

## PgCert Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication

### Action Research Project Ethical Enquiry Form

Participant name: Shade Abdul

Cohort: 3

Tutor name [delete as appropriate]: Liz Bunting / Rachel Marsden

#### 1. What is your research question?

How might co-production be embedded into a socially engaged pedagogy?

I teach BA Vertical Design Studio in BA Architecture with another tutor. The site that my co-tutor and I have chosen is Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham. The estate has a socio-political history relevant to Black relations in the UK, and whilst there have been shifts in the demographic of its residents, it remains very diverse.

My research aims to explore three pedagogical approaches for framing a socially engaged practice. The first is a set of introductory tasks inviting students to consider their identities and then share these with others within a small group and later to the entire studio. The second is a co-produced manifesto that sets out the principles for how students would approach the site, its residents and other collaborators. The third approach is locating our design studio on Broadwater Farm Estate for the majority of the first semester. The pedagogical 'moves' take place in the order set out above as a way of preparing students for a structured situated learning outside of the university.

The participants of my research include different three stakeholder groups, which are the students, my co-tutor, and Haringey Council and other external collaborators. The teaching is being delivered with an emphasis on 'collaboration' where everyone has something to contribute to a shared experience. In a teaching/learning setting, this way of working with students is influenced by the work of Paulo Friere (Freire *et al.*, 2018) and bell hooks (hooks, 1994). It also draws on my own architectural practice where co-production with residents/users is central to the design development. As a studio, we extend 'collaboration' further to include our external collaborators who will be hosting us on the estate.

The research is also being carried out in the first year that BA Architecture 'Ethical Guidelines for Socially Engaged Design Studios' has been introduced, which I had contributed to developing. The guidelines includes approaches for exploring ethical ways of engaging with communities outside of the university that is reciprocal and avoids one-sided forms of knowledge extraction. Further to this, I think ethical and collaborative engagement is a key method for decolonising the university by valuing voices outside its structures. It is this, 'decolonising the curriculum', that I am in essence exploring through these three pedagogical approaches.

#### 2. Who will be providing you with information to help you answer your question, and how will you approach and/or select them?

The students, my co-tutor and external collaborators (Haringey Council and Wheelytots, a community group on the estate) that will be helping to answer the research question.

I will approach each stakeholder as follows:

**Students**

The students have yet to be informed about the research as the three approaches have been introduced as part of their learning process, prioritising their needs as they settle into the academic year. I plan to introduce the research as a '*Situated Practice: Co-producing a socially engaged urban pedagogy*' on Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> of November and complete on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November, leaving the last week of November to process the data and December to finalise as a presentation document. The research will be introduced through a morning briefing held as a studio discussion, following which further details about the research will be shared by an information sheet and consent form. The students will be provided the option to participate on the '*Situated Practice: Co-producing a socially engaged urban pedagogy*' research or to opt out.

The students that provide their consent will be asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire, so that all the students are provided with the opportunity to feedback their thoughts on the three pedagogical approaches introduced to the studio's teaching practice. By anonymising the questionnaire, I hope that the students feel comfortable to express their views and therefore, draw the participation of a cross-section of students including those that are introverted. I will let the students know at the end of the questionnaire that there will be a focus group which they can choose to participate in and where they can expand as a group on their responses. I anticipate that the focus group might draw extroverted students. However, the focus group might allow the '*reflection*' element of the Action Research to be done with the students as collaborators in the process to refine the on-site (on Broadwater Farm Estate) experience. The final method that I will use to gather responses from the students is through observation which will be quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data will come from the studio register which holds a record of attendance. This will give some indication of the level of enthusiasm the students have regarding the relocation of the teaching space to the estate. The qualitative data will come from general field notes taken through tutorials, capturing students exploration of the site. The data recorded via observation will be less rigorous than the questionnaire as it will place my interpretations at its centre rather than the students responses. Also, the data from the register will not have a baseline established from which the on-site teaching could be compared against the university design studio teaching due to the time constraints in which the ARP must be completed by.

I recognise that no method is '*perfect*' where perfect would be capturing all types of students' voices and positionalities in the study, and no data analysis is neutral. However, I think a mixed method approach for collecting data from students who wish to participate will be sufficient to gain a broader understanding of the students' experience of these three teaching approaches.

I will also be using photography to record the studio's activities whilst on site.

### **Co-tutor**

My co-tutor will be asked to complete a consent form which will provide details about the research in advance of collecting his views for inclusion in the research project.

I would like to use a conversational approach rather than an interview given the familiarity and working relationship that has been established. However, I also recognise that a conversation might not uncover all the reflections that time allows the space for. We currently use emails and WhatsApp to plan in between our teaching sessions. I would like to use a different app to these, so that the conversation can be taken outside of our day-to-day methods, with collaborative tools such as Miro. I would start with some post-it notes to start the conversation and allow my co-tutor to drop in as and when they want with their initial responses and perhaps later coming back with further reflections or follow-up to further questions that I may have.

### **External Collaborators**

The studio's external collaborators will be asked to complete a consent forms which again provides details about the research in advance of collecting their views for inclusion in the research project.

As part of an ethical engagement with our collaborators, I have to remain aware that their time is valuable, and therefore need to consider a method that provides the answers whilst not taking up too much of their time. 5 questions sent via email will be my approach. There have been some conversational exchanges via email which have taken place concerning access to a space that the studio can use and what the studio might 'give back' as a reciprocal exchange. I will continue this approach as it has allowed open conversations about expectations, reciprocity and mutual benefits beyond one-sided knowledge extraction.

○ **What will you be asking participants to do?**

**Students**

The students will be asked the following:

- To complete a consent form which includes the option to opt-out of the research entirely or at any time during before the end of the academic year when the research will be finalised. A record will be kept to monitor which students are participating in the study, which activity they are participating in and stages when they opted out of the research.
- Students that provide their consent will be asked to complete an anonymised questionnaire with 5 questions for each task, and therefore 15 questions in total, through JISC online surveys. The questions will be as follows:

**The Introductory Task**

- How did you find the introductory task as the first exercise for the academic year?
- Why do you think your tutors set that task?
- What did you learn from the process?
- How might your tutors improve the task for next year's students?
- Do you have any other feedback you would like to share?

**The Manifesto**

- How did you find the process of collectively producing learning material together?
- Why do you think the tutors opted to develop the manifesto as a co-production activity?
- What were the positives and negatives that you observed with this approach?
- Would you be interested in co-producing more learning materials and explain the reasoning behind your answer?
- Do you have any other feedback on the exercise that you would like to share?

**Situated Learning on Broadwater Farm Estate**

- How are you finding the relocation of teaching to site?
- Do you feel that you have what you need to be based regularly on site?
- Why do you think your tutors have proposed this as a core element of the studio?
- Would you be interested in additional teaching on site during Term 2 and explain the reasoning behind your answer?
- Do you have any other feedback you would like to share?

The focus group will ask these same questions to allow for the responses to expand through a collective '*thinking*' and '*developing*' process.

## **Co-tutor**

My co-tutor will be asked to the following:

- To complete a consent form that lets them know how the information will be used and to provide an opportunity to review how it has been captured ahead of wider sharing, so that they can check whether it is an accurate reflection of what they had said.
- To hold an informal conversation (semi-structured interview) in Miro that provides a different electronic space outside the normal channels that we use to plan our teaching, and to provide the time and space for the conversation to evolve. The Miro board will start with this prompts:

### **The Introductory Task**

- How did you find this task as a way to start the academic year?
- Where there aspects that could have been improved?
- What were your observations during the delivery?
- Is it a task that you think we could bring back next year? Please let me know your reasoning behind your answers?

### **The Manifesto**

- How did you find this task as a way of preparing for students ahead of the site visit?
- Where there aspects that could have been improved?
- What were your observations during the delivery?
- Is it a task that you think we could bring back next year? Please let me know your reasoning behind your answers?

### **Situated Learning on Broadwater Farm Estate**

- How have you found being based on the estate so far?
- What are your thoughts about being based on site for most of the semester?
- Are there any areas that we should improve or reconsider at this point onwards or for next academic year?
- What has been your observations concerning students' experience?

## **External Collaborators**

External collaborators will be asked to complete the following:

- To complete a consent form that lets them know how the information will be used and to provide an opportunity to review how it has been captured ahead of wider sharing, so that they can check whether it is an accurate reflection of what they had said.
- To ask questions over email. The questions will be as follows:

### **Situated Learning on Broadwater Farm Estate**

- How have you found our studio being based on Broadwater Farm Estate so far?
- What are your thoughts about being based on site for most of the semester?
- Are there any areas that we should improve or reconsider at this point onwards or for next academic year?
- What has been your observations concerning students' experience?

- Do you have any other feedback you would like to share?

### 3. How will you get informed consent from these participants?

#### Information sheet

I will provide an information sheet to all participants about the study explaining the purpose of the research, including the question that the study aims to answer. It will provide information about the methods that will be used (as described above) and the type of data that will be collected, which will include qualitative, quantitative, audio recordings and photographs. It will provide information about how the data will be used once collected, how it will be stored and for how long.

The information will introduce '*Participatory Action Research*' (PAR), emphasising that the collaborative processes already carried out through some exercises will extend to reflections on those activities, with the aim of exploring how they can be improved to support the ongoing experience of the students, my co-tutor and the studio's collaborators. PAR will be defined as a research method that places participants as co-researchers where all parties are contributing to the research process and learning together (Lenette, 2022).

It will offer participants confidentiality and anonymity, ensuring that the distinctions between the two are explained. It will briefly summarise that '*confidentiality*' relates to the extent of how the information they provide will be disclosed to others, whilst '*anonymity*' relates to ensuring that they cannot be identified from the information once disclosed (Sim, Waterfield, 2019). Consent will be sought regarding the use of photos or audio recordings alongside the option for participants to remain anonymous.

It will provide information on how the research will be shared with others and in what format.

#### Consent form

A consent form will be used to obtain participants informed consent. It will refer to the Information Sheet so that participants are informed about the project before completing. It will request their signature following which I will countersign the document. They will be provided an electronic copy of the countersigned form.

The focus groups will include additional measures due to the fact that the discussions cannot be entirely controlled, so ensuring that the study results in no harm cannot be guaranteed (Sim and Waterfield, 2019). Although, there are ethical risks in using a focus group as a method, the potential benefits include expanded responses that can open the space for collective reflection and co-production to redesign the three activities. There will be a verbal briefing held separately to the Information Sheet and Consent Form about how the focus group will be conducted including number of participants and the questions that will be asked and provide the option for participants to opt out before the focus group is held (Sim and Waterfield, 2019). During the discussion, I will make sure to remain alert to how participants are responding and to ensure that everyone is provided the opportunity to contribute. After the discussion, I will provide a debrief of summary of discussions and check that participants are in agreement about the information collected from the discussion (Sim and Waterfield, 2019).

### 4. What potential risks to the interests of participants do you foresee and what steps will you take to minimise those risks?

We will be hosted by Wheelytots, one of our collaborators, in the Broadwater Farm Estate Community Centre and in the Residents Association Room (RA Room). Both spaces have different qualities: the community will be shared with residents where cooked food is provided alongside a foodbank, whilst the RA Room is a space that can be used solely by the design studio. As we will be off university grounds, I will familiarise myself with the UAL's health & safety requirements, including the Accident and Incident Report Form for review by UAL Health & Safety Advisor in the case of an accident (UAL, 2022). In terms of general comfort, my co-tutor and I have discussed the studio's requirements regarding desks, chairs, seating, heating, lighting and power points to which students can plug-in their laptops.

There is a risk that students might find being based on Broadwater Farm Estate for most of the semester an uncomfortable or unstimulating experience in comparison to the spaces and facilities provided at the university. Student attendance is key to the studio's teaching and learning experience, so relocating the studio outside the university risks students' disengagement. The only way to mitigate this is to ensure that my co-tutor and I consistently clarify the benefits to the students research process that the regular visit and engagement with the site provides. And to embed co-production as part of the studio culture, which I hope will help the students to see themselves as a collective.

Further, my co-tutor and I have established an agreement that ensures that the studio's presence on the estate embeds reciprocity, and avoids one-sided knowledge extraction without any benefits to residents. The agreement has been developed together between my co-tutor and I and our collaborators. It allows students to choose how within the agreed framework they would like to give back to residents, allowing flexibility for the students and therefore, respecting their autonomy. The agreement was also developed in the context of BA Architecture's *'Ethical Guideline for Socially Engaged Studios'*, which offers some advice for how students can engage with a site through an ethical lens.

The *'Manifesto for Engaging with the Site'* which we co-produced as a group is also relevant in regards to supporting students to remain safe by working in groups of minimum three people and to provide a brief summary introducing themselves when approaching residents:

*"I am a design student from the university Central St Martins, and we are researching the Broadwater Farm Estate. I am taking photos and film of the local area to help get to know the area and the stories of local people."*

And to respect residents' responses at all times.

The students will be conducting research to support the development of their speculative projects. This is taking place in the context of an actual redevelopment project of the estate by Haringey Council. The Council has been conducting community engagement for 3/4 years to ensure that the residents' views are at the centre of proposals. With our collaborators, we have agreed that students must be transparent at all times about the speculative nature of their projects and also to remain aware of *'consultation fatigue'* as residents may have grown less willing to engage over time especially if they have participated in many engagement activities concerning the redevelopment of the estate. And also to avoid confusion between the students' speculative projects and Haringey Council's actual project.

##### **5. What potential risks to yourself as the practitioner do you foresee and what steps will you take to minimise those risks?**

The potential risk to myself during the research will be coping emotionally if the students and my co-tutor find it challenging to work from the estate considering how different it will be to learning environments that they are used to. Whilst the BA Architecture portrays racial and social justice in its description, engaging with people is often approached incidentally, if at all in its delivery. How architecture affects racialised communities in urban redevelopment projects is a socio-political issue, and so when the course refers to *'racial and social justice'*, I feel strongly that how tutors teach needs to go beyond the comfortable spaces of the university to really understand the issues and what is at stake for marginalised communities.

As a Black woman proposing a different way of learning to the well-worn paths of architectural pedagogy, maintaining some emotional distance will be required to actively respond to the studio's feedback on the experience.

**6. Does your project involve children or vulnerable adults e.g. a person with a learning disability?**

Delete as appropriate: YES

If yes, describe the extra measures you will put in place to safeguard vulnerable participants:

There is a student in the cohort that has an Individual Support Agreement. I will ensure that she has opportunities to have one-to-ones with me, so she can communicate any feedback she has about the experience. Further to introducing the research to the entire studio verbally initially, I will also hold a one-to-one to allow further discussion about the research. The information sheet and consent form will be presented to meet her ISA. Also, I will remind her that she can also access additional support from UAL if she wishes to talk about the experience outside of the group.

**7. How will you store the information you gather from participants?**

All data collected will be uploaded to a Microsoft OneDrive folder which is encrypted. All information collected where participants have provided consent will be retained for 3 years. I will assign randomly generated numbers to each participant and to the data they provide, so that personal identifiers are separated from data collected. Aside from data collected from the focus group sessions, which would be run as a group activity and therefore difficult to remove individual contributions, the participants will have options to withdraw consent at any time before the research is presented to PG Cert tutors as a completed project (BERA, 2018). Any data which consent has been withdrawn will be destroyed within 48 hours of request.

All data including information sheets and consent forms will be electronic and stored on Microsoft OneDrive, so that when the data is no longer needed, it will be deleted from the OneDrive folder where it has been stored and also from the Trash folder to ensure that it has been permanently deleted (GOV.UK, 2018).

**8. Bibliography**

British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, fourth edition, London. Available at: <https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018> (Accessed: 7 November 2023).

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Lenette, C. (2022) *Participatory action research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Sim, J. and Waterfield, J. (2019) 'Focus group methodology: some ethical challenges', *Quality & quantity*, 53(6), pp. 3003-3022. doi: 10.1007/s11135-019-00914-5.

UAL (2022) *Health and Safety Hub*. Available at:  
<https://canvas.arts.ac.uk/sites/explore/SitePage/42587/health-and-safety-hub> (Accessed: 7 November 2023).

**I confirm my responsibility to deliver the project in accordance with the Code of Practice on Research Ethics of the University of the Arts London (the University). In signing this form I am also confirming that:**

- a) The form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- b) I understand and accept that the ethical propriety of this project may be monitored by the relevant College Research body and/or the University's Research Ethics Sub-Committee.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 9 November 2023

**I support this project and have reviewed it with the participant:**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Rachel Marsden \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 9 November 2023 \_\_\_\_\_