

PRISON EDUCATION

Dr. Kirstine Szifris

Senior Research Associate

Policy Evaluation and Research Unit

Manchester Metropolitan University

THESEUS' SHIP

"The ship wherein Theseus and the youth of Athens returned [from Crete] had thirty oars, and was preserved by the Athenians down even to the time of Demetrius Phalereus, for they took away the old planks as they decayed, putting in new and stronger timber in their place, insomuch that this ship became a standing example among the philosophers, for the logical question of things that grow; one side holding that the ship remained the same, and the other contending that it was not the same."

—Plutarch, *Theseus* (circa 1 AD)

QUESTIONS RAISED AND DISCUSSED

What is identity?

Is there a stable, **core self**?

Can our identity change?

Does your past define you?

Is your identity shaped by your associations or how you are perceived by others?

Personal identity, what is it and how is it constructed?

Environment, pain, education and relationships all motivate change

Are **innate** characteristics or **learnt** behaviours more relevant to identity?

What is **morality**?

How do morals **develop**?

What is the nature of the link between **past** selves and **future** selves.

PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE

Socratic dialogue

12-week philosophy course

An Inquiry

Community of philosophical inquiry

Participants explore concepts in a safe, non-adversarial environment.

Co-operative dialogue to build understanding

Philosopher's ideas introduced in stages

Time and space for dialogue



PHILOSOPHY IN PRISON

“This is what struck me...everyone had something to say and we was all on equal terms.”

(Jonny, Philosophy Participant)

“I just think it gives people opportunity to do something different. ‘Cause to me, it’s, like, a little bit of a getaway, a little bit...And I think that’s needed sometimes.”

(Martin, Philosophy Participant)

“Freedom. Freedom and bit of...a bit of freshness. Stimulus, a break from the banality, the drudgery of everything.”

(Paul, Philosophy Participant)

WHAT IS PRISON LIKE?

“It’s the same thing every day, same routine, ... we’re still human beings, we’re not sheep... open the gate, usher us forward through the gate, you stay up there for the day, and then the sheepdog comes, barks all you lot back into the little kitchen that you go in for the night or whatever it is, and that’s it. And then when they come when it’s feeding time, come, put all the food, and everyone comes rushing, buzzing, get their food.”

(Martin, Philosophy Participant)

Teach prisoners philosophy to increase their empathy and tolerance, study finds



The initiative was designed to challenge "hyper-masculine survival behaviour" in the prisons, including among the most serious offenders.

A statue of Socrates in Athens. The initiative was designed to challenge "hyper-masculine survival behaviour" in the prisons, including among the most serious offenders. CREDIT: ARIS MESSINIS /AFP



How a short
From spectacular
excursions, in
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Teaching pris
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The initiative was de
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Dr Szifris, who is pre
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"The first half of the
often be aggressive,
positivity meant that
exhausted and emot
difficult."

The 10-month study

JEREMY CLARKSON My philosophy is prison life should be slop on plates – not learning Plato

Criminals should be utterly miserable in prison as they pay for their crimes, not living and eating in luxury, says Jeremy Clarkson

COMMENT By Jeremy Clarkson, Sun Columnist
14th April 2018, 12:36 am | Updated: 14th April 2018, 12:36 am



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COMMENTS

I HAVE argued for many years that if you are convicted of an offence so serious that you end up in prison, life from that moment on should be fairly terrible.

You should be shown to your cell and told that you can only eat what you can grow in your window box. And that if you're thirsty, you should suck moisture from the moss in the walls.



GETTY - CONTRIBUTOR

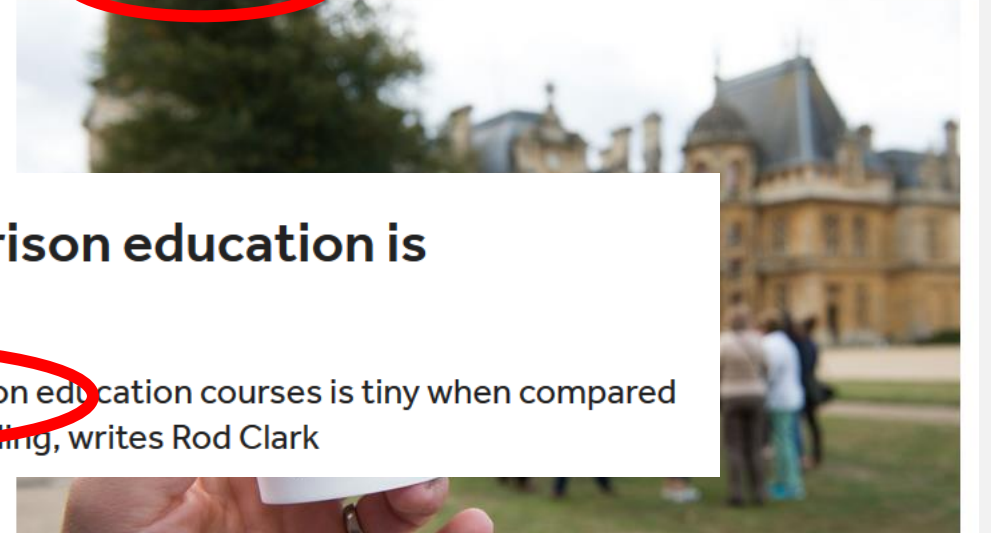
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Prisons should be much tougher says Jeremy Clarkson

80,000 cups of coffee are sold each year at Waddesdon Manor and now the beans come from Aylesbury Prison.

Redemption Roasters run a roastery and barista training centre at the Prison and have now partnered with the National Trust site to be their coffee provider.

Who are Redemption Roasters?



'The value of prison education is compelling'

The cost of funding prison education courses is tiny when compared with the cost of reoffending, writes Rod Clark

How sport in prison could stop reoffending

Rosie Meek

The MoJ's promise of money is welcome, but I propose a radical, far-reaching sport programme for the justice system

- Rosie Meek is the author of a review into sport in the youth justice system

the UK,
raining

develop

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS IN PRISON

Perception:

- Low levels of literacy
- High rates of adults with learning disabilities or difficulties
- Low employment skills

Statistics demonstrate this is true:

- 42% of adult prisoners report having been permanently excluded from school. (Coates, 2015)
- Nearly one third of prisoners self-identified on initial assessment as having a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD). (Coates, 2015)
- 36% of prisoners have Level I literacy skills compared to 85% of the general population.

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS IN PRISON

“Planning for my first ever class in a prison, I stripped down the content of the materials I had planned to the lowest common denominator. Then twenty minutes in to a three-hour lesson, I was starting to run out of material and I had students talking to me about Rousseau and Hobbes. I had one guy who’d just finished an Open University degree in criminology and I had to up my game. The fact is, there are some intelligent people in prison.”

Andy West, Philosophy teacher, The Philosophy Foundation

WHAT DOES PRISON EDUCATION LOOK LIKE?

- English and Maths functional skills
- Arts
- Business studies
- Personal and social education
- Cookery
- Vocational skills – carpentry, industrial cleaning, painting and decorating
- Gardening
- Open University
- Some Level 3 courses, e.g. sociology, psychology and politics
- Prison-University Partnerships – Inside-Out/Learning Together
- Philosophical dialogue – The Philosophy Foundation/Kings College,
- Reading groups
- Tatton Flower Show
- Yoga and mindfulness

EDUCATED CIRCLES

“In an educated circle ...And that was the first and foremost reason why I started...Then, seeing the subject matters as well as the diverse amount of thinking, ... people’s rationale and that, I thought yeah, I think I should stay here, I’ll definitely benefit by opening up my horizon, expressing my ideas, taking in new ideas. Because I think everybody takes ideas from everybody ... I think majority of people, they learn from other people, init.And then they define themselves. So if I’m in an educated circle I think that’s gonna have a good reflection on me.Whereas if I was in a criminal circle, that’s gonna have a reflection on me.And to a certain extent, depending how strong the person is, but, yeah, it’s something that I’d like to always get engaged in, definite educational circles.”

(Jason, Philosophy Participant)

DEVELOPING OPINIONS

*You know what, I've changed my mind. It's not consequences that matter, it's **motivations**; it's why you do something that matters.*

Saddique, Philosophy participant

The best thing is discussing your own perspective in light of other people's opinions. It's good to get other people's ideas on things.

Cady, Philosophy participant

THE 'BIG PICTURE'

*“Looking to and talking about things in the abstract can help you to actually **look again at the personal from a different point of view.**”*

(Tom, Philosophy Participant)

*“It’s helped me look at things from different point of view, it helps you see both sides of an argument, **it helps you see sometimes a bigger picture that you are looking at rather than yourself...** There are many dimensions ... something that might just seem too deep at the start may have lots of different aspects that I tap into and think about ... **[Philosophy’s] changed worlds innit, it’s changed ways of thinking in whole continents so if we can learn to kind of like ... make that a microcosm, we could do that in out our lives personally.**”*

(Charlie, Philosophy participant)

TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING

“I had a different direction of articulating it, so what I thought I knew I didn’t quite know. What I knew I could, sort of, say in a better way.”

(Jonny, Philosophy Participant)

“I think I’m pragmatically learning through these sessions ... learning more tolerance. Because for me, [another member of the group] really pushed my tolerance level at times ... I have to broaden my horizon[s] even more, understand people more, why, who, how, feelings, all of them stuff, which I, kind of, closed off.”

(Jason, Philosophy Participant)

PHILOSOPHICAL CONVERSATION

“If you try to say that the philosophical point of view is to kind of stay open minded to, kind of, look at both ends of an argument to, kind of, look at both sides of a coin and try and work out what is the best outcome – if there is a best outcome. I think it fits in well with the ethos of what we are trying to do here.”

Charlie, 41, Grendon

A FINAL WORD

“I saw a different side to the people I already knew. And it gave me more, it made me see other people in a different way. Because, before, I’d never heard other people’s opinions. Being able to work together, being able to argue together, develop ideas to-gether; it’s always been ‘You’re right, I’m wrong, this is the way it is, no it ain’t’ etc.’ To see people work on the thing together, to build and come to some sort of conclusion together, in some cases, it was enlightening to see that. And, I suppose, that’s sort of rubbed off ... I listen more to people because I realise people have got their own ideas and they can think about things logically. So I’ve given other people more time as well and I’m more interested in what other people have got to say as well rather than, well, you’ve got nothing to say.”

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

- Theseus' Ship, personal identity and change
- Plato's Republic, the structure of a 'just' society
- Kant's Categorical Imperative, a theory of moral action
- Utilitarianism, an alternative theory of moral action
- Descartes 'I think therefore I am', dualism
- Hume's Bundle Theory of the self
- Arendt's theories on action and identity
- The teachings of the Stoics
- The meaning and purpose of Art
- Human rights

THANK YOU

@kirstineszifris

k.szifris@mmu.ac.uk