing on poverty as a contributing factor to criminality. Both

theories compose the lens through which the researcher conducted the analysis of the data.

Quantitative Research Questions

What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities (access to instructions, time, etc.) they received in prison compared to that they received in prison compared to that they received after incarceration, as part of a Reentry Campus Program?

1. What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated (attempting to attend educational programs, complete coursework outside of class, etc.) compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program?
2. What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?
3. What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?

Qualitative Research Questions

1. How do previously incarcerated students perceive their level of satisfaction regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities they received in prison compared that they received after incarceration, as part of the Reentry Campus Program?

2. How do previously incarcerated students perceive barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting they have been in since release?
3. How do previously incarcerated students perceive how the Reentry Campus Program has aided or impaired their quality of life insofar as employment?
4. How do previously incarcerated students perceive how the Reentry Campus Program has impaired their quality of life insofar as personal relationships?

Mixed Method Research Question

1. How do the participants explain their quantitative ratings concerning their perceptions, feelings, and expectations while participating in education programs both in prison and in the Reentry Campus Program?

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

Methodology

Research Design

The research presented involves a study using a mixed methods research methodology which examined the feelings, thoughts, and past experiences of previously incarcerated students, as they relate to their participation in postsecondary correctional programming, through a survey, followed by a semi-structured interview. A mixed methods approach involves the integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data in a research study (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative data is usually open-ended in nature, while quantitative data is gathered through close-ended inquiries. Other terms used for this approach include *integrating, synthesis, quantitative and qualitative methods, multimethod, and mixed methodology* (Creswell, 2014). However, recent writings prefer the term *mixed methods* (Bryman, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The mixed methods approach was introduced in the early 1990s as a result of studies conducted and work published by researchers in fields such as evaluation, education, management, sociology, and health sciences. This approach has expanded into a vast variety of disciplines and is used in many countries throughout the world (Creswell, 2014). The rise of the mixed methods approach is evident through discipline-specific discussions about mixed methods found in journals across the social and health sciences (Creswell, 2014).

A mixed approach method was chosen because of its ability to draw from both qualitative and quantitative research, while addressing the weaknesses of each. Quantitative data often fails to understand the context or setting in which data is

collected, while qualitative data does not lend itself to statistical analysis (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, the mixed methods approach combines inductive and deductive reasoning, and helps reduce the potential biases of the researcher (Creswell, 2014). There are several types of mixed methods designs. Creswell identified three basic mixed methods designs: (1) the Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design; (2) the Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design; and (3) the Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design (Creswell, 2014). An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design was used for this study.

The explanatory sequential mixed methods approach is a design in mixed methods that involves a two-phase project in which the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase, analyzes the results, and then uses the results to plan the second, qualitative phase (Figure 2). The objective of this design is to have the qualitative data help explain in more detail the initial, quantitative results. Because this study used surveys to gather quantitative data, followed by semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data, the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach was the most appropriate methodology.

Qualitative Approaches

There are several qualitative approaches to consider when designing a mixed study. Among them are: (1) ethnography; (2) case study; (3) grounded theory; (4) phenomenology; and (5) generic (Percy et al., 2015). Ethnography focuses on the investigation of the network of social groupings, social customs, beliefs, behaviors, groupings, or practices that define a culture (Percy et al., 2015). Case studies are in-depth investigations of a single case, using multiple methods and multiple sources of data

(Percy et al., 2015). Grounded theory uses data from people to develop an explanation or theory for the process in question developed over time (Percy et al., 2015).

Phenomenology investigates the lived experience of various psychological phenomena (Percy et al., 2015). A generic qualitative inquiry investigates people's reports of their subjective opinions, attitudes, beliefs, or reflections on their experiences (Percy et al., 2015). For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a generic approach.

The generic approach to qualitative study may be used when: (1) the research problem and question require a qualitative or mixed-methods methodology; (2) the researcher has a body of pre-knowledge/pre-understandings about the topic that he or she wants to be able to more fully describe from the participant's perspective; and (3) ethnography, case study, grounded theory, or phenomenology is inappropriate because the focus of the study, the content of the information desired, or the kind of data to be obtained do not fit those approaches (Percy et al., 2015). The first criterion was met due to the mixed-methods methodology presented. The second criterion was also met because the researcher developed the methodology with pre-existing knowledge and assumptions. The last criterion was also met because ethnography, case study, grounded theory, and phenomenology are each inappropriate for reasons discussed below.

Firstly, as aforementioned, ethnography focuses on the investigation of the network of social groupings, social customs, beliefs, behaviors, groupings, or practices that define a culture, none of which focus on people's attitudes, opinions, beliefs or reflections on their experiences (Percy et al., 2015). Secondly, case studies are used for in-depth investigations of a "single case," which is defined by having clearly recognizable boundaries that differentiate the case from any other collection of instances

(Percy et al., 2015). Case studies investigate the same case using multiple methods and sources of data, and the participants used for the presented study do not constitute a “case” in that sense. Thirdly, grounded theory uses data to develop a theory over time, while the presented study aims to explore the reflections on the experiences of the participants (Percy et al., 2015). Lastly, while many of the phenomena studies through this approach include attitudes, beliefs, opinions and feelings, phenomenology explores the inner dimensions, textures, qualities, and structures of those cognitive processes, not in the external content that may trigger the cognitive processes, as this study does (Percy et al., 2015). For the aforementioned reasons, the presented research design involves a generic mixed-methods approach.

Participants

The participants in this study were composed of previously incarcerated students currently attending programs providing them with postsecondary education upon their release. Using participants who had been released provided a unique perspective, as they were able to compare their correctional education experience to their educational experience outside the walls. The participants’ educational history prior to being incarcerated, the crimes they had been charged with, or the sentences they completed, were not be disclosed to the researcher. No juveniles were included in this study. The researcher focused on previously incarcerated students who participated in postsecondary educational programs after 1994, as the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act passed that year stripped incarcerated students from access to Pell Grants.

In Rhode Island, there are a total of seven state institutional facilities. For the purpose of this study, participants came from a variety of all seven, providing

perspectives from prisons varying in population and level of security. Participants were selected from the Reentry Campus Program, further discussed in the section below regarding the sites involved in this study. A total of 14 participants were included in the study. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006, p. 63) suggest that saturation often occurs at around 12 participants in. To ensure that a researcher has reached saturation, he or she needs to go beyond the point of saturation to ensure that no new themes emerge Guest et al., 2006). As such, the researcher sought to include a total of 14 participants in order to give the resulting data adequate credibility.

Sampling is an imperative part of the research process because it helps inform the quality of inferences made by the researcher from the findings. In the case of mixed methods studies, sampling schemes must be designed for each their qualitative and quantitative components. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) identified 24 sampling schemes, all of which fall into two classes: random sampling and non-random sampling. If the objective of the study is to generalize (or make inferences from) quantitative and/or qualitative findings to the population from which the sample was drawn, then the researcher will randomly select a sample of that population (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). If the objective of the study is to obtain insights into a phenomenon, individuals, or events, then the researcher will purposefully select individuals, groups, and settings (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Because in this study, the researcher attempted to make inferences from data obtained from a particular population, random sampling was used. Furthermore, there are five random sampling schemes: simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster random sampling, systematic random sampling, and multi-stage random sampling (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). For the purpose of this

study, simple random sampling was used for both the initial, quantitative phase of the study, and the second, quantitative phase of the study.

Following the sampling scheme, a sampling design must be identified. Sampling designs can be classified according to (1) the time orientation of a study's components; and (2) the relationship of the quantitative and qualitative samples. Time orientation dimension refers to whether each the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study take place at the same time (congruently), or take place one after the other due to the latter phase being dependent on the former phase (sequentially; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The relationship between the data gathered during the quantitative phase and the data gathered during the qualitative phase may be identified as either identical, parallel, nested, or multilevel. An identical relationship exists when exactly the same sample members participate in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). A parallel relationship exists when the samples for the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study differ but are drawn from the same population of interest (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). A nested relationship exists when the sample members participating in one phase of the study represent a subset of the sample members participating in the other (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Lastly, a multilevel relationship exists when there are two or more sets of samples that are extracted from different levels of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

The determination of the two abovementioned criteria yield eight possible types of mixed methods study sampling designs. Design 1 involves a concurrent design using samples with an identical relationship for the quantitative and qualitative components of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Samples are considered to have an identical

relationship when exactly the same sample members participate in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study. An example of a study using samples with an identical relationship is a study in which the exact group of participants is used to gather data from qualitative and quantitative phases which occur simultaneously. Design 2 involves a concurrent design using samples with a parallel relationship for the quantitative and qualitative components of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Samples with parallel designs are samples composed of participants drawn from the same population, despite the qualitative and quantitative components of the research being different. An example of a study using samples with a parallel relationship is a study in which a group of seventh graders is administered a quantitative measure of reading attitudes during the quantitative phase, and a group of seventh graders from another school is administered a quantitative measure of reading attitudes during the qualitative phase. Design 3 involves a concurrent design using nested samples for the quantitative and qualitative components of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). A nested relationship between the samples refers to the samples involving sample participants who were selected for one phase of the study to represent a subset of those participants chosen for the other facet of the investigation.

Design 4 involves a concurrent design using a multilevel sample for quantitative and qualitative components of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). A multilevel relationship between the samples refers to the use of two or more sets of samples that are extracted from different levels of the study. An example of a multilevel relationship is a study using two samples each containing participants from different populations. Design 5 involves a sequential design using identical samples for both quantitative and

qualitative components of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Design 6 involves a sequential design using parallel samples for the quantitative and qualitative components of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Design 7 involves a sequential design using nested samples for the quantitative and qualitative components of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Lastly, Design 8 involves a sequential design using samples with a multilevel relationship for quantitative and qualitative components of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

This study involved the use of a quantitative approach for the initial phase, which was conducted through the use of a survey, as well as the use of a qualitative approach for the second phase, which was conducted through the use of semi-structured interviews. Because the interview questions inform the data gathered from the surveys, the time orientation of this study was sequential. Additionally, this study involved the use of the same participants from the initial phase to conduct the second phase. As such, the relationship between the data gathered during the initial phase and the data gathered during the second phase was identical, making this study illustrative of Sampling Design 5. Sampling Design 5 involves a sequential design using identical samples for both quantitative and qualitative components of the study. This study was determined to be most effectively conducted through Sampling Design 5 because it aimed to initially gather data from the quantitative phase, and to then explore the answers given in the quantitative phase through the qualitative phase. Sampling Design 5 catered to these needs by providing a sequential design which allowed the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration during the second, qualitative component of the study, of the answers given by the same individuals during the first, quantitative phase of the study.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were a survey and a semi-structured interview. All of the instruments used were created by the researcher.

The alignment matrix below illustrates the alignment between each developed survey and interview question (Figure 3). There are two survey questions corresponding to each of the four developed quantitative research questions, resulting in a total of eight survey questions. The first quantitative research question listed in the matrix is followed by survey questions 1(a) and 1(b). The second quantitative research question is followed by survey questions 2(a) and 2(b). The third quantitative research question is followed by survey questions 3(a) and 3(b). Lastly, the fourth quantitative research question is followed by survey questions 4(a) and 4(b). As illustrated by the matrix, these questions make up the quantitative phase of the study.

In regards to the semi-structured interview, there are four semi-structured interview questions corresponding to the first of the four developed qualitative research questions. There are two additional interview questions corresponding to the remaining three qualitative research questions, resulting in a total of ten interview questions. The first qualitative research question listed in the matrix is followed by interview questions 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), and 1(d). The second qualitative research question is followed by interview questions 2(a) and 2(b). The third qualitative research question is followed by interview questions 3(a) and 3(b). Lastly, the fourth qualitative research question is followed by interview questions 4(a) and 4(b). As illustrated by the matrix, these questions make up the qualitative phase of the study. Lastly, the matrix includes the mixed methods research question developed for this study.

Survey

The first instrument used was the survey. The survey questions may be found below (Appendix A). The second instrument used was the semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview may also be found below (Appendix B).

The format used for the survey was the Likert Scale, which uses a 5 or 7-point scale, ranging from one extreme to another, to identify degrees of opinion. The Likert Scale allows the researcher to collect and measure a participant's values, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions regarding a particular subject. The survey used for this study used a 5-point scale allowing participants to select responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The survey items were read aloud by the researcher to ensure that participants were able to participate regardless of literacy level.

There are numerous advantages to conducting research through surveys. Two primary advantages are that the research produces empirical data and that surveys have the capability of gathering data at a low cost. When designing a survey, the following issues must be considered: (1) planning the content of a research tool; (2) survey layout; (3) questions; (4) piloting; and (5) covering letter (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003).

Planning the content of a survey is imperative because adequate planning increases the probability of effectiveness. "A well-designed research tool is simple, appropriate for the intended use, acceptable to respondents, and should include a clear and interpretable scoring system" (Kelley et al., 2003, p. 263). Additionally, making sure that the tool is reliable and produces credible data is very important. "If a research instrument has not undergone a robust process of development and testing, the credibility of the research findings themselves may legitimately be called into question and may

even be completely disregarded” (Kelley et al., 2003, p. 263). Due to the fact that a tool used specifically for studies with the objective of gathering the data that this study aimed to gather has not been published, the researcher developed an original survey. This survey was tested in the pilot study for reliability and credibility.

The layout of the survey, as well as the questions posed by it, must be conducive to ease of use and understanding. The questions must also be clear and concise in order to produce the most reliable and credible data possible. According to Kelley, the researcher must be very mindful of the form of the questions, avoiding questions which are asking two questions in one, questions containing double negatives, and questions which may be leading (2003). The researcher developed a survey which was concise, easy to read and understand, and which posed questions which focused on one single issue at a time while also lending themselves to a wide range of answers from the participants.

To ensure the efficacy and reliability of the tool, it should be tested on a pilot sample of members (discussed above) of the population being targeted in the study. The pilot test is beneficial because it will aid the researcher in understanding whether changes need to be made to the tool in order to conduct the study successfully. “This process will allow the researcher to identify whether respondents understand the questions and instructions, and whether the meaning of questions is the same for all respondents” (Kelley et al., 2003). The researcher conducted a pilot study with members of the participant group in order to ensure that the survey was effective and that the study rendered credible and reliable results.

Additionally, a covering letter is necessary in order to provide participants with the most transparency possible. A cover letter includes information such as the organization behind the study, the contact name and address of the researcher, details of how and why the respondent was selected, the aims of the study, any potential benefits or harm resulting from the study, and what will happen to the information provided (Kelley et al., 2003). Covering letters not only encourage potential participants to participate, but they aid in solidifying informed consent. The researcher provided all participants with a covering letter prior to the commencement of the study.

Because the researcher created this survey, it does not have reliability and validity statistics. As such, to test the questions for validity, the researcher had a panel of experts review the questions. The individuals that served as the researcher's expert panel are: A. T. Wall, Lois M. Davis, and Cathryn Chappell. Each of these individuals has contributed to the area of postsecondary correctional education in some capacity and has the experience and knowledge necessary to adequately assess the validity and reliability of the research questions.

A. T. Wall is Director of the Rhode Island Department of Corrections. Mr. Wall is a qualified expert in postsecondary correctional education because he is the longest serving correctional director in the country and has overseen every educational programming offered in Rhode Island's correctional facilities. Lois M. Davis is a senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation and has over 25 years research experience in the areas of public safety and public health (RAND Corporation, 2018). Ms. Davis is currently leading an evaluation of a three-state demonstration project called "Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education," led by the Vera Institute of Justice (RAND

Corporation, 2018). The project aims to demonstrate that access to postsecondary correctional education can, among other things, reduce recidivism and increase employability (Patrick, 2013). Cathryn Chappell is a researcher and associate professor at Ashland University (Ashland University, 2018). Her areas of expertise include assessment, multicultural education, peace education, and social justice issues (Ashland University, 2018). One of her primary areas of scholarship is postsecondary prison education (Ashland University, 2018).

Semi-structured Interview

The second instrument used in this study was the semi-structured interview (Appendix B). The interview questions are listed in the matrix below (Figure 3).

A semi-structured interview, using open-ended questions, is an inductive approach often used to help researchers understand how the opinions of the participants and how they feel, in an effort to understand their perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A total of eight open-ended questions, were used to conduct the semi-structured interview and to allow the participants to elaborate on their answers to the survey questions.

The researcher used the recording application Temi (2018) to record and transcribe the recordings from the semi-structured interviews into written text.

Bracketing

In order to ensure the credibility of the results of a study, researchers must prioritize impartiality. In qualitative (or in this case, mixed methods) studies, bracketing may be used in an attempt to prevent researchers from referencing their personal experiences when interpreting data. Bracketing is a methodological device of inquiry that requires the researcher to put aside their beliefs about the subject matter in question

and what they already know regarding it prior to conducting the study (Sorsa, Kiiikkala, & Astedt-Kurki, 2015). The researcher's background can affect the study's focus, planning, and analysis, as well as the methods used to present the findings (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). "The aim of bracketing is that the researcher should not influence the participant's understanding of the issue. If bracketing is not used during research, the risk is that data will be biased and more a reflection of the worldview of the researcher, rather than that of the participant" (Sorsa et al., 2015, p. 10). The integrity of the data gathered may be compromised if precautionary measures are not taken to ensure that researcher bias is eliminated. As such, bracketing was used during the collection of data.

Bracketing is conducted by requiring that the researcher fully disclose past experiences and existing sentiments which may have to do the subject in question, or consciously use their background as a research tool. In this case, the former is applicable. As such, the researcher will discuss how access to postsecondary correctional education personally relates to her.

The researcher who conducted this study is largely driven by work surrounding mass incarceration and racial disparity in the criminal justice system. Racial disparity in the prison system exists when the proportion of a racial or ethnic group within the control of the system is greater than the proportion of such groups in the general population. It is the result of the systematic racial discrimination prevalent in the criminal justice system. The quality of, and access to, postsecondary education in prison is imperative to the likelihood that individuals in prison will engage in educational programs. The direct correlation between education and decreased recidivism rates cements the importance of ensuring that individuals in prison are receiving an equitable education which provides

them with a satisfactory academic experience. Due to their overrepresentation in prisons, minorities are the most likely to suffer the consequences of lacking an education when attempting to successfully reenter the community. Because of the researcher's position on mass incarceration and racial disparity, and the role of postsecondary correctional education in those issues, careful consideration had to be made to ensure that she did not compromise the credibility of the data collected and the data analysis. These biases were monitored closely, and the data was revised several times to be certain that the findings presented in this study adequately represented the messages of the participants.

Procedures and Data Collection

The following is a description of the site selection process, explanation of how the researcher gained access to the site involved in the study, the participant selection process, and the recording process.

Sites Involved in the Study

Given the small size of Rhode Island, there are not an abundance of sites or programs designed to provide postsecondary education in prisons. The most interesting program available is the Reentry Campus Program, which provides follows a model consisting of DSST exams prepared for and taken while in prison, which provide credits transferable to any traditional academic institution. This program was chosen because it ensures that participants have experience engaging in educational programs both in prison and outside of prison. Having both experiences allows for a more informed perspective on postsecondary education attainment while in prison.

Gaining Access

After determining that the Reentry Campus Program was the ideal site, the researcher contacted James Monteiro, the Executive Director of the program and explained her interest in meeting with him to discuss her desire to conduct a generic qualitative study on perspectives on postsecondary correctional education from the previously incarcerated student. Mr. Monteiro met with the researcher and they discussed the students in the Reentry Campus Program, as well as how the researcher would collect her data. Mr. Monteiro agreed to allow the researcher to ask the students if they would be willing to participate in a survey, followed by a semi-structured interview at a later date, assessing their experience with postsecondary education from behind the walls.

Participant Recruitment and Selection Format

Recruiting the participants from the Reentry Campus Program entailed the researcher going to observe a class and asking the students if they would be interested in participating. The participants were selected based on inclusion/exclusion criterion determined by the research question. The primary research question involved in this study was: how do previously incarcerated students perceive their correctional postsecondary educational experience? As such, participants selected needed to have been previously incarcerated students who had experience attempting to participate in postsecondary educational programs while incarcerated. No juveniles were included in this study.

Recording

The surveys were recorded on paper. The semi-structured interviews were audio recorded to allow the researcher to focus on the testimony of the participants instead of on the quality of the notes taken, and to ensure that the researcher was able to use the recordings as reference when updating notes. The researcher transcribed the recordings using a recording application named Temi (2018) to generate the script version of the interviews. The recordings were listened to and read through various times in order to acquire a clear understanding of the responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Following this, the researcher analyzed, coded, and categorized the data using Dedoose, a qualitative analysis computer program, which uses a set of code trees and defined descriptor fields. Through Dedoose, the qualitative data was tagged with corresponding codes. The program then identified patterns and provided the researcher with visual data reports. From this, the researcher was able to identify different descriptors to analyze the data for meaningful patterns and themes (Dedoose, 2018).

Data Analysis

Coding

Data analysis in qualitative research begins with the collection of the data, followed by the reduction of the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes (Creswell, 2007). Data analysis is concluded by representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion (Creswell, 2007). For this study, the researcher used multiple sources of evidence to provide answers to the research questions presented: the survey (Appendix A), and the open interview (Appendix B).

The results from the survey provided the researcher with a general view on the postsecondary correctional education experience from the perspective of the previously incarcerated student at the site chosen. The survey questions were divided into the following categories: (a) postsecondary educational opportunities; (b) barriers and facilitators to learning; (c) development of characteristics and routines needed for employment; (d) development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships.

The results of the open interviews were analyzed through the use of rules as dictated by qualitative coding procedures, which dictated how the responses were categorized, and ultimately, what each category indicated. The researcher analyzed the results with the objective of making connections, and the researcher then used the categories organized by Dedoose (2018) to make inferences from the responses. Once the data was organized, the researcher identified the ideas and opinions of the participants, and coded the data.

As defined by Saldaña (2016), a code in a qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. There are three primary forms of coding: in vivo coding, descriptive coding, and values coding. In vivo coding keeps the data rooted in the participant's own language, descriptive coding summarizes the primary topic of the excerpt, and values coding captures and labels subjective perspectives (Saldaña, 2016). Because of the emphasis on insight and opinion that comes with the kind of inquiry presented in this study, values coding was the most appropriate.

Values coding is the application of codes to qualitative data which reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives (Saldaña, 2016). Value, attitude, and belief are each distinct. A value refers to the importance one attributes to oneself, another person, thing, or idea (Saldaña, 2016). An attitude is the way one thinks and feels about oneself, another person, thing, or idea (Saldaña, 2016). Lastly, a belief is a part of a system that includes one's values and attitudes, and adds one's personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of the social world (Saldaña, 2016). While one can code for all three, one does not have to, and values codes may be determined prior to the collection of data as *provisional codes*, or constructed during the collection of data. Values coding is particularly useful with data which wishes to answer inquiries regarding intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences (Saldaña, 2016). Because this study aimed to gather data regarding both the intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences of previously incarcerated students with postsecondary correctional education, values coding best served this study. Following the coding of the data collected, the researcher searched for emerging themes.

The primary tool used for analyzing data produced through generic qualitative inquiry studies is thematic analysis. A "theme" is the outcome of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself, coded (Saldaña, 2016). Saldaña explains that "security," for example, can be a code, but "a false sense of security" is a theme (Saldaña, 2016). The objective of thematic analysis is to extract specific and descriptive themes from the codes prepared.

Thematic analysis is a flexible analytic method used for deriving central themes from data. This form of analysis creates themes-statements for ideas or categories of ideas (codes) that the researcher extracts from the responses of the participants. There are two primary types of thematic analysis: inductive and theoretical. With the inductive thematic analysis approach, that data are interpreted inductively, excluding any preselected theoretical categories. Alternatively, with theoretical thematic analysis, the participants' words are interpreted according to categories or constructs from preexisting literature. For this study, inductive thematic analysis was used, as it most appropriately extracted ideas that are not related to preexisting research.

Because of the above, the researcher used a values coding method, followed by an inductive thematic analysis. The themes that emerged illustrated the perspectives on postsecondary correctional education from the previously incarcerated student. The results derived from the study answered the research questions posed by providing insight on the specific factors and/or experiences which have shaped the perceptions of the incarcerated postsecondary student on correctional postsecondary education.

Limitations

The only limitation the researcher foresaw in this study was the possible lack of cooperation from previously incarcerated students. It would have been virtually impossible to gather this data without their compliance, and their perspective was necessary to the understanding of the effectiveness of postsecondary correctional education programs, as well as their quality and accessibility. In the case that the researcher had trouble getting previously incarcerated individuals to participate, the researcher planned on attempting to conduct the study in an alternative location.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher in this study entered the study as a learner. The researcher aimed to acquire as much genuine, organic data from the participants as possible. The objective was to learn from the previously incarcerated students, and use what was learned to extract the most reliable data.

The role of the researcher in a generic qualitative study is to behave as an instrument in the collection of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This is quite different from the role of a researcher conducting a quantitative study, as in that case the researcher's role is ideally nonexistent; the data is meant to be collected through inventories, questionnaires, or machines. Because of the active role the researcher plays in a generic qualitative study, it was imperative that relevant aspects of self, including biases and assumptions, expectations, and past experiences, be explored (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Researcher Bias

To ensure that the researcher received the data absent of preconceived notions or biases, phenomenological bracketing was utilized. The researcher did not inquire about the participants' educational history prior to being incarcerated, the crimes they had been charged with, or the length of the sentences they completed. The researcher also refrained from inquiring about the participants' graduation timeline, program major, or the grades they have received in the program.

Ethical Considerations

The primary ethical factor considered during this inquiry was that of participant exploitation. The guidelines issued by the Institutional Review Board in regards to the

ethicity were devised in order to ensure that the rights of all study participants, especially those who belong to a vulnerable population, are not violated. The basic principles by which review boards assess the ethicality of research are as follows: (1) the participant should always have the opportunity to make informed decisions; (2) withdrawal from the study without penalty and without the need for explanation should always be an option for the participant; (3) the study should be designed in a way which eliminates or significantly reduces any risk to the participant; (4) the benefits of participation should outweigh any risk; and (5) the researcher must be qualified to conduct the study (Creswell, 2013).

To ensure that the present study was conducted in a way which abided by these principles, several measures were taken. A thorough, yet comprehensive, informed consent form was issued to all participants. The consent form informed each participant that participation in the study would not affect their progress in the academic program they attended. This was a key component of ethicality to consider because it ensured that all participants chose to participate without any expectation that they would be rewarded or penalized for participating/not participating. Additionally, the tools used to conduct the study were designed in a way which protected anonymity, as to eliminate any risk to the participants. Insofar as the qualifications of the researcher were concerned, the researcher studied qualitative research through coursework and had been deemed prepared to commence the studies involved in the dissertation process.

CHAPTER 4: Results

Results

While vocational programs have been proven to reduce recidivism, there are not nearly enough postsecondary programs offered in prisons, despite studies demonstrating that they have a greater impact on recidivism rates than other programs (Thomas, 1995; Westervelt, 2015). Given the correlation between receiving postsecondary education and the decrease in recidivism, it is imperative that the experiences of incarcerated postsecondary students are understood, in order to ensure that these experiences are positive ones.

The problem for this study was that the experiences of incarcerated students with postsecondary educational programs was not sufficiently explored, causing there to be a lack of understanding for the quality of carceral postsecondary education programs. Not assessing the quality of these programs does not allow for their improvement. Improving the quality of postsecondary educational programs in prison could incentivize inmates to participate, thereby capitalizing on the opportunity to lessen recidivism. The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of students who participated in postsecondary educational programs while incarcerated. This analysis was done by comparing participants' experiences with the postsecondary programs they participated in while incarcerated to their experiences with postsecondary programming outside of prison.

Triangulation of the Data

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the perspectives of previously incarcerated postsecondary students on their experience with postsecondary education while incarcerated, as compared to their postsecondary experience after release. The research

was a mixed methods study that included a triangulated set of data. The researcher obtained participants by reaching out to the Reentry Campus Program and introducing the presented study to the Director of the program, James Monteiro, and inquiring about the possibility of conducting the study with the students in the program. The researcher attended a class at the Reentry Campus Program and explained the study. Participants who were interested in participating, were ready to give consent, and had enough time to complete both parts of the study were able to move to another classroom. The researcher then distributed the survey to the participants, who returned the surveys to the researcher upon their completion. The researcher then conducted the semi-structured interviews with each participant, individually, in a conference room. The order in which the participants were interviewed was randomized. The researcher planned to repeat this exact sequence of events until collecting data from a minimum of twelve participants.

Participants

On the researcher's first visit to the Reentry Campus Program, 4 students from a class of 13 students agreed to participate. On the researcher's second visit to the Reentry Campus Program, 5 students from a class of 8 students agreed to participate. On the researcher's third visit to the Reentry Campus Program, 5 students from a class of 9 students agreed to participate, making the total number of participants 14. The maximum number of participants for this study was 16.

Results from Survey

The survey was the first collection of data in the study. The study was offered to a total of thirty students, from which fourteen participated. The researcher wanted to gain a generalized idea of how the previously incarcerated students felt about their

correctional postsecondary experience as compared to their postsecondary experience after release.

Quantitative Research Question 1: What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities (access to instruction time, etc.) they received in prison compared to that they received after incarceration, as part of the Reentry Campus Program? Two survey questions asked the students about their level of satisfaction with their access to resources while attempting to complete coursework (Table 1). The combined mean score on those items was 2.74, on a scale of 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *disagree*, and 5 = *strongly disagree*. Results indicated most students felt unsatisfied with their access to resources while attempting to complete coursework while incarcerated. All students reported feeling satisfied with their access to resources as part of the Reentry Campus program.

Table 1

Responses to Survey Questions Re. Access to Resources

Survey Question	Number of Responses					Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1. Do you feel satisfied with the access to resources you had while attempting to complete coursework outside of class while incarcerated?	0	1	3	4	6	4.07	0.99
2. Do you feel satisfied with the access to resources you had while attempting to complete coursework outside of class as part of the Reentry Campus Program?	8	6	0	0	0	1.42	0.51

Note. $N = 14$. Mean score based on a scale of 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *disagree* and 5 = *strongly disagree*. Lower scores indicate more affirmative perceptions.

Quantitative Research Question 2: What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated (attempting to attend educational programs, complete coursework outside of class, etc.) compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program? Two survey questions asked the students about barriers and facilitators to learning (Table 2). All students reported feeling there were barriers to learning while in prison that are no longer present as part as the Reentry Campus Program. No students reported feeling that there were facilitators to learning while in prison that are no longer available to them as part of the Reentry Campus Program. The combined mean score was 2.89.

Table 2

Responses to Survey Questions Re. Barriers and Facilitators to Learning while

Incarcerated

Survey Question	Number of Responses					Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
3. Do you feel that there were barriers to learning while in prison that are no longer present in either the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting you have been in since your release?	11	3	0	0	0	1.21	0.42
4. Do you feel that there were facilitators to learning while in prison that are no longer present in either the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting you have been in since your release?	0	0	1	4	9	4.57	0.64

Note. $N = 14$. Mean score based on a scale of 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *disagree* and 5 = *strongly disagree*. Lower scores indicate more affirmative perceptions.

Quantitative Research Question 3: What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment? Two survey questions asked the students about aids and impairments to development of characteristics needed for employment (Table 3). All students reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment. No students reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired the development of characteristics and routines needed for employment. The combined mean score was 3.06.

Table 3

Responses to Survey Questions Re. Aids and Impairments to Development of

Characteristics for Employment

Survey Question	Number of Responses					Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
5. Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has aided your development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?	8	6	0	0	0	1.42	0.51
6. Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired the development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?	0	0	0	4	10	4.71	0.46

Note. $N = 14$. Mean score based on a scale of 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *disagree* and 5 = *strongly disagree*. Lower scores indicate more affirmative perceptions.

Quantitative Research Question 4: What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships? Two survey questions asked the students about aids and impairments to development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships (Table 4). Most students reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships. No students reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired the development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships. The combined mean score was 3.17.

Table 4

Responses to Survey Questions Re. Aids and Impairments to Development of Characteristics for Positive Personal Relationships

Survey Question	Number of Responses					Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
7. Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has aided in the development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?	7	6	1	0	0	1.57	0.64
8. Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired the development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?	0	0	0	3	11	4.78	0.42

Note. $N = 14$. Mean score based on a scale of 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *disagree* and 5 = *strongly disagree*. Lower scores indicate more affirmative perceptions.

Results from Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interview was the second collection of data in the study. The study was offered to a total of thirty students, from which fourteen participated. The researcher wanted to gain a generalized idea of how the previously incarcerated students felt about their correctional postsecondary experience as compared to their postsecondary experience after release. The qualitative analysis computer program Dedoose was used to analyze, code, and categorize the data. Dedoose uses a set of code trees and descriptor fields, and the researcher went through the interview transcript within the program to highlight codes. A total of 454 codes emerged from the semi-structured interviews, from which 29 themes were identified. The themes were identified by merging codes similar in nature to form overarching thematic categories. For example, the first theme related to satisfaction listed in Table 5, “change to non-prison setting,” was derived at through the combination of four codes ranging from “leave the main building” to “different set-up.”

Qualitative Research Question 1: How do previously incarcerated students perceive their level of satisfaction regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities they received in prison compared to that they received after incarceration, as part of the Reentry Campus Program? Table 6 demonstrates the number of students indicating each theme relating to their level of satisfaction with the educational programming offered to them in prison, and the number of times the theme was evident in all interviews.

Interviewees described dissatisfaction with the educational programming they received in prison compared to that which they received through the Reentry Campus Program. Interviewee 3 described dissatisfaction with range of class options, and a lack of books and tutors:

There weren't a lot of options for the classes you could take. And they weren't always offered. Like we would be able to take an English class and a psychology class, but then the next semester, only sociology would be available. It wasn't consistent. Here, you have a lot of options. There weren't enough books either, and some of the ones we had were ripped and all marked up.... We needed more teachers too, all of the tutors were just for people getting their GEDs, not people taking college courses.

Interviewee 11, among others, described dissatisfaction due to punitive removal from the class list:

"Sometimes, when it was time for me to go to class, I would ask a guard for permission to go and they would say no, sometimes because they were mad at something I might have done, and sometimes just because, without me even doing anything to them, and there was no arguing it so I would miss class for no reason."

The themes related to positive and negative influence on satisfaction, listed in Table 5 below, have been separated into four clusters. Each cluster corresponds to the responses given by the participants in response to each of the four interview questions relating to positive and negative influence on satisfaction (interview questions 1-4). For example, the themes listed in the first cluster (change to non-prison setting, non-carceral environment, and helpful instruction) were all extracted from responses participants gave to the first interview question (which satisfactory qualities do you feel the postsecondary educational programming offered to you while incarcerated had, if any?).

Table 5

Quality Data Analysis of Themes Related to Positive and Negative Influence on Satisfaction

Theme	Quality: Theme Description	Supporting Data	Analysis
Change to non-prison setting	Going to a facility, building, or room separate from prison setting.	<i>"The classroom was in a different building and had a lot of windows. It didn't feel like you were a prisoner when you went there."</i> (Interviewee 4).	The supporting data suggests that going to a facility, building, or room separate from prison setting served as a satisfactory quality.
Non-carceral environment	Entering a space with norms and structures different from those regularly followed in routine prison.	<i>"There were guards there, but they were separate from us, and they didn't use transition bells"</i> (Interviewee 1).	The supporting data suggests that entering a space with norms and structures different from those regularly followed in routine prison served as a satisfactory quality.
Helpful instruction	Providing instructional guidance and support.	<i>"The teachers were helpful. They took their time explaining things and weren't annoyed when I asked questions."</i> (Interviewee 7).	The supporting data suggests that providing instructional guidance and support served as a satisfactory quality.
Lack of books	Not having enough adequate textbooks for each student.	<i>"There weren't enough books either, and some of the ones we had were ripped and all marked up."</i> (Interviewee 3).	The supporting data suggests that not having enough adequate textbooks for each student served as an unsatisfactory quality.
Lack of tutors	Not having enough tutors available to students.	<i>"Programs like the GED program had a lot of tutors, but the college classes I didn't have any so if I needed help outside of class, I was on my own."</i> (Interviewee 2).	The supporting data suggests that not having enough tutors available to students served as an unsatisfactory quality.
Limited class options	Lack of variety in classes being offered	<i>"There weren't a lot of options for the classes you could take. And</i>	The supporting data suggests that lack of variety in classes being

	and their limited availability.	<i>they weren't always offered.</i> " (Interviewee 3).	offered and their limited availability served as an unsatisfactory quality.
Lack of instruction	Instruction provided with insufficient instructional guidance or support.	<i>"Some teachers didn't want to help. Like you could tell they didn't want to be there."</i> (Interviewee 6).	The supporting data suggests that instruction provided with insufficient instructional guidance or support served as an unsatisfactory quality.
Punitive removal from class list	Being removed from class list as a result of unfavorable behavior.	<i>"Sometimes, when it was time for me to go to class, I would ask a guard for permission to go and they would say no, sometimes because they were mad at something I might have done, and sometimes just because."</i> (Interviewee 11).	The supporting data suggests that being removed from class list as a result of unfavorable behavior served as an unsatisfactory quality.
Lack of hands-on experience	Classes not providing the opportunity for hands-on learning.	<i>"The classes were taught with books and articles, and I learn better when I can do things with my hands."</i> (Interviewee 1).	The supporting data suggests that classes not providing the opportunity for hands-on learning served as an unsatisfactory quality.
Created discipline	Having responsibilities and consequences.	<i>"Before I started taking classes, I didn't understand deadlines or being on time so my grades weren't that good. Being in the classes taught me to be responsible with my work."</i> (Interviewee 5).	The supporting data suggests that having responsibilities and consequences had a positive influence on satisfaction.
Gained academic confidence	Developing positive academic self-assuredness.	<i>"Nobody told me I was smart in high school. Taking college classes and actually doing well in them made me feel like I could do this and I might be smart after all."</i> (Interviewee 2).	The supporting data suggests that developing positive academic self-assuredness had a positive influence on satisfaction.

Motivated by experience	Developing inspiration to pursue positive growth.	<i>"Doing well with the writing assignments and getting good grades motivated me to keep going because it didn't seem so impossible to get my degree."</i> (Interviewee 8).	The supporting data suggests that developing inspiration to pursue positive growth had a positive influence on satisfaction.
Discouraged by experience	Decrease in inspiration to pursue positive growth.	<i>"It seemed like no matter how hard I tried [with assignments], it wasn't enough."</i> (Interviewee 12).	The supporting data suggests that a decrease in inspiration to pursue positive growth had a negative influence on satisfaction.

The table above outlines the relationship between the qualitative themes extracted from interview questions 1-4, their description, the supporting data collected, and the conclusions made from each. For example, the theme "change to non-prison setting," emerging from Interview Question 1 and described as "going to a facility, building, or room separate from prison setting," is supported by the following statement made by Interviewee 4: "The classroom was in a different building and had a lot of windows. It didn't feel like you were a prisoner when you went there." This statement suggests that going to a facility, building, or room separate from prison setting served as a satisfactory quality. The same was done for each emerging theme.

Table 6 illustrates the emerging themes, the number of interviewees mentioning each theme, and the number of times each theme was evident.

Table 6*Frequency of Themes Related to Positive and Negative Influence on Satisfaction*

Theme	Number of interviewees mentioning theme	Number of times theme evident
Change to non-prison setting	14	33
Non-carceral environment	11	21
Helpful instruction	3	6
Lack of books	8	14
Lack of tutors	7	10
Limited class options	5	13
Lack of instruction	3	4
Punitive removal from class list	3	7
Lack of hands-on experience	2	6
Created discipline	6	10
Gained academic confidence	4	9
Motivated by experience	2	7
Discouraged by experience	2	3

Note. Interview *N* = 14.

Qualitative Research Question 2: How do previously incarcerated students perceive barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting they have been in since release? Table 9 demonstrates the number of students indicating each theme relating to barriers and facilitators and the number of times the theme was evident in all interviews.

Interviewees described feeling as though there were barriers to learning while incarcerated that are no longer present as part of the Reentry Campus Program.

Interviewee 4 stated:

We didn't have computers in class and there were only two in the library which were really slow. There was internet but we couldn't use it for

much which was very limiting. That was a problem when trying to write papers for class too, because there wasn't any Microsoft Word on them. Most of the time I wrote my stuff my hand but that takes a long time. The Reentry Campus Program has computers available for us, with Microsoft Word and we can print whenever we want.

The themes related to barriers to learning, listed in Table 7 below, correspond to the responses given by the participants in response to the interview questions relating to barriers to learning (interview question 5 and 6). Because every participant responded "none" to interview question 6, all of the themes listed were extracted from responses participants gave to interview question 5.

Table 7

Quality Data Analysis of Themes Related to Barriers to Learning while in Prison

Theme	Quality: Theme Description	Supporting Data	Analysis
No access to computers	Inability to complete coursework on a computer or electronic device due to lack of access.	<i>"We didn't have computers in class and there were only two in the library which were really slow."</i> (Interviewee 4).	The supporting data suggests that the inability to complete coursework on a computer or electronic device due to lack of access served as a barrier to learning while in prison.
No access to internet	Inability to complete coursework with the assistance of an internet connection due to lack of access.	<i>"I didn't have internet so I couldn't just Google things so it was hard to do research."</i> (Interviewee 5).	The supporting data suggests that the inability to complete coursework with the assistance of an internet connection due to lack of access served as a barrier to learning while in prison.

No individual time with instructors	Lack of access to individual time with instructors as a result of the carceral structure.	<i>"Meeting with the teachers wasn't an option because I had to go back to my cell right after class, so there was no time to ask questions."</i> (Interviewee 1).	The supporting data suggests that lack of access to individual time with instructors as a result of the carceral structure served as a barrier to learning while in prison.
No access to Microsoft Word	Lack of access to Microsoft Word to complete coursework.	<i>"We didn't even have access to Word. Papers had to be typed on this pad so when you printed it, it didn't look how it should because of the format."</i> (Interviewee 10).	The supporting data suggests that lack of access to Microsoft Word to complete coursework served as a barrier to learning while in prison.

The table above outlines the relationship between the qualitative themes extracted from interview question 5, their description, the supporting data collected, and the conclusions made from each. Because every participant responded "none" to interview question 6, no themes emerged from it. For example, the theme "no access to computers," described as the "inability to complete coursework on a computer or electronic device due to lack of access," is supported by the following statement made by Interviewee 4: "We didn't have computers in class and there were only two in the library which were really slow." This statement suggests that the inability to complete coursework on a computer or electronic device due to lack of access served as a barrier to learning while in prison. The same was done for each emerging theme.

Interviewees also described feeling as though there were facilitators to learning as part of the Reentry Campus Program. Interviewee 1 stated:

[At the Reentry Campus Program] we get laptops that we can borrow and take home if we need them. And there's a computer lab we can use here too. We can use it any time the center is open and it's free.

The themes related to facilitators to learning as part of the Reentry Campus Program, listed in Table 8 below, arose from responses given by the participants in response to the interview questions relating to barriers to learning while incarcerated (interview question 5 and 6). Because every participant responded "none" to interview question 6, all of the themes listed were extracted from responses participants gave to interview question 5.

Table 8

Quality Data Analysis of Themes Related to Facilitators to Learning as Part of the Reentry Campus Program

Theme	Quality: Theme Description	Supporting Data	Analysis
Access to computers	Ability to complete coursework on a computer or electronic device due to availability of access.	<i>"[At the Reentry Campus Program] we get laptops that we can borrow and take home if we need them. And there's a computer lab we can use here too." (Interviewee 1).</i>	The supporting data suggests that the ability to complete coursework on a computer or electronic device due to availability of access served as a facilitator to learning as part of the Reentry Campus Program.
Access to internet	Ability to complete coursework with the assistance of an internet connection due to availability of access.	<i>"[At the Reentry Campus Program] there's unlimited Wi-Fi access which makes looking things up a lot easier." (Interviewee 5).</i>	The supporting data suggests that the ability to complete coursework with the assistance of an internet connection due to availability of access served as a facilitator to learning as part of

			the Reentry Campus Program.
Individual time with instructors	Ability to spend individual time with instructors due to availability of access.	<i>"[At the Reentry Campus Program] I can talk to the teachers any time and I can call or even text some of them if I need help with something."</i> (Interviewee 2).	The supporting data suggests that ability to spend individual time with instructors due to availability of access served as a facilitator to learning as part of the Reentry Campus Program.
Access to Microsoft Word	Ability to complete coursework on Microsoft Word due to availability of access.	<i>"[At the Reentry Campus Program] I can use Word which is a lot easier [than Notepad]."</i> (Interviewee 10).	The supporting data suggests that ability to access Microsoft Word to complete coursework served as a facilitator to learning as part of the Reentry Campus Program.

The table above outlines the relationship between the qualitative themes extracted from interview question 5, their description, the supporting data collected, and the conclusions made from each. Because every participant responded "none" to interview question 6, no themes emerged from it. Thus, none of the interviewees perceived that there were facilitators to learning provided while in prison. In contrast, the participants did indicate facilitators to learning after incarceration as part of the Reentry Campus Program. For example, the theme "access to computers," described as the "ability to complete coursework on a computer or electronic device due to availability of access" is supported by the following statement made by Interviewee 1: "[At the Reentry Campus Program] we get laptops that we can borrow and take home if we need them. And there's a computer lab we can use here too." This statement suggests that the ability to complete coursework on a computer or electronic device due to availability of access served as a

facilitator to learning as part of the Reentry Campus Program. The same was done for each emerging theme.

Table 9 illustrates the emerging themes, the number of interviewees mentioning each theme, and the number of times each theme was evident.

Table 9

Frequency of Themes Related to Barriers to Learning while in Prison and Facilitators to Learning as Part of the Reentry Campus Program

Theme	Number of interviewees mentioning theme	Number of times theme evident
Barriers to Learning		
No access to computers	14	36
No access to internet	12	25
No individual time with instructors	7	16
No access to Microsoft Word	4	9
Facilitators to Learning		
Access to computers	14	31
Access to internet	8	19
Individual time with instructors	5	11
Access to Microsoft Word	4	8

Note. Interview $N = 14$.

Qualitative Research Question 3: How do previously incarcerated students perceive how the Reentry Campus Program has aided or impaired their quality of life insofar as employment? Table 11 demonstrates the number of students indicating each theme relating to characteristics needed for employment and the number of times the theme was evident in all interviews.

All interviewees described perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment. No interviewees perceived that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment. Interviewee 13 described how the

Reentry Campus Program has encouraged them to adapt characteristics and habits conducive to successful employment:

[The Reentry Campus Program] give[s] us classes that are actually relevant to real life jobs. They have us do things that will help us find work, like in English class we do our resumes and cover letters. I never had a resume before. I didn't know what a cover letter was before. They make us do speeches in class to work on sounding more professional.

The themes related to characteristics needed for employment, listed in Table 10 below, correspond to the responses given by the participants in response to the interview questions relating to characteristics needed for employment (interview question 7 and 8). Because every participant responded 'none' to interview question 8, all of the themes listed were extracted from responses participants gave to interview question 7.

Table 10

Quality Data Analysis of Themes Related to Characteristics Needed for Employment

Theme	Quality: Theme Description	Supporting Data	Analysis
Increased professionalism to improve interview skills	Development of skills associated with interviewing for employment.	<i>"The [Reentry Campus] Program gave me training on how to sit for interviews. I had mock interview training which was helpful because I hadn't really had that before."</i> (Interviewee 4).	The supporting data suggests that the development of skills associated with interviewing for employment through participation in the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced quality of life insofar as employment.
Courses relevant to career choice to better qualify/be prepared for employment	Course options reflective of the student's interest in career.	<i>"[The Reentry Campus Program] give[s] us classes that are actually relevant to real life</i>	The supporting data suggests that course options reflective of the student's interest in career

		<i>jobs.</i> " (Interviewee 13).	through participation in the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced quality of life insofar as employment.
Resume help to improve chances of obtaining employment	Assistance with the development of resume with the objective of obtaining future employment.	<i>"They have us do things that will help us find work, like in English class we do our resumes and cover letters. I never had a resume before. I didn't know what a cover letter was before."</i> (Interviewee 13).	The supporting data suggests that assistance with the development of resume with the objective of obtaining future employment through participation in the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced quality of life insofar as employment.

The table above outlines the relationship between the qualitative themes extracted from interview question 7, their description, the supporting data collected, and the conclusions made from each. Because every participant responded "none" to interview question 8, no themes emerged from it. For example, the theme "increased professionalism to improve interview skills," described as the "development of skills associated with interviewing for employment," is supported by the following statement made by Interviewee 4: "[The Reentry Campus Program] give[s] us classes that are actually relevant to real life jobs." The supporting data suggests that the development of skills associated with interviewing for employment through participation in the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced quality of life insofar as employment. The same was done for each emerging theme.

Table 11 illustrates the emerging themes, the number of interviewees mentioning each theme, and the number of times each theme was evident.

Table 11

Frequency of Themes Related to Characteristics Needed for Employment

Theme	Number of interviewees mentioning theme	Number of times theme evident
Increased professionalism to improve interview skills	14	29
Courses relevant to career choice to better qualify/be prepared for employment	11	21
Resume help to improve chances of obtaining employment	6	13

Note. Interview $N = 14$.

Qualitative Research Question 4: How do previously incarcerated students perceive how the Reentry Campus Program has aided or impaired their quality of life insofar as personal relationships? Table 13 demonstrates the number of students indicating each theme relating to characteristics needed for positive personal relationships and the number of times the theme was evident in all interviews.

Most interviewees described perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships. No interviewees perceived that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships. Interviewee 9 described how the Reentry Campus Program encouraged them to adapt characteristics and routines which impacted their personal relationships:

My family is proud of me, my daughter tells me every day that she's proud of me... I feel proud of myself for sticking to something. The structure I found here helps me hold myself accountable and my family sees me as more responsible.

Interviewee 14 spoke of the personal relationships they built with others through the Reentry Campus Program:

I've gotten really close to a lot of people in the program. We've all gone through similar things and all want to do better. We're there for each other and have the same goals. We help each other stay on the right track.

The themes related to characteristics needed for positive personal relationships, listed in Table 12 below, correspond to the responses given by the participants in response to the interview questions relating to characteristics needed for positive personal relationships (interview questions 9 and 10). Because every participant responded 'none' to interview question 10, all of the themes listed were extracted from responses participants gave to interview question 9.

Table 12

Quality Data Analysis of Themes Related to Characteristics Needed for Positive Personal Relationships

Theme	Quality: Theme Description	Supporting Data	Analysis
Heightened sense of pride in self	Increased confidence and/or assurance felt in self.	<i>"My family is proud of me, my daughter tells me every day that she's proud of me... I feel proud of myself for sticking to something."</i> (Interviewee 9).	The supporting data suggests that increased confidence and/or assurance felt in self through participation in the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced quality of life insofar as personal relationships.
Heightened sense of pride from others	Increased confidence and/or assurance felt from others.	<i>"The structure I found here helps me hold myself accountable and my family sees me as</i>	The supporting data suggests that increased confidence and/or assurance felt from

		<i>more responsible."</i> (Interviewee 9).	others through participation in the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced quality of life insofar as personal relationships.
Exposure to others with same experiences	Interactions with others who shared similar past circumstances and/or life events.	<i>"I've gotten really close to a lot of people in the program. We've all gone through similar things and all want to do better."</i> (Interviewee 14).	The supporting data suggests that interactions with others who shared similar past circumstances and/or life events in the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced quality of life insofar as personal relationships.
Exposure to others with same goals	Interactions with others who shared similar future aspirations.	<i>"We're all here for the same thing. We all want the same things, so it makes it easier to bond."</i> (Interviewee 6).	The supporting data suggests that interactions with others who shared similar future aspirations in the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced quality of life insofar as personal relationships.
Community building	Becoming a contributing member of one's community.	<i>"It feels good to be able to contribute to my community. Transitioning out of prison is hard work and I feel that [the Reentry Program] helped me feel like less of an outsider in my community."</i> (Interviewee 8).	The supporting data suggests that becoming a contributing member of one's community through participation in the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced quality of life insofar as personal relationships.

The table above outlines the relationship between the qualitative themes extracted from interview question 9, their description, the supporting data collected, and the conclusions made from each. Because every participant responded “none” to interview question 10, no themes emerged from it. For example, the theme “heightened sense of pride in self,” described as the “increased confidence and/or assurance felt in self,” is supported by the following statement made by Interviewee 9: “My family is proud of me, my daughter tells me every day that she’s proud of me... I feel proud of myself for sticking to something.” The supporting data suggests that increased confidence and/or assurance felt in self through participation in the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced quality of life insofar as personal relationships. The same was done for each emerging theme.

Table 13 illustrates the emerging themes, the number of interviewees mentioning each theme, and the number of times each theme was evident.

Table 13

Frequency of Themes Related to Characteristics Needed for Positive Personal Relationships

Theme	Number of interviewees mentioning theme	Number of times theme evident
Heightened sense of pride in self	14	39
Heightened sense of pride from others	14	41
Exposure to others with same experiences	13	37
Exposure to others with same goals	12	28
Community building	8	17

Note. Interview $N = 14$.

Summary of Findings for Mixed Methods Question

The mixed methods question in this study was: How do participants explain their quantitative ratings concerning their perceptions, feelings, and expectations while

participating in education programs both in prison and in the Reentry Campus Program? Four quantitative questions help illustrate the answer to this question.

The first quantitative research question involved in this study was: What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities (access to instruction time, etc.) they received in prison compared to that they received after incarceration, as part of the Reentry Campus Program? Most students reported unsatisfaction regarding postsecondary educational opportunities received while incarcerated (mean score of 4.7), but satisfied with the postsecondary educational opportunities received as part of the Reentry Campus Program (mean score of 1.42). In regards to the first qualitative research question allowing elaboration on the first quantitative research question, Interviewee 3 explained that there was lack of adequate books and teachers while participating in postsecondary education in prison, and alternatively, sufficient access to both while participating in the Reentry Campus Program.

The second quantitative research question involved in this study was: What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated (attempting to attend educational programs, complete coursework outside of class, etc.) compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program? Participants reported feeling there were barriers to learning while in prison that are not present as part of the Reentry Campus Program (mean score 1.21), and that there were no facilitators present while participating in postsecondary education in prison that are not available to them as part of the Reentry Campus Program (mean score 4.57). In regards to the second qualitative research question allowing elaboration on the

second quantitative research question, Interviewee 4 explained that there was not enough access to computers, limited internet access, and no access to Microsoft Word for students while participating in postsecondary education while in prison, but access to all of these resources as part of the Reentry Campus Program.

The third quantitative research question involved in this study was: What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment? Participants reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided (mean score 1.42), and not impaired (mean score 4.71), their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment. In regards to the third qualitative research question allowing elaboration on the third quantitative research question, Interviewee 13 explained that the Reentry Campus Program provided its students with classes relevant to potential employment in the real world, English classes, and resume assistance.

The fourth quantitative research question involved in this study was: What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships? Most students reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships (mean score 1.57), and no students reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired the development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships (mean score 4.78). In regards to the fourth qualitative research question allowing elaboration on the fourth quantitative research

question, Interviewee 9 and Interviewee 14 explained that participating in the Reentry Campus Program has made their families proud, and has allowed them the opportunity to build strong friendships within the program.

Twenty-nine themes emerged from the semi-structured interviews. Throughout the semi-structured interviews, participants showed satisfaction with the change in setting that came with participating in postsecondary programs in prison, but were unsatisfied with their access to books and tutors. Various participants demonstrated satisfaction with the discipline they created through their involvement with postsecondary programs in prison. In regards to barriers, most participants notably mentioned no access to computers or internet, which was “very limiting.” All participants mentioned benefiting from an increase in professionalism, and most participants appreciated the “classes that are actually relevant to real-life jobs” offered by the Reentry Campus Program. All participants also expressed a heightened sense of pride in self, and noted that their “family is proud” of their participation in the Reentry Campus Program.

Mixing the Quantitative and Qualitative Data: Similarities and Differences

The qualitative data emerging from this study directly relates to the quantitative data gathered (Figure 4). In regards to the first quantitative research question, the quantitative results demonstrate that most students feel unsatisfaction regarding postsecondary educational opportunities received while incarcerated, and that most students feel satisfied with the postsecondary educational opportunities received as part of the Reentry Campus Program. The qualitative results are consistent with the quantitative results. In the qualitative phase of the study, participants described unsatisfaction with the educational programming they received in prison compared to that

which they received through the Reentry Campus Program. Assertions made by participants that there was a lack of adequate books and teachers while participating in postsecondary education in prison, and alternatively, sufficient access to both while participating in the Reentry Campus Program, relate to dissatisfaction with their postsecondary educational experience and satisfaction with their experience in the Reentry Campus Program. There are no notable differences between the quantitative findings and the qualitative findings in response to the first quantitative research question.

In regards to the second quantitative research question, the quantitative results demonstrate that most students feel there were barriers to learning while in prison that are not present as part of the Reentry Campus Program, and that most students feel there were no facilitators present while participating in postsecondary education in prison that are not available to them as part of the Reentry Campus Program. The qualitative results are consistent with the quantitative results. In the qualitative phase of the study, participants described feeling as though there were barriers to learning while incarcerated that are no longer present as part of the Reentry Campus Program. Assertions made by participants that there was not enough access to computers, limited internet access, and no access to Microsoft Word for students while participating in postsecondary education while in prison, but access to each of these resources as part of the Reentry Campus Program, relate to barriers to learning while in prison that are not present as part of the Reentry Campus Program. There are no notable differences between the quantitative findings and the qualitative findings in response to the second quantitative research question.

In regards to the third quantitative research question, the quantitative results demonstrate that participants feel that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment, and alternatively, that the Reentry Campus Program has not impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment. The qualitative results are consistent with the quantitative results. In the qualitative phase of the study, participants described perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment, while none described perceiving that that the Reentry Campus Program impairs said development. Assertions made by participants that the Reentry Campus Program provided them with classes relevant to potential employment in the real world and resume experience relate to the aiding of the development of characteristics and routines needed for employment. There are no notable differences between the quantitative findings and the qualitative findings in response to the third quantitative research question.

In regards to the fourth quantitative research question, the quantitative results demonstrate that most students feel that Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships, and alternatively, that the Reentry Campus Program has not impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships. The qualitative results are consistent with the quantitative results. In the qualitative phase of the study, participants described perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships, while none described perceiving that that the Reentry Campus Program impairs said

development. Assertions made by participants that participating in the Reentry Campus Program has made their families proud, and has allowed them the opportunity to build strong friendships with the program relate to the aiding of the development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships. There are no notable differences between the quantitative findings and the qualitative findings in response to the fourth quantitative research question. The implications of the results discussed above are explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

Discussion: Overview of the Dissertation

The problem for this study was that the experiences of incarcerated students with postsecondary educational programs was not sufficiently explored, causing there to be a lack of understanding for the quality of carceral postsecondary education programs. The purpose of this study was to gather data which would indicate the experiences postsecondary students had with postsecondary educational programs while in prison. Through the Reentry Campus Program, 14 students participated in a survey and semi-structured interview.

Summary of Findings

The mixed method research question is: How do the participants explain their quantitative ratings concerning their perceptions, feelings, and expectations while participating in education programs both in prison and in the Reentry Campus Program?

Four quantitative research questions guided the study:

1. What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities (access to instructions, time, etc.) they received in prison compared to that they received in prison compared to that they received after incarceration, as part of a Reentry Campus Program?
2. What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated (attempting to attend educational programs, complete

coursework outside of class, etc.) compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program?

3. What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?
4. What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?

Four qualitative research questions guided the study:

1. How do previously incarcerated students perceive their level of satisfaction regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities they received in prison compared that they received after incarceration, as part of the Reentry Campus Program?
2. How do previously incarcerated students perceive barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting they have been in since release?
3. How do previously incarcerated students perceive how the Reentry Campus Program has aided or impaired their quality of life insofar as employment?
4. How do previously incarcerated students perceive how the Reentry Campus Program has impaired their quality of life insofar as personal relationships?

In regards to Quantitative Research Question #1 and Qualitative Research Question #1, the results from the study indicate that the majority of students felt unsatisfied with the postsecondary educational opportunities they received in prison compared to that they received as part of the Reentry Campus Program. Participants expressed dissatisfaction with their access to resources while attempting to complete coursework while incarcerated, and all felt satisfied with their access to resources as part of the Reentry Campus Program.

In regards to Quantitative Research Question #2 and Qualitative Research Question #2, the results from the study indicate that all students felt unsatisfied due to barriers to learning present while in prison and a lack of facilitators, but satisfied with facilitators to learning present as part of the Reentry Campus Program. All participants reported feeling that there were barriers to learning while in prison that are no longer present as part of the Reentry Campus Program, and no students reported feeling that there were facilitators to learning while in prison that are no longer available to them as part of the Reentry Campus Program. Facilitators to learning as part of the Reentry Campus Program were identified by participants.

In regards to Quantitative Research Question #3 and Qualitative Research Question #3, the results from the study indicate that previously incarcerated students generally believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided, and did not impair, their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment. All students reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment, and none reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired their development of the same.

In regards to Quantitative Research Question #4 and Qualitative Research Question #4, the results from the study indicate that previously incarcerated students generally believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided, and did not impair, their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships. Most students reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program aided their development of characteristics needed to develop positive personal relationships, and none reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired their development of the same.

Interpretation of Findings

The primary way in which the results of this study were interpreted was through comparison to the data currently available. Many themes uncovered in the literature specifically related to the data gathered in this study. In regards to dissatisfaction, the themes emerging from the results of this study were the following: change to non-prison setting and non-carceral environment, lack of books, tutors, instruction, and hands-on experience, limited class options, punitive removal from class list, creation of discipline, gained academic confidence, and motivation and discouragement by the experience. The themes of lack of instruction and punitive removal from class list were uncovered in the literature. The researcher expected the literature to mirror the finding of the theme of lack of instruction because the confinements of the carceral setting lend for lack of instruction to be a strong possibility. However, the researcher did not expect for punitive removal from class list to be a theme supported by the literature. Removing an imprisoned student from a class list as a punitive measure is unconscionable, and prior to conducting this study, the researcher believed this to be an impossibility under the

assumption that there are existing regulations made to safeguard the educational rights of all inmates, regardless of behavior.

In regards to barriers to learning, the themes emerging from the results of this study were the following: no access to computers, internet, or Microsoft Word, and no individual time with instructors. The themes of no access to computers or the internet were uncovered in the literature. The researcher expected the literature to mirror the finding of the theme of lack of computer or internet access, as these are accommodations assumed to be costly in a system which seemingly does not often prioritize inmate education. In regards to facilitators to learning as part of the Reentry Campus Program, the themes emerging from the results of this study were the following: access to computers, internet, and Microsoft Word, and individual time with instructors. The researcher expected the literature to mirror the finding of these findings, as these accommodations are reasonably attainable for postsecondary programs outside of prison.

In regards to characteristics needed for employment, the themes emerging from the results of this study were the following: increased professionalism, courses relevant to career choice, and resume assistance. The theme of increased professionalism was uncovered in the literature. The researcher expected the literature to mirror the finding of the theme of increased professionalism, as an increase in exposure to the classroom setting may be said to reinforce behaviors conducive to a professional character.

In regards to characteristics needed for positive personal relationships, the themes emerging from the results of this study were the following: heightened sense of pride in self and from others, exposure to others with the same experiences and same goals, and community building. The themes of heightened sense of pride in self and from others,

and exposure to others with the same experiences and same goals were uncovered in the literature. The researcher expected the literature to mirror the finding of the theme of heightened sense of pride in one self and from others, as such may be derived from personal accomplishments. The researcher also expected the literature to mirror the finding of exposure to others with the same experiences and same goals because being exposed to others with the same objective may be assumed to provide individuals with support and affirmation.

The context of the findings yielded by the study presented are compared to available data in further detail below.

Context of Findings

Students described satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and barriers and facilitators associated with both the postsecondary correctional education programs. Students also described the impact of the Reentry Campus Program on the development of characteristics and routines needed for employment, as well as the development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships. Studies previously conducted exploring the perspective of the incarcerated student focus on quantitative analysis and the correlation between postsecondary education and recidivism rates. While various qualitative studies have been conducted to explore the perspective of the incarcerated student, they differ from the study presented either due to the focus of the study, the participants used, or the nature of the inquiry.

A study by Tewksbury and Stengel (2006), conducted with the purpose of understanding the importance of tools and resources in educational correctional programs from the perspective of the incarcerated student, compared the perspective of students in

vocational programs to the perspective of students in academic programs (GED or postsecondary). Students were surveyed on four different aspects of their experiences in correctional education programs: (1) reasons/motivations for attending correctional education programs; (2) beliefs about facilitators of successful completion of the program; (3) perceptions of eleven skills or content areas they perceive as important; and (4) perceptions regarding learning resources and how such have facilitated their learning (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006). The results indicated that the primary motivator for incarcerated students in vocational programs was gain employment, while the primary motivator for incarcerated students in academic programs was an increase to one's self esteem (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006). Additionally, participants in both vocational and academic programs perceived high level of confidence that they will successfully complete the program they are in. The quality of vocational programs was rated higher than that of academic programs by participants, and vocational program students rated their instructors as higher quality than academic program students (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006). Tewksbury and Stengel concluded that inmates acknowledged a connection between success in academic programs and successful reintegration after release. These findings, like the ones of the study presented by the researcher, support the argument for improving the quality of the correctional education experience.

The perspective of the incarcerated student was also explored in a study conducted by researchers Hall and Killacky (2008). This study aimed to gain an understanding of how prisoner students perceive prison education programs, and which programs would aid their likelihood of obtaining employment (Hall & Killacky, 2008). The participants in this study were primarily involved in GED, adult literacy, and

vocational programs. The research question was: “how do prisoner students perceive their correctional educational experience?” The objective was to determine which factors contribute to the correctional postsecondary education experience, and how the educational programming behind bars affects the future career, employment, and educational goals of the incarcerated student (Hall & Killacky, 2008). Ten incarcerated students participated in this study through semi-structured interviews. The researchers extracted codes and themes from the responses they received. Among the primary findings was that students’ perception of incarcerated students has a strong influence on their motivation and future educational and employment plans (Hall & Killacky, 2008).

Another study which considers the perspective of the incarcerated student, conducted by Pelletier and Evans (2019), explored the feelings, perceptions, and experiences of previously incarcerated correctional education students, and how those feelings, perceptions, and experiences contributed to positive outcomes. The data, gathered qualitatively through semi-structured interviews, suggests that participants feel that their educational experiences directly correlated with opportunities received during reentry (Pelletier and Evans, 2019). The results suggest that previously incarcerated students made connections with peers, improved their communication skills, and developed confidence. These attributes were reported by participants to be instrumental upon reentry, as they enabled participants to find employment and have a positive influence over others (Pelletier and Evans, 2019).

In the first study discussed, conducted by Tewksbury and Stengel, the perspectives of incarcerated students participating in vocational programs were compared to the perspectives of incarcerated students participating in academic programs

(Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006). Alternatively, in the study presented, the researcher gathered the perspectives of incarcerated students who had participated in postsecondary academic programs both inside and outside of prison, and how they compared their experiences with each. In the second study discussed, conducted by Hall and Killacky, the perspectives of incarcerated students participating in GED, adult literacy, and vocational programs were explored (Hall & Killacky, 2008). Alternatively, in the study presented, the perspectives of students participating in postsecondary education were gathered. Lastly, in the third study discussed, conducted by Pelletier and Evans (2019), while the perceptions gathered were of incarcerated students who were specifically attending postsecondary programs, the inquiry focused on positive outcomes from the perspective of the participants. Alternatively, in the study presented, the inquiry includes causes of unsatisfaction, barriers, and negative influences experienced by incarcerated students in postsecondary educational programs.

Research Question 1: Satisfaction. Students interpreted satisfaction as a change to non-prison setting, in the sense that they were able to leave the redundancy of their prison-like surroundings and enter a classroom which differed from the dynamics of prison. Few students felt satisfied with the instruction they received from the staff hosting the postsecondary classes. Most students identified unsatisfaction as a lack of books and tutors, and limited class options. A few students identified unsatisfaction to relate to a lack of instruction, punitive removal from class list, and a lack of courses offering hands-on experience. Students' responses regarding lack of instruction and punitive removal from class lists support the literature. A qualitative study published in the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry* collected data from 34 incarcerated

postsecondary students with the objective of understanding how encounters between incarcerated postsecondary students affect their experiences in higher learning within correctional settings (Runell, 2016). Results from the study revealed that postsecondary incarcerated students felt that faculty who come to teach in prisons do not have the resources to provide adequate instruction, which discouraged them and caused them to “do the minimum” when teaching class (Runell, 2016). Other participants felt that professors did not have high enough expectations for their students, which also affected the quality of their instruction (Runell, 2016). Another factor identified as instrumental in affecting the quality of instruction was the time new professors needed to adjust to the prison setting (Runell, 2016). This adjustment period made it difficult for professors to build relationships with their students, thereby affecting the likelihood that their instruction was being well-received.

A common theme that emerged from the study published in the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry* was that participants perceived corrections officers as misusing their discretionary powers for the purpose of blocking efforts to participate and engage in postsecondary carceral education (Runell, 2016). This sentiment stemmed from, among other things, the punitive removal from class lists by correctional officers. Participants viewed correctional officers as being concerned with institutionalizing prisoners rather than understanding how to support their involvement in postsecondary education (Runell, 2016). Participants expressed that their time spent in class was inconsistent due to restricted access, as implemented by corrections officers (Runell, 2016). One participant in this study explained that corrections officers might use their power in ways that

circumvent access to prison education and uninterrupted academic instruction, often by arbitrarily preventing prisoners from attending classes (Runell, 2016).

Satisfaction with the Reentry Campus Program was identified by students as the creation of discipline, an increase in confidence, and an increase in motivation by their experience. Students' responses support the literature. Postsecondary prison education aids in the development of confidence, consequently motivating students to make decisions which positively affect their futures, decreasing the likelihood of recidivism and easing reentry into society (Bauwens, 2020; Oakford et al., 2019). The importance of motivation is supported by literature which suggest that participating in educational programming while in prison increases motivation amongst students, inspiring them to create goals for their lives post-incarceration (Winterfield et al., 2009).

Research Question 2: Barriers and Facilitators. Students interpreted barriers as a lack of access to computers, internet, or Microsoft Word, and a lack of individual time with instructors. Students' responses regarding access to computers support the literature. A 2013 study conducted by Davis et al. (2014) found that while most states report some use of computers in correctional education, student access to the internet was limited. Additionally, while more than half of 42 states surveyed report that their computers were part of a local area network (LAN), only 14% allowed students in their facilities to have computers on wide area networks (WAN) with restricted access to internet (Tolbert, 2015). Local area networks are limited to connections between devices in a small geographical area (such as printing ability) while wide area networks allow connections between devices in large geographical areas (such as the internet).

Research Question 3: Characteristics and Routines Needed for Employment.

Students interpreted characteristics and routines needed for employment to be an increase in professionalism. Students also interpreted courses offered being relevant to their career choice to be indicative of characteristics and routines needed for employment. Resume help was also identified as relevant to characteristics and routines needed for employment. Students' responses regarding an increase in professionalism support the literature. The increase in likelihood of acquiring employment stemming from participating in postsecondary education may be attributed to the increase in professionalism participants feel they gained. A study conducted by the Vera Institute of Justice found that employment rates for former inmates increases by 10%, on average, after they participate in postsecondary programs (Oakford et al., 2019). It is estimated that if all inmates participated in postsecondary programming while incarcerated, their combined wages would increase by about \$45.3 million during their first year back in their communities (Oakford et al., 2019).

Research Question 4: Characteristics and Routines Needed for Positive

Relationships. Students interpreted characteristics and routine needed for positive relationships to mean a heightened sense of pride in self and from others. Students also interpreted characteristics and routines needed for positive relationships to mean exposure to others with the same experiences and goals, as well as community building. Students' responses regarding a heightened sense of pride felt in self and from others, and exposure to others with the same experiences and goals support the literature. When inmates engage in postsecondary educational programs, their sense of self increases, improving their confidence and giving them a previously lost sense of pride. In a

qualitative study conducted through the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning, incarcerated postsecondary students reported on their perceptions of postsecondary correctional education through semi-structured interviews (Cage, 2020). In their responses, they expressed feeling pride in being involved with postsecondary correctional programs, indicating doing so made them feel productive (Cage, 2020). The literature also supports exposure to others with the same objectives as having a significant impact on building positive personal relationships. The results from the study conducted by the Journal of Prison Education and Reentry (introduced above) indicated that the majority of students enjoyed leaning with others who shared a genuine desire to learn, and that doing so served as a bonding experience which positively affected their relationships outside of the classroom (Runell, 2016). Furthermore, students identify pride from others as instrumental in building positive relationships. Participants in this study reported feeling motivated to attend postsecondary courses by the pride their families felt, encouraging them to work on developing better familial relationships (Runell, 2016).

Many studies have focused on education in prison, but not many have focused specifically on postsecondary education in prison, and the majority of the ones that have focus on a quantitative inquiry. Most quantitative approaches concern recidivism and employment rates post-release. However, the literature is lacking consideration for the perspectives of postsecondary correctional students, leaving an absence of the assessment of quality from those involved in the very programs being studied. The study presented helps address this absence, bringing much-needed light to the strengths and weaknesses of postsecondary correctional education from the lens of those who benefit from it. This

insight is immensely useful when attempting to maximize the efficiency and efficacy of these programs, as prioritizing the experience of attendees is likely to create incentive in participation, thereby capitalizing on the quantitative benefits of increased participation, such as improved recidivism rates, increased likelihood of obtaining employment, and successful reentry into society.

Implication of Findings

The findings uncovered in this study have several implications in terms of practice and theory. In terms of practice, the implication of the finding that the postsecondary incarcerated student is not satisfied with the postsecondary correctional experience is that correctional education programs should develop policies and procedures with the objective of improving the experience for participants. Because it has been established that participating in postsecondary education decreases the likelihood of recidivism, the results might influence policy to be drafted in a way which prioritizes ensuring that postsecondary students in prison are having positive experiences, as it would be in the best interest of both the prisons and our communities for incarcerated students to participate in postsecondary programs. Positive experiences are likely to encourage inmates to involve themselves in postsecondary programs. As such, the research uncovered in this study may affect postsecondary incarcerated students by encouraging programs to improve their experience.

The data resulting from this study characterizes what is currently done in the field of postsecondary correctional education as unsatisfactory. From this data, it is clear that in order to improve outcomes, postsecondary correctional programs must take measures to improve the experiences of their participants. In addition to adding to the limited body

of knowledge concerning postsecondary correctional education, the results of the study presented provide existing programs with insight into how to improve the experiences of incarcerated postsecondary students and their level of satisfaction with the services provided. In light of the data gathered, existing postsecondary programs operating in prisons should consider prioritizing materials, instructors, and computers. This is because the data demonstrates that these tools are largely responsible for the level of satisfaction reported by participants, as not having access to them was reported as a cause for unsatisfaction. They should also consider seeking improvement in the area of class diversity, focusing on courses with prepare the program participants for employment post-release, as the data demonstrates that such factors impact satisfaction positively.

In terms of theory, the researcher had determined prior to conducting this study that the Moral Development Theory and the Opportunity Theory, two out of three theories which compose the Theories of Individual Change (discussed above in Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework Section), adequately relate to the inmate's postsecondary correctional education experience (Ubah & Robinson, 2003; Ransome, 2010). After collection of the data, it became evident to the researcher that both theories are arguably supported by the findings made. However, some findings suggest that the third theory belonging to the Theories of Individual Change, the Social-psychological Development Theory, may also adequately relate to the experiences of postsecondary incarcerated students. This would suggest that a combination of all three theories would be the most appropriate. The findings emerging from this study imply that each of the three theories composing the Theories of Individual Change are relevant to the research problem

presented. Below, each theory will be discussed, and their relevance to the results gathered in this study will be explained.

The Moral Development Theory, which poses that postsecondary teachings heighten consciousness, lessening the likelihood of recidivism, is debatably supported by the implications made from the findings of this study in terms of practice. This is because the implication that programs should work to improve the experiences of postsecondary incarcerated students is preceded by the idea that improved experiences will lead to satisfaction, increasing participation by others in prison. The finding that there were barriers to learning present while participating in postsecondary programs while in prison, in conjunction with the finding that there were facilitators to learning present while participating in postsecondary programming through the Reentry Campus Program, further emphasize the need for improvement of such programs in prison. Improved quality, resulting in increased participation, impacts recidivism rates, as such is illustrated by the literature (discussed above in Chapter 2: Literature Review). Because the Moral Development Theory poses that heightened consciousness caused by participating in postsecondary educational programming results in a lessening in the likelihood of recidivism, it follows that maximizing participation should be a primary objective.

Opportunity Theory, posing that obtaining postsecondary education while incarcerated will provide inmates with legitimately acquired human capital, resulting in increased likelihood of employment, is also supported by the implications made from the findings of this study. This is because aiding postsecondary incarcerated students in their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment coincides with an

increased likelihood of employment. The themes of increased professionalism to improve interview skills, as well as courses relevant to career choice to better quality for employment, found in most responses from participants in regard to the positive impact of the development of characteristics needed for employment, correlate with the beliefs of this theory (See Table 10 and Figure 4).

The finding that most students perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships is not related to either the Moral Development Theory or the Opportunity Theory, suggesting that these theories alone do not explain all resulting data addressing the research problem. These theories fail to address the positive impact postsecondary education has on the characteristics developed by incarcerated students to aid in their personal relationships. The Social-psychological Development Theory, which does incorporate support for this finding, should be combined with the Moral Development Theory and Opportunity Theory. As such, all three theories incorporated into the Theories of Individual Change discussed above are applicable to the results gathered.

Social-psychological Development Theory assumes that individuals exhibit new patterns of behavior through exposure to correctional education programming. This theory holds that each inmate who participates in correctional education programs enhances their psychological well-being through their development of cognitive abilities, thereby developing a more positive image of themselves, leading to an increase in self-esteem. The finding of themes of heightened sense of pride in self and pride from others, found in all responses from participants in regard to the positive impact of the development of characteristics needed for positive personal relations, correlate with the

beliefs of this theory (See Table 9 and Figure 4). As such, this theory, like the Moral Development Theory and Opportunity Theory, is also supported by the implications made from the findings of this study. Conclusively, all three theories, combined to compose the Theories of Individual Change, most adequately address the aspects of the research problem addressed by the findings made.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations in this study which should be explored. The limitations include the sample size used for the study, the survey template, the single session interviews, the honesty of the participants involved, and the applicability of the results.

The first potential limitation is the sample size, which consisted of only 14 participants. It may be argued that a larger sample size might produce more credible and reliable data. However, in light of the fact that this study had a qualitative component, a 14-participant sample size may have been large enough, as qualitative research does not aim to generalize findings in large communities. As such, small sample sizes are often preferred when attempting to gather qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Additionally, it is suggested that saturation occurs at approximately 12 participants (Guest et al., 2006). This indicates that 14 participants is an adequate sample size.

The second potential limitation is the template used to conduct the surveys. The survey asked close-ended questions on a standard Likert Scale, with only 5 points to choose from. It could be argued that this format limited the extent to which participants could express their thoughts on the questions presented, thereby limiting the value of the data collected. However, this limitation was precluded in this study. That is, the

researcher used triangulation of the quantitative data with qualitative data, which makes it likely that the data gathered or conclusions made were limited by incomplete information. Using more than one method to conduct this study allowed the researcher to collect data which could be cross-validated, effectively negating any doubt of reliability.

The third potential limitation which should be considered is the fact that single session interviews were used. Participants were only interviewed once, arguably limiting the time spent exploring interview questions and neglecting the possibility that participants may change their minds about their responses at any time. However, this limitation is mitigated by the fact that the researcher asked open-ended questions, did not place a time restraint on the interviews, and allowed the participants to elaborate on their opinions and perceptions fully in response to each individual interview question prior to asking the next.

The fourth potential limitation presented by this study is the possibility that the participants were not honest in their responses. It may be argued that the participants may not have felt entirely comfortable being honest with the researcher due to being concerned with speaking negatively of their experiences while incarcerated. Participants may have still been on parole at the time of the interviews, which may have subconsciously affected their willingness to express disapproval with any carceral structure, fearing that doing so would reflect negatively on them. However, the researcher spent sufficient time building rapport with each participant prior to asking the interview questions, and the researcher feels confident that the participants felt comfortable enough to answer the interview questions honestly.

Lastly, the fifth potential limitation to be considered is the applicability of the findings. It may be argued that because this study was conducted with participants from one program, the Reentry Campus Program, who were only able to speak to their experiences within the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, limits the applicability of the findings. However, considering that Rhode Island is a small state, with only seven correctional facilities and two programs providing postsecondary education in prisons, the findings may be generalized and highly applicable, particularly when considering that participants came from all seven of the correctional facilities in the state.

Direction for Future Research

In the future, researchers could expand research to more postsecondary education programs in different communities and states. The findings suggest that the experiences of incarcerated students participating in postsecondary programs while in prison are not positive as compared to the experiences they had participating in postsecondary courses outside of prison. Future research could encourage the refinement of postsecondary programs in prison. In light of literature indicating the positive correlation between postsecondary education and lowered recidivism rates, there should be incentive to improve the quality of the postsecondary courses offered in prison with the objective of bettering the experiences of participants. Improvement of quality could be achieved by addressing the unsatisfactory aspects identified by participants, including lack of books and tutors, limited class options, lack of instruction, possible punitive removal from class list, and a lack of classes offering hands-on experience. Addressing these concerns and working on improving the experiences of participants could increase the likelihood of incarcerated students participating in postsecondary programs.

Specific research could include implementation of better practices within the postsecondary programs offered in the Rhode Island Department of Corrections. Such practices, catered to address the needs identified by participants, could improve the correctional postsecondary experience. Surveys and/or semi-structured interviews conducted pre and post implementation of these new practices could reveal whether these practices positively affect the experiences of participants.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was an attempt to explore the correctional education experience from the perspective of the postsecondary incarcerated student. While previous studies conducted suggest that the effectiveness of correctional education should be strictly measured by lowered rates of recidivism and increased ease in reentry, it was imperative that the experience of those engaging in correctional education be documented to better understand how these individuals interpret the usefulness and quality of the instruction they were provided while incarcerated.

Through surveys and semi-structured interviews with fourteen participants, the researcher gathered data reflective of the postsecondary carceral experience. The researcher concludes that participants generally share mostly negative perspectives of their postsecondary correctional educational experience. The insight shared through the data collected from this study indicates that postsecondary incarcerated students felt satisfied with certain aspects of the carceral postsecondary experience (such as with the change in setting that came with participating in postsecondary programs and the discipline they created through participating in such programs), but unsatisfied with others (such as their limited access to books and tutors). Although lack of access to

computers or the internet were presented as barriers, participants expressed developing professionalism, and gaining pride in self and from others, and feeling that the Reentry Campus Program allowed them to develop skills for positive characteristics needed for personal relationships and employment.

It can be concluded from the data collected that postsecondary educational programming in prison is not satisfactory to the incarcerated student as opposed to postsecondary educational programming provided upon release, through the Reentry Campus Program. Increased satisfaction with postsecondary correctional programming incentivizes participation, thereby decreasing the likelihood of recidivism. Reducing the likelihood of recidivism is in the best interest of both the communities parolees are returning to, and the American justice system as a whole. Therefore, more resources should be dedicated toward improving the postsecondary carceral experience, as ensuring that the incarcerated population is incentivized with the best postsecondary experience possible contributes to this interest.

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30626/411954-The-Effects-of-Postsecondary-Correctional-Education.pdf.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

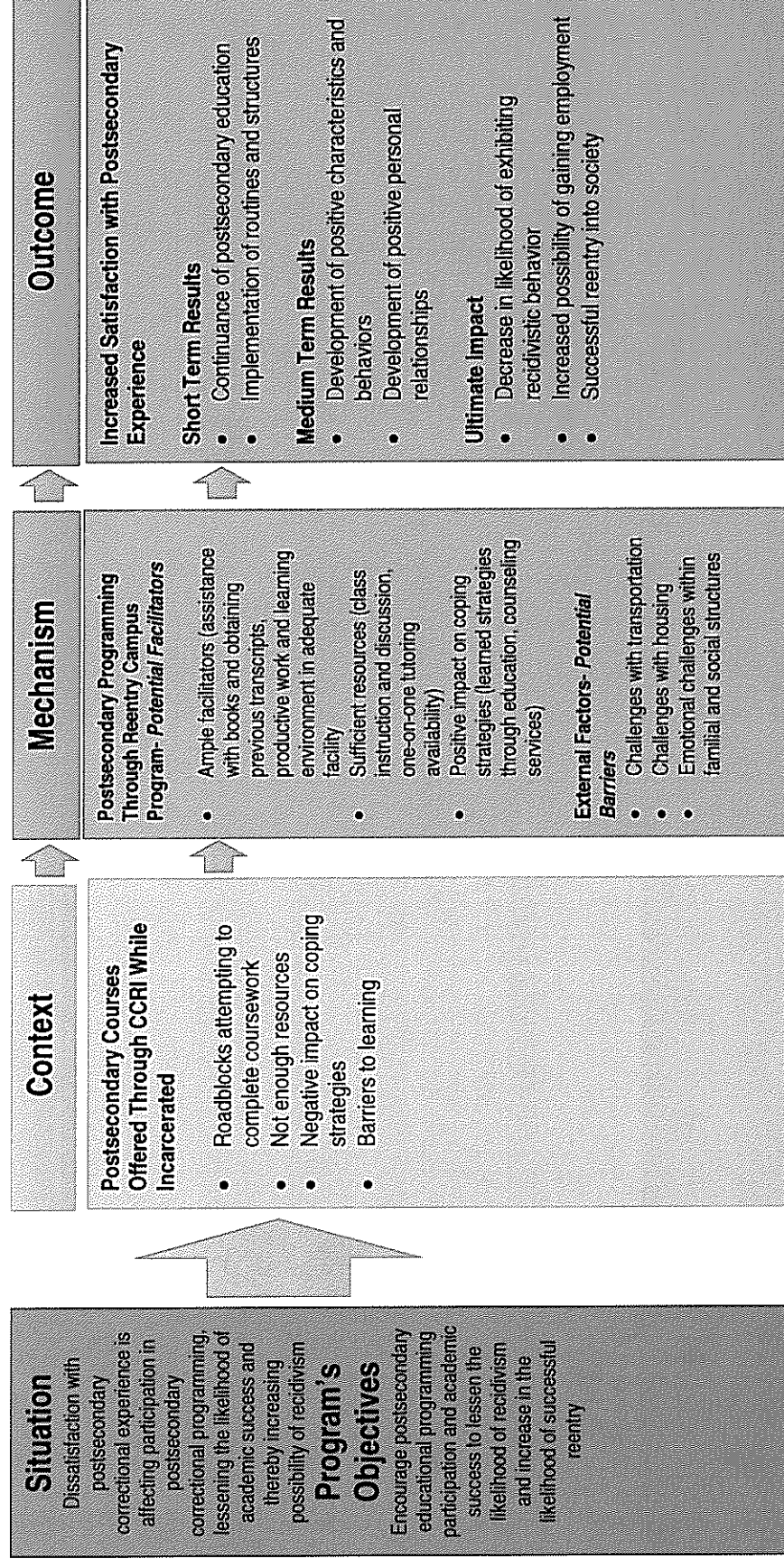


Figure 2: Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Study Design Flow Chart

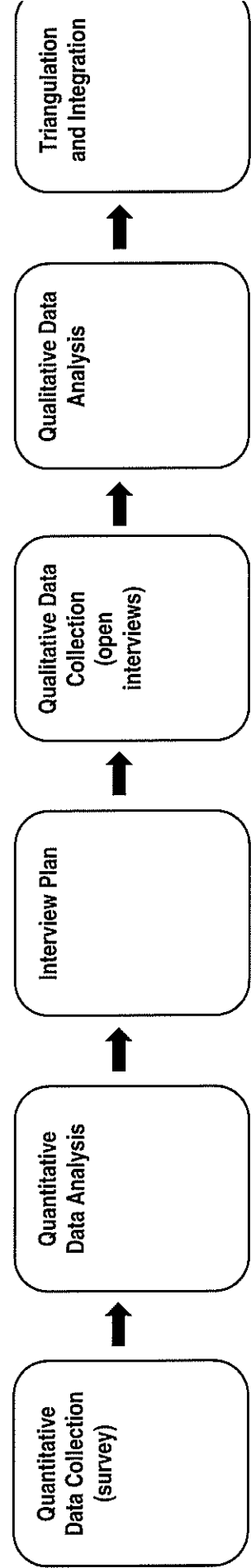


Figure 3: Alignment Matrix Charts

Quantitative Research Questions	Survey Questions: Quantitative Phase	Qualitative Research Questions	Interview Questions: Qualitative Phase
1. What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities (access to instruction, time, etc.) they received in prison compared to that they received after incarceration, as part of a Reentry Campus Program?	<p>1(a). Do you feel satisfied with the access to resources you had while attempting to complete coursework outside of class while incarcerated?</p> <p>1(b). Do you feel satisfied with the access to resources you had while attempting to complete coursework outside of class as part of the Reentry Campus Program?</p>	<p>1. How do previously incarcerated students perceive their level of satisfaction regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities they received in prison compared that they received after incarceration, as part of the Reentry Campus Program?</p>	<p>1(a). Which satisfactory qualities do you feel the postsecondary educational programming offered to you while incarcerated had, if any?</p> <p>1(b). Which unsatisfactory qualities do you feel the postsecondary educational programming offered to you while incarcerated had, if any?</p> <p>1(c). How, if at all, has the postsecondary programming offered to you in prison positively influenced your satisfaction with your postsecondary educational experience?</p> <p>1(d). How, if at all, has the postsecondary programming offered to you in prison negatively influenced your satisfaction with your postsecondary educational experience?</p>
2. What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated (attempting to attend educational programs, complete coursework outside of class, etc.) compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program?	<p>2(a). Do you feel that there were barriers to learning while in prison that are no longer present in either the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting you have been in since your release?</p> <p>2(b). Do you feel that there were facilitators to learning while in prison that are no longer present in either</p>	<p>2. How do previously incarcerated students perceive barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting they have been in since release?</p>	<p>2(a). Which, if any, barriers to learning were present while in prison that are no longer present in either the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting you have been in since your release?</p> <p>2(b). Which, if any, facilitators to learning were present while in prison that are no longer present in either</p>

	the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting you have been in since your release?		the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting you have been in since your release?
3. What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?	<p>3(a). Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has aided your development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?</p> <p>3(b). Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired the development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?</p>	3. How do previously incarcerated students perceive how the Reentry Campus Program has aided or impaired their quality of life insofar as employment?	<p>3(a). In which ways, if any, has the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced your quality of life insofar as employment?</p> <p>3(b). In which ways, if any, has the Reentry Campus Program negatively influenced your quality of life insofar as employment?</p>
4. What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?	<p>4(a). Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has aided in the development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?</p> <p>4(b). Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired the development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?</p>	4. How do previously incarcerated students perceive how the Reentry Campus Program has aided or impaired their quality of life insofar as personal relationships?	<p>4(a). In which ways, if any, has the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced your quality of life insofar as your personal relationships?</p> <p>4(b). In which ways, if any, has the Reentry Campus Program negatively influenced your quality of life insofar as your personal relationships?</p>
Mixed Methods Research Question			
How do the participants explain their quantitative ratings concerning their perceptions, feelings, and expectations while participating in education programs both in prison and in the Reentry Campus Program?			

Figure 4: Mixing the Data: Data Comparison Chart

Quantitative Research Questions	Quantitative Results in Response to Quantitative Research Questions	Qualitative Results in Response to Quantitative Research Questions	Similarities Between Responses	Differences Between Responses
<p>Quant. RQ1: What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding the postsecondary educational opportunities (access to instruction, time, etc.) they received in prison compared to that they received after incarceration, as part of a Reentry Campus Program?</p>	<p>Most students reported dissatisfaction regarding postsecondary educational opportunities received while incarcerated (mean score: 4.7).</p> <p>Most students reported being satisfied with the postsecondary educational opportunities received as part of the Reentry Campus Program (mean score: 1.42).</p>	<p>Participants described dissatisfaction with the educational programming they received in prison compared to that which they received through the Reentry Campus Program.</p> <p>Example: Interviewee 3 explained that there was a lack of adequate books and teachers while participating in postsecondary education in prison, and alternatively, sufficient access to both while participating in the Reentry Campus Program.</p>	<p>Lack of books and teachers while receiving a postsecondary education in prison directly relates to dissatisfaction.</p> <p>Sufficient access to books and teachers while participating in the Reentry Campus Program directly relates satisfaction.</p>	<p>There are no differences between the quantitative findings and the qualitative findings regarding Quantitative Question #1.</p>
<p>Quant. RQ2: What is the average rate of satisfaction that previously incarcerated students have regarding barriers and facilitators to learning while incarcerated (attempting to attend educational programs, complete coursework outside of class, etc.) compared to those while part of the Reentry Campus Program?</p>	<p>Participants reported feeling there were barriers to learning while in prison that are not present as part of the Reentry Campus Program (mean score: 1.21).</p> <p>Participants reported that there were no facilitators present while participating in postsecondary education in prison that are not available to them as part of the Reentry Campus Program (mean score: 4.57).</p>	<p>Participants described feeling as though there were barriers to learning while incarcerated that are no longer present as part of the Reentry Campus Program.</p> <p>Example: Interviewee 4 explained that there was not enough access to computers, limited internet access, and no access to Microsoft Word for students while participating in postsecondary education while in prison, but access to all of these resources as part of the Reentry Campus Program.</p>	<p>Lack of access to computers, limited internet access, and no access to Microsoft Word directly relates to barriers to learning while in prison that are not present as part of the Reentry Campus Program.</p>	<p>There are no differences between the quantitative findings and the qualitative findings regarding Quantitative Question #2.</p>

<p>Quant. RQ3: What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?</p>	<p>Participants reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment (mean score: 1.42).</p> <p>Participants reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has not impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment (mean score: 4.71).</p>	<p>All participants described perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment. No interviewees perceived that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for employment.</p> <p>Example: Interview 13 explained that the Reentry Campus Program provided its students with classes relevant to potential employment in the real world, English classes, and resume assistance.</p>	<p>Access to classes relevant to potential employment in the real world, English classes, and resume assistance directly relates to the aiding of development of characteristics and routines needed for employment.</p>	<p>There are no differences between the quantitative findings and the qualitative findings regarding Quantitative Question #3.</p>
<p>Quant. RQ4: What is the prevalence that previously incarcerated students believe that the Reentry Campus Program aided or impaired their development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?</p>	<p>Most students reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships (mean score: 1.57).</p> <p>No students reported perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired the development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships (mean score: 4.78).</p>	<p>Most participants described perceiving that the Reentry Campus Program has aided their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships. No participants perceived that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired their development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships.</p> <p>Example: Interviewee 9 and Interviewee 14 explained that participating in the Reentry Campus Program has made their families proud, and has allowed them the opportunity to build</p>	<p>Pride expressed from family and building strong friendships as a result of participating in the Reentry Campus Program directly relates to the aiding of development of characteristics and routines needed for positive personal relationships.</p>	<p>There are no differences between the quantitative findings and the qualitative findings regarding Quantitative Question #4.</p>



		strong friendships within the program.		
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Appendix A
Quantitative Tool – Survey

Survey

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this important survey measuring the rate of satisfaction the incarcerated student has regarding their postsecondary correctional education experience. Read each question and indicate whether you agree or disagree, circling the option which best reflects your thoughts. This survey should only take 5-8 minutes. Be assured that all answers provided will be kept in confidentiality.

1. Do you feel satisfied with the access to resources you had while attempting to complete coursework outside of class while incarcerated?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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2. Do you feel satisfied with the access to resources you had while attempting to complete coursework outside of class as part of the Reentry Campus Program?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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3. Do you feel that there were barriers to learning while in prison that are no longer present in either the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting you have been in since your release?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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4. Do you feel that there were facilitators to learning while in prison that are no longer present in either the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting you have been in since your release?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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5. Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has aided your development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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6. Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired the development of characteristics and routines needed for employment?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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7. Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has aided in the development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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8. Do you perceive that the Reentry Campus Program has impaired the development of characteristics needed for positive personal relationships?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Appendix B

Qualitative Tool – Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. Which satisfactory qualities do you feel the postsecondary educational programming offered to you while incarcerated had, if any?
2. Which unsatisfactory qualities do you feel the postsecondary educational programming offered to you while incarcerated had, if any?
3. How, if at all, has the postsecondary programming offered to you in prison positively influenced your satisfaction with your postsecondary educational experience?
4. How, if at all, has the postsecondary programming offered to you in prison negatively influenced your satisfaction with your postsecondary educational experience?
5. Which, if any, barriers to learning were present while in prison that are no longer present in either the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting you have been in since your release?
6. Which, if any, facilitators to learning were present while in prison that are no longer present in either the Reentry Campus Program or in any other educational setting you have been in since your release?
7. In which ways, if any, has the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced your quality of life insofar as employment?
8. In which ways, if any, has the Reentry Campus Program negatively influenced your quality of life insofar as employment?
9. In which ways, if any, has the Reentry Campus Program positively influenced your quality of life insofar as your personal relationships?
10. In which ways, if any, has the Reentry Campus Program negatively influenced your quality of life insofar as your personal relationships?