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## RESEARCH

# Deprivation Strategies: Increasing Public Understanding of Vision Impairment Using Performative Pedagogy

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This paper theorises, articulates and demonstrates how performative pedagogies can be employed to engage participants (both sighted and non-sighted) with haptic, gustatory, olfactory and aural sensorial-immersive encounters as part of an ongoing mixed-method project *You Don't Need Eyes to See You Need Vision* that aims to develop pedagogic practices, enhance learning experiences for students who are visually impaired and improve public awareness of the need for new practices. Using performative pedagogy and 'deprivation strategies', this project has opened up new ways of thinking about how we engage our bodies (for both sighted and non-sighted persons) to experience a multitude of senses beyond the visual, carving out revised ways of thinking about bodily affect in space and time. In recognition of this work, I was a recipient of the University of Lincoln Best Practice Award in Promoting Equality in 2017.

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**Keywords:** access; affect; the body; occularcentricity; performative pedagogy; visual impairment

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## Introduction: Important Realisations

What does it mean to experience the world when you are visually impaired? My current research highlights and challenges a dominant approach in teaching and learning in the arts, the default reliance on the assumed primacy of the visual. Developing an interest in sensory pedagogies, this research aligns with the interests of a community of active critical thinkers and doers from within and beyond the academic community (teachers, scholars, artists and practitioners) including Richie Manu, Lucy Algar, Kevin J. Hunt and Fo Hamblin and Nathan Geering whose approaches to multisensory teaching and learning can be described, in part, as

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pivoting against what Martin Jay refers to as 'ocularcentriity' (Jay, 1993: 3). By using performative pedagogies to generate haptic, gustatory, olfactory and aural sensorial-immersive encounters in the classroom, students do not need to 'see' in order to have a meaningful learning experience. Such a pedagogic approach connects with 'the affective turn' in the arts (Seigworth and Gregg, 2010), as explored in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogies, Performativity* (2003) for example. This discussion around the relationship between texture and affect is central to the importance of 'textural perception,' (Sedgwick, 2003: 13). It also informs attempts in theatre to challenge theatre from an ocularcentric perspective, exploring how theatre practitioners seek to engage audiences in sensorial encounters (Alston and Welton, 2017). These attempts formed the basis for panel discussions during *Theatre in the Dark* held at the University of Surrey in 2015 and more recently, *Theatre Sense* – a one day symposium that took place at Battersea Arts Centre (BAC), London in 2018 with contributions by Adam Alston, Lynne Kendrick, David Shearing, Martin Welton, Melanie Wilson and others.

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The ubiquity of light within social life [...] we want to see everything with total punishing clarity. A retreat into darkness could be seen as a reaction to that but of a profound need to hide away, to think differently, to be invisible (Welton, 2018)

Beginning with organiser Martin Welton's reminder of 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Playing in the Dark* season at BAC that took place in 1998 with seminal productions by such companies as Sound and Fury, Theatre Complicite and Primitive Silence and how these foregrounded a 'growing number of theatre makers making use of darkness' (Welton, 2018), he referred to the potential of 'the theatrical sensorial' for carving out 'new possibilities for audience imagination' (ibid.).

In 2015, I realised how visual my teaching was owing to the first presence of a visually impaired student in my class. This has led me to explore how teaching styles may be adapted to accommodate students who are visually impaired and how art (and particularly performance art) may be adapted to make it more accessible.

Thinking about how I could support the visually impaired student I came upon important realisations regarding how visual my teaching materials had been up to that point but also *how visual* the subject discipline of Fine Art can be. I wanted to ensure that the visually impaired student was about to teach did not feel disadvantaged or made to feel different amongst the other sighted students. Whilst consideration of the student with a vision impairment in terms of their learning experience was paramount, I needed to be careful of a potential 'othering' of this person and recognised that visual impairment varies amongst people who have different learning styles etc. I acknowledged that lack of homogeneity, that everyone has very different loss of vision.

Art and design as disciplines require technical skills and abilities that mean art colleges in providing education, as well as training, emphasize 'experiential learning' (Kolb, 1991) as part of a core teaching philosophy. I have learnt that when teaching Fine Art, it is key that students are made aware of the possibilities for affective/sensorial encounters in varied artistic situations. During the Fine Art class – a practical seminar – performative pedagogies were employed to enable all students present to engage in experiential learning through such affective/sensorial encounters. Students were asked to make an instructional performative artwork with their mobile phones. An initial response by the students related to where one group instructed the class to set up alarms to go off at intervals of their choice in a timeframe of five minutes. The resulting effect was a layered soundscape. The visually impaired student told the group that they particularly enjoyed this multidimensional experience. Their final response took inspiration from the visually impaired student's phone, an Alto 2, specifically designed for people who are visually impaired where every feature and function is spoken. As part of the artwork, participants would listen to a series of instructions they were invited to enact whilst having their vision deprived in some way. Participants would need to prioritise the importance of listening (maybe in ways beyond their normal listening levels), as they could no longer rely on the power of sight. Once blindfolded and having listened to the recording, the participant was instructed to enact something that was super 'bodily'. For example, trying to balance a pineapple on top of their heads or attempting to move an After Eight mint from

the top of their foreheads into their mouths without the mint falling onto the floor. The participants who took part in the activity told the students that having their sight impeded with the blindfold forced them to acknowledge other senses and the physicality of their bodies.

In a feedback discussion with students, what emerged as key in their learning related to how vision can often be taken for granted and that our cognitive understanding of the world (as made explicit in the case of the visually impaired student is derived not just through our eyes (through vision) but also *through our bodies* (we make sense of the world through our ears, through our noses etc.). The visually impaired student told me after the session that he was appreciative that I had adjusted my teaching style to accommodate him. He also appreciated how acts of visual negation had been embedded into the content of my class to underline *just how visual* the subject discipline of Fine Art can be and how this needed to be challenged. We reflected upon norms within our subject discipline relating to the dominance of visuality over other senses and emphasised consideration of what it may mean to live in a society described as 'ocularcentric' or 'dominated' by vision (Jay, 1993: 3). I encouraged students to consult the work of Martin Jay and Hans Jonas (1954) who suggests 'tactility has been purposefully forgotten in our culture in favour of the nobility of sight' (Jonas, 1954: 507).

Extending teaching practice discussed here, I have since carried out a full literature review on this topic finding very little across the disciplines (Performance Art and vision impairment) and have identified a gap to explore the question: "How can public awareness of visual impairment be increased through performative pedagogy?"

My current research project, *You Don't Need Eyes to See You Need Vision*, highlights and challenges a dominant approach in teaching and learning in the arts, the default reliance on the assumed primacy of the visual. The project demonstrates how teaching styles can accommodate those who are visually impaired by adapting (performance) art to increase accessibility and develop inclusion for students who are visually impaired. It is particularly concerned with the design of learning that can transcend disciplines whilst drawing on an affiliation with performance art.

Recognising the gap in awareness of different disabilities (visual, sensory and hidden) amongst members of the public and especially in academia, and whilst universities may have policies of inclusivity and training about inclusivity, there remains a gap of staff and student understanding. This project aims to fill this void in part through developing activities that enable participants to increase their awareness of inclusive strategies for those who are visually impaired help shape people's understanding to be aware but to also to seek to know more. *You Don't Need Eyes to See You Need Vision* is concerned with the reactive; information that is available to people versus the proactive; what can be done to get people to change their mind-sets.

It is anticipated that persons primarily concerned with improving accessibility for those who are visually impaired within Higher Education will benefit from this research. Proposed outcomes of the project include policy documents, good practice guidelines etc. designed to enrich individuals pedagogic offering to the benefit of the visually impaired student experience. Those persons will benefit from the research by 1) gaining new pedagogic perspectives on supporting those who are visually impaired; 2) helping to (re) shape an individual's pedagogic approaches; and 3) prompting new angles to look at practice (including and beyond pedagogy, mainly in terms of art and performance). The approach to performative pedagogy to address aspects of inclusion will benefit those working within several fields: performing arts, design/innovation and pedagogic.

In the first section of this paper, *Methodology: Performative Pedagogy* explains the methodological framework underpinning the research project. The next section, *Open Lab Residency* provides a discursive description and analysis of selected events comprising a residency at The Brady Arts Centre in London that took place in 2017 which demonstrates the methodology in practice. The overall aim of the residency was to increase understanding of visual impairment and strive towards the production of a cross-modal arts manifesto for people who are visually impaired by using performative pedagogies underpinning the stated methodology. This section first summarises key ideas addressed in a selection of presentations by various speakers that underline the importance of performative pedagogy as methodology when exploring vision impairment. Then, selected examples of performative pedagogy

employed by a range of creative practitioners as part of workshops and performances, many of which deploying 'deprivation strategies' taking place during the residency are highlighted and discussed. The following sections; *Results*, *Limitations*, and *Future Research* summarises key findings and outcomes of the residency, indicating potential leads for future research, as well as important reflection upon some of the problematics of the methodology employed. The paper concludes with the section, *Discussion and Implications for Practitioners*.

### **Methodology: Performative Pedagogy**

The key research methods comprising *You Don't Need Eyes to See You Need Vision* relate to pedagogies underpinned by experiential learning, inviting participants who are— to undergo a series of practical exercises. Following from the field of practice-as-research and practice-based methodologies, I believe that one of the most profound ways to gain embodied knowledge and enact personal development is through practical exploration. Rather than telling people what vision impairment feels like, they get to physically experience it. By experiencing vision impairment albeit temporarily, this enables participants to reflect upon that there is something here that they need to know about in terms of disability awareness.

There is a substantial body of literature by scholars who have taught students who are visually impaired (Allan, 2010; Axel and Levent, 2003; Hayhoe, 2008); others have previously promoted the concept of 'learning by doing' for those with visual impairment (Gearheart, 1976). Meanwhile, artists such as Jackson Pollock and Yves Klein explored the body in space, performance, and action (Hendricks, 2003), moving 'beyond the visual' to embrace phenomenology, embodied performance and affect (Marks, 2002; Paterson, 2007). The term 'affect' refers to passion, sentiment, mood, feeling or emotion and much of the discussion of aesthetics revolves around questions of the production and transmission of affect – what the art object/installation/event *does*. The notion of affect offers a framework for considering art's attempt to reawaken and to break with traditional perceptual experience. Performance, more specifically, is a means of transmitting affect by creating mood, bodily response – passion, emotion, feeling, pain, fear. Performance using the body often involves the performer's immersion in the senses to provoke sensation in the viewer.

A paradox exists in the museum/gallery paradigm – that of occularcentricity. Artworks are (on the whole) not designed to be touched. Using performative pedagogy as core methodology that engages the senses counters that by not allowing the visual of Fine Art to be at the forefront. There is no onus on finished artworks – in the spirit of Performance Art, the emphasis is on process. This methodology puts emphasis on embodied experience drawn upon my experience as an artist who uses the body as the core principle for making work. Increased usage of the non- visual senses, hearing – aural, taste – gustatory, touch – gustatory, smell – olfactory, can be described in art practice as the 'affective turn' whereby the term affect denotes sensorial bodily encounters, 'intensities between bodies' (Seigworth and Gregg, 2010), the multisensory and the sensual revolution in relation to Carolee Schneemann and body art practices from the 1960s and beyond, olfactory art by Wolfgang Laib for instance and artist Lygia Clark's various sensory objects. By using performative pedagogies, participants engage with haptic, gustatory, olfactory and aural sensorial-immersive encounters – beyond the visual, in reaction to Geza Revesz's (1950) ideas that art cannot be enjoyed by those who are visually impaired.

### **Open Lab Residency**

Over the course of a one-week residency (August 2017) at The Brady Arts Centre in Tower Hamlets, London, developed through the Open Lab Scheme at the Barbican and Guildhall School of Music & Drama, performance was used as the key research method to generate public pedagogy in vision impairment.

Working collaboratively with different professional groups including members of the RNIB, VocalEyes (a national charity concerned with audio description) and the BBC, artists, social scientists and disability rights campaigners/advocacy were invited to discuss themes prevalent to living with a vision impairment through presentation leading to live public contestation, deliberation and debate.

Reminding listeners that people tend to think of the medium of photography as being only visual, Dr Simon Hayhoe's presentation shared his research on people who are visually impaired engaging and interacting with photography to contradict Revesz's (1950) ideas that blind people cannot understand art. In her presentation, Dr Louise Fryer, audio describer and broadcaster on BBC Radio 3, supported my



promotion of bodily affect in terms of the visually impaired, suggesting that 'art is something appreciated for emotional power [...] the effect of art is affect on us'. Sristi K.C, founder of *Blind Rocks!*, presented how she has developed a new dance form: acoustic creative dance with sound jewellery (ASJ), explaining how she uses the medium of dance as a tool to challenge idea that dance is a purely visual subject. Like the situation that I experienced with the first presence of the blind student in my art class, Sristi explained how, when she first started studying since losing her vision as a teenager, teachers would use lots of PowerPoint presentations and videos and because of this she understood nothing. Like I did with my visually impaired art student, she discussed how her teachers saw her as an opportunity. When she first started touching her teachers to understand where they were in relation to her, their reaction, she suggested was one of shock, but this action– touching feet – has in fact led Sristi and her teachers to consider how teaching could be made more accessible. She explained how this has led to a development in her research practice where she attempts to make movement (dance) audible, so that as a dance tutor she can analyse and feedback what is going on with her dance participants. Through her creation – sound jewellery, 'suddenly the body was made visible through sound'. By setting up sound to supervise, to feedback, to coordinate the dance, her blind participants could then choreograph their own dance, she explained. A personal anecdote by Sristi really underlined the importance that I place upon experiential learning in terms of understanding vision impairment; during her presentation, she explained a situation when a young blind girl was asked to draw a bus. The girl had never seen a bus yet she had experienced being on a bus and so she drew two vertical lines and one horizontal line (going up the stairs). In this way, the girl drew her experience not representation.

Having listened to a range of presentations, participants, both with and without a visual impairment, then enacted the methodology, engaging with haptic, gustatory, olfactory and aural sensorial-immersive encounters by undergoing a series of practical exercises in performance art exploring removal of sight through a range of workshops led by different artists/performance makers. Many of these exercises focussed upon the act of listening and communicating in terms of the words that

people choose to say and can describe things. Underpinning these exercises was a deployment of 'deprivation strategies', to experience blindness temporarily.

Nathan Geering, Artistic Director of *Rationale*, engaged participants in a series of physical body activities with their sight impeded with glasses that contained varying levels of visual deprivation (**Figures 1–2**). 'What I am experiencing now is seeing my hearing', Simon (Hayhoe) stated in reflective discussion during the workshop (**Figure 3**). Alexander Costello grappled with reams of blank paper symbolising the struggle to harness ideas through conscious action in a performance in the dark (**Figure 4**).

Carali McCall generated a performance related to running – circling the performance space in the dark – creating something beyond the sound and act of moving through a room at speed. This challenged the notion of what the haptic is, that it is not just touch. Audio is also haptic; its frequencies and air. As Carali ran, she created a wave with the air around her. This tested the boundary where the sonic and the haptic begin. After the performance, Carali explained how she fed off the space during the performance, sometimes getting to see. Matthew Cock of *Vocal Eyes*



**Figure 1:** Participants moving around the performance space wearing the 'visual deprivation' glasses as part of Nathan Geering's workshop. Photo: Lee Campbell. 2017.



**Figure 2:** Workshop leader Nathan Geering (left) with Fran Healands (right) wearing the 'visual deprivation' glasses. Photo: Lee Campbell. 2017.



**Figure 3:** Simon Hayhoe (right) and Alexander Costello (left) wearing the 'visual deprivation' glasses. Photo: Lee Campbell. 2017.

explained that as his eyes adjusted to the darkness at the start of the performance, so he shut his eyes so that he wasn't distracted by the visual. For him, he suggested, this experience bore resemblance to listening to music and conjuring up visuals.

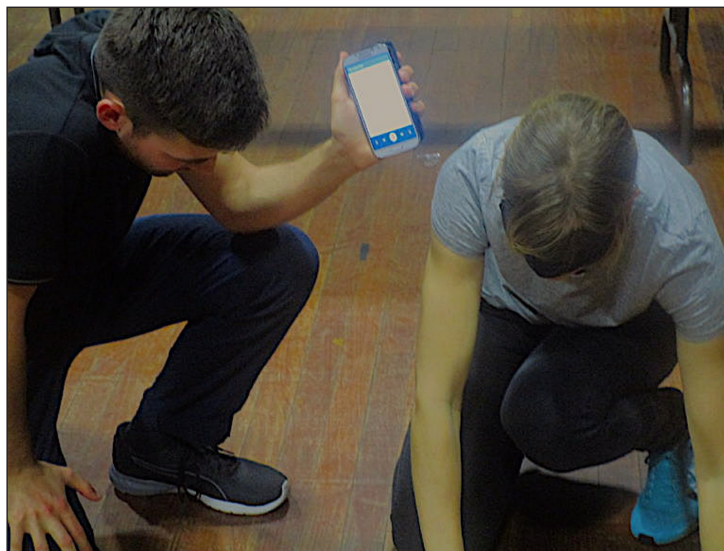


**Figure 4:** The aftermath of Alexander Costello's performance with brightly coloured reams of paper. Photo: Lee Campbell. 2017.

Gemma Shaw led a workshop exploring sound as one of the contributing senses to the manifesto. At the start of her workshop, Gemma told the group that when she first began teaching art to people who had a visual impairment, she learnt the importance of giving clear (vocal) instructions. Indeed, since the 1960s and 70s artists such as Sol Lewitt and Yoko Ono have made artworks that involve giving the audience a set of instructions for them to carry out. Yet, as Gemma pointed out, these instructions are often in written form, leading to potential barriers for people with sight loss. Gemma's workshop addressed this issue by encouraging participants to make audio-based instructional artworks using their mobile phones. Thus, her workshop added to the rich contextual history of artists using mobile phone technology to generate artworks, such as Tim Etchells' *Surrender Control* (2001), which consists of a series of (written) SMS instructions, but prioritised the importance of sound over the visual. Gemma invited participants to work in pairs. Person A waits while Person B, with their mobile phone, goes to a table laden with materials, and selects a card with a shape that Person A will be instructed to make. Person B then records instructions on their mobile phone about the shape and which of the materials that they wish Person A to use. Gemma underlined the importance of

Person B not identifying the material by colour when recording their instructions, as colours lose importance; instead she suggested that Person B focused on the tactility of the element involved. For example, 'pick up the smallest reel of tape, pick up the thinnest reel etc., the tape with the most texture on it etc.' Some participants chose to use blindfolds to heighten their other senses. (Figure 5). The pair then swapped roles, and Person A instructed Person B.

*Light as Violence* was a performative lecture I delivered on the first day of the residency about inclusion for students with visual impairment. During the lecture, blindfolds were given to audience members, lights were turned-off and coloured finger torches were used. Simultaneously, instructions to put on a blindfold or close one eye were bellowed through a megaphone. Throughout these changes, I turned on a flashlight and continued to read my paper without faltering. The obstruction and distraction of these changes altered the flow, particularly as changing the lighting led to a more and more direct attempt at disruption. And, of course the audience continued to listen and try to assimilate the information. I attempted to deliver my lecture whilst an assistant provided light so that I could read the paper as the space



**Figure 5:** Participants in Gemma's mobile phone workshop, Simon Lyshon (left) holds a mobile phone with an audio recording with instructions for Carali McCall (right) who is blindfolded. Photo: Lee Campbell. 2017.



that I was reading in was in complete darkness (**Figure 6**). A parasitical relationship was produced – on the one hand, I needed light to read, on the other hand it could blind me. My assistant used light to antagonise rather than support me, and the situation became extremely uncomfortable for both me as speaker and audience. The resulting documentation of the lecture (recording purposely with no sound) resembles a silent horror movie predicated upon photophobia (fear of light). Later during the residency, an embodied participative performance that I led employed slapstick to provoke a direct, bodily form of audience participation to examine the relationship between what is heard and what is seen. Participants undertook a collective march circling the performance space repeatedly in complete darkness. As participants (myself included) marched, we shouted the word “Yes” repeatedly as we shook our heads repeatedly. We then shouted the word “No” whilst nodding our heads. Further actions consisted of further “opposites” where what we shouted would not correspond with the physical action being enacted through our bodies. In reflective discussion between participants and audience, visually impaired audience



**Figure 6:** The performative lecture *Light as Violence*. Assistant Fran Healands (left) provides light with a torch to my reading of the paper. Photo: Gemma Shaw. 2017.

member Rosy McKenzie suggested that what was pertinent for her was where she could 'really feel the conflict between the spoken 'yes' and no's echoing each other'.

## Results

Qualitative interviews, informal discussions and focus groups both formally and informally were held with residency participants to gauge immediate impact/assess impact further down the line. Written and oral testimonials given during focus groups by those who participated in the residency evidence how this research makes positive usage of performative pedagogies to improve the breadth and depth of knowledge about human culture in relation to increasing understanding of visual impairment by engaging people who are and who are not visually impaired as co-producers in a series of practical exercises that promote experiential learning by engaging the body in affective sensorial encounters. Testimonials were given by a range of publics from within and outside academia. The nature of the testimonials evidence positive impact that engagement with the invited speaker presentations, practical exercises and reflective discussions has had on those participants. These include: 1) how the residency galvanised possibilities for networking, enabling participants to develop links with industry professionals; 2) gaining critical feedback on an individual's (art and performance) practice; 3) understanding the daily realities (particularly relevant for those participants who were currently experiencing the harsh realities of sight loss deprivation at the time of the residency) of living with a vision impairment by learning coping mechanisms directly from those with this condition.

Soon after the residency, I organised the public dissemination event *Curating in the Dark* at Toynbee Studios, London (21/09/17). Simon Hayhoe suggested that the emphasis placed throughout the whole residency on ideas of embodiment and how our bodies are part of the creative process in my usage of Performance Art, as a form of art that prioritises process over end-product. In other words, the production of a concrete object' helped Simon come upon realisations from links that I have made between the work of Jackson Pollock and Yves Klein who set precedents for art making in terms of the importance of *process* and those with vision impairment. This extends the link already drawn between experiential learning and the

visually-impaired by Bill Ray Gearheart (1976) who suggests, 'whenever possible allow the visually impaired child to experience 'doing it' rather than just verbally explaining the process' (Gearheart,1976: 63).

## **Limitations**

Setting up moments of temporary visual deprivation by handing out blindfolds etc. may be regarded as providing a false experience/huge underestimation of the realities of living with vision impairment.

During the residency, an audience member who has a vision impairment, remarked that 'it's very easy to romanticise not having vision – bear in mind that the workshop [*Nathan's*] included participants that could see – it makes the idea of sight loss worse than it really is – slightly false experience as it leads to an underestimation of what blind people can do'. Sristi K.C. also pointed out that for her there is a tendency amongst sighted persons to make those persons who are visually impaired not appear normal, even 'super-normal'; 'Nobody wants to be treated lower or extra-higher', she suggested. Indeed, I acknowledge limitations of people who are not visually impaired experiencing blindness temporarily and misrepresenting what blindness is like through temporary visual deprivation.

Recent artistic attempts such as *Projet In Situ's* (Martin Chaput and Martial Chazallon) *Do You See What I Mean? A Blindfolded Journey in the City*, first created in 2005 at the Merlan, National Theatre of Marseille, France, have not really looked at this (experiencing blindness as person who is not visually impaired) as a prolonged duration. Sighted persons cannot begin to understand the dynamics of blindness over a lifetime – but it is important that when sighted persons are engaged in artistic exercises hoping to generate awareness of vision impairment issues, they challenge themselves by being in a position where they cannot just open their eyes. As I did when I embarked on this project as someone who as a child was frightened of being locked in a cupboard because I was afraid of the dark. Blindness opens up so many discussions around 'darkness' as it makes sighted persons question our ideas of darkness as frightening. Sristi K.C. once told me about a situation she experienced related to blindfolding sighted participants in a workshop. A blind girl taking part in



the workshop asked where her blindfold was. This reinforces the idea that blindness is a social construction.

### **Future Research**

Plans for future research as part of this research project include a further series of workshops inviting participants (who are and who are not visually impaired) – to undergo a series of practical exercises (without the use of blindfolds and simulation devices) that promote the importance of sound and touch amongst other senses to contribute to a multisensory pedagogy. I also want to carry out a survey of institutional practice in Higher Education (HE) across the United Kingdom, and follow-up focus groups with participants. These should result in a report for local government and the RNIB (Royal National Institute for Blind People) as well as good practice guidelines for HE institutions. Beyond the UK, I intend to explore what other institutions do around the world, what might be considered good practice, what institutions already have in place and what they can potentially do better.

### **Discussion and Implications for Practitioners**

In Art and Design education, students are often shown artistic representations of an idea/thing which in themselves are representations and depictions. Activating and enacting performative pedagogies (based upon action/'doing') results in participants acquiring working practical, embodied and emotional forms of knowledge where they move ideas beyond abstraction through (bodily) engagement in performative 'doing'/action. Performative pedagogy that prioritises this kind of engagement. Multisensory learning thus creates a bridge between the mind and the body in terms of the embodied experience and cognitive process – how meaning making takes place.

As an audience member observed during reflective discussion after a keynote paper that I had given at *Founding a Community of Practice for Sensing Culture Through Inclusive Capital*, University of Bath in March 2018: 'Trauma is stored in the body not just in the brain. So, when you are thinking anything that you are observing or learning, you soak up in the body. You accumulate those neurological and physiological connections'. Using the body, helps those who are and who are not

visually impaired find ways into difficult concepts, to an idea; it opens up a space where students feel they can take risks and learn resilience.

Teaching may be considered as a purely visual exercise. Teachers are encouraged to make our teaching visual to engage students without realising that we may be alienating some students – teaching needs to use all the senses/provide possibilities that provoke kinaesthetic learning. Through a performative means, this research aims to help the academic teaching and learning community appreciate how to make reasonable adjustments to make what happens in seminars etc. is accessible and fully inclusive. Academics are often encouraged to think about different ways of being inclusive and are given recommendations/suggestions for adjustments. Heavy workloads may mean that academics do not have the time to fully implement such recommendations. I educated myself because this experience did not only force me to think about my teaching materials and visual presence as a teacher, but also visual art as my subject discipline. I have identified a paradoxical situation; the problem of (accommodating) inclusion and, at the same time, recognising difference. As educators, we must ensure access, meet needs without othering or homogenising disabled students or those labelled as 'marginalised'.

With vision favoured over other senses and the increasing importance of digital and virtual realities in students' lives, never has there been a time in which the meanings of access are so broadened via technological mediation – that draws on all senses. Relying on *all* senses becomes an aspect of public pedagogy that is more inclusive. Teachers can help ensure that students who are visually impaired do not feel singled out, potentially 'othered', but comfortable in engaging in shared learning experiences. Rather than accentuating difference, structurally engineer teaching so that learning can take place *through students' bodies* and *not just their eyes*. Knowledge acquisition is not exclusively derived from *what we see*.

Beyond (and including) a teaching and learning environment, it is important to set up a supportive space by providing a stimulating environment, both visually and tactually, where learning can take place through bodies and not just eyes. This can be achieved by using a range of activities that deploy sensory feedback for the benefit of both students with VI and their sighted peers. Generate activities/materials that

draw on all senses – touch, smell, sound etc. As Elisabeth Axel and Nina Levent (2003) suggest, 'The more senses that are involved, the more accessible the art becomes, and the more the students will gain' (Axel and Levent, 2003: 370). As participant David Johnson suggested during the Open Lab residency; 'There isn't a lot of difference between the visually impaired world and the visual world in terms of what we are trying to do in our lives. Let's look at what we have in common not what separates us. You never experience anything with just one sense. We are always fizzing with all our senses.'

### **Ethics and Consent**

The author attests that the procedures of their local Institutional Review Board were followed to insure the safety of research subjects and that the author gained consent from all participants.

### **Competing Interests**

[[COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT TO BE PROVIDED]]

### **Author Information**

Dr Lee Campbell is Lecturer in Academic Support across Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon colleges, University of the Arts London. His practice explores how meaning is constructed through politics of space and the politics of artist articulated through visual and verbal languages. Recent research publications include *PARTake: The Journal of Performance as Research* and the *Journal of Pedagogic Development*. He is currently working on an edited collection *Leap into Action: Critical Performative Pedagogies in Art & Design Education* (Peter Lang USA). He is currently a studio resident in the artist studio programme *Conditions* in Croydon.

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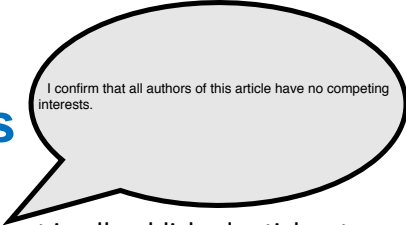
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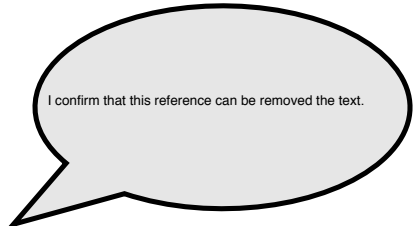
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