

PgCert Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication

Action Research Project Ethical Enquiry Form

Participant name: Sebastian May

Cohort: 4

Tutor name: Lindsay Jordan

1. What is your research question?

How can I enable a sense of connectedness among creative students through digital storytelling?

The aim of this project is to investigate the power that digital storytelling has in supporting connectedness among students. The study will touch on the power of community and belonging in engaging students in academic activities, and the idea of play as a driver of student engagement. This is based on the idea that connectedness amongst students may support their learning. The results of this study will inform the design of future digital learning activities for students engaged in online learning.

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

As part of my role as Student Experience Lead, I am currently working with 12 student partners who I will invite to take part in this research. Student partners were initially selected for their interest and experience in online learning by the UAL Online team. I will contact them via their UAL email addresses and a dedicated UAL Teams page, providing them with information about the study and giving them an opportunity to put themselves forward. The activity is designed to include as many student partners as possible.

It is important to me, from an ethical point of view, that students can decide for themselves if they wish to take part in the research. They will be able to decide to take part based on their interest in the project and based on their availability. Given that the activity will be in addition to students' academic workloads and other personal commitments, they will also be compensated for their time.

While this relatively small group of students will not be representative of their wider student body, research findings should provide me with sufficient information to review and improve the original design of the activity, and draw out recommendations to be shared with my department, as well as the wider university.

During the design stage of the research, I am also seeking feedback from peers and colleagues on the quality of the exercise that I have designed; and have created opportunities for me to revise the exercise before launching it with students.

The activity also has the potential to be re-run with different students in the future.

3. What will you be asking participants to do?

Initially, I will ask participants if they are interested to participate, giving them an overview of the research project and activities that are involved.

If so, participants will then be asked to formally consent to taking part in the research project, which includes a storytelling-based learning activity and a project evaluation. This will include:

- 10 minutes: exploring and adding to storytelling elements on Padlet
- 10 minutes: exploring a story map on Miro
- 45 minutes: writing / producing a short story
- 5 minutes: finalising and publishing a short story on Miro
- 5 minutes: completing a short project evaluation

As part of the activity evaluation, participants will be asked to answer a number of questions by anonymously completing a Microsoft form questionnaire.

Draft questions:

-Start-

Page 1

Generally, it is important to me to be part of a community of students.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

The activity made me want to be part of a community of students.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I felt like the activity allowed me to contribute to and shape a community of students.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Page 2

The storytelling activity made me feel connected to some / any of the other students.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain: [Open-ended question]

There were elements of the activity that made me feel disconnected from some / any of the other students.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain: [Open-ended question]

The playfulness of the activity discouraged me from participating in the activity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain: [Open-ended question]

Page 3

I felt like I was able to tell my own story as part of the activity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I felt like I was able to express myself freely as part of the activity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Page 4

It felt easy for me to take part in this activity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

The learning activity felt fully accessible to me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

The learning activity felt inclusive to me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Page 5

In 2-5 sentences, please describe your experience of participating in this activity and how it made you feel. Feel free to expand on any of your previous answers.: [Open-ended question]

-Ends-

I will also reflect on any observations from running the activities, for example by monitoring students' queries or questions raised in chats and platforms.

Much of my role as Student Experience Lead focuses on the design of student experiences that are accessible and inclusive, often facilitated through the use of digital technologies. It is therefore important to me to create a research project that aligns with these values, and I have designed the project to be run asynchronously to allow for more flexible and accessible participation in the activity. This means that students can participate when it is most suitable to them (rather than having to be available when I am available, for example to join a live activity or live interview).

4. How will you get informed consent from these participants?

Participants will receive a full briefing and participant information before being asked to consent to taking part in the activity. The activity itself and the evaluation are designed to be anonymous, unless students actively choose to disclose any personal information or data, in which case this information will be redacted in final reports and presentations. The platforms that I will use as part of the activities (Padlet, Miro, Microsoft Forms) can be set up so they do not show any personal information to other participants.

It will be made clear to participants that the stories they share as part of the activity may be shared in materials such as a final presentations and reports. Final materials will also be shared with students.

Students will be able to withdraw themselves from the research at any point until two weeks after the activity has been completed, and this will be made clear in the research information and consent form. This will not stop them from participating in the activity itself.

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

The activity will come with a trigger warning, as some of the stories that other students might choose to share could be triggering or evoke strong feelings and emotions from other participants. Because the activity will not take place live, there is a risk that I may not be able to respond to students immediately. I will outline a clear process and information for students to get support, using myself as a key contact as well as other university support services that may be able to support them. As Arts Temps, student partners also have access to support through the Arts Temps team.

Through the storytelling activity, student partners may inadvertently disclose personal information. I will make clear to participants that the intended audience for the study will be UAL internally, and that non-essential information will be removed or altered to ensure participants are not recognisable. I will also highlight to participants that the main outcome of the study will be a presentation, which may highlight some of the content student partners have submitted.

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

I might find triggering some of the content that students choose to share as part of the activity. I will be able to consult with colleagues to gain support as and when needed. I am also planning to set aside additional time to reflect on interactions with students and any content they may share.

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

Delete as appropriate: NO

8. How will you store the information you gather from participants?

All of the research data will be kept securely on my UAL drive, which is only accessible by me. Participant consent forms will be saved separately from any of the activity submissions and so there will not be any links between students' personal data and their contributions. Any final report data will be redacted of personal information.

I am planning to keep relevant personal data for at least one year, in case I need to contact participants about their contributions. I am planning to keep raw data for at least two years, for the purpose of returning to this to help me inform my personal academic practice short-term.

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:

Sebastian May

Date: 25 October 2023

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____