

CHANGEMAKERS

Using Creativity to Drive Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice in the Arts

Visualising Justice as a Practice-Based Model for Student Partnership and Institutional Learning

Working Paper / Research Report

Kevin J. Brazant

Senior Educational Developer and Changemakers Lead

London College of Communication

Dated: 23/2/26

Abstract

This working paper documents the development of the [Visualising Justice initiative](#), a collaborative student–staff partnership project delivered through the Changemakers programme at [London College of Communication](#) in partnership with [SOAS University of London](#). The initiative situates creative practice as a method for exploring questions of racial, social, and climate justice within higher education, while simultaneously functioning as a mechanism for institutional learning and curriculum innovation.

Emerging from the conceptual foundations of [Disrupt the Discourse](#), the project positions student co-creation as a structural intervention within institutional systems rather than a consultative engagement activity. Through events, student-led research, and participatory evaluation processes, the initiative explores how creative storytelling and artistic practice can surface lived experiences of inequality, challenge institutional assumptions, and generate new pedagogical approaches to equity and inclusion in the arts.

Drawing on evidence from the launch events held in January and February 2026, this paper outlines the conceptual rationale, partnership architecture, and emergent themes from participant engagement. It also introduces the **Situated Evaluation Framework (SEF)**, a participatory research methodology developed with student partners to translate creative and dialogic knowledge into institutional learning.

The paper argues that initiatives such as Visualising Justice offer a scalable model for integrating student partnership, creative inquiry, and justice-oriented pedagogy within institutional governance and curriculum development. In doing so, the work contributes to wider sector conversations about how universities might move beyond traditional staff–student binaries toward more collaborative models of institutional change.

1. Introduction

Across the higher education sector there is increasing recognition that meaningful progress on issues of equity, inclusion, and student belonging requires deeper forms of collaboration between students and institutions. Traditional models of student engagement, often centred

on consultation or feedback, are increasingly viewed as insufficient for addressing structural inequalities embedded within institutional systems.

Within creative higher education contexts, these challenges are particularly acute. Art and design institutions frequently position creativity as a catalyst for social change, yet institutional structures may struggle to translate this ethos into systemic educational practice.

The [LCC Changemakers programme](#) at London College of Communication seeks to address this gap by developing structured models for embedding student partnership within curriculum development, institutional governance, and research-informed educational practice.

This working paper documents the launch and early development of the **Visualising Justice initiative**, a collaborative project developed through Changemakers in partnership with SOAS University of London. The initiative explores how creative storytelling and artistic practice can function as tools for examining racial, social, and climate justice within higher education.

The project builds upon the conceptual foundations of [Disrupt the Discourse](#), which proposes the use of critical race theory and participatory pedagogical methods to challenge dominant assumptions about knowledge, authority, and participation within academic institutions.

2. Conceptual Background

The Changemakers model draws on several strands of scholarship relating to:

- student partnership and co-creation
- inclusive and anti-racist pedagogy
- Third Space professional practice
- practice-based research in creative education
- institutional change theory

Within this context, student co-creation is understood not simply as a pedagogical strategy but as a **mechanism for institutional learning**. Rather than positioning students solely as recipients of education, the model recognises students as collaborators capable of contributing valuable insight into the lived realities of institutional structures.

Creative practice offers particular opportunities within this context. Artistic expression can surface forms of knowledge that are difficult to capture through traditional academic methods, allowing students to articulate experiences of marginalisation, belonging, and social transformation through visual, narrative, and performative forms.

The Visualising Justice initiative therefore positions creative storytelling as both:

- a **method of inquiry**, and
- a **tool for institutional reflection**.

3. The Visualising Justice Initiative

The **Visualising Justice initiative** was launched through two collaborative events delivered in January and February 2026. The first event took place in person at London College of Communication on 21 January 2026, followed by an online event hosted jointly with SOAS University of London on 4 February 2026.

The events brought together student partners, academic staff, professional services colleagues, and external collaborators to explore the role of creativity in advancing racial and social justice within higher education.

The initiative sought to:

- launch the Visualising Justice creative call for student work
- establish a student-led archive exploring themes of equity and justice
- introduce the **Situated Evaluation Framework (SEF)** as a research methodology
- create space for cross-institutional dialogue on student partnership and institutional transformation

In doing so, the project aimed to explore how student-led creative practice might contribute to institutional understanding of inequality and belonging within creative education environments.

4. Participation and Institutional Engagement

Across both events, the initiative engaged **105 participants** (40 in person and 65 online). Participants included representatives from multiple institutional departments and roles, including:

- academic staff from Media, Screen and Design programmes
- the Digital Learning Team
- the Information Centre
- Careers and Employability services
- Educational Development
- Knowledge Exchange teams
- Arts Students' Union representatives
- student leadership roles such as EDI Champions, Digital Champions, and Climate Advocates

The diversity of participants suggests that the Changemakers model is beginning to engage audiences beyond individual programmes, supporting broader institutional dialogue around equity and curriculum transformation.

5. Student-Led Research and Co-Creation

A central component of the initiative involved the development of a **student-led creative archive** documenting diverse interpretations of justice, belonging, and contemporary social challenges.

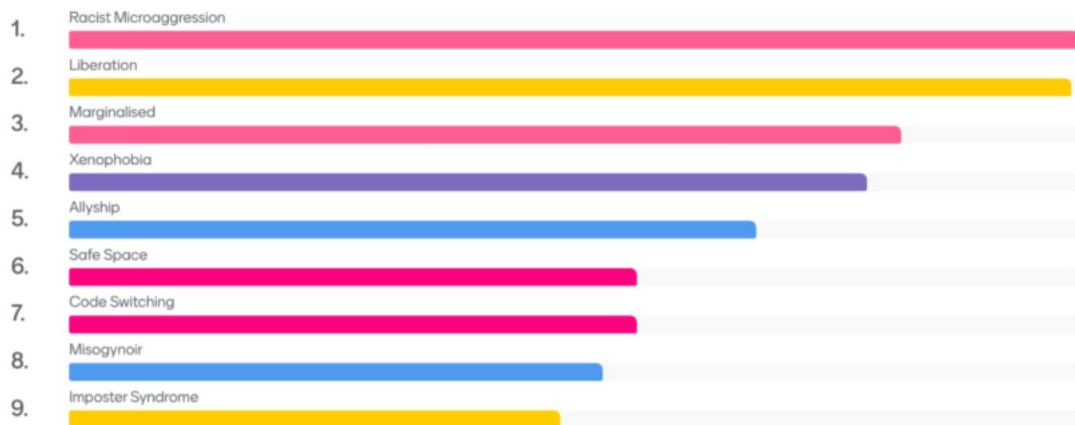
Students were invited to submit artistic responses exploring themes including:

Disrupt the Discourse (DtD) Working Paper Series - Practice-Based Research Report

- racial justice
- climate justice
- social equity
- belonging and identity
- structural inequality

Inserted graphics from Mentimeter polling exercise – Visualising Justice Launch

Select up to 5 terms that you believe should be prioritised in the Visualising Justice glossary.



Is there a term you'd like to explore visually or interpret creatively?

intersectionality

Epistemic totality
(knowledge
subjugation)

brave spaces

Safe space --> Brave
Space

heteronormativity

Microaggression
"Subjective" daily
experiences do contribute
to systemic injustice.

Liberation, as it feels like a
collective effort to break
oppressive systems

wokeness



The resulting archive functions both as a **creative exhibition space** and as a **research resource**, capturing student perspectives on the social and institutional conditions shaping their educational experiences.

The project also introduced the **Situated Evaluation Framework (SEF)**, a participatory evaluation methodology developed collaboratively with student partners. The SEF seeks to translate qualitative and creative forms of knowledge—such as storytelling, visual art, and reflective dialogue—into accessible forms of institutional insight.

This approach positions evaluation not as a purely managerial process but as a collaborative practice through which students and institutions can generate shared understanding.

6. Emergent Themes from Participant Dialogue

Participant engagement during the launch events was facilitated through interactive dialogue and digital polling tools. Several recurring themes emerged across discussions:

- institutional bias and marginalisation
- tensions between innovation and institutional structures
- the role of creativity in enabling structural change
- the importance of community and collective agency
- the need for spaces enabling radical imagination and care

These themes highlight the complexity of implementing justice-oriented change within higher education institutions. Participants frequently emphasised the importance of balancing institutional rigour with the creative experimentation necessary for meaningful transformation (See table below for attendees' responses).

<i>Attendees' Responses:</i>	
<i>“Reflexivity and Radical imagination”</i>	<i>“Hope, and the power of the institution and student strengths”</i>
<i>“Progress, arbitrary boundaries, meaningful and extensive collaboration, wider scope of horizons”</i>	<i>“Radical imagining with courage honour and recognition”</i> <i>“Greater understanding of how BAME students can be minimised through their voices.”</i>
<i>“Collaborate”</i> <i>“Institutional rigour vs Innovation/authenticity.”</i> <i>“Broaden and redefine the interpretation!”</i>	<i>“Community”</i> <i>“Institutional Bias”</i> <i>“Creativity can be commandeered to make change.”</i> <i>“There is strength in numbers”</i>
<i>“Art for Inclusion / Inclusion for Art”</i>	<i>“Institutional bias”,</i> <i>“Integration of different cultures”</i>

--	--

7. Strategic and Institutional Contributions

The Visualising Justice initiative contributes to several institutional priorities, including:

- enhancing student engagement through paid leadership opportunities
- supporting inclusive curriculum development
- strengthening collaboration across academic and professional roles
- generating knowledge exchange with external community partners

Importantly, the initiative also demonstrates how **hybrid student–staff partnership roles** can function as mechanisms for institutional renewal (Portinari, 2026). By integrating student perspectives directly into institutional processes, the model enables lived experiences of inequality and belonging to inform decision-making structures.

Recent sector commentary has begun to recognise the potential of such approaches, including reference to the Changemakers model in sector publications discussing alternatives to traditional staff–student hierarchies in higher education.

8. Future Development

Future phases of the initiative will focus on expanding the Visualising Justice archive and strengthening cross-institutional collaboration between London College of Communication and SOAS University of London.

Planned activities include:

- collaborative student partnership workshops
- dissemination through institutional equity and inclusion events
- continued support for student-led creative research projects
- integration of qualitative partnership insights with institutional student success metrics

These developments aim to strengthen the integration of student-generated knowledge within institutional learning processes.

9. Conclusion

The Visualising Justice initiative represents an emerging example of how creative practice can support justice-oriented institutional learning within higher education. By combining student partnership, artistic inquiry, and participatory evaluation, the project offers a model for embedding equity-focused dialogue within curriculum development and institutional governance.

Rather than positioning students as passive recipients of institutional change, the Changemakers model situates students as collaborators and co-researchers capable of contributing meaningful insight into the transformation of educational environments.

As the initiative continues to develop, it offers a potentially transferable framework for other creative institutions seeking to integrate student partnership, social justice, and institutional learning within their educational strategies.

References

Brazant, K. (2021). **Disrupt the discourse: Applying critical race theory as a conceptual framework for learning and teaching.** *Equity in Education & Society*.

Brazant, Kevin (2024) *Using Creativity to Drive Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice: A three-year strategy. A guide to working with the London College of Communication's Changemakers to Co-Develop Inclusive Pedagogies.* Documentation. University of the Arts London.

Brazant K. and Baek, J (2025) *Storytelling Through Art and Design: Visualising Racial and Social Justice Using Creativity to Drive Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice in the Arts. A Knowledge Exchange Initiative Exploring Equity Through Creative Practice.* Accessible here: <https://lccchangemakers.cargo.site/>

Kaloferov, S (2024). **London College of Communication Changemakers, Student Led Archive and Blog.** Accessible here: <https://lccchangemakers.myblog.arts.ac.uk/>

Palmer, M (2025) **Brand Insights: How LCC Changemakers Turn Employability into Real EDI.** Accessible here: <https://blog.jobs.ac.uk/recruiters-hub/how-lcc-changemakers-turn-employability-into-real-edi/>

Portinari, C (2026) **Universities that can learn means getting beyond the staff–student binary.** Accessible here: <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/universities-that-can-learn-means-getting-beyond-the-staff-student-binary/>