

Hello, I would like to talk about something I have never discussed, education in prison. Not an education in prison life or what its like to be here. For the 1st time in my almost 26 yrs I have been given a chance to take a college class. I am baffled that I was chosen. So this class is a Sociology course. 12 prisoners, most of us serving life without parole, were selected after answering questions and writing a short essay. We are paired with a fantastic professor from Bucknell University and 8 young ladies who are all in college. Let me tell you, I was super excited to be chosen. Now I am worried. These college kids are so smart. They have amazing note taking skills, great memories, they are so intelligent, I am now worried I don't belong in this class. We have read 2 books so far, To kill a Mockingbird and Invisible Child. The 1st book put me to sleep but the 2nd book, its a true story written by a New York Times investigative reporter Andrea Elliott. Its a great story about Dasani Coates and her family. She is a child. Google her and read the articles. But let me tell you about the young ladies. These kids are so outgoing and smart, it makes you nervous. I'm a 47 yr old man who is supposed to know stuff but in this class, I feel inadequate. Like I'm not good enough. In prison educational opportunities are rare. Most people do not get this chance. This program is part of an amazing program nationwide called Inside-Out. The Inside-Out program puts college kids in prisons all over America together with a small number of prisoners and a professor to learn together. It's not about prison or learning about prison, it's what the kids are taking in their real life college experience. I applaud these young adults for being brave enough to take this course. I am overwhelmed with just 1 class while they have many more to do besides just this 1 class. I am so very impressed because I don't have the time to finish the work in 1 week yet they have many classes and they finish the work. But education in prison is almost nonexistent. In Pennsylvania you can earn up to a GED but you're not taught like in school, you're given a book and you can learn at your own pace and you must teach yourself. But after that, you're pretty much done with school. You can take a few different vocational courses like carpentry or custodial maintenance or electrician, but these are just basic courses and there is little actual hands on work, most of it you just learn from a book. So I just wanted to say publicly to Bucknell University, Thank you. I am overwhelmed, I am worried I will fail, I am challenged, and I am given a chance to learn. Something I have not been given a chance to do in 26 yrs. So to professor Karen and all of the young women who are brave and smart enough to enter this prison weekly and take this class with us, help us learn together, Kirah, Dora, Zoey, Maya, Izzy, Caroline, Sammie,

Sochie (I did not spell her name right so I am sorry Flower) I say thank you. Thank you for being brave enough to enter a prison when you didn't have to and be so focused on working with us and making it seem like I belong, thank you. I do not know if any of these young ladies will ever see this but if they do, know that this educational experience is not normal in here. As out in the world you can attend college, in here we are usually denied education. I wish you all luck in college and in life and with how smart these young ladies are, I am sure they will have amazing lives. In here, we will continue to fight for more and better education. I am always available for any questions on this or at my gmail: robertpezzeca@gmail.com

Take care and thank you always. Rob, Prison Dad

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.