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Balancing Sympathy and Empathy in an Emotive Discipline

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Introduction

Studying Criminology involves an exploration of the nature, causes, and extent of crime, while incorporating a critical examination of responses to criminal activity through the criminal justice process. Navigating through the criminological discipline, students frequently encounter emotive topics including, but not limited to, violence, victimisation, trauma, harm, and vulnerability. However, despite the often-challenging nature of criminological study, topics of a sensitive nature can also be the stimulus for students' desire to learn (Dalton, 2010). Dalton (ibid.) argues that teaching such topics has pedagogical value in raising students' consciousness and promotes an 'enhanced respect for human difference, tolerance, and empathy for the plight of others' (p. 15). Educators in Criminology can encounter polarised student attitudes towards people

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who commit crime, ranging from the punitive to the sympathetic. By presenting the ideal of rehabilitation and the principle of punitiveness as two ends of one spectrum, rather than an either/or dichotomy, Tajalli et al. (2013) found in their survey of criminal justice college students in the United States, that students with conservative political values, and those who worried about becoming victims of crime, were more likely to favour a punitive approach towards people who commit crime. As students' progress through their higher education journey, their interaction with critical debate and discussion of criminological research findings can change their attitudes and shift their mindset and position on the punitive spectrum. This observation, combined with being encultured into the predominantly left-wing university setting (see Bailey & O'Leary, 2017), can sometimes present the development of sympathetic views, including towards people who have committed offences.

This chapter will consider the challenges of balancing sympathy and empathy in the emotive discipline of Criminology. With a focus on the study of prisons, the chapter will consider some of the oppositions between media and academic illustrations of prisons and people who live and work within them. Subsequently, it will incorporate a case study reflecting upon Humphrey's experience of studying a final year undergraduate optional module 'Psychology in Prisons' which contained some emotion-invoking learning materials. Through this reflection, it is argued that accounts from prisoner voice, evidence of prisoner vulnerability and visual sources can be particularly emotive triggers in this area of study, often which require students to engage in a reflective process to successfully redress the sympathy/empathy balance in the pursuit of in-depth, critical, and simultaneously balanced understanding. In doing so, the chapter will highlight the potentially positive implications for student engagement through processes of feeling, reflection, and sense-making to achieve a holistic scholarly experience involving both personal and academic development.

Pedagogies of Empathy

To situate this chapter within the broader pedagogical context, it will address points for consideration contained within 'pedagogies of empathy' literature. This will highlight the importance of empathy development in students, and connect to the wider content of the chapter, which draws upon the teaching of penology to articulate the sympathy/empathy balance.

English (2016) defines empathy as the 'imaginative seeing of situations from the view of another person' (p. 1053). By exploring the work of Dewey, English (2016) points to the connection between imagination and empathy, illustrating that 'empathetic projection' enables us to achieve a view of the world as others see it, explaining that imagination enables us to 'dwell in these spaces of uncertainty as spaces of learning' (English, 2016: 1054). While identifying that empathy requires the ability to view experiences from another's perspective, through the consideration of the existence of other viewpoints in the world, a person is then able to learn from the other. As noted by Leake (2016), those calling for pedagogies of empathy advocate for teaching empathy to find better ways to understand one another 'across our substantial differences'. Batson et al. (2002: 1656) further propose that attitudes can be improved through the development of empathy for members of stigmatised groups, and that it may be 'a potent and valuable technique' for more positive responses to the stigmatised in society. According to English (2016) students dwelling in these spaces enables them to become aware of their 'blind spot' which, when identified, creates an awareness of things beyond everyday experience (English, 2016).

Nussbaum (1998), highlighted the narrative arts as having force in opening the mind through imagination, which leads English to note how autobiographical literature has the capacity to create 'third voice'; a voice not otherwise present in the classroom. This third voice allows us to imaginatively extend our experiences of the present world into a world that is 'hidden from view'. In English's experience of teaching in the classroom, the inclusion of the third voice through literature enabled students to consider the lived experiences of authors, which then extended to the

development of empathetic interest in the social and cultural differences between student peers.

The students in the case study presented in this chapter were broadly socially and culturally homogenous, and thus were primarily focused on collectively delving into the hidden world of 'the other', as opposed to English (2016) who identified her students coming to discuss the ways in which they were culturally similar and different from one another (as well as the differences between them and the authors whose work they were reading). In the case study, engagement was achieved in seminar activities designed to develop empathy by presenting students with scenarios familiar to them personally, drawing upon on core experiential themes to connect them to the people they were endeavouring to understand; people in prison. In this case, students' 'blind spots' were identified through engagement with materials that revealed prisoner voice, such as prisoner-authored poetry presented at the end of each lecture and pieces written and published by serving prisoners which were read by students during their independent study time.

Although the development of empathy for 'the other' is an inherently positive undertaking, Shuman (2005) proposes that empathy rarely changes the circumstances of those who suffer and is more often for those in the privileged position of empathiser rather than empathised. This criticism is supported by Leake (2016) who proposes that this form of empathy resembles pity and can serve the interests of the empathiser by confirming his or her desire to be considered a compassionate individual without changing the circumstances of the person empathised with. Furthermore, Batson et al. (2002) suggest in their proposition of an empathy–attitude–action model that increased positive attitudes towards 'the other' should provide the basis for increased motivation to help.

While the empathy developed in this chapter's case study does not present an opportunity for students to help those experiencing the challenges and difficulties of imprisonment, for some students the development of empathy during study had a direct, evidenced impact on their desire to participate in action to support 'the other' through their graduate employability pursuits. Some former students, who have established careers working directly with people in prison, have since returned to talk to current students about how they have been able to apply their critical

understanding of key topic areas in their working lives, with reference to the importance of developing an empathetic viewpoint as a transferable skill.

As will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, over-exposure to the challenging realities of prison life, through fictional and non-fictional media representations, can serve to desensitise students through the normalisation of such ordinarily distressing images. This desensitisation can result in emotional distancing akin to the compassion fatigue for the suffering of the marginalised described by Seu (2003). In Criminology, which strives to capture the foundational causes of criminality through an appreciation of the impact of social inequality and social injustice, understanding those in the prison setting requires engagement with the challenges of understanding the marginalised and criminalised 'other'. As such, part of the aim of engaging students in developing an understanding of those who are subject to sentences imposed by the criminal justice system, is to create *resensitisation* through the development of a balanced empathetic viewpoint.

The Challenge of Achieving Empathy When Teaching Penology

The focus of this chapter towards a specific case study in practice, considers the challenge of balancing sympathy and empathy in the context of teaching penology, the study of punishment and prisons in theory and practice. Prisons are among the most secure institutions in society, with the primary insights of students prior to study, often being based on carefully edited media representations driven by newsworthy-driven agendas. The public often commute between factual news and entertainment programming (Mason, 2003), creating piecemeal stereotypical perceptions of the reality of criminal justice institutions and those who live and work within them. Jewkes (2015) argues that of the twelve news structures and values that shape crime news media, five apply to the prison in terms of what makes it such a newsworthy topic, one that is especially appealing to audiences. Presentations such as risk, conservative ideology, graphic imagery, violence, and high-status persons (ibid.)

make fictional and non-fictional observations of prisons very attractive to audiences. With the emergence of the Netflix phenomenon, viewers are spoilt for choice with the breadth of films, documentaries, and series that they can watch about prisons. This has resulted in such perceptions being problematic, especially given that the reality of prison life can be heavily dominated by overbearing routine and boredom. While documentaries may resonate with some of the ethnographic work of researchers, they often take a particular angle (Jewkes, 2015). As audience members prior to studying prisons, students' preconceptions of what we might study about these institutions may be located in the extremes of the easy-going holiday camp or the dangerous and violent environment (Coyle, 2005).

Crewe (2007) argues that in contrast to the 'lawless jungle' often portrayed in prison films, academic literature offers a range of lenses through which to view and understand prison life. This can be seen in recent publications that divert away from a fixation on dominant forms of masculinity, which offer a limited picture of the identities presented in the prison setting (see Laws & Lieber, 2020; Maguire, 2019). Exploring their understanding of expressions of care among male prisoners, Laws and Lieber (2020) highlight that prisoners do not always live in a continuous state of fear, and that there is a need to acknowledge the many understated prisoner characteristics including empathy, positive interactions, kindness, and friendship. In teaching practice, it is important to introduce students to such characteristics, to broaden their knowledge on the relevance of them in their role as learners. This, in part, challenges the predominantly aggressive masculine 'argot roles' that Sykes (1958) depicted in his classic work, *The Society of Captives*; work which has endured in the study of prisons. In doing this, students can explore the 'classic' prison sociology literature alongside the contemporary, and engage with opportunities to develop their criticality. As with previously cited academic literature, acts of kindness in prison have demonstrated that prisoners are able to have supportive relationships with one another, as shown in practice through peer support schemes. The Listener Scheme is a peer support service, delivered by the Samaritans, which aims to reduce suicide and self-harm in prisons (Samaritans, 2020). Operating in almost all prisons in England, Scotland, and Wales, volunteers for

the Samaritans select, train, and support prisoners to become Listeners who provide confidential emotional support to their peers who are struggling to cope (ibid.). The Samaritans website offers content, which can be useful to educators, including information, videos, and testimonials. These resources can provide students with materials that enable them to link findings from academic literature to real-life initiatives. Further signposting to evidence of the effectiveness of peer support for prisoners has also been provided online by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (see GOV.UK, 2020). As well as providing access to summaries concerning evidence of effectiveness and evidence-informed effective practice, this website presents sources for further reading including *Life in Prison: Peer Support* (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2016) and *A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of peer education and peer support in prisons* (Bagnall et al., 2015).

To broaden their understanding of life behind prison walls, several academics have reflected upon their own experiences of conducting research in prisons within their published work (see Crewe, 2014; Jewkes, 2012; Liebling, 1999; Sloan & Wright, 2015). Within such publications, writers have offered reflections on distinct themes concerning research processes and experiences. Liebling (1999) considered the 'dangers and rewards' of doing prison research and the reality of the subjective feelings that researchers experience in the prison space. Further acknowledging the emotional trials that can be involved in research in this environment, Jewkes (2012) presented the 'autoethnographic dimensions' of qualitative enquiry shedding light on the emotional investment involved in studying stigmatised 'others' pulling together the work of other ethnographers while also recounting a personal research encounter of her own. More recently, Sloan and Wright (2015) reflected upon the experiences of 'going in green' as a new researcher and the challenges that are negotiated by those who are new to the prison in a research capacity. By engaging with varied reflective accounts, students have the opportunity to consider that emotion has a role to play, not just in prison research experiences, but also in studying prisons more broadly. This raises key points for debate within teaching and learning, and strikes an important balance between sympathy and

empathy to reveal a much deeper level of understanding about prisons and those who live and work inside them.

Deconstructing Empathy and Sympathy

Critical thinking in learning involves encouraging students to identify and question their own assumptions and engage in developing their worldviews (Howes, 2017). When supporting students with developing their critical thinking, it is important to create a balance to avoid understanding spilling into sympathies, as this may cloud interpretations of wider contexts. Such observations have been significant for students studying prisons and penology in order to facilitate their critical thinking and creativity when presenting balanced arguments in assessed work. It is also integral in the process of redressing the balance with students' explorations of victimised actor models that provide alternative views to rational actor theories of crime and deviance (see Burke, 2019). It is therefore crucial for students to be able to recognise the distinctions between sympathy and empathy, and apply them when working to develop an understanding of some of the emotive issues raised within this topic area.

With reference to media representations that may shape assumptions students may have when joining university (see Bennett, 2006), it is important to understand the role of tabloid media. The framing presents the topic of prisons and prisoners often with a distinctly unsympathetic viewpoint. Therefore, presenting students with academic research can starkly challenge such representations, and deconstruct images providing students with what may be interpreted as an overly liberal 'reality check'. Therefore, it is imperative that students are informed, through academic research, of the realities of prison life and how this can differ from popular media representations. Thus, we must not lose sight of the quest for in-depth understanding of the topic which requires some balancing of the books (see Mackey & Courtright, 2000).

Introducing students to the academic literature on prisons raises a number of key issues. Students have often expressed that they are particularly interested in understanding the challenging nature of prison life,

and the impact that prison experiences can have on the mental well-being of prisoners. However, in creating the necessary balance, consideration needs to be given as to how we interpret this knowledge, while also recognising the role prisons have in keeping the public safe from people who may have a proven capacity to cause harm to others. In teaching, we can begin to unpack our own engagement with the subject matter and contemplate where we can draw the emotional line. For this reason, it is worthwhile to make a distinction between *empathy* and *sympathy*, which has proven itself to be a useful exercise when having discussions with students (as will be noted at the end of this chapter).

While they may have similar connotations, and in some cases be used interchangeably (albeit incorrectly), the distinct nuances in the meanings of *empathy* and *sympathy* need to be recognised and understood. When teaching students about imprisonment, and engaging with academic literature, this can very often place a distinct focus on the negative elements of the prison environment and experience. At the same time, this also requires a consciousness that comes from critical engagement in debates, that being given a prison sentence is a signifier of a serious offence which has caused victimisation in some form.

At its core, sympathy involves a process of sharing the feelings or emotions of another individual. For example, we may experience pain ourselves when learning about the emotional pain of others. If a friend or family member experiences grief through the loss of a loved one, we too may feel a sense of grief through the knowledge that a person we care about is in distress. Empathy however is about understanding and requires us to imagine how another person may be feeling by figuratively putting ourselves in their shoes while maintaining emotional distance. The distinction between sympathy and empathy was captured by Aring (1958) who proposed:

> The act or capacity of entering into or sharing the feelings of another is known as sympathy. Empathy, on the other hand, not only is an identification of sorts but also connotes an awareness of one's separateness from the observed. One of the most difficult tasks put upon a man is reflective commitment to another's problem while maintaining his own identity.

Furthermore, Davis (1983) measured empathy as sensitivity to others, social functioning, emotionality and self-esteem, and intelligence.

When exploring prisoner narratives, we often encounter experiences of victimisation, exclusion, and stigmatisation grounded in stories of personal trauma. At the same time, we also see accounts of imprisoned people who have had supportive upbringings and positive experiences in earlier life. The varied nature of prisoners' backgrounds presents a realistic and well-rounded understanding of the population, which importantly highlights that they are not a homogenous group. However, as previously discussed, the negative often outweighs the positive when it comes to learning more about the lives that people have led before imprisonment. Such realisations can invoke sympathetic responses, which are natural when taking into account some prisoners' particularly traumatic narratives. While it is important for students to maintain an objective viewpoint, where possible, it is also natural and appropriate for emotional responses to be realised when confronted with traumatic human experience.

At this point we are presented with an opportunity to engage students with the 'whose side' debate (see Becker, 1967; Gouldner, 1962; Liebling, 2001) in which the existence of a value-free approach to the social sciences has been contested. Through discussions concerning this debate (see Nichols, 2021), conclusions can be drawn which align with Liebling's work, that we can engage emotionally with such subject matter as a natural human response, and then step back to consider how we translate this into a balanced academic account. In the same way that prison researchers can reflectively neutralise their side being swayed during the research process, students can take a similar reflective approach by ensuring that their reading of the academic literature is sufficiently broad so as not to overly rely on single or small numbers of accounts, thus enabling them to see, and academically discuss, the wider context.

It is important for students to develop the ability to examine prisoner narratives in academic literature from a place of empathy. Putting themselves in the position of another person, whose personal circumstances are often markedly different from their own, enhances their opportunity to develop intellectual ability which is 'logically related to

emotional intelligence' (Busu et al., 2020: 889). This situates students in a position to further enhance their ability to 'become reflective on their actions or thinking towards others' (Busu et al., 2020: 891) and form balanced arguments that do not slip unnecessarily into sympathetic tone. As noted however, sympathy itself is not problematic in academic study or research, especially when learning about people who have victimised others and in many cases been victims themselves. Instead, recognising sympathetic responses should be viewed by students as a trigger for them to question their responses through the wider exploration of academic materials available to them.

The next section of this chapter will present a case study, identifying a sample of learning resources that triggered such responses, and explore how a student (Humphrey) was able to draw on their skills to reflect and make sense of them as a learner.

Achieving Empathy

To provide an example of how students engage with learning materials that have the potential to invoke emotive responses, this case study is about a third year optional Criminology module delivered at the University of Lincoln in 2021; *Psychology in Prisons*. This module examines the psychological and physiological effects of imprisonment on people in prisons. By exploring the pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958) through both classic literature and more contemporary adaptations and interpretations (Crewe, 2011; Crewe et al., 2017), students explore the intricacies and complexities of prison life. The module provides an opportunity for students to develop their understanding of different populations in prisons including men, women, young people, older people, people from black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds, and prison staff. Each academic year, the module content is informed by students from the previous cohort following a process of reflection and evaluation at the end of the module.

The case study draws upon a reflective approach examining module materials including written and visual sources. Utilising the Gibbs' (1988) model of reflection, Humphrey examined a letter written by

an inmate discussing the impact of positivity upon prisoners' mental health, an excerpt of a BBC Panorama documentary exploring daily life within a British prison and finally a report from the Prison Reform Trust exploring issues concerning older people within the prison environment. Aspects of the following student-led reflection have been discussed using the first person to effectively evaluate the balance between sympathy and empathy when discussing module materials from a student's perspective.

Throughout this module, letters written to Inside Time (the national newspaper for prisoners and detainees) were explored. When studying the pains of imprisonment, as discussed by Sykes (1958), the letter 'Small things—Star letter of the month' (A, 2020) was used as a topic of discussion within the seminar for that week. This letter, written from an inmate's perspective, explores sensitive topics surrounding the impact of prison life and staff interaction upon prisoner mental health. Throughout this emotive letter it describes the impact that an officer had on the inmate through positive interactions. Through such interaction, the inmate described that they felt like a human being and like they mattered. This description of prison life allowed an insight into the daily routine and showed that when officers in a position of authority treat inmates with respect, this can positively impact behaviour. Through the way that the surroundings of the prison itself were described in this letter, and seeing this through an inmate's perspective, as opposed to that of an academic, this changed the emotive response to such a piece. Discussions within the inmate's letter, around feeling like they were being treated like an animal and the impact of an officer with a positive attitude, created a sympathetic response to the situation they described.

This perspective made me question the overly punitive perspective of punishment, as often seen within the media and public perceptions, due to the influence of media perceptions of inmates built on news values such as violence, where prisoner mental health is often overlooked (Jewkes, 2015). As a student, seminar discussions allowed me to question the sympathy I felt through conversation and the application of theory, such as the rational actor model and concepts surrounding social control. This experience provided a positive opening discussion which expanded my knowledge in critical thinking while exploring sources, and

how to use such feelings of empathy as opposed to sympathy towards such scenarios.

The material surrounding older prisoners, aged 50 or over, was also found to be similarly emotive within my experience. Seminar materials on the growing number of older inmates included a Prison Reform Trust report titled 'Good practice with older people in prison—the views of prison staff' (Cooney & Braggins, 2010). The report was written using surveys of prison staff and raised questions about whether older inmates' care is adequate within prison institutions. Aiming to evaluate and improve care provision it raised discussions around the ethical implications of prisoners ending their life in prison, and the 'double burden' that the care of older prisoners causes within modern-day institutions (Turner et al., 2018). Critically exploring the 'double burden' of older prisoners specifically caused emotional responses, notably when learning that older prisoners are less likely to receive visits from friends and family, which can leave them isolated. Societal projections of older people being more likely to be vulnerable also created feelings of concern linked to me thinking of older people within my life, and how I would personally feel if they were to end their life in such a setting. However, I often found myself forgetting the crimes that inmates may have committed, being aware that high amounts of older inmates are in prison due to sexually related offences, therefore bringing up emotions came as a shock.

Discussions throughout this module with peers on older prisoners were the most dividing, and challenging when keeping an emotional distance. Often arguments held sympathetic undertones of the 'double burden', being met with statistics that showed a significant number of older inmates are in prison due to sexual offences (Turner et al., 2018). This contrast to critically evaluate for and against arguments was further explored through reading the journal 'Ageing and dying in the contemporary neoliberal prison: Exploring the double burden for older prisoners' (Turner et al., 2018). Evaluating and reflecting on the feelings that such sources created, I am now able to effectively balance understanding and emotional distance towards discussions concerning older people in prison.

When discussing researching prisons within the first weeks of the module, a source which I found to be particularly emotive was an

excerpt of a Panorama documentary by the BBC titled 'Behind Bars: Prison Undercover' (von Plomin, 2017). This showed an undercover reporter working as a prison officer within a prison in England, showing body camera footage of their experiences. This documentary highlighted many poignant themes, including how prison officers felt overwhelmed within their role, understaffing and the effects of this on education and work, as well as the impact of privatisation of prison services. However, throughout the video, the overwhelming themes of mental health and intoxication of inmates, through both alcohol and drug use, made this source stand out. Some images created emotional responses unlike those for some of the literature, as it showed the true extent of the issues with illicit substances and mental health within the prison environment, causing a natural sympathetic response.

Through evaluating such feelings towards sources, themes surrounding mental health within the prison environment caused emotive and often sympathetic emotional responses. Watching but being unaware of the crimes committed caused a disconnect with the audience, but also altered the balance between sympathy and empathy. Also, watching and hearing what the prisoners were doing and their feelings, unlike when reading academic materials, further brought to the foreground the 'realness' of the situation. Seminar discussions showed that many other students also found that visual stimulus particularly difficult to watch when keeping an empathetic stance, especially when in relation to mental health. Such emotions felt by the group were evaluated through discussions of available support and schemes currently running within the prison system, which within the source, were not highlighted when faced with the intense emotion shown by inmates. Reflecting on this source specifically, I found this topic leading to the most conflicting emotional response due to popular media perceptions of inmates that often filter into our way of thinking as perpetuated by selected news values, as discussed by Jewkes (2015).

These experiences, aided my critical thinking when evaluating and reflecting upon situations, where balancing sympathy and empathy was particularly difficult. Prior to studying such modules, my emotional response was linked to the portrayal in the media. However, exploring emotions of both sympathy and empathy in the module have been

useful in building a critical standpoint and emotional resilience, which has positive academic impact. Through exploring reflections on those who are seen to be vulnerable within society, such as older inmates or those experiencing a mental health crisis, created the most significant emotional responses, which was further exacerbated when seen visually, heard audibly, and through prisoner voice in written accounts. Through discussions with peers in seminar spaces, topics which were relatable, such as mental health and older people, often created a larger divide in opinion and had undertones of sympathetic and empathetic emotions. Through this reflection, when experiencing such emotional triggers towards materials, I am now more aware of being conscious of sympathetic feelings and would be confident in critically evaluating this in the future.

Conclusion

It was noted at the beginning of this chapter that student attitudes towards people convicted of criminal offences can be polarised, with both punitive and sympathetic attitudes occupying the two extremes of the spectrum. In making a case for the value of establishing an empathetic stance, thus moving away from the potential skew of sympathy, this chapter has drawn upon the student voice to present a case study, from Humphrey's perspective, giving insight into students' approaches to the mechanics of achieving a more balanced view. While this kind of reflective thinking was not captured in students' assessed work, the lack of attaching such activity to credit-bearing work can be beneficial in focusing it in seminar activities which give students the freedom of engaging in reflective processes as a formative basis for the development of critical thinking. Students were given further opportunity to engage in reflective thinking through weekly directed activities which combined 'read, listen, and watch' approaches to learning materials. This gave students choices in the types of materials they wanted to engage with on a weekly basis diversifying their independent learning experiences within the module. By understanding the processes involved in

developing an empathetic rather than sympathetic viewpoint, conclusions can be drawn about the broader value of reflective practice in criminological learning. There may, for example, be positive implications here for student engagement whereby students' psychological investment in their learning (see Lawson & Lawson, 2013) broadens engagement to also involve feelings and sense-making, as well as participation in educational activities (Harper & Quaye, 2009). The development of such skills can contribute to students' development both academically and personally, enabling them to consider their own position in their interaction with the world around them and the people they may encounter in their personal and professional lives in the future.

Encouraging the sympathy/empathy debate in criminological teaching practice can enhance students' ability to think critically and creatively, enabling them to unlock their intellectual potential in ways they may not have done previously. As noted earlier in the chapter, researchers are doing this in the field by openly discussing their emotions when reflecting on research processes and the same practice can be conducted in the classroom. Beyond the case study included in this chapter, student outcomes on the module in question have frequently seen the achievement of higher grades which, in part, could be attributed to the way they are encouraged to scrutinise their own thinking as well as the arguments presented to them in academic literature, which results in criticality and creativity in their assessed work.

To conclude, when studying the emotive criminological topics, students will encounter numerous instances whereby they are faced with the sympathy/empathy challenge. In identifying this, educators should harness this opportunity to openly discuss the challenge with students in a transparent and supportive way to facilitate the enhancement of their creative thought.

Top Tips: Teaching an Emotive Discipline

- Be open with students by discussing your own personal challenges when balancing empathy and sympathy.

- Openly discuss and deconstruct with students the sympathy/empathy balance as a core part of the wider teaching delivery process.
- Encourage students to utilise models of reflection. This will enable them to consider how they are processing and critically analysing learning materials.
- Identify opportunities to bring lived-experience voice into teaching and learning through materials such as letters, blogs, and podcasts.
- Encourage students to confidently acknowledge discomfort when their emotions are challenged during learning.

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