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Trust, Power, and Transformation in the Prison Classroom

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Abstract: *This article does three things. First, it asks a new question about transformative education, namely 'what is the role of power and trust in the decision of whether to transform one's meaning scheme in the face of new information or whether to simply reject the new information?' Secondly, it develops a five-stage model which elaborates on the role of this decision in transformative learning.*[1] *Finally, it uses grounded-theory and the five-stage model to argue that power and trust play an important role in facilitating transformative learning.*

Keywords: *transformative learning, prison education, transformative experience, meaning schemes, power, trust, student resistance, pushback, empowerment.*

Trust, Power, and Transformation in the Prison Classroom[2]

Prison education seems to have many benefits. Recidivism rates appear to be lower for individuals leaving prison having completed some form of education (Bender, 2018; Cecil et al., 2000; Coley & Barton, 2006; Davis et al., 2014; Duguid & Pawson, 1998), behavior within prison seems improved for individuals in education programs (Brewster, 2014; Davis et al., 2014), and students themselves report improved quality of life when enrolled in education programs (Davis et al., 2014; Dhami et al., 2007). An additional purported benefit is that of transformation. Prison education is said to have the potential to transform incarcerated students by changing the way they see themselves and the world they live in.[3] Indeed, this is often taken as a justifying factor for prison education; through education, incarcerated individuals undergo transformation and reform.[4] This paper investigates the relationship between power, trust, and transformative learning in prison. It uses grounded theory to analyze data collected through 19 interviews with prison educators. The result is a suggested extension of Mezirow's account of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1990, 1991, 1995) which i) draws out the importance

1 This account should be thought of as complementary to (not exclusionary of) Mezirow's account.

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3 See (Costelloe, 2014; DelSesto et al., 2020; Duguid & Pawson, 1998; Inderbitzin, 2012; Pike & Hopkins, 2019; Vandala, 2019).

4 Michelle Inderbitzin argues that prison education is valuable because it is potentially transformative (Inderbitzin, 2012) which is particularly important for prison teaching: 'And really, who needs transformation more than the criminal?' (Inderbitzin, 2012, p. 23). The Boston College Inside-Out program is supported on this basis of its potential for (and success in) achieving transformation through education (DelSesto et al., 2020). Anne Pike and Susan Hopkins suggest that prison education, when transformative, can have desirable effects such as change in social group membership and increase in opportunities (Pike & Hopkins, 2019). Anne Costelloe argues transformative learning is especially important in prison teaching because it helps develop civic competency and active citizenship (Costelloe, 2014). Ntombizanele Gloria Vandala argues that transformative education in prisons has material and measurable effects, such as reduction in recidivism rates and change in offending behavior (Vandala, 2019, see also Duguid & Pawson, 1998; Wilson & Reuss, 2000; Reuss, 1997).

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of what I call the 'decision point' in transformative learning - the point at which the student decides whether to rationalize away incongruous data or else accept a new meaning scheme - and ii) explores the impact of trust and power on the student's decision.

Literature Review

In this section, I canvas the views of some of the important figures in the transformative learning literature and draw out the themes of trust and power as they arise in research lying at the intersection of transformative learning and prison education.[5] This forms the backdrop for my own research and supports the findings that I present later.

Transformative Learning

On Jack Mezirow's model, transformative learning occurs when, through exposure to new ideas, theories, behaviour etc., students experience a profound shift in their presuppositions and paradigms of thinking (Mezirow, 1978, 1990, 1991, 1995). Through transformative learning, students critically reflect on how they assess and interpret the world, question these methods and assumptions, then reject or revise them in light of new information.

When we receive any type of information from the outside world, we interpret and understand it via 'meaning schemes' made up of various smaller components such as individual beliefs, values, emotional responses, and pieces of knowledge (Mezirow, 1991, pp. 5-6) as well as general world views, theories, presuppositions, and goal orientations (Mezirow, 1990, p. 44).[6] When I receive a new piece of information (say that I got an A on my recent math test), I assess and interpret that piece of information against my meaning scheme which tells me how to interpret that information. If my meaning scheme tells me that I am hopelessly bad at math and could never ace a math test, then I am likely to assess my A-grade with suspicion, as evidence that the test was too easy rather than as evidence of my mathematical ability. The notion of 'meaning schemes' is similar to the Kuhnian notion of 'scientific paradigms' - sets of implicit practices, rules, and assumptions that guide and dictate what makes for good scientific practice (Kuhn, 1962; Kitchenham, 2008, pp. 105-107).

In ordinary cases of learning, new information is assimilated into an existing meaning scheme. Transformative learning is different. It occurs when the new information forces a change in my current meaning scheme. I might initially interpret my A-grade as evidence that the test was easy, but after taking many tests and doing well, I may be forced to adjust my meaning scheme since it is no longer rational to interpret that data as evidence of the test being easy. Rather, the data forces me to adopt a meaning scheme which allows for my being good at math: I have undergone transformative learning. Transformation of this kind is similar to (and influenced by) Kuhn's 'revolutionary science.' While normal periods of science see us assimilating new data into existing paradigms, occasionally some new data is gathered which is so radically incommensurable with the existing paradigm that that paradigm must be thrown out and a new one built. In these cases, a paradigm-shift happens, and we enter 'revolutionary science.'

Transformative learning can occur in any number of different situations given the right conditions and any type of belief can cause transformation in the right context. There is, however, a general structure to the way transformative learning plays out (Mezirow, 1995 p. 50).[7] First, the student experiences a disorienting dilemma which leads them to critically assess their epistemic and sociocultural assumptions to try to resolve the dilemma. When this proves impossible, and when they recognize that others have been through a similar experience, they

5 The literature on transformative learning has ties with the more recent philosophical literature on transformative experience (for example Paul, 2014; Carel & Kidd, 2020).

6 These are also called 'reference frames' or 'meaning structures' by Mezirow, and 'paradigms' by Kuhn. I use the term 'meaning schemes' exclusively for consistency.

7 Appendix D presents Mezirow's ten phases explicitly. He went on to add to and alter these phases in later work (Kitchenham, 2008; (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1995)), but the core idea remains the same and this presentation of his view will suffice for our purposes.

begin to explore possible changes to their actions, assumptions, and beliefs. This, accompanied by testing, questioning, and trying out new meaning schemes, leads to an eventual change in meaning scheme – a transformation (Mezirow, 1978, 1990, 1991, 1995).

This model of learning emphasises the active, reflective, and critical role of the student in their own learning journey (Mezirow, 1990, pp. 1-19). Paolo Freire, along with philosopher and linguist Jurgen Habermas (1971), form a theoretical basis here (Kitchenham, 2008, pp. 105-108). Freire argues that the standard conception of successful teaching and learning, on which the teacher is seen as the bearer of knowledge and the students as empty vessels waiting to be filled with that knowledge, was misguided: successful learning necessarily involves active, critical reflection on the part of the student.[8] Transformative learning has important applications to prison teaching (see above) and there is now an important literature applying Mezirow's framework to prison teaching. Below, I present evidence that the literature indicates an important role for trust and power/empowerment in the process of transformative learning.

The Role of Trust

Pike and Hopkins (2019) find that supportive family members and communities play a significant role in the likelihood that students will undergo transformative learning (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, pp. 6-10 and 8-9).[9] This might point towards the role of trust in achieving transformative learning. Support systems generally lend themselves to being sources of trust (and empowerment – see below), where members of the support system reinforce and encourage acceptance of new meaning schemes. Pike and Hopkins also tell us '[b]elonging to a learning community appeared very important to the development of social identity' (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, p. 10), which ties community membership to the development (or revising) of social identities. Below, I show that the literature indicates a central role for the development of social identities in transformative learning.

The same emphasis on community can be found in DelSesto et al. (2020) who discuss the Boston College 'Inside-Out' program in which students from a college campus ('outside students') take classes alongside students who are incarcerated ('inside' students'): 'Through the humanizing experience of connecting in the classroom, students are able to develop a "renewed sense of community in education," especially for inside students who may have felt that being "inside [prevented them] from thinking outside the intellectual box"' (DelSesto et al., 2020, p. 20). The development of community is 'humanizing' and as such facilitates a change in (perceived and actual) social identity.

Trust might also relate to the role respect has in transformative learning. Cheryl Keen and Robert Woods (2016) report that mutual respect between student and teacher is needed for transformation to occur.[10] I suggest that respect is important in part because it enables teachers to cultivate trust in their students. In the following excerpt a student speaks to being treated as an adult, and hence with respect:

> Sometimes however, it was merely being treated with respect which made the difference. Stuart remembered one particular teacher from one of his first prisons, "There was a woman [in a young offender institute]… she understood that a lot of people had had a troubled childhood. They took extra time. They knew how to talk to you – it was not like the school environment. Obviously some rules – can't let you take liberties - but apart from that you were tret [treated]

8 For Freire, transformation takes place on a societal level, so Freire's notion of educational transformation is broader than Mezirow's, which happens at the level of the individual (Taylor, 2008). However, both authors make critical reflection and self-reflection primary, and both emphasise the role of transformation in the learning process.

9 Pike and Hopkins focus on Prison-Based Higher-Level Distance Learning (PHDL). In PHDL, learners are connected with a remote instructor who assigns distance-learning materials that the student studies remotely, by themselves. Despite the more specific focus, their findings are relevant to my, more general, topic.

10 Keen and Woods focused on K-12 educators who worked in correctional facilities, which differs from my focus on adult education in prison. Still, I take their findings to be relevant to my study.

like an adult" Stuart (30-39). (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, p. 8)

In treating our students as adults, we trust them to behave in certain ways, take the work seriously, and complete the required assignments. In Stuart's case, such an extension of respect played a positive role in his transformation.

One of the most persistent themes in the literature was that transformation encouraged the development of (or a change in) social identity (also referenced above). Pike and Hopkins compare the effects of education to the effects of religious conversions which 'could give prisoners a new social identity to replace their criminal label, empowering them with a language and framework for forgiveness, which gave them more control over their future' (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, p. 3). (Here the theme of power and empowerment also comes out – more on this later.) Of Andrew, they tell us: '[he] now considers himself part of a different group of people who are educated. He is looking at things from a different perspective, from a different 'frame of reference'' (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, p. 14). And they quote Tristan, who says: 'It[prison]'s […] created a good – a need to find some stability and I've done that through education. At the end I'll have come out of here with a different outlook. My whole persona's changed I like to think' (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, p. 15). An especially nice example appears in Pike and Hopkins (2019) of a student (Alan) who only made the commitment to distance learning once an education manager entrusted him with a teaching assistant job (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, p. 9). This extension of trust helped Alan see himself in a different light – as having a different social identity - which helped him embrace a new meaning scheme. Pike and Hopkins cite other examples where students responded positively when placed in roles of responsibility (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, pp. 10-13), which emphasises the role that trust plays in transformative education.

The same sentiment is echoed by Michelle Inderbitzin (2012). For her, taking college courses offers up a 'new identity' and 'alternative peer group' (another reference to the importance of community) and is, in this way, transformative:

> [students] can choose to embrace the label of student rather than that of convict or inmate; they are able to define themselves as deliberate learners who choose to spend their time and efforts on self-improvement rather than hanging out on the yard and getting into trouble. (Inderbitzin, 2012, p. 21).

Change in self-image is important also for Kristin Bumiller (2013).[11] Bumiller speaks about the role of transformative education in 'the breaking down of participants' demonizing stereotypes of the criminal' (Bumiller, 2013, p. 178). Old meaning schemes in which learners are positioned as bad actors are rejected in favor of new, positive meaning schemes, which allow learners to reconceptualize themselves as useful and valuable members of society.

DelSesto et al. (2020) make a similar suggestion: 'students voiced that the class "made [them] feel like human beings" and "allows students to reclaim their self of worth, value, and mental/ creative strengths"' (DelSesto et al., 2020, p. 21). Costelloe (2014) argues that one of the primary roles of education is to 'imbue the learner with the skills, values and attitudes necessary for active citizenship' (Costelloe, 2014, p. 30) where 'active citizenship' and 'civic competency' are 'focused less on enabling prisoners to know their place in society and more on enabling them to re-conceptualise their place in society' (Costelloe, 2014, p. 30). This, for Costelloe, is what makes education (potentially) transformative. Ntombizanele Gloria Vandala (2019) tells us that transformative education 'seems to birth the realisation of particular potentials and facilitates the emergence of the true self, a self who has hope for a brighter future' (Van Wyk, 2014, p. 75 as cited in Vandala, 2019, pp. 5-4). This further illustrates that social identity is central to transformation.

And this makes sense. A radical change in self-image is a good indication of a shift in meaning scheme. A student finds an entirely new role in the social world by revising the way they see their place in (and contributions to) it. But self-images are deeply entrenched and

11 It is worth noting that Bumiller's work relates specifically to Boston College's Inside-Out program.

developed over a long period; they are extremely difficult to penetrate and revise. So, it is no easy task to embrace a new meaning scheme and undergo transformation. A student's trust in an instructor might play an essential role in their ability to undergo such a change in identity. Identity, which is a central part of one's very self.

For students who undergo transformation, trust in oneself, in addition to trust in the teacher, seems important. Pike and Hopkins identify an increase in confidence, for instance, in Alan and Susan - two students who were offered roles as teaching assistants - and in Brian, who was offered a peer-partner job. In general, students were 'developing an inner strength, or resilience, which would help them to overcome further barriers after release' (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, pp. 15-16). They quote students who reference an increase in resiliency or self-reliance (for example, Nina p. 16) and they note that '[m]any of the participants felt empowered in this way, mostly through overcoming the barriers to learning but some were purely empowered by the knowledge they had gained' (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, p. 16). Overall, they suggest that transformative learning 'encouraged participants' personal change, how they helped them to develop their self-awareness and their resilience and raised their hopes and aspirations for future prospects upon release' (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, p. 13).

The Role of Power

Bumiller takes power to play a central role in achieving transformative learning (Bumiller, 2013, p. 178). She argues that students observe transformation as well as undergoing it (Bumiller, 2013, p. 182) by recognising the ways in which all citizens are 'vulnerable to managerial forms of power' (Bumiller, 2013, p. 182). When transformation is achieved, '[s]tudents learn the art of sociological critique—the capacity to question how institutionalized power is instrumental in the production of knowledge' (Bumiller, 2013, p. 182). These observations bring together the themes of increased self-knowledge and power in teaching and transformation. To gain thorough self-knowledge is to come to understand the power-dynamics between oneself and other people, the state, and the teacher. For transformative learning to occur, we must endeavor to make power-dynamics visible.

There is also evidence in DelSesto et al. (2020) of the role of power in facilitating trust: 'The respect maintained in the class allows "the class to be open, honest, and vulnerable"' (p. 20). A sharing of power between instructor and learner is pivotal in encouraging learners to give up their old, defunct meaning schemes in preference of new, positive meaning schemes. Support systems, which are important for transformative learning (DelSesto et al., 2020.; Pike and Hopkins, 2019), might also be a source of empowerment for students. Indeed, it is conceivably this that makes them so pivotal. By receiving validation from those sources, by having a network of people who believe in them, students gain self-respect, resiliency, and self-belief. Empowered students are more likely to have the resources to identify defunct meaning schemes and the strength to overturn them.

Power-sharing in the classroom is instrumental in the cultivation of confidence in students. Empowered students have self-belief and the ability to see their merits and abilities. Persistent pronounced power asymmetries between student and teacher can stymie the students' ability to develop self-confidence and empowerment. As we saw above, increased confidence is identified by several authors (Inderbitzin, 2012; Mezirow, 1978; Pike & Hopkins, 2019; Vandala, 2019) as partly constitutive of transformative learning. Both the quantitative and the qualitative results of Vandala's study indicated that correctional education is transformative in the sense that it 'boosts self-esteem and confidence, revives humanity, improves literacy levels, equips with skills and transforms offenders into law-abiding and productive citizens on release' (Vandala, 2019, p. 1).

Positive change in social identity, identified as partly constitutive of transformative learning (Bumiller, 2013; Costelloe, 2014; DelSesto et al., 2020; Inderbitzin, 2012; Pike & Hopkins, 2019; Vandala, 2019), can also be seen as related to, even a cause of, empowerment

for students both internally and materially. According to Pike and Hopkins, transformative learning leads to difference in opportunities (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, p. 20). Bumiller (2013) positions transformative learning as the cultivation of 'metapragmatic moments' - a term attributed to Luc Boltanski (2011) - in which students become acutely aware of their position within a situation, what the rules for discourse are, how they might be constrained, and how their social identities might be defined (Bumiller, 2013, p. 182). Through transformative education, students are empowered to question the entrenched social practices and structures of the world they live in. DelSesto et al. also suggest that transformative learning is facilitated by empowerment and increased agency (DelSesto et al., 2020, p. 21).

We have seen that increased self-knowledge, the addition of new ways of thinking, and increased self-confidence/empowerment are operative in the cultivation of transformative learning. Through transformative learning, students learn to recognise their existing meaning schemes: they 'come away with a greater awareness of their own beliefs, personality, disposition, and social location' (DelSesto et al., 2020, p. 20) and with an ability to recognize previously unacknowledged 'narrow mindedness, biases and even soapboxes' (DelSesto et al., 2020, p. 20). As a result, they are better able to develop a new way of thinking (DelSesto et al., 2020, p. 22). The interaction between this new way of thinking with an increased self-knowledge might be taken to indicate that there is a distinction between the point at which students are confronted with a new meaning scheme and the point at which they adopt that meaning scheme.

The transference of power from teacher to student is evidenced in accounts (also presented above) which cite instances where students are imbued with additional responsibilities. Since giving students responsibilities is identified as facilitating transformative learning (Pike & Hopkins, 2019), we can also see a role for power and power-sharing here. I suggest that we might achieve a more thorough understanding of transformative learning if we add to our existing analysis of transformative learning, which does not currently emphasise the 'decision point' in a transformative learning experience.

Situating This Study Within the Current Literature

Given that trust and power are such prominent themes in the existing literature, it would be prudent to turn our attention more directly to those connections. Additionally, we might benefit from focussed research on the 'decision point,' where students must choose between adopting a new meaning scheme and rejecting the incongruous data. Through transformative learning, a student encounters a disorienting dilemma – where a new piece of information has been received that cannot be assimilated into their existing meaning scheme - and they try to resolve it. There is a gap between such a situation and a change in meaning scheme. This article adds to the current literature by discussing that gap, and by exploring the question 'how can we encourage a change in meaning scheme over a rejection of incongruous data?'

Methods

I performed a qualitative study by interviewing 19 instructors and Teaching Assistants for college-level courses in prisons. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded using Alan Bryman's four-stage technique (Bryman, 2008), which uses a thematic analytical framework to sort data into themes and recurring notions, questions, or concepts. At stage one, I used a combination of open and closed coding by identifying quotes and passages related to the themes of 'trust' and 'power,' adding supplemental codes later (see below). At stage two, I identified themes, codes, and sub-codes inductively (appendix B lists these and gives exemplifying quotes). At stage three, I re-read the interviews, marking the text where themes arose, making notes, and identifying labels for codes. At stage four, I used grounded theory and inductive methods to develop my account and draw conclusions about the role of trust and power in transformative learning.

Source of Data

Of the 19 interviewees, 6 were teaching assistants and 13 were instructors. All were teaching on a volunteer basis (in some cases, limited compensation was offered for expenses) under a prison education program run through a local University.[12] Through that program, students were able to obtain credits towards an Associate degree, awarded by a local Community College (separate from the University through which the program was run).[13] These degrees were celebrated in a formal award ceremony, which other students and select instructors and family members could attend. Instructors and teaching assistants were primarily graduate and undergraduate students at the University, though some were professors.[14] The interviewees taught a range of topics, including English, neuroscience, philosophy, and law. Some had significant experience teaching through the program.

Interview Method

It was important to establish rapport and trust with interviewees, so I conducted semi-structured, rather than heavily structured, interviews. The interviews lasted approximately one hour each. I used a skeleton of 9 prompts and probe-questions (see Appendix A), but I did not use a set structure or read those questions directly. Talking about prison education can be difficult and emotional, especially given the level of secrecy around what is said and done behind prison walls. This methodology allowed me to gather deeper and truer data from my participants.

The 'Decision Point' in Transformation

I have suggested that students may not respond to a disorienting dilemma by changing their meaning scheme. A much more likely response would be to reject or reinterpret the incongruous information. We assess new evidence against a background of assumptions, beliefs, and other factors as a way of testing that evidence (Kuhn, 1962; Quine & Ullian, 1978). We generally give the background assumptions more weight than we do the new evidence because those background assumptions are built on years of experiences, teachings, and inferences and because they are more central to the 'web' of beliefs that we follow (Quine & Ullian, 1978). So, if a new piece of information doesn't easily assimilate into our accepted meaning schemes, we (usually) take that as evidence that the new information is faulty.

For example, imagine that someone tells you that rats are naturally very clean creatures – cleaner, even, than cats. This new piece of information does not fit with your existing frame of reference which indicates that rats carry diseases. You have a choice: you might reject the new information as false, or you might change your meaning scheme to accommodate it; you reach the 'decision point.' I suggest that (shelving other important factors, such as where the information came from) it is quite unlikely that you will change your meaning scheme. Meaning schemes are, by their nature, deeply entrenched. They are made up of both individual beliefs (such as 'rats are dirty, diseased animals') and habits of mind (such as automatically moving from the idea of rats to feelings of disgust and fear), the latter of which are extremely difficult to overturn due to their relative invisibility.

That the 'decision point' is a significant stage in the transformation process is supported by both the epistemology and philosophy of science literatures and the literature on transformative learning in prisons. For example, there is a suggestion in Pike and Hopkins that self-awareness is important - indeed, a 'pre-requisite' (Pike & Hopkins, 2019, p. 10) – for transformative

12 It is hard to assess how prevalent programs like this are in the U.S. due to a lack of systematically collected data. In 2011, the Institute for Higher Education Policy reported that between 35 and 42 percent of correctional facilities offer post-secondary college education opportunities of some kind (TBS Staff, 2021, April 22). This number is repeated in a 2018 article in the Center for American Progress (Bender, 2018, March 2).

13 We might wonder: 'why were the degrees not awarded through the University itself?' I think that this factor is potentially problematic. More research into the prevalence of, and reasons behind, this would be valuable.

14 That the program drew mostly students - as opposed to professors or individuals employed by the University - is interesting. More research on this topic would be valuable.

learning. Students need to recognize the problems with their existing meaning schemes to be able to embrace new ones. Analogously, Kuhnian paradigm shifts happen only when a critical mass of anomalies has been reached (Kuhn, 1962). It is also well-recognised that the process of transformation can be distressing and alienating for students (Mezirow, 1978, 1990): discovering that a new and compelling piece of information is incommensurable with your existing meaning scheme demands critical self-reflection, which can be difficult and disorienting. This is why Mezirow emphasises connecting with the experiences of others: feelings of guilt and shame can be eased by the knowledge that others have been through something similar before. But rejecting or reinterpreting the new information is an effective way to avoid these feelings of guilt and shame and is arguably a lot easier than changing meaning scheme. The student will never reach the point of transformation if they choose to reject/reinterpret the new information rather than choosing to revise their meaning scheme.

I used data from my interviews along with the resources of philosophy of science and epistemology to develop an account of this 'decision point' (a table of quotes exemplifying each stage is included in Appendix C).

Stage 1: **Initial Position**

Student comes to the classroom with initial meaning scheme.

Stage 2: **New Data**

Student encounters new data.

Stage 3: **Assimilation**

Student attempts to fit new data into existing meaning scheme.

Stage 4: **Incommensurability**

Student realizes that assimilation is impossible within current meaning scheme.

Stage 5: **Altered Frames**

Student either rejects new data or adopts new meaning scheme (the 'decision point').

In most cases of learning, the student will assimilate the new data into their initial meaning scheme at stage three without issue. In cases of transformative learning, the student will move to stage four where they find that the new data is incommensurable with their existing meaning scheme. They then move to stage five where they choose whether to reject the new data, reinterpret it, or revise their existing meaning scheme.

So, what makes the difference between a student's embracing a new meaning scheme and their rationalizing away the incongruent information? Looking at the 'decision point' can help us to answer this question and work out more effective ways of achieving transformation through learning. Below, I begin that project.

Findings

Here, I present three characterising questions that represent common concerns voiced in the interviews (Why are you here? Is this a 'real' class? What are the boundaries of power here?) along with discussion of these questions and supporting quotes from the interviews (themes and sub-codes are included in Appendix B). Using a combination of data and analysis I suggest, for transformation to occur, it is imperative that i) there is a good basis of trust between student and teacher, and ii) power is shared between teacher and student. If an adequate level of trust is not established by the time the student reaches the assimilation stage, they will be much more likely to reject the new data at stage five. If students are not empowered, they will lack the resources to overturn entrenched meaning schemes.

Why are You Here?

This thematic question came out of codes for 'trust' ('Should I trust this instructor or

are they 'using' me?') and 'caring' ('Does the instructor care about me as an individual?'), but also has connections with 'insecurity' ('Is the instructor using me to get something else?'). Interviews indicated students were worried that their instructors/teaching assistants were there just to pad their resumes or as part of some sort of 'saviour complex' as opposed to really caring about them and their views. 'Robert'[15] reports:

> … at the very beginning he did ask me about my qualifications for giving the class. (Q: Really?) Yeh, yeh, at the end of the first class he came up and asked me, 'so why did you want to teach this class, 'cause I like to get a feel for my instructor.' So maybe what I said made him not trust me.'Robert'

'Sahil' tells a similar story:

> Actually, after I asked them all why they wanted to take neuroscience, one of the students asked me why I was teaching there, which I was a little taken aback by. I guess looking back on it, it's not surprising why they want to know that, I mean I ask them why they were there, so why shouldn't they ask me, right? 'Sahil'

As does 'Arielle':

> … we shook hands on first meeting, umm… they asked me to tell my life story (laughs). (Q: Really?). Yeah, at least my background to teaching this class. (Q: Do you remember the wording of the question?). I don't. I think I had asked them to all introduce themselves, and then they asked me about my background…'Arielle'

The instructors' motives seem important for students' trust levels. This may indicate that students are particularly protective of their meaning schemes, and suspicious of individuals offering information that contradicts them.[16] For example, 'Arielle' (amongst others) reported that a full, detailed, and honest answer was well received:

> … I told them my college and grad school background, where I'd studied and time that I'd taken off from study to work, and when I'd finished telling that story, I was sort of in my head, but I was suddenly jolted out of my own thinking to hear them all going 'Hmmm, hmmm,' nodding approval and, like 'thanks' for opening up to them. 'Arielle'

Students' initial meaning schemes may tell them that individuals volunteering to teach them must have certain (problematic) motives. For example:

> I would often thank them at the end of class, and they would thank me, you know, they'd say 'No thank you, we think it's awesome that you guys come from [University] to teach us.' And Sam (pseudonym) said, 'It's unbelievable.' You know, and you could see the expression on his face; 'I can't believe that you guys would actually come here to teach us.' 'Rosalyn'

There is evidence that these students see themselves as less deserving of education, which might be a deeply entrenched part of their initial meaning schemes. 'Rosalyn' goes on:

> I think that they know the perception that a lot of people on the outside have of them, and so I think that they were just generally curious why someone would drive an hour once a week to go teach a bunch of prisoners, when I could teach maybe people who were more deserving of it, you know. Or just spend my time doing something that people who aren't in prison do. Why would I? I think that they deserve it, if they want it. 'Rosalyn'

This concern also reflects a role for respect: students want to be respected as autono-

15 All interviewee names are pseudonyms.

16 A good research question might be whether such protectiveness is more pronounced in certain settings (i.e., in the prison classroom).

mous individuals and not treated as items of curiosity (DelSesto et al., 2020; Keen & Woods, 2016; Pike and Hopkins, 2019). If the instructor were there merely for their own benefit, then this might represent a lack of respect on the part of the instructor: the instructor fails to respect the personal and individual goals and life trajectories of the students themselves. There are also ties with important work (Freire, 1970; Kristjánsson, 2017) which suggests that good education aims to help students 'flourish,' rather than dictating a particular path or role for them. If students believed that their instructor had their best interests at heart, and if they felt that they were being treated with respect, they were much more receptive and less likely to push back against their instructor. In the following quote, 'Keiana' reports experiencing 'pushback' regarding their motives:

> … I say, 'so let's get to know each other; you don't know me, what questions can you ask me the answer to which will inform you whether or not I have the authority to be the instructor? And then if you can give a good reason for why that would be informative, then I'll answer the question.' And only at that time has there ever been students who've sort of challenged, have felt comfortable to challenge, and there, their concern was 'do you care about us?' not, like, 'do you have the credentials?' or whatever… 'do you care about us?' 'Keiana'

My data suggests that a student who is comfortable with their teacher's aims, methods, and intentions is more likely to revise their meaning scheme later in the face of difficult or contradictory data.

Is This a 'Real' Class?

The thematic question 'is this a real class?' came out of codes for 'insecurity' ('Don't give me special treatment'). Interviewees indicated students worried that the materials of their classes were not representative of the content of a 'regular' college class, that classes might be 'dumbed down.' 'Marie-Rose' reports:

> I think that a lot of the guys are insecure about the legitimacy of academic credentials, I get a lot, they write about it in their papers, when they come up with examples, and it also seeps into a lot of the discourse in the class, they're worried that this isn't a real college class, this is just somebody coming in and doing their little thing, but it's not like real education, and we're not being challenged like real college students are challenged, and I don't think that has to be the way I'm doing the classes, I think that's a worry that they carry into the program, so they're really insecure about that, and it affects their behavior. 'Marie-Rose'

This kind of insecurity can also result in pushback, as reported by 'Janet':

> … so, I have people saying, if I'm lenient with them about things 'no don't be lenient, I want to earn it… I think you made a mistake grading my paper but don't change the grade, let me rewrite the paper.' 'Janet'

This might be taken to exemplify a move from incommensurable data to rationalization. The student's initial meaning scheme tells them that the work will be too hard for them, or that they are not capable of achieving a high score, but new data tells them they have achieved a high score. In 'Janet's' case, rationalization was opted for over a change in meaning scheme. A similar example of pushback resulting from a lack of trust comes from 'Ella-Louise':

> … another thing that happened was in the mid-term exam, I had… this is also example of push back… I gave them 20 study questions and I said there are 10 questions on the exam paper taken from these questions, and [University] students would be thrilled by that, 'Awesome! If I answer these questions, I can get an A or B exam!' But some of these guys were mad about that; they were, like, 'don't do that, that's making it not a real class, that's making it not hard

> like it's supposed to be,' and one guy was, like, 'a real college class would never do that.' 'Ella-Louise'

Again, there is a rejection of incongruent data because the student's existing meaning scheme does not allow them to accept that 'real' college work would be 'doable' in this way. 'Ella-Louise' continues:

> … But sort of it's a trust issue because they don't trust the class to be like a real college class and they're insecure about that. 'Ella-Louise'

A further quote brings out how rationalization might be used to protect a deeply entrenched meaning scheme:

> Maybe they're intimidated by the class, and they tell themselves it's not a real class. Maybe some students who tell themselves it's not a real class do it because they're intimidated, as a way of justifying not working as hard. I could also see other prisoners who are intimidated by those who get into the class trying to deal with that by minimizing achievement, minimizing their achievement by saying 'it's not a real class anyway.' 'Marcus'

If the conditions are right, this kind of incongruous and disorienting data can result in a change in meaning scheme, but my data indicates that this requires deep levels of trust and security.

What are the Boundaries of Power Here?

The interviews indicate that power plays a special role in transformative learning. Interviewees spoke of cases where students seemed resistant to them or their methods and attempted to test the power-dynamics in class. This gave rise to the thematic question 'what are the boundaries of power here?' which came out of coding for 'power' and 'resistance.'

Pushback and resistance may indicate that the students are experiencing the discomfort of the incommensurability stage. 'Allison' reports:

> … they all got back their first exam and I guess he didn't do as well as he had hoped, and so he told Jimmy (pseudonym), 'don't expect too much from me because I'm not going to reach those expectations, I'm just here to pass the class and get my credits and leave, I don't care about any of the information I'm learning,' or something like that. 'Allison'

'Allison' later reflects on this event and suggest that it is an instance of pushback that serves as 'self-handicapping':

> But, yeah, he just pushed back against Jimmy (pseudonym), and he thinks that it might be something to do with self-handicapping, just like resisting authority maybe. 'Allison'

This might demonstrate how entrenched meaning schemes can be reinforced when a student perceives there to be problematic power-dynamics at work. In this instance, the student gets a low grade, which seems to cohere with an existing (problematic) meaning scheme and uses that data to reject or rationalize away the desire to do well in the class: they reason that they are there only to pass the class, and not to excel or grow.

Pushback was often exemplified in doubt of the credentials or proficiency of an instructor:

> … so, the resistance at [University] is more because I'm asking them to do something different, the resistance at [Prison] is because I'm asking them to do something that's hard, OK. One is just, 'you're making me work harder than I thought I was going to have to work in a college class,' versus 'you're making me do something that is so different than what I've been rewarded for all through my high school experience, I'm not even sure I should accept that this

> is a reasonable way of doing this.' 'Bella'

'Shane' reports on a similar situation:

> we had one moment where I felt really, really stressed by the power-dynamics in that class last semester. Because he's [the student] kind of a History buff, so we'd have all these very specific questions about dates and events… stuff…. and I felt like he was sort of crossing a line and actually, like, testing me, rather than just asking because he was curious. He was, sort of, like 'I don't think you actually know anything,' you know, 'History? You just know this wishy-washy stuff.' 'Shane'

The student doesn't believe that the class is a 'real' class – that doesn't fit within their existing meaning scheme – so they reason that the instructor is underqualified. This might be taken as an example of rationalization in response to uncomfortable power asymmetries. The student is rebelling against the instructor's power qua instructor – the power they have to make judgments on the quality of their work, or their academic abilities.

On the other hand, there were some instances in which students were perhaps overly accepting of an instructor's claims and power. 'Jenson' recalls:

> I feel like the prisoner is much more trusting in the authority of the instructor to be the knowledgeable one, like in our psychology class Daisy (pseudonym) has a lot of knowledge as a psychologist, so if they have any questions they'll take her word for it. Whatever she says… 'Jenson'

This demonstrates the influence of power-dynamics on the changing or reinforcing of meaning schemes. If the student's meaning scheme tells them that students (in this case the instructor was a graduate student) of [University] are particularly able and to be revered, then that will affect the power-dynamic between student and teacher and the likelihood that meaning schemes will be altered. In this case, it might be very hard for 'Jenson' to challenge this conception because of the asymmetry in power relations between themselves and the student. 'Kathryn' tells a similar story:

> There's definitely more skepticism in [University] classrooms than in prison classrooms because even when they're reading, the prison students might assume that the information is accurate as opposed to objectionable you know, like they do in [University]. 'Kathryn'

The interviews indicate that establishing a level of trust with the students early on encouraged them to not reject new data even in the face of uncomfortable critical self-reflection and an effective way to do this was by 'ceding power.' For example:

> One thing is just more ceding power, just letting students have more say; more students in prison have more say over kind of the progress in the classroom, the content of the class, and more of us just acknowledging… kind of acknowledging that [University] students come from… almost a… more cookie cutter than most students in that they both have access to different ideas and different ways of thinking. 'Dean'

Ceding power in this way also came in the form of openness, which connects with my earlier findings regarding respect. Teachers often reported that they were careful to be 'open' to different ideas and different means of expression in their students.

> … I graded a few [papers] and, you know, very, very conscious of being open to a lot of different ideas, and the quality of ideas too. 'Joseph'

This tactic was generally reported to be beneficial. The following instructor speaks to the tactic of accepting, acknowledging, and attending to the (perceived) needs to the students to keep them on-track:

> And I think at [Prison Education Program] things got more derailed more often in more weird directions. There's a lot of me just trying to accommodate and some of their needs are, like, 'explain this new technology to us, we're curious about it,' and I'll just, like, for a couple of minutes… but then in a kind of a jokey way 'ok guys, let's go back to work.' That's worked for me at [Prison Education Program]. 'Frank'

One interesting remark points towards a different kind of relationship between pushback and power relations, in which a change in the power-dynamic (coming from the instructor admitting they don't know the answer to a question) leads to occasional pushback from the students:

> 'Angus': for the people who care, I think it's all about how you do the 'I don't know' thing, and there's lots of moments where I'm very comfortably 'I don't know,' and then there are the testing moments where you're just, like 'shut up, stop pushing me, that's not cool.'
>
> Interviewer: And the difference between those two kinds of moments… where does the difference come from, do you think? It's in the type of question that's being asked of you? Or do you think it's in the context?
>
> 'Angus': I mean, I have to say 'I don't know' not very often, so it can be very 'let's move on'…. like, how much is it something I actually should know? […] And if it's a friendly environment it's easy to say 'I should know that, I'll get back to you' kind of thing, but if it's not, if there's a sort of vibe of, like, 'this whole thing is bullshit'… (Q: they're testing you), yeah. 'Angus'

'Angus' cedes power by showing vulnerability, admitting he did not know something, and the students responded somewhat negatively to this; it led to their questioning 'Angus'' capability as an instructor. However, there was other evidence that this kind of approach can be successful. The difference might depend upon the students' trust-levels. They begin suspicious that the class is not authentic and are presented with lots of data which contradicts that supposition, but they home in on the data that seems to corroborate it; their instructor's admittance that they 'do not know.' If a level of trust is established early on, this might encourage students to see the data more analytically and accurately.

Transformative learning has been correlated with an increase in empowerment as students find new ways to conceptualize themselves and their place in society (Bumiller, 2013; DelSesto et al., 2020; Inderbitzin, 2012; Pike & Hopkins, 2019). A sharing of power might be taken at the very least as correlative with transformative learning, if not as partly constitutive of it. If we take the arguments of Bumiller (2013) seriously, we might also come to believe recognition and exposing of power-dynamics is essential in the pursuit of transformative education. I would again relate this fact to what I have been calling the 'decision point.' Once power relations are acknowledged and exposed, students are in a better, more informed, position and hence more able to make considered decisions regarding the embracing or rejecting of new meaning schemes.

Future Research

This project highlights the importance of the 'decision point' in transformation and suggests that trust and power play a particularly important role in the conclusion of that decision. Before concluding, I will offer some particularly fruitful avenues for further investigation.

A Broader Range of Data

There are many more facilities that run college programs in prison, and many more

instructors who could give valuable insights into the experience of teaching in a prison. The fact that my interviewees were working on a volunteer basis may have influenced the data gathered. It may make a difference to the security of the students, the power-dynamics, and the behaviour of the instructors. It would be valuable to gather evidence from educators who work on a contracted, paid basis. It also bears mentioning that, in my investigation, the students were all male. Further data is needed here too.

The Students' Experience of Transformation

I was unable to conduct interviews with or gather data from the students themselves. This is problematic both analytically and ethically. It is problematic analytically because it narrows the scope of the data I have gathered. It is problematic ethically because it further silences an already silenced group. I had the opportunity to informally ask students about their feelings towards prison teaching research and their reactions were always guarded and skeptical, but they were generally frustrated that there were so many academics talking about the experience of being in a prison without actually talking to the people who are in prison. This needs to be remedied.

The Ethics of Transformation

In addition to research that focuses on the conditions that are required for transformation, what the experience of transformation is like, and other questions having to do with how we can facilitate transformative learning, it is important for us to consider whether and when aiming for transformative learning is ethical, especially given its profound effects. While some transformations of this kind are positive, others may be extremely negative. An individual in an emotionally abusive relationship may come to have a transformative learning experience through repeatedly being told that they are worthless. Imposter syndrome is also a learned experience. As I encourage further investigation into the role of transformative education in prison classrooms, I feel I must also encourage further investigation into the ethics of transformative education.

Conclusion

This project focused on the role of trust and power in a particular stage of the process of transformative learning – specifically, the stage at which the student either decided to alter their meaning scheme or to reject the new information. Data from 19 interviews with prison educators suggests that power and trust may be particularly important at stage five of my five-stage addition to the classic Mezirow account of transformative learning and that, by building a foundation of trust and power-sharing/empowerment early on, students are more likely to change their meaning schemes when encountered with incommensurable data rather than rejecting of reinterpreting that data.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

The following is a list of interview questions and probes that I used as jumping-off points in my interviews with prison educators. I did not ask every question of every individual, nor did I follow a strict, predetermined structure for the interviews. Rather, I tried my best to make the interviews feel like informal conversations, in order to encourage the interviewees to feel comfortable and to open up.

1. What is the most defining feature of your experience teaching in a prison?
2. Was there anything that surprised you about your students in prison?
3. What differences have you noticed in teacher-student dynamics comparing prison teaching with non-prison teaching? Probe: what steps have you taken in light of these considerations? How do they affect the class?
4. How does your relationship with your incarcerated students differ from your relationship with your non-incarcerated students? How does it differ from students' relationships and interactions with each other?
5. Have you experienced student resistance to certain tasks or assignments? Probe: Can you tell me a bit about those cases? What was the task, in what ways were the students resistant, why were they resistant? How did you deal with the resistance?
6. Have you experimented with any techniques for improving poor relationships with incarcerated students? How well do you think they worked?
7. How do you foster trust in your prison classroom? Probe: Was this easy or difficult? How does it compare to fostering trust in the non-prison classroom?
8. Did you notice any behavioural changes in your students over the course of the semester? Probe: Can you remember any particular cases/circumstances? What do you think prompted their change?
9. Have you noticed any 'breakthroughs' with students? Probe: Can you tell me a bit about that breakthrough? What prompted their change?

Appendix B
Themes, Subcodes, and Exemplifying Quotes

Themes	Sub-codes	Exemplifying Quotes	Exemplifying Quotes	Exemplifying Quotes
Trust	Trust	I think it's the tone of the question... I mean, I have to say 'I don't know' not very often, so it can be very 'let's move on'... like, how much is it something I actually *should* know?[...] And if it's a friendly environment it's easy to say 'I should know that, I'll get back to you' kind of thing, but if it's not, if there's a sort of vibe of, like, 'this whole thing is bullshit'... (Q: they're testing you), yeah. - A	I think, well, trust, right? I think he fet very, um, he felt like I cared about his engagement with the class and the material, and maybe it made him trust me... - B	We have a lot of discussion in our classes. I don't know on what basis they would say it ['you're wrong'] to me... unless they could say to me 'but wait, it says here...' That happens. And then I know I have said 'do you know, I didn't even see that, I'm so glad you saw that, wait a minute now I have to think. So what do you think, when you said that what did you think?' And then we'll go that way. I love it when they can do that. - L
		I just handed essays back with comments and he said 'well, I'm not sure that I really understand your comments but you've earned my trust now so I'm going to go with it.' [...] what he seemed to be responding to was me showing that I care about him being engaged in ther class and, you know, trying to cater to his interests - B	Q: ... do you take this very open approach in all your classes or is that something that you implemented because of the prison classes, do you think? A: I think mostly because of the prison class [...] Q: Is that a strategy that you think you'll come back to? A: Absolutely, absolutely, I think that they really are responsive when they know how much effort I'm putting in, and they know that I am a student in teaching and I think they can see me growing through the process... - D	... at some point I think I just said to them 'I feel like I've learned some things since I started coming here, but I'm still... there's still a lot of things that you know better, what the rules are and, you know, what's O.K. or not and you need to tell me if I'm doing something that's stupid, or if I give you something that you shouldn't have,' or... I mean... just sort of being... 'there's so much I can learn from you, teaching here, and you have a better sense of what the limits are. And I trust you, also, to tell me if something's off.' - M
	Caring	They do not respect teachers who they think are there for résumé building or to write a paper […] and so I think that the dynamic is really important with respect and trust, because they don't trust people they don't respect, and they're not going to respect you, or trust you, if they think that your motives aren't there. - C	... so something... I didn't change this over the course of the semester in our class, but I changed it in the next class I taught, was just the way that I was structuring syllabi, so, trying to not have too many readings, and not too long, and also trying to build in days where we just talk about concepts or something, basic reading to do. So that's something that from our class I felt like that could be helpful, and I tried to do in my writing seminars at [University] campus too. - I	I'm sure they do trust me in terms of being somebody who isn't going to give them misinformation about [discipline], I think that's probably true. Maybe the way I show that is, if I don't know something I just say that I'm not sure but I'm going to look it up and the next week I do tell them what I've looked up; I'm very careful to do that because I think it's important that students trust that I'm going to do what I say I'm going to do. - N
		They are receptive. They really had no idea how much time and effort goes into planning the classes, grading the assignments and getting the materials ready. Umm, I had them do an exercise to evaluate how much time and effort they were putting in and how much time and effort I was putting in, we were kind of gauging whether we were putting in enough or too much... it was in the first half of the semester so we tried to figure out whether we needed to adjust. It was, like, having really open conversations about what my struggles are, why I was doing certain things, and then adapting... - D	... I've had a couple of students at [Prison 1] and I guess at [Prison 2] who, usually what happens is that they really don't like one of the books or stories that we're reading and they really want everyone to know about it. And so they will basically do nothing but insult the book or the story [...]. On the occasions where I've had [this] type of resistant student [...] usually I'll just try to bring them into the spotlight: 'OK what don't you like about it?' 'Why don't you like that thing? Why do you think it's in there even if you don't like it? We're going to have an academic conversation in a purposeful way even though you don't like it because it's character building for you. Q: And? How do they react to that? A: Um, it works to varying degrees. Again, fundamentally you have to want to be brought in. And if you don't want to be brought in no amount of pushing from me is going to bring you in. But frequently what I will find is that they actually do want to talk about this book and you can find something in it that they don't hate with sufficient prodding. - J	I know some people who are in down-and-out situations don't trust the supposed selfishness of people who are trying to help them, they think 'you're just helping me becuase it feels good to you, you don't really care about me,' or ' you're just helping me because you have some political agenda, but really I don't care about your political agenda, I just want to get out of here, and I want you to help me get out of here.' - O

Power	Empowerment	... rather than […] dogmatically going ahead with whatever they think is going to work; there are science guys who've tried to do that by 'filling the empty cups' and end up with really unhappy students. […] They don't want to sit and listen for three hours, they want to be active participants, and if an instructor doesn't take advantage of that, student learning, I think, is jeopardised. - E	I feel like the prisoner is much more trusting in the authority of the instructor to be the knowledgeable one, like in our [discipline] class [the instructor] has a lot of knowledge as a [student of the dscipline], so if they have any questions they'll take her word for it whatever she says [...] recently they asked her 'oh do you know if there's any one language in the world that has the most emotional words?' or something and she's like 'oh, I don't know but I can come back and tell you that, I'll figure it out for next week.' - K	… yeah, the earlier thing where the guy… where I paired them up and the guy said 'no I'm not going to work with him'… um… at first I said 'well, you have to' like 'too bad,' and I think he gave me, he pushed back a little bit, but things got a little bit chaotic at that point because, I think the TA intervened, and said 'well may-be this anyway isn't the best way to pursue, to cover this topic, let's [set up] splitting people into pairs, let's instead do it this other way,' and I guess that I just deferred to the TA's judgment on that because I was having trouble. I didn't want to have a show-down and force these people to work together, and here, the TA was coming up with this really good idea so I just went with it. So, she sort of saved me from having to come up with a solution. - P
	Resistance	It's different resistance... so, the resistance at [University] is more because I'm asking them to do something different, the resistance at [Prison] is because I'm asking them to do something that's hard, OK. One is just, 'you're making me work harder than I thought I was going to have to work in a college class,' versus 'you're making me do something that is so different than what I've been rewarded for all through my high school experience, I'm not even sure I should accept that this is a reasonable way of doing this. - F	There's definitely more scepticism in [University] classrooms than in prison classrooms because even when they're reading, the prison students might assume that the information is accurate as opposed to objectionable you know, like they do in [University]. They put more weight into what they're reading and instruct themselves as opposed to college students who can do their own research and figure out what the diversity of thought is. - K	I did have one student, actually just last class… they all got back their first exam and I guess he didn't do as well as he had hoped, and so he told [instructor], 'don't expect too much from me because I'm not going to reach those expectations, I'm just here to pass the class and get my credits and leave, I don't care about any of the information I'm learning' - K

Appendix C
The Five-Stage Model with Exemplifying Quotes

Stage	Stage Description	Exemplifying Quote	Application to Prison	Role of Trust and Power
1: Initial Position	The student comes to the classroom with initial meaning scheme	I mean, in prison, right, everyone around them can exert power on them… other prisoners, guards, the state, the federal government, like everyone has control over them to some extent. They have such little autonomy, and they have no control over their environment, and they're extremely wary... - Q	Incarcerated students reside in a space that can be disempowering and not conducive to trust. Subsequently, they develop a meaning scheme which tells tem that they have no power, and that others intend to wield their power over them.	If the student's initial meaning scheme allows for appropriate trust and if it allows them to see where appropriate power relations are held, then they are less likely to push back against new meaning schemes.
2: New Data	The student encounters new data	I think that their expectation of lots of structure, lots of things decided for them, conflicts with my wanting to empower them and give them some […] power over the direction of their course or their assignments and so I think we've been working to figure that out because I might not have given them the structure that they're used to. - R	The classroom experience introduces prison students to new data, either because they have less educational background or because the classroom environment is so different from that of the prison generally (at least in cases where teachers do not exert inappropriate levels of power, and extends trust to them). They may also be introduced to new data regarding the subject matter of the class.	
3: Assimilation	The student attempts to fit new data into their existing meaning scheme	…a lot of the guys are insecure about the legitimacy of academic credentials […] they write about it in their paprs, when they come up with examples, and it also seeps into a lot of the discourse in the class, they're worried that this isn't a real college class, this is just someone coming in and doing their own little thing, but it's not like a real education. - S	In the prison classroom, the attempt to assimilate often involves the questioning of intentions and the testing of power. Successful assimilation might be seen in a student who already has a healthy view of good power relations between student and teacher and subsequerntly recognizes that as being present in their class.	
4: Incommensurability	The student realizes that assimilation is impossible within their current meaning scheme	I just handed esays back with comments and he said 'well I'm not really sure I understand your comments but you've earned my trust now so I'm going to go with it' - B	In the case of incarcerated students, their existing meaning scheme is likely to tell them that that others are sources of power and distrust, whereas the new meanig scheme (hopefully) indicates that they have power in the classroom and as a result of their learning and that their teacher cares for/trusts them.	Incommensurability is reached when i) the student's initial meaning scheme indicates that teachers abuse their power and/or fail to trust/be trusted and ii) the teacher in fact extends trust to the student and embodies an appropriate power dynamic. So, incommensuarbility will (sometimes) result when power and trust are treated appropriately by the teacher.

5: Altered Frames	The student either rejects the new data or adopts new meaning scheme (this is the 'decision point' in transformative learning)	Change in Meaning Scheme	The [incarcerated] students […] have a great deal of appreciation for having classes offerred to them because it takes them so far outside their normal environment […] at most universities […] I don't think, at least in general, that they see that their professors are people whgo are their because they care about them or want to see them succeed, they're judst there to perform some task that they need to do so that they can gert their grades [and] go to law school or whatever - U	Especially in the prison setting, students who undergo transformation are repoprted to be empowered, to develop new (positive) social identities, to be less likely to re-offend, and to have better future prospects.	A change in meaning scheme requires significant levels of trust between student and teacher. If the teacher extends trust towards the student (by being open and honest, by showing caring, by giving the student additional responsibilities), the student is more likely to trust the instructor. If the strudent trusts the teacher, they are more likely to adopt a new meaning scheme due to trust that the new meaning scheme is the correst one. If there is a heralth power dynamic betyween student and teacher, then the student is less likely to feel pushed into the new meaning scheme and less likely to push bck against it. If the student is empowered, they are more likely to have tyhe tools required to ovberhaul and critique their existing meaning scheme.
		Rationalization or Rejection	…on the exam one of the questions was 'define rationalization and give an example,' and a student gave a brilliant and also really heartbreaking example of somebody who is intimidated by their prison class and, as a result of that, doesn't take the class, and then rationalizes that by saying to himself 'it's not a real class.' - V	In non-prison classes, rejection/rationalization is more likely than transformation because meaning schemes are deeply entrenched. But there are also good reasons to expect that it is especially rare in cases of prison teaching because certain existing meaning schemes - which indicate disempowerment and distrust - are reinforced regularly outside of the classroom, in the standard prison setting.	

Appendix D

Mezirow's Ten-Phase Account

Mezirow's ten-phase account of transformative learning is presented here.

Phase 1: The student experiences a disorienting dilemma.

Phase 2: The student performs self-examination in light of the disorienting dilemma which often brings on feelings of guilt and/or shame

Phase 3: The student critically assesses their epistemic and sociocultural assumptions in order to try to resolve the dilemma.

Phase 4: The student recognizes that others have been through a similar experience.

Phase 5: The student explores possible changes to their actions, assumptions, and beliefs.

Phase 6: The student makes a plan for moving forward.

Phase 7: The student gathers the skills to put that plan into motion.

Phase 8: The student tries out their new assumptions, beliefs etc.

Phase 9: The student, via testing, gains self-confidence in their new meaning-scheme.

Phase 10: The student integrates the new assumptions, beliefs etc. into their meaning scheme.