



The People Lab

Extended Results and Future Opportunities

Fall 2021



Berkeley
Public Policy
The Goldman School

Presentation overview



1. Reminder: Data Description
2. Results: Prison Education and Transformational Learning
3. Results: Prison Education and Social Networks
4. Future Opportunities: Research Clinic



1. **Reminder: Data Description**
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Research Data

We looked at...

- **CDCR administrative data**
 - Violations
 - Admissions
 - Sentencing
 - Demographics
- **Mount Tamalpais College student data**
 - Administrative
 - Academic
- **Longitudinal student survey data**
 - First Phase (Dec 2017 – April 2018)
 - Second Phase (Dec 2018 – Spring 2019)





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**We followed 98 MTC college students for a
year...**



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Change in Self-Efficacy

Compared with the year before, the same students felt significantly more competent on all indicators regarding their lives after release.

Successfully compete courses at a college or university? +3%

Get a job +9%

Find a safe and stable place to live +9%

Stay out of prison or jail +11%

How confident are you that you could do the following, if you ever wanted or needed to [after your release]?

Change in Civic Orientation

Compared with the previous year, the same students demonstrated greater engagement in their community and an increased level of confidence in the potential of their impact.

Overall, how much impact do you think you can have in making the prison a better place to live

+9%

Have you ever served in an official or unofficial leadership role in a program at [this prison]

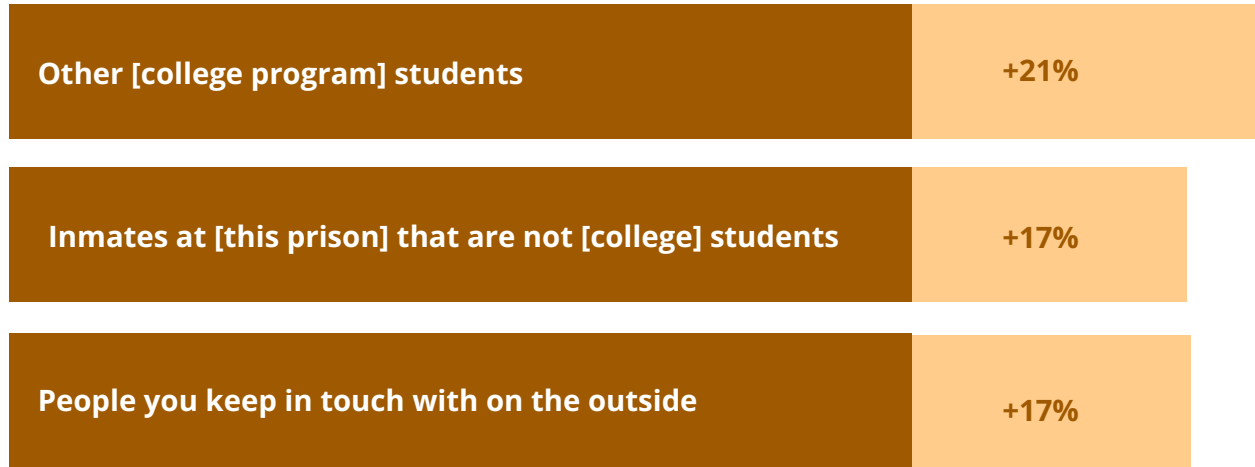
+15%

How often in the past 6 months have you worked with a group or program that tries to advocate for political reform, social justice or social change?

+13%

Spillover Learning

Within the year, students were much more likely to have become teachers to others – sharing knowledge with other MTC students, others in prison, and those they kept in touch with outside of prison.



How often in the past 6 months did you help the following people learn something new?

Transformational Learning and Community

It's hard to sum that up [the effects of prison higher education] in a tiny little neat sound bite. What would I say? I would say that it is truly a transformative experience and one that will not only transform the individual but also allow the individual to regain a contributory role in society.... you get out and no longer are a beneficiary, but a benefactor. You give back to the community. You are involved in programs that mutually and together uplift your community. And you're no longer a drag on the community; rather, you're dragging the community along to a better day.

- MTC ALUM



Language & Identity



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How students see themselves | Language & Identity

“And while you are there for the two or three hours, you completely forget about the fact that you are in prison... and you are a **student.**”

- MTC ALUM



Identity Survey Experiment

The survey randomly assigned different versions of two questions to respondents. One question randomized whether the respondents' identity was labeled as a prisoner versus a student: “As a prisoner at [this prison] / student in the college program, how confident are you that you have the skills and abilities to accomplish your goals?”

In a second question, the identity label was reiterated along with the corresponding recidivism rate for that identity group: “The recidivism rate for prisoners in California is 65% / students in the college program is 17%. How confident are you that you could stay out of prison if you were released today?”



Language matters for identity

How confident are you that you have the skills and abilities to accomplish your goals?

“AS A STUDENT IN THE COLLEGE PROGRAM”

92%

“AS A PRISONER IN SAN QUENTIN”

87%

Respondents who received the student label were more confident that they have the skills and abilities to accomplish goals, and also were more confident they could stay out of prison if they were released



Language matters for identity

Moreover, those who were assigned to the “student” label earlier in the survey were **13 percentage points** more likely to circle “Student” relative to those who received the prisoner label when asked for which words describe them best. Conversely, those who were assigned to the “prisoner” label were **9 percentage points** more likely to circle “Incarcerated” relative to those who received the student label.

41. Please circle the THREE words that describe you best.

Capable	Kind	Student
Incarcerated	Criminal	Community member
Reflective	Well-adjusted	Leader
Analytical	Educated	Ignorant
Shy	Smart	Unsure





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**We looked at whether participation in MTC
changes the racial composition of students'
social networks...**



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Participating in prison higher education impacts the racial heterogeneity of student networks

The number of students' close interracial relationships



The desire to meet and get to know others across racial groups

Involvement in activities with people from other racial groups.



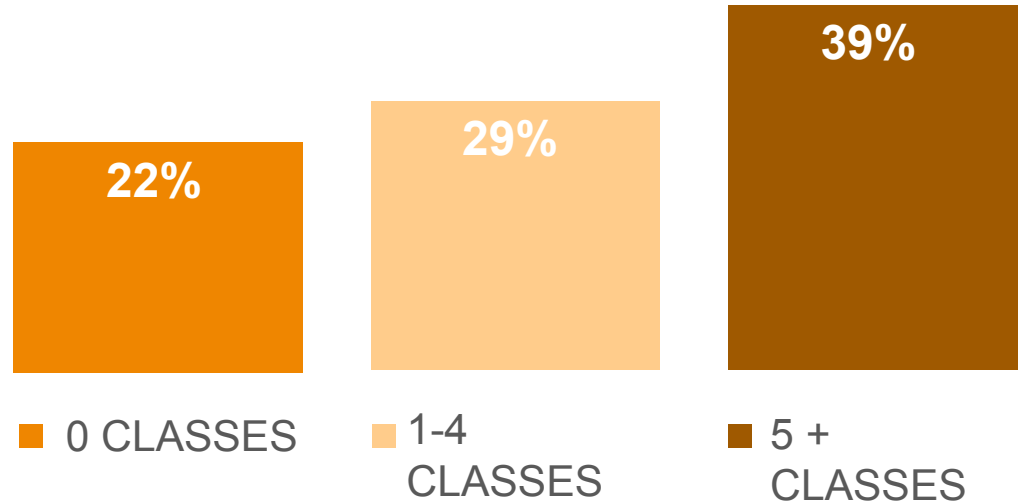
Sentiments regarding interracial association



Close Interracial Relationships | Networks

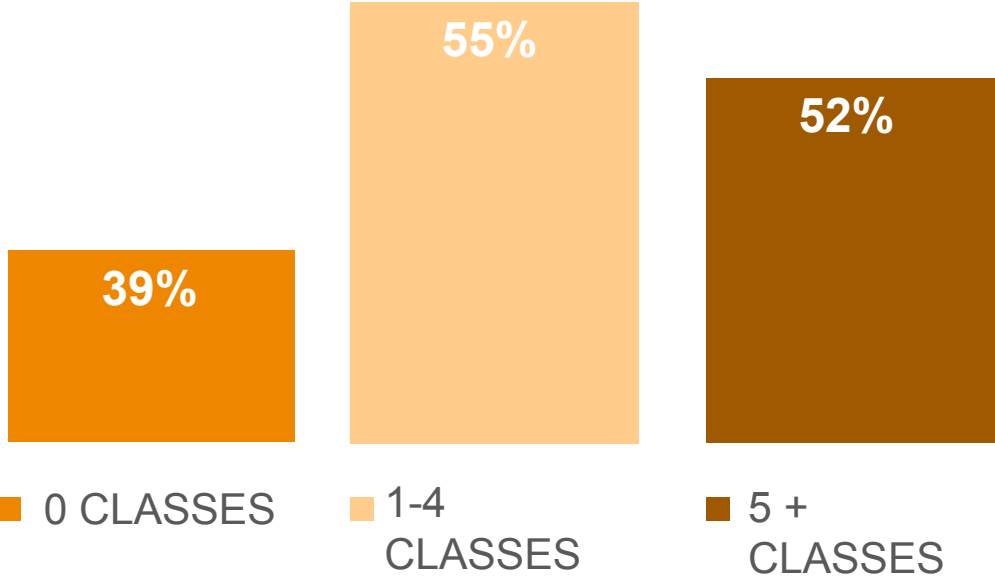
How many close relations do you have whose race is different than yours?

(More than 3)



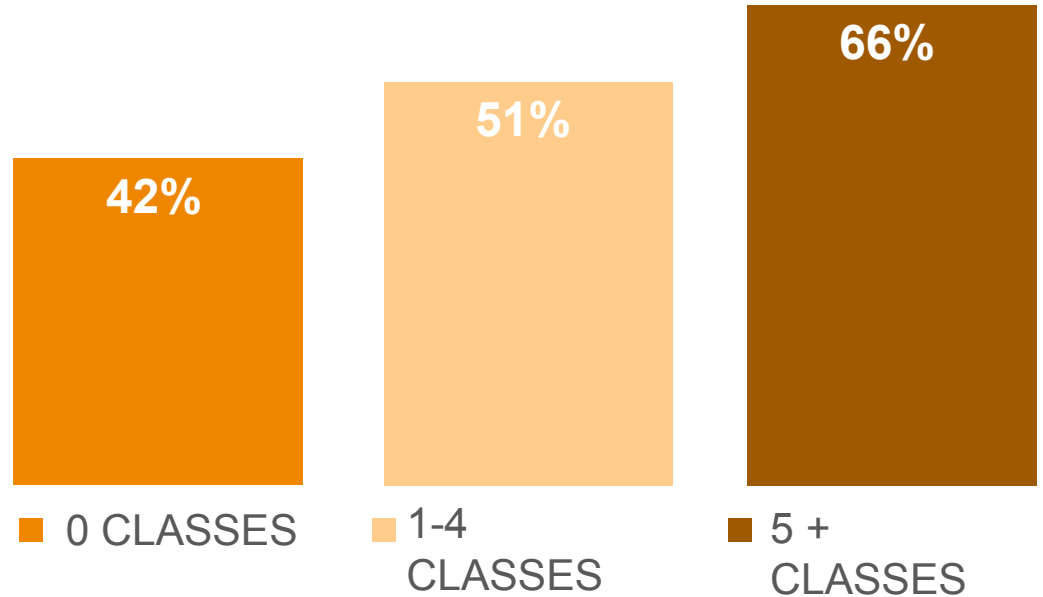
New Interracial Relationships | Networks

I like meeting and getting to know people from racial groups other than my own.



Interracial Activities | Networks

I am involved in activities with people from other racial groups.





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**The People Lab and MTC have the opportunity
to partner in producing community-based
participatory research inside San Quentin State
Prison.**



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Community-Based Participatory Research Clinic at San Quentin

1. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a method of conducting rigorous and “systematic inquiry, with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied” (Green et al, 2003). This approach places community stakeholders (i.e., MTC students) squarely at the center of the research process.
2. Unlike other approaches that work from the top-down, CBPR uses a grassroots approach into every facet of the research framework –from design to data collection, analysis, and dissemination of results.
3. In line with the CBPR approach, The People Lab proposes to conduct a for-credit, two semester research clinic inside San Quentin designed to equip MTC students with the research skills necessary to conduct high-quality research in their community.



The key principles of CBPR will guide our facilitation of this clinic, which will include:

1. Builds on strengths and resources within the San Quentin community
2. Facilitates a collaborative partnership in all phases of the research
3. Fosters co-learning and capacity building among all partners
4. Addresses relevant problems at San Quentin and considers multiple determinants of outcomes
5. Occurs in a cyclical and iterative process that includes ongoing evaluation
6. Involves a long-term process and commitment to sustainability



Basic Course Outline

- The first half of the clinic will train students in the tenets of research design as applied to community-based research, including how to develop hypotheses, carry out focus groups, conduct surveys, analyze data, and interpret results.
- The second half of the clinic will provide students with the opportunity to participate in a hands-on research project. Working in small groups, MTC students will define a research topic of interest and carry out a study.
- Each team will outline a theory of change, generate the research framework, research design and data collection strategy, and identify key indicators for measurement.
- By the end of the semester, students will analyze data and prepare a final report to disseminate key findings.
- The People Lab will partner with and support the student-researchers, meeting weekly inside the prison to assist with all aspects of the research process.





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Thank you!

