

## Inside Out Pedagogy: A Praxis for Social Policy

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### Abstract

This paper examines the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program's pedagogy as a praxis for transformative learning and social change, with a particular focus on the role of incarcerated students in shaping public policy. It explores how an Inside-Out approach cultivates a learning environment rooted in critical thinking, reflection, collaboration, and inclusivity. This paper demonstrates how incarcerated students can contribute to the broader discourse and challenge conventional perceptions of incarceration. By centering the voices of incarcerated students, Inside-Out pedagogy fosters student agency and offers alternatives to current paradigms of punishment.

**Keywords:** prison education, transformative learning, inside-out prison exchange program

## Introduction

Innovative prison education programs such as the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program offer transformative learning experiences for faculty as well as students (Allred, 2009, 2013; Maclaren, 2015; O'Brien et al., 2022; Perez & Leon, 2020; Pompa, 2013; Werts, 2013; Wyant & Lockwood, 2018). The roots of transformative learning can be traced to the radical and liberatory scholarship and practices of Paulo Freire (1970/2018) and, later, Jack Mezirow (2003). Through an Inside-Out Pedagogy, we identify transformative learning experiences as those that emerge from equality, mutuality, and dialogue, raise consciousness, and produce altered frames of reference for participants (Pompa, 2002, 2013). We contend that prison education not only enriches student learning but also highlights the intellectual contributions of incarcerated populations (Allred et al., 2020) and creates a liberatory space inside a repressive context, thereby promoting “education as the practice of freedom” (hooks, 1994). Prison education programs, of which Inside-Out is only one model, foster meaningful relations between incarcerated students and university stakeholders, advance academic scholarship, and provide a platform for legislative reform.

This paper examines how Inside-Out pedagogy, as a praxis transformative learning and social change, can transform higher education programs in prison. It challenges the deficit-based assumptions perpetuated by systems of privilege and power that often marginalize incarcerated voices. Often discarded by mainstream research and the broader society (Castro & Gould, 2018), incarcerated students demonstrate brilliance and a capacity for influencing social policy. In highlighting their strengths rather than their deficits, Inside-Out Pedagogy recognizes them as active producers of knowledge rather than individuals in need of education as intervention or rehabilitation. This paper also highlights the potential of incarcerated students to shape public policy through course projects and think tanks. By recognizing the contributions of this under-utilized population, this paper demonstrates how Inside-Out Pedagogy empowers incarcerated students as creators of knowledge and policy. In summation, this reflective paper presents Inside-Out pedagogy as a praxis for fostering transformative learning environments inside prisons, public policy, and social change.

The paper begins with a review of the existing literature on prison education. Then, it analyzes the Inside-Out Program conducted in conjunction with the Cook County Department of Corrections and Stateville Correctional Center. Drawing on the principles of Inside-Out pedagogy, it highlights the broader implications of college education programs within carceral settings that can inform the work of other metropolitan institutions. With the reintroduction of Pell Grants in carceral institutions, this paper concludes with a discussion of future direction and calls on higher education institutions to provide educational opportunities once again to incarcerated voices.

## Literature Review

### Contextualizing Education in Prisons

Prison education programs comprise a range of learning opportunities designed to improve knowledge and skills. These include adult basic education, GED preparation, vocational and technical training, and college degree programs. Whereas vocational training focuses on equipping individuals with job-specific skills, reading and math programs focus on improving fundamental cognitive abilities. Both types of programs emphasize the development of essential "soft skills," such as communication, problem-solving, and decision-making (Drake & Furnia, 2017), which are critical for personal and professional success.

Higher education in prison (HEP) programming has long been a contested subject in the United States, susceptible to the whims of public opinion and federal funding (Applegate et al., 1997; Mastrorilli, 2016). Following the passage of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, legislation that greatly expanded financial assistance for students enrolled in postsecondary programs through the availability of Pell Grants (federal grants that provide monetary support to undergraduate students with low incomes), prisons saw a surge in demand for programming (Robinson & Smith, 2017). By 1982, 350 HEP programs enrolled around 27,000 incarcerated individuals, primarily through Pell Grants. By the early 1990s, an estimated 772 programs were operating in 1,287 jails and prisons nationwide, enrolling more incarcerated individuals than ever (Robinson & Smith, 2017).

However, public support and political rhetoric shifted dramatically in the 1980s and 1990s (Applegate et al., 1997). In 1994, Congress passed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The Bill barred all incarcerated individuals from eligibility for Pell Grants, a move that simultaneously prevented nearly all incarcerated individuals from accessing higher education and shuttered most college-in-prison programs (Robinson & Smith, 2017; Welsh, 2002). By 1997, only eight college-in-prison programs were still operating in the United States (Robinson & Smith, 2017).

In 2008, President Barack Obama launched the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program, which ran from 2016 to 2022. Second Chance Pell enrolled more than 40,000 individuals, resulting in approximately 12,000 credentials (Taber & Muralidharan, 2023). In July of 2023, the U.S. Department of Education fully reinstated Pell Grant eligibility for incarcerated individuals enrolled in approved higher education programming, initiating a new chapter in higher education programming (U.S. Department of Education, 2023).

### The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

In the mid-1990s, around the same time that jail and prison populations were expanding exponentially and prison programs and services were diminishing, Lori Pompa, a professor of Criminal Justice at Temple University, began taking Temple undergraduates inside Pennsylvania jails and prisons to facilitate meaningful conversations between incarcerated individuals and criminology majors (Pompa, 2002). In 1997, Pompa launched the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program (hereafter Inside-Out), a community-based educational program that brings together incarcerated students (inside”) and campus-based students (“outside”). Classes, which are held inside jails or prisons and require collaboration between institutions of higher learning and carceral institutions, employ a liberatory pedagogy and methodology aimed at promoting social change through dialogue and collaboration (Inside-Out Center, 2025). In contrast to the banking model of education made famous by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970/2018), in which teachers act as depositors of knowledge, a liberatory pedagogy recognizes students' knowledge, lived experiences, and creative power to recognize and act upon their realities. Inside-Out instructors forego acting as final authorities on a subject and instead pose questions and learn with their students. From the start, Pompa was insistent that Inside-Out be understood as community-based and not service-based: students learn “*with*” and not “*from*” one another (Pompa, 2002). To the greatest extent possible, given the constraints and power imbalances, participants encounter one another as equals (Inside-Out Center, 2025). Participatory dialogue, one of the “signature” pedagogical components of Inside-Out courses (Pompa, 2013), occupies a central role in the model: it enables participants to encounter one another as individuals, cultivate bonds (Perez & Leon, 2020; Van Gundy et al., 2013), and even develop higher order thinking by creating new frames of reference (Wyant & Lockwood, 2018).

## Inside-Out Pedagogy

Transformative learning is an approach to education that extends beyond the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Freire, 1970; Mezirow, 2003). It fundamentally shifts students' worldview perspective and empowers them to critically analyze society and actively engage in social change. In the context of Inside-Out pedagogy, transformative learning aligns with what Harkins and Meiners (2014) describe as "broader structural thinking about how we can work in college in prison programs most ethically and in ways that contribute to prison abolition within and across campus and prison settings" (n.p.). Inside-Out pedagogy embodies this approach through experiential learning, dialogue, problem-solving, and the cultivation of agency in learners (Inside-Out Center, 2025). All instructors interested in partnering with Inside Out participate in a weeklong intensive training that covers topics such as curriculum development, institutional relationships, group dynamics, and interactive pedagogical approaches (Inside-Out Center, 2025). Participants learn from experienced Inside program instructors and incarcerated coaches during the training. Coaches facilitate group discussions, lead reflective exercises, provide feedback on syllabi, and mentor small-group project development. The opportunity to learn from incarcerated coaches who were once Inside-Out students distinguishes Inside-Out Pedagogy.

## Critical Thinking and Reflection

Transformative learning, a tenet of Inside-Out pedagogy, unfolds through critical thinking and reflection. The Inside-Out program offers outside students experiential learning opportunities by entering correctional facilities and learning alongside incarcerated students, many of whom have earned college degrees while in detention. The outside students are encouraged to question common assumptions, analyze different perspectives, and develop independent conclusions regarding incarcerated populations and the broader criminal legal system. One of the most distinctive features of Inside-Out is the context in which they are held: jails or prisons. A space designed to limit freedom, collaboration, and self-expression, the correctional setting temporarily becomes a place of dialogue and critical inquiry when it is transformed into a classroom (Pompa, 2013)

For inside students, the college-level curriculum advances their critical thinking and writing skills while allowing them to contextualize their lived experiences within the curriculum context. Pompa has made the bold assertion that for incarcerated students, the space becomes “a liberating space juxtaposed against its repressive content” (Pompa, 2002, p. 69). Moreover, those who have only ever heard or read about social justice and criminal justice are granted “direct, unadulterated exposure to the exigencies of a particular context” (p. 68). The setting provides a unique “embodied context” for learning (Butin, 2013; Davis & Roswell, 2013; Shay, 2013). This claim is echoed in student reflections and course evaluations, as reported by Ryder and Carroll (2018), Shay (2013), and Steil and Mehta (2020), as well as in qualitative and quantitative studies conducted by Allred (2009).

In class, students engage in activities designed to deepen their understanding of course material. These include community-building exercises, large-group brainstorming, guided small-group discussions, and role-playing exercises. Students reflect on their values and experiences related to course topics through these interactive methods while collaboratively analyzing case studies that bridge theoretical concepts with real-world applications (DelSesto & Sellers, 2022). For instance, employing the Socratic method allows students to engage in spirited discussion rooted in scientific inquiry to challenge existing beliefs about themselves and society. This process uncovers a deeper appreciation of one another and the social structures that shaped their social position. It also creates conditions in which all participants can apply their knowledge outside the walls of the classroom to enact social change.

## Collaboration

Collaboration is central to transformative learning because students develop critical thinking, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving capabilities. In a prison classroom, specifically through Inside-Out Pedagogy, students learn to work together, analyze different perspectives, synthesize

information, and apply knowledge to real-world problems. It is structured through community-building activities, open-ended group brainstorming, a mix of guided small and large group discussions, and project-based activities where students explore the practical applications of what they are learning (DelSesto & Sellers, 2022).

Inside-Out assignments and activities build trust and foster mutual benefits between inside and outside students. Whenever possible, it is important to establish an inclusive learning environment by sitting inside and outside students in a mixed arrangement. Including interactive activities also invites students to participate and share their ideas. For instance, at the beginning of each class, students participate in a variety of icebreakers intended to promote trust and help students recognize their shared humanity. Through collaboration, students learn to communicate clearly, listen to others, and respect different perspectives. At the heart of the Inside Out pedagogy is dismantling the physical and mental walls that divide us. Through thoughtful engagement and purposeful trust-building activities, outside students develop empathy for their fellow classmates on the inside and develop a greater understanding of their personal biographies. This pedagogy challenges conventional notions of criminality and humanizes incarcerated individuals.

## Inclusivity

Transformative learning fosters respect for different perspectives, cultures, and experiences to create equitable learning environments. An inclusive learning environment reflects the principles of equity and fairness by recognizing and valuing students' differences. Inclusive pedagogy embraces this diversity, integrating it into its approach to learning (Hockings, 2010). The Inside-Out pedagogy affirms the voices of incarcerated students and recognizes their lived experiences as valuable sources of knowledge. It creates a learning environment where everyone is recognized as having valuable contributions (Pompa, 2013). To achieve this goal, instructors must actively involve inside students in decision-making processes, ensuring they shape discussion, drive narratives, and challenge inherent classroom dynamics of power.

By affirming incarcerated students' perspectives, an Inside-Out pedagogy challenges dominant narratives that dehumanize incarcerated populations. Incarcerated students, as co-educators, provide valuable firsthand insights into existing power structures that often silence marginalized voices. In a correctional setting, incarcerated students must follow the rigid rules and social hierarchies that maintain their subordinate status. The Inside-Out pedagogy offers incarcerated students a platform to assert their agency and redefine their roles in intellectual discourse.

Brave spaces foster inclusive dialogue where incarcerated students can converse candidly and honestly. These environments empower marginalized individuals to share their experiences without fear of judgment or discrimination. Cultivating an Inside-Out pedagogical approach

provides a platform for incarcerated students to share their stories and perspectives through various channels, such as media, publications, and public events. These platforms, often denied to incarcerated populations, allow the public to observe incarcerated students' potential for social policy.

## Lived Experience

Recognizing lived experience in prison education allows students to connect the course material to their own experiences and foster deeper understanding. Inside-Out pedagogy invites incarcerated students to share their unique insights into systemic issues like structural racism, the war on drugs, and tough-on-crime policies. Incorporating these lived experiences into the curriculum ensures that the course content is relevant and informs policy recommendations. Both inside and outside students co-construct knowledge, but in doing so through lived experiences, incarcerated students can provide us with some insights that would otherwise be missing. Furthermore, incorporating lived experiences disrupts the reproduction of social advantages held by outside students. It challenges the dominance of understanding, perceiving, and knowing the world through the lens of academic discourse (Spivak, 1990), which actively values the experiences of inside students (Baumgartner, 2020).

By sharing and discussing diverse lived experiences, students can critically analyze different perspectives and develop a nuanced understanding of theory, policy, and practice. Inside-Out pedagogy encourages students to reflect on their social positions to assess competing viewpoints. This allows students to consider multiple truths from multiple perspectives. Inside-Out pedagogy recognizes the importance of all students seeing themselves in the course material. Readings that reflect students' experiences are of particular importance in this setting, as incarcerated individuals primarily encounter negative portrayals of themselves in media and political discourse.

Lived experience can dispel common misconceptions about incarcerated students by presenting personal stories that challenge conventional notions of criminality. Inside students apply classroom knowledge to real-life contexts, demonstrating critical thinking and policy analysis skills that often surpass those of outside students. Their insights counter mainstream narratives and advance discussion around criminal justice reform by popular media outlets.

## Implications for Practice

Inside-Out pedagogy is a praxis for transformative learning and social change. This approach disrupts traditional classroom power dynamics and empowers inside students to generate knowledge and influence public policy. The following discussion outlines ways society can benefit by engaging this often-underutilized population and harnessing the transformative

potential of higher education. It explores the pedagogical framework of the Inside-Out program implemented within the Cook County Department of Corrections and Stateville Correctional Center. Inside-Out pedagogy facilitates a collaborative space where incarcerated (“inside”) and non-incarcerated (“outside”) students critically engage with the challenges facing justice-impacted populations in Illinois. Steil and Mehta (2020) suggest that the prison classroom is an environment where diverse and conflicting perspectives could arise as students navigate and challenge divergent epistemological paradigms. The Inside-Out program encourages inside students to contribute in meaningful ways often closed to them by the general society. By positioning students as co-creators of knowledge, the prison classroom becomes a liberatory space as everyone claims authority over the production of knowledge and legislation.

### Inside Students as Knowledge Producers

Drawing on their lived experiences, incarcerated students enriched the Inside-Out program’s goals, course learning objectives, class discussions, and group projects with invaluable perspectives. Their insights, particularly on improving the reentry process, guided discussions around social policy. Rather than focusing on the deficits and stereotypical portrayals of incarcerated students, an Inside-Out pedagogy acknowledges their potential to produce knowledge and contribute to the broader discourse regarding incarcerated populations.

Incorporating incarcerated voices represents a paradigm shift that fosters collaborative knowledge construction to develop a sense of self-knowing, participatory knowledge, and critical thinking skills (Wang & Liu, 2020). This participatory approach embodies the principles of humanity, collectivism, and unity of purpose (Steil & Mehta, 2020). It can create an inclusive classroom environment where robust knowledge is generated through shared contributions. A participatory-oriented approach empowers individuals to be actively involved and creates a sense of belonging (Blackwell-Starnes, 2018). When students adopt a participatory framework, the classroom becomes a space for co-creating knowledge that reflects diverse experiences and perspectives.

Traditional paradigms often privilege academics and practitioners as the primary sources of expertise. By framing inside students as academic equals, this paper challenges conventional notions of who produces knowledge, demonstrating that incarcerated individuals possess a deep and nuanced understanding of systemic inequities in their communities. It contributes to a growing body of scholarship that foregrounds the knowledge and experiences of incarcerated individuals and positions education as a learning exchange rather than an intervention. A study by Hernandez Castillo (2015), for example, argues that incarcerated students can serve as bridges between incarcerated populations and broader society, challenging inequitable processes that deny justice to marginalized people. Participants in Castillo’s writing project critiqued systemic injustices by sharing their life histories with a wider audience. Pollack’s (2020) work offers

another model. By instructing her inside students to conduct research, she illustrates that data analysis is not a neutral, objective process; rather, it emerges from people's own perspectives, lived experiences, and preferred analytic frameworks. Freitas et al. (2014) highlight the potential for inside students to reclaim their self and voice. As authors and, therefore, producers of knowledge, they suggest that incarcerated women can find liberation from within prison walls.

## Community Asset Maps: Unveiling Strengths and Gaps

In Spring 2019, the Inside-Out program at DePaul University offered a Criminology course within the Cook County Department of Corrections. The course culminated in the development of community asset maps (see attached index). The community asset maps highlighted the resources available in marginalized communities across the city. The maps centered the inside student's perspective by affording them the agency to select and define the features of their respective communities. Given their intimate familiarity with their own neighborhoods, the inside students were uniquely positioned to articulate the needs and assets of their surroundings. In this course, the instructor intentionally tasked inside students with selecting Chicago neighborhoods with high rates of poverty and crime. In contrast, the outside students researched the assets and needs of each respective neighborhood. The following week, inside and outside students discussed their findings, compared them to the inside students' firsthand knowledge, and collaboratively conceptualized community asset maps. The instructor actively involved inside students in decision-making processes, ensuring they shaped discussions, drove narratives, and challenged inherent classroom power dynamics.

Inside-Out Pedagogy centered the lived experiences of incarcerated students as valid sources of knowledge. Using a Public Participation Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS) approach, the course empowered community members to spatialize their knowledge, identify needs, showcase assets, and propose solutions to neighborhood concerns (Elwood, 2006; Ghose, 2001). Built on principles of cooperation, collaboration, and compliance (Sieber, 2006), PPGIS projects can mobilize action-oriented partnerships and strengthen community-building efforts focused on education and network building (Elwood, 2006). This framework enables researchers and policymakers to understand the nuanced realities of urban spaces through the lens of community residents' daily experiences.

In the classroom, the incarcerated students guided the mapping process. They worked together with the outside students to synthesize information and apply personal knowledge to real-world problems. They engaged in structured brainstorming discussions in small groups to conceptualize the community maps. Rather than focusing on the deficits, the community asset maps emphasize the positive elements in marginalized working-class communities of color. Inside and outside, students in the course created maps that underscore vital community institutions like schools, hospitals, recreational centers, and places of worship (City of Chicago, 2019). By positioning

incarcerated individuals as equals, the maps challenge stigmatizing narratives and highlight the social and human capital often overlooked in traditional research. Looking beyond an individual's worst mistakes and tapping into their potential can not only foster reintegration into society but also address systemic community concerns. Moreover, the community asset maps illustrate how residents can mobilize collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1997) and advocate for community well-being.

The community asset maps also revealed significant gaps in social services, particularly for reentry populations. Using GIS mapping techniques, the students identified “service deserts,” or areas with limited social service providers or inaccessible support services essential for individuals returning from incarceration, such as counseling, job training, and housing assistance. While most individuals (91.4%) may have access to social services, Case & Hawthorne (2012) indicate that a significant portion remains unserved (8.5%). Notably, 38% of unserved populations are concentrated in the most underserved regions, and 17.8% of individuals eligible for the labor force lack immediate access to social services within their neighborhoods. For reentry populations, these deficiencies present critical challenges, as they face systemic barriers such as inadequate education, poor job skills, and limited housing options (Carson & Sabol, 2012; Petersilia, 2005; Travis, 2005). This is a critical challenge because reentry populations often face release conditions requiring them to participate in mandated social services. When these services are unavailable within their neighborhoods, individuals must travel long distances, incurring transportation costs and enduring lengthy travel times. Additionally, they may enter unfamiliar or unsafe areas, compounding the barriers to successful reintegration.

The results from the community asset maps were particularly interesting for jail administrators. During the final day of class, inside and outside, students presented their findings to an audience of invited guests, including jail administrators. Anecdotally speaking, the jail administrators were highly impressed with the student's presentations and insights revealed through the asset maps. They expressed plans to share these findings in future discussions and acknowledged the projects as instrumental in identifying and targeting specific services for certain communities throughout the city. By providing a visual representation of the challenges in the location of social service providers, the community asset maps serve as a tool for fostering informed decision-making and facilitating targeted interventions to improve successful reintegration efforts.

## Social Advocacy and Public Policy

Think Tanks are groups of Inside-Out alumni and faculty who meet regularly on a voluntary basis. The groups form organically around local interests and initiatives, exemplifying civic engagement, human connection, and a sense of agency that Inside-Out courses inspire. Think Tanks create their own projects, including leadership development, re-entry programs, training

Inside-Out faculty, or community workshops on topics such as restorative justice, conflict resolution, and racial inequality (Inside Out Center, 2025).

In 2016, the DePaul Think Tank at Stateville Correctional Center launched the *Behind the Walls Participatory Civics Collaborative* to focus on voter awareness and access. Two years later, they drafted House Bill 2541, the Reentering Citizens Civic Education Act. The bill mandates nonpartisan civics workshops for individuals in Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) facilities within twelve months of their scheduled release. This legislation is the first of its kind in the United States, as it establishes a program taught by incarcerated peer educators who are specially trained by nonpartisan civic organizations (Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, 2023). The Chicago Lawyers' Committee provided legal counsel and technical support in drafting HB 2541, which emerged from the Inside-Out Think Tank at Stateville Correctional Center. DePaul's Think Tank members collaborated with public officials, attorneys, community organizations, social justice advocates, and formerly incarcerated individuals to write and advocate for the bill. With near-unanimous bipartisan support, Governor J.B. Pritzker signed it into law in 2019.

The success of the DePaul Think Tank demonstrates the potential for incarcerated students to transform the learning environment and move beyond producers of knowledge to producers of legislation. By recognizing the potential of incarcerated students, policymakers can develop more informed and effective public policies. The passage of HB 2541 marks the transition of Inside-Out pedagogy from theory to practice. In small group activities, the DePaul Think Tank identified the need to educate returning individuals about their voting rights and worked diligently with social advocates to draft the bill's language. Despite initial resistance from public officials hesitant to engage with incarcerated populations, the group persisted. Through strategic outreach, they secured key political backing and framed the bill as a strategy to address the social harms of mass incarceration. Their perseverance ultimately led to the bill's passage, reinforcing the significant role incarcerated individuals can play in shaping civic policy.

The social implications of the DePaul Think Tank's efforts and the passage of HB 2541 are particularly significant in civic engagement, criminal justice reform, and democratic participation. By involving incarcerated individuals in the legislative process, the think tank challenges the notion that they are passive recipients of policy. Instead, it affirms their ability to contribute meaningfully to society. HB 2541 ensures returning citizens are informed about their voting rights, increasing civic participation among a historically marginalized population.

## Conclusion

Inside-Out pedagogy can serve as a praxis for transformative learning environments to shape public policy. This paper demonstrates how community asset maps can reveal the social and

human capital necessary to address community challenges while identifying critical service gaps hindering reentry efforts. The findings from the community asset maps underscore the need for targeted interventions in underserved neighborhoods. Addressing “service deserts” requires intentional investment in reentry programs and other social support within the communities that most need them. Policymakers must prioritize accessibility, ensuring that individuals under state custody can meet their conditions without undue hardship.

The Inside-Out Think Tank’s success challenges misconceptions about incarcerated individuals as disconnected from societal issues. By demonstrating their ability to research, draft, and advocate for legislation, Think Tank members reframe how the public and policymakers view incarcerated populations, highlighting their potential as informed and active members of society. The legislation sets a precedent for other states to adopt similar measures that support civic education in correctional facilities. It also aligns with broader criminal justice reform efforts by acknowledging the role of education in reducing recidivism. The collaboration between incarcerated students, university students, faculty, legal professionals, and public officials exemplifies how incarcerated marginalized voices can drive real-world policy change. This model can inspire other educational institutions to create similar programs that bridge the divide between incarcerated individuals and society.

There is still a great deal to learn about which program models work and what instructional methods, staff training and qualifications, technology applications, participation incentives, and other program components are adequate for diverse types of students in carceral settings. Together with their students, researchers and faculty at DePaul and neighboring universities can learn more about effective policies and practices, address gaps in research about jails—an often-overlooked subject in mainstream research (Duffy-Comparone & Aiello, 2020)—and support incarcerated individuals located near our urban centers and universities. Thus, it is imperative for higher education institutions to (re)enter carceral settings and resume engagement with incarcerated populations. With the return of Pell Grants, universities across the country can advance higher education efforts regarding research and social policy.

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