

# **Offender eLearning: A systematic literature review on re-entry, recidivism, and life after prison**

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## **Abstract**

Several studies have been conducted on education in the discourse of offender rehabilitation; however, little has been published on the nexus between offender eLearning and re-entry into a digital society. This study aimed to systematically review the existing literature on offender education focusing mainly on eLearning to explain how offender eLearning enables re-entry, reduces recidivism, and promotes a better post-release life. The review draws on the good lives model (GLM) of offender rehabilitation and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Both theories acknowledge the paradox of digital inclusion in offender rehabilitation. We found that online education, facilitated by digital platforms, is a chance for offenders to learn new information and develop their abilities, presuming that the demand for education and training in prisons must be comparable to that of traditional educational institutions. Digital prison education gives inmates a purpose for their time in imprisonment as well as prepares them for life after prison. We conclude that technology cannot replace good teaching in offender rehabilitation; it can only support it. Moreover, the mere presence of the most innovative, mobile, user-friendly technology will not improve access and outcomes if the users on the ground do not have the time, space, resources, energy, and motivation to engage it. We, therefore, recommend that the technology for offender rehabilitation must be highly contextualized to ensure the long-term accomplishment of eLearning initiatives aimed at non-traditional and isolated students.

**Keywords:** re-entry, life after prison, eLearning technologies, offender education/eLearning, information communication technologies (ICTs)