

## Impact case study (REF3b)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Liverpool
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 32 - Philosophy
<b>Title of case study:</b> The Lyceum Project
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p><i>The Lyceum Project</i> is an original programme, introduced in 2012 and led by Vassilopoulou, disseminating and further developing departmental research in philosophical pedagogy with the aim to positively impact on children’s wellbeing. Our distinctive methodology for teaching philosophy, applicable to both curricular and extra-curricular contexts, promotes self-reflection, creativity, rationality, and cultural engagement, all decisive factors in shaping children’s self-understanding, experiences, values, and aspirations. This case study describes the programme’s impact (February 2012 – July 2013) on children’s wellbeing, by capturing changes effected in (a) <i>subjective</i> wellbeing indicators with respect to the national baseline, especially self-esteem and life satisfaction, and (b) <i>objective</i> wellbeing indicators, especially educational provision, policy, and practice. Beneficiaries include schoolchildren and families, teachers and museum educationalists.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Academic research in philosophical pedagogy conducted by Clark (Liverpool 1984-2009), McGhee (Liverpool 1987-2010) and Vassilopoulou (Liverpool since 2007), published in 4 journal articles and 4 chapters in edited collections (1996-2010), argues that the teaching of philosophy is a learning process not focusing exclusively on the cultivation of analytic or critical thinking, but also on value and character-development by fostering self-reflection, creative understanding, and reflective cultural engagement, leading to the transformation of learners and their lives. The specific insights of this research that underpin the <i>Lyceum Project</i> methodology and resources are: (i) the key role of classical techniques of self-understanding in promoting philosophical inquiry and self-reflection as a means for normative self-realisation, (Vassilopoulou #6, McGhee #4, Clark #1), (ii) the constitutive role of metaphor and story-telling in learning, and the pedagogical significance of encouraging young learners to engage creatively with pervasive metaphors embedded in contemporary cultures (including artworks) thereby prompting questioning and fresh re-evaluation of cultural stereotypes, (Vassilopoulou #7&amp;8, Clark #2&amp;3). This further leads to the empowerment of young persons and their integration rather than assimilation in contemporary multicultural societies (McGhee, #5). The research findings that inform the <i>Lyceum</i> methodology distinguish it from previous methodologies for introducing philosophy to children that concentrate primarily on critical enquiry skills, without forging explicit links between these and personal development, social integration, or the appropriation of cultural heritage.</p> <p>The motivation for the development of a teaching methodology on the basis of this research is provided by an issue of acute concern for the educational and cultural sectors: as illustrated by the results of the <a href="#">2007 UN survey on the wellbeing of children</a> in 21 economically advanced countries. The UK startlingly ranks last, with “Educational Wellbeing”, “Family Relationships” and “Subjective Wellbeing”, identified among the weaker dimensions. The <i>Lyceum</i> methodology responds directly to this by pursuing, with the help of the conceptual tools outlined above, the link between children’s subjective and educational wellbeing both <b>(1) within the school curriculum</b> and <b>(2) in extra-curricular contexts:</b></p> <p><b>(1) Curricular: <i>Philosophy and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)</i>.</b> Since 2010, PSHE has become a compulsory part of the national curriculum in recognition of its importance for “promoting well-being” and “developing capabilities children and young people need to flourish in life and at work” (<a href="#">‘PSHE Education – Briefing for voluntary and community organisations’</a>). However, a recent comprehensive mapping survey funded by the Department for Education and conducted by Formby <i>et al.</i>, (2011) highlights a recognised need for substantial development in PSHE’s delivery method and resources, and identifies a lack of clear links between personal development and learning broadly defined (Report DFE-RR080, <a href="#">‘PSHE Education: A mapping study of the prevalent models of delivery and their effectiveness’</a>). This strand’s objective is to contribute methodology and resources to the teaching of PSHE in order to address the above problems.</p> <p><b>(2) Extra-Curricular: <i>Philosophy and Art for children and families</i>.</b> While in recent years museums and galleries have been developing a wealth of educational programmes, there is a clear absence of self-reflective methodology when engaging young children and their families with</p>

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art. This strand's objective is to enhance the current educational provision of museums and galleries by creating resources tailor-made to the institutions' collections, sharing best practice in staff training sessions, as well as running in situ workshops for children and families by introducing them to a philosophically-informed mode of engagement with art that could be reenacted during their independent visits to museums. The methodology and resources were further developed through participatory research activities: consultation meetings with external partners and a practitioner-conference led to a refining and retuning of our research.

The development of the *Lyceum's* pedagogy along these two strands makes it distinctive in that its relevance is not limited to the teaching of philosophy as a distinct subject, but extends to the teaching of other subjects that are already part of the curriculum and systematically reaches beyond the classroom into the space of art institutions.

### 3. References to the research

#### Peer-reviewed Publications:

1. Clark, S. R. L., 'Thinking about How and Why to Think', *Philosophy* 71 (1996), 385–403.
2. Clark, S. R. L., 'Going Naked into the Shrine: Herbert, Plotinus and the Constructive Metaphor', in D. Hedley & S. Hutton, eds., *Platonism at the Origins of Modernity* (Springer: Dordrecht 2008), 45–61. [RAE2008 output]
3. Clark, S. R. L., 'Therapy and Theory Reconstructed', *Philosophy as Therapy: Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplementary* 66, 2010, eds. C. Carlisle & J. Ganeri (Cambridge: University Press, 2010), 83–102.
4. McGhee, M., 'Wisdom and Virtue: Or, what do philosophers teach?', *Teaching Philosophy* (Continuum, 2008) 23–37.
5. McGhee, M., 'The Philosopher as Stranger', in M. Joy, *After Appropriation: Explorations in Intercultural Philosophy and Religion* (University of Calgary Press 2011), pp. 25-39.
6. Vassilopoulou, P., 'Plotinus on Teaching and Learning Philosophy', *Women: Cultural Review* 14 (2003), 130–43. [RAE2008 output]
7. Vassilopoulou, P. 'Sages of Old, Artists Anew', *The Classical Bulletin* vol. 81.1 (2005), 35-50. [RAE2008 output]
8. Vassilopoulou, P., 'Teaching Philosophy Through Metaphor', in A. Kenkmann ed., *Teaching Philosophy* (Continuum, 2008), 116–33.

#### Research Grants:

**Clark** was awarded a *Major Research Fellowship* by the Leverhulme Trust (£100K, 2003–8); #2 and #3 emerged from this research. **Vassilopoulou** was funded by the Academy of Finland, holding a full-time Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship, 2007–8 (€40K) as part of the *Symbol, Metaphor, and Apophysis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* project (€500K); #6 emerged from this research. #7 was funded by the Leverhulme Trust, through a grant awarded to **Clark** on *Constructive Metaphor in Plotinus* (2002-3, £40K), under which she held an 18-month full-time Post-Doctoral Fellowship with the University of Liverpool. On the basis of the success of the above research, Vassilopoulou was invited to be an external expert for the €16m EU-funded [Open Discovery Space project](#) (2012-2015). She was awarded an AHRC Cultural Engagement Fund (£10K, Feb-May 2013) to appoint a post-doc researcher who contributed to the development of the methodology and resources of the *Lyceum*.

### 4. Details of the impact

#### Delivery

In order to benefit users and lead to impact, the underpinning research was disseminated and further developed with special focus on its practical applications through (a) the training of undergraduate philosophers in the tenets of the underpinning research and the delivery of workshops and lessons to young people; (b) the presentation of the methodology at practitioner-conferences; (c) freely accessible electronic resources.

(a) In partnership with Liverpool College and Liverpool Biennial, Vassilopoulou trained students (through an accredited undergraduate module and a volunteering scheme) in classical

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techniques of self understanding and the incorporation of metaphor and story telling into teaching, to deliver Philosophy and PSHE lessons to a selected group of KS3 pupils during a three week placement (2012-13) and facilitate free Philosophy and Art workshops for children in KS1&2 (across the region) and their families as part of the official programme of *Liverpool Biennial 2012*.

- (b) The methodology was further disseminated through presentations at practitioner conferences at which teachers and educationalists were present, such as [Teaching the Teaching of Philosophy with Children](#) (Greenwich, May 2012) and [Educating Wellbeing](#) (Liverpool, October 2012), fostering comparisons and evaluation of different methodologies and best-practice sharing.
- (c) Vassilopoulou's collaboration with the EU-funded Open Discovery Space (ODS) project led to the dissemination of research to the ODS's consortium, including beneficiaries such as Intrasoft, NGOs, and UNESCO and a network of 4,000 European school communities. We designed interactive learning objects that exemplify our methodology and educational content, which became available to all ODS users, thereby also facilitating knowledge sharing between school communities, educationalists and policy makers at international level. This, then, expanded and will continue to expand both the significance and reach of the *Lyceum's* impact beyond the directly targeted local communities. Moreover, international dissemination was also achieved through the [Lyceum Project website](#), which between April and July 2013 had over 2100 visitors (15% of them international).

### Measuring Impact

#### (i) Changes in Subjective Wellbeing Indicators:

In order to measure the impact on improving the subjective wellbeing of pupils taking the PSHE lessons informed by our methodology, we collaborated with *New Philanthropy Capital (NPC)*, a consultancy think-tank, which has developed the [Wellbeing Measure Tool](#) to analyse and evaluate young persons' subjective wellbeing. We conducted this survey on 110 participating Liverpool College pupils in Years 7 and 9 before and after our three-week Philosophy and PSHE course in February 2012. In terms of significance, the results demonstrate that the project significantly increased *self-esteem*, defined as "a child's appraisal of his or her own worth [...] closely linked with self-confidence [...] important for a healthy, happy life", and *life-satisfaction*, "a global measure of a child's overall happiness or satisfaction where the child rates his or her life". In particular, the average *self-esteem* score of the group relative to the national base line increased from 51.4% before the intervention, to 59.4% after, while *life-satisfaction* increased from 49.5% to 55%. With regards to *self-esteem*, the results were statistically significant to 99.6% confidence, while with *life-satisfaction* to 95.5% confidence. According to NPC, this means that we can be very confident (99.6% and 95.5% certain) that the changes are not just due to chance.

Wishing to correlate subjective wellbeing with end-users' evaluation of the academic merits of the project, we gathered responses from the 110 participating pupils to an anonymous questionnaire developed in consultation with NPC. The results demonstrated that 83% agree or strongly agree that the lessons were interesting and 74% agree or strongly agree that they want to have similar lessons in the future. Given the statistical significance and correlation of these results, the next priority for the project was to ensure that changes in the subjective wellbeing of this target group would inform changes in objective wellbeing, namely, educational policy and practice, thus expanding the significance of the project and its reach to national and international users.

#### (ii) Changes in Objective wellbeing indicators:

The impact was also captured by changes in educational policy and practice in schools and cultural institutions, further supported by testimonials, all attesting to an increase in objective wellbeing via the enrichment of young persons' educational opportunities for self-reflection, dialogue and cultural engagement. These changes provide the mechanism to ensure that the changes in subjective wellbeing evidenced above will be long-lasting and sustainable.

- (a) **Schools:** In September 2012, Liverpool College established the Philosophy and PSHE lessons as an annual programme, and introduced *Arete*, a unique programme replacing Religious Studies: its educational priorities (as a space for reflection), the topics it covers (conscience, virtue, community) and its mode of delivery were the direct effect of teachers' exposure to the *Lyceum Project* pedagogy and the student-demand reflected in the survey results above for 'similar lessons in the future'. Furthermore, H. Broekman, Principal of Liverpool College, comments, "The Philosophy students who teach at our school have provided intellectual rigour

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and a lot of creativity. They have improved the school and enthused our pupils". D. McLaughlin, Liverpool School Improvement Team EYFS, states: "This philosophical approach made me reflect on my planned work ... will use it to get practitioners to reflect as they work with children". With reference to our electronic resources accessed through ODS, M. Fragaki, Headteacher and trainer at the ICT Institute, Ministry of Education, Greece, writes: "they are unique and stimulating, I have strongly recommended them for use in the Citizenship lessons taught in my school ... I will also be using these learning objects and ideas in the teacher-training programme I lead". Dr A. Abu-Dayyeh, member of the UNESCO committee for teaching philosophy to children in four continents, has used our resources in schools in Jordan and identifies the Lyceum Project's contribution to UNESCO's aims as 'empower[ing] young people to integrate in multicultural societies'.

- (b) **Cultural Institutions:** As a result of the formal inclusion of the Philosophy and Art workshops in the Biennial's official programme of events (2012), a number of new partners in the local area came forward to be involved with the developing methodology. Hence, the initial sessions led not only to further collaboration with Liverpool Biennial, but also the production of new tailor-made workshops for The Bluecoat, National Museums Liverpool, FACT, and METAL. These new opportunities were developed under an AHRC Cultural Engagement award (2/2013-5/2013) with additional funding from the School of the Arts. The partnerships led to the inclusion of the *Lyceum Project's* methodology in the educational programmes of the above institutions, thereby changing their practice in this regard. Furthermore, the contribution of the *Lyceum Project* to their educational programmes was co-developed in consultation meetings with these leading institutions, and input from the meetings, as well as self-assessment of the project by the AHRC post-doctoral researcher (February-May 2013), fed back into the refinement and development of the methodology, so that it best reflected end-users needs. A national conference co-hosted by The Bluecoat (June 2013) brought together theorists, educators, curators, policy makers and artists and allowed for co-ordination of educational strategies, better understanding of user requirements, and increased awareness of the links between education and children wellbeing. Further evidence of the project's contribution to local educational programmes is given by the CEO Liverpool Biennial, who comments on volunteers and staff from the Department: "They bring an informed and intelligent approach to their work and play a vital role in the delivery of the Biennial" and from a parent's point of view R. Clark, states that she will "definitely guide her children's engagement with art differently as a result of this workshop"; and agrees that our workshop enabled her children to reflect more on what art means to them and "helped them learn the importance of others' opinions".

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. ['The results of NPC's Well-being Measure for the Lyceum Project'](#) and ['The Lyceum Project: Survey March 2012'](#) are reports/surveys demonstrating the impact on children's wellbeing cited in section 4: increase in subjective wellbeing indicators correlated with academic merits.
2. The Principal of the Liverpool College (LC) can be contacted to corroborate testimonials in section 4, demonstrating impact on the LC's students and educational policy.
3. The Head of Partnerships National Museums Liverpool (NML) can be contacted to corroborate contributions to NML's education and participation programme.
4. A parent can be contacted to corroborate testimonials quoted in section 4, demonstrating the impact that our philosophy workshops had on her children's engagement with art.
5. The Head teacher of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Primary School of Peania (Athens) and trainer at the ICT Institute at the Greek Ministry of Education can be contacted to corroborate testimonials quoted in section 4, demonstrating the international significance and reach of our learning resources.
6. The member of the UNESCO Committee for teaching philosophy to children has provided a statement to corroborate the project's contribution to UNESCO's scheme to teach philosophy to school children in the Arab world, Asia, Africa and South America. It also verifies claims regarding how the project's resources were used in schools in Jordan.