

Framework to Practice

Student Experiences of Justice-Based
Learning in Creative Higher Education

ual: university
of the arts
london

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awareness → *ideation* → *shift*

Transformational Learning

Learning as a process of fundamental change in how adults understand themselves and the world.

- > disorienting dilemma,
- > critical reflection on assumptions,
- > exploration of alternative perspectives
- > reintegration of a revised worldview into identity and action

(Mezirow, 1978; 1981; Calleja, 2014; Kuriakou, 2023)

Threshold Concepts

Portals to new ways of understanding a discipline, transforming how learners perceive a subject and enabling further progress.

- > troublesome
- > conceptually difficult
- > counter-intuitive or deceptively simple,
- > creating barriers to understanding and application

(Cousin, 2006)

Context

awareness	Teaching <i>about</i>	Knowing	Descriptive	
ideation	Teaching <i>for</i>	Doing	Integrative	
shift	Teaching <i>as</i>	Being	Critical	
	<i>Williams and Toth-Fejel (2017)</i>	<i>Barnett and Coates (2005)</i>	<i>Weller (2016)</i>	

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Principles

1. move with urgency;
2. cultivate systems thinking and practice;
3. foster futures thinking;
4. design for human equity, social and racial justice;
5. accelerate activism and advocacy.

ual:

the
exchange

Climate, Racial and Social Justice principles

01. Move with urgency

to become a community that has the capabilities to address the social, racial and environmental injustices of climate emergency using creativity and resourcefulness. We offer hope through action, committing to the decolonisation and decarbonisation of our education and creative practices.

02. Cultivate systems thinking and practices

that meaningfully acknowledge the interconnections and complexity of life on earth.

03. Foster futures thinking

to design for possible futures that restore and regenerate, unleashing the power of imagination through participatory and speculative methods.

04. Design for human equity, social and racial justice

by mobilising critical thinking, humbly questioning the norms, practices and biases embedded in our societies and cultures. We recognise and reflect on our individual actions and societal values through self-awareness and reflective practice.


05. Accelerate activism and advocacy

by participating in co-creation and actions that realise change in solidarity with those within and outside of our community. We advocate for justice for nature and humanity through our creative practices.



Research questions

1. How do students' experiences of CSRJ-embedded curricula relate to those levels of transformation?
2. How do students make meaning of CSRJ principles as they try to translate them into their own creative practice?



Theme 1

Starting points

Alena Jarrett, 2023 BA Contemporary Media Cultures. London College of Communication, UAL
Photograph: Alys Tomlinson

Theme 1: Starting Points

“This is all completely new”

(Participant RD02)

Theme 1: Starting Points

“It opened my eyes to a lot of things
I wouldn't have learned otherwise”

(Participant RD10)

Theme 1: Starting Points

“I think that’s because I’m probably
not like the most politically active”

(Participant RD02)

Theme 1: Starting Points

“I consider a lot of the stuff that responsible design suggested anyway, but it almost **validated** those thoughts that I had”

(Participant RD05)

Theme 1: Starting Points

“I’m involved with ideas of justice more than a lot of my peers, and so personally I found it **really satisfying** to get a lot of academic support around that”

(Participant RD07)

about



for




as



Theme 1: Starting Points

“Many art directors aren’t following these principles — maybe they’re teaching us, but the principles are sentences we **already know**, in harder words”

(Participant RD09)



Theme 2: Understanding ≠ Action

Vishala Chouhan, 2023 Business Pathway, London College of Fashion, UAL
Photograph: Alys Tomlinson

about



for



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Theme 2: Understanding ≠ Action

“If you don't know what systems thinking is, if you're not familiar with the phrase, then it just **assumes you know** what that means”

(Participant RD07)

Theme 2: Understanding ≠ Action

“I know **English** probably better than any other language, and all the people at UAL are also internationals, so I feel it might be even less than what I understand”

(Participant RD03)

Theme 2: Understanding ≠ Action

“I picked up ideas on the **surface**, but I’m not fully understanding, which made me **nervous to use them**”

(Participant FPSC05)



~~propositions~~
thresholds

Theme 2: Understanding ≠ Action

“I **wouldn't know how** to take them into the work, or how to incorporate them, or refine our ideas to make sure we include them”

(Participant RD05)


Theme 2: Understanding ≠ Action

“I would know sustainability, I would know what circularity is, but I **wouldn't know the right example** or how to bring that in”

(Participant RD08)



mediating structures



Theme 3: Enabling Conditions

UAL LGBTQ+ Zine making and photography workshop, 2023, London College of Communication,
UAL | Photograph: Yana Kasa

Theme 3: Enabling Conditions

“The **unit was so short**, I never really absorbed it. I feel like I was just so caught up in just trying to get something done”

(Participant FPSC01)

Theme 3: Enabling Conditions

“I don't think a lot of people **know what their practice is** yet — it's hard to know how to make it more sustainable if you don't know what it is”

(Participant RD02)

ab



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Theme 3: Enabling Conditions

“I try and be as careful [...] then I see other people and they don't really seem to care. And then I felt feel like **I'm held back** in my work slightly”

(Participant RD05)

ab



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Implications

Implications for Practice

Implications

Design for divergent entry points

Implications

Design for divergent entry points

Scaffold threshold crossing across the programme

Implications

Design for divergent entry points

Scaffold threshold crossing across the programme

Structural conditions = preconditions

about



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