

The Impact of Peer Mentoring and College Education on Self-Efficacy and Reintegration

Ronald L. Moss MSW*, Executive Director, The Gamble Institute

Elizabeth Marlow, PhD, C-FNP, Co-Founder, The Gamble Institute

Susan I. Stone, PhD, Associate Professor, UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare

*University of California at Berkeley, The Graduate School of Social Welfare 2017 MSW Candidate (Management and Planning)



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The Street Scholars Peer Mentoring Program



The Street Scholars Leadership Team

Street Scholars was developed using a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach and is lead by formerly incarcerated and recovering adults who are current and former students at Merritt College



Our Research



The Scholars

Seventy percent of state prisoners do not have a high school diploma and most have only a 10th grade education or less (Western & Petitt, 2010).



Qualitative Findings

- The structure of school is beneficial to both recovery and reduced criminal behavior
- The challenges to academic success are both intangible and practical
- Peer support is essential to academic success
- Academic success enhances self-efficacy

The structure of school is beneficial to both recovery and reduced criminal behavior

Charles: School helped me because I could be in the streets grinding, selling dope, but I choose not to because I want to stay in school and finish what I started. So, it's really been a help for me to keep me up out of the streets. I know by me staying up out of the street, I'm staying up out of the penitentiary.

Sarah: School gives me the discipline to be aware of myself when certain signals are triggered in me that make me want to drink.

The challenges to academic success are intangible and practical

Malcolm: The biggest problem was acclimating socially because of my past. I still think in terms of where I've been, 14 years behind the walls has instilled in me certain values and belief systems, even in a college setting, somebody cuts in front of me in a bookstore line, I'm taking offense to it. And I would have to shut down that type of mentality from time to time.

Steven: And paperwork, comprehension, reading -- all the things that's required of you is that I need assistance to bring me back to the level where I can do it on my own. I need help. Before, I wouldn't allow people to help me. Today I surrender. And if you seek the resources, you can get the help that you need.

Evelyn: I think the biggest problem has been organization and time management.

David: What are some of the biggest problems in terms of getting through school? Getting here, actually. Getting the gas, getting the energy of coming.

Peer support is essential to academic success

Bruce: When I first came here this dude walked up to me and said, “What you trying to do, get your life together?” “Yeah, I am really!” And he gave me the game...And now it’s like in 18 months it’s like I’ve got my home here. That’s what peer mentoring is.

Robert: Coming up here [to Merritt College] was me seeing my own people. Seeing people just like me being successful in college. I'm seeing black instructors; I'm seeing blacks running the school; our president was black; our Vice President was black. I'm seeing brothers out there that got their stuff together and they want to see other brothers doing well, like I needed that.

Preliminary Quantitative Findings

(n=9 baseline participants)

(n=6 completed baseline and four month surveys to date)

Self-Efficacy Areas of Interest:

- academic and career clarity (7 point rating scale, 12 items)
- academic self-efficacy (7 point rating scale, 8 items)
- self-regulated learning self-efficacy (7 point rating, 11 items)
- drug and alcohol abstinence self-efficacy (3 point rating scale, 11 items)
- tobacco abstinence self-efficacy (3 point rating scale, 7 items)

Efficacy Domains* (n=6)

	Academic and Career Clarity ¹		Academic ¹		Self-regulated Learning ¹		Drug and Alcohol Abstinence ²		Tobacco Abstinence ²	
	Baseline	4 months	Baseline	4 Months	Baseline	4 months	Baseline	4 months	Baseline	4 months
Mean	6.3	6.7	5.2	5.7	5.5	5.4	2.6	2.3	2.4	2.6
SD	.71	.19	1.51	.85	1.11	1.00	.29	.36	.61	.54
Min, Max	5.3, 7	6.5, 7	2.7, 6.8	4.4, 6.6	3.5, 6.6	3.8, 6.4	2.2, 3	2, 3	1.4, 3	1.7, 3

* Domain specific composites created by averaging respondent scores across relevant items

¹Items on a seven point rating scale

²Items on a three point rating scale

Summary of Survey Results



Given small sample size, results are suggestive of changes in specific efficacy domains

Mean, standard deviation, and range differences between baseline and 4 month surveys:

- Suggest improvements in academic and career clarity, academic, and tobacco abstinence self efficacy domains
- But, slightly different patterns emerge for self-regulated learning and drug and alcohol abstinence efficacy domains

Do these data reflect intangible demands?

Contact Info:

- Email: ron@gambleinstitute.org
- Phone: (510) 436-2580

Website: www.gambleinstitute.org