

# Action Research Project

Gem Smith

‘Purpose –

In a collaborative learning environment, there will be many learners with diverse cultures. These learners **should be supported** to communicate and collaborate among themselves.’  
(Economides, 2008, p.1)

‘I find it difficult to speak up about my ideas in my group. They do not understand about what I am saying.’ (UAL international student 2024).

‘Some students do find it a challenge due to cultural differences to work together collaboratively. This can bring discord.’ (UAL MA Lecturer, 2025).

I feel isolated in my class and find it a challenge to work in a group’ (UAL home student 2025)



(TyliJura, 2025)

# About me.

- Who am I?

An Academic Support Lecturer at LCC for 4 years

- Professional background?

Interior Designer,

FE - Admissions Officer,

Art & Design, 3D Design and Fashion Progression Lecturer  
worked in Education for over 16 years.

- Positionality?

Woman of colour

First generation for HE

Parents from the Caribbean, born and raised in England

‘There's a natural influence of culture simply through being in a certain region for most of my life, but I grew up in a global family and worked with people from everywhere through adult life, so I have become adaptable.’ (LCC Student, 2025)

‘For us, therefore, reflexivity is always a self-monitoring of, and a self-responding to, our thoughts, feelings and actions as we engage in research projects.’ (Corlett and Mavin, 2018, p.3)

‘... whilst reflection might enable researchers to observe research practice, as it might be reflected back to them from a mirror image, reflexivity involves ‘exposing or questioning our ways of doing’ (Hibbert et al., 2010: 48).’ (Corlett and Mavin, 2018, p.3)

# Social Justice and professional context



## Academic Support

Social justice is embedded into my professional practice. It is not a separate entity it is what we do.

## Dignity and Hope Song by Bob Dylan

“Blind man breaking out of a trance puts both his hands in the pockets of **chance**. Hoping to find one circumstance of dignity”. (Sony Music Entertainment, 2021).

**Changing the status quo and putting all hands together to create new collaborative opportunities.**

**Social justice**  
moving beyond words  
requires action by policy  
and practice.

(Fields and Green, 2025)

**Removing barriers** so,  
everyone can thrive.

‘Striving for dignity is at the core of social justice movements. (Loewen and Pollard, 2010, p.1)



# Original context/Background

## Action Research Project Inspiration

Research Question:

**How** can the awareness of cultural identity **enhance** collaborative learning experiences in higher education?

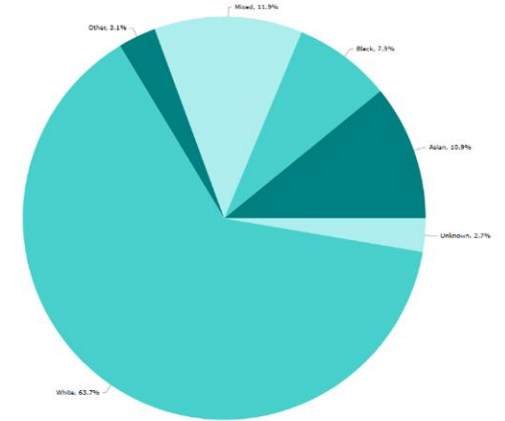
Continuation from the **Inclusive Practice Unit on Intersectionality.**

‘I want to suggest that intersectionality offers a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics.’ (Crenshaw, 2013, P.10)

**LCC Students mark making and writing collaboratively** irrespective of differences. A masterpiece of freely created visual ideas and expressions.

**30.7% students are not home students according to UAL Dashboard 2024/2025.**  
(UAL,n.d )

How do students communicate and integrate culturally with each other when working collaboratively?



(UAL, n.d

(Smith, 2025)

# Original context/Background Theoretical Framework

‘... the different learners’ cultural backgrounds affect their participation, their motivation, their satisfaction and their performance during collaborative learning activities.

Learners with diverse cultural background may have divergent modes of communicating, interacting, and working. They may have different views of the world, different values, behaviours, and attitudes. They may also develop different feelings and thoughts during the collaborative learning activities.’ (Economides, 2008,P.2)

## Psychological Safety

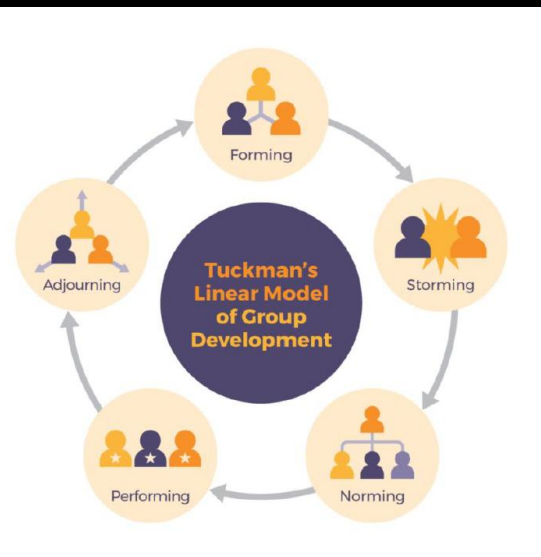
Psychological safety is the cultural conditions needed to speak up, point out issues, errors, blind spots, take risks and productively navigate tensions without negative consequences. It involves learning, curiosity and vulnerability. (Green, 2024)

### Design Activism

Where design is used to address social, environmental and political issues. (Julier, 2013, pp.215 – 236.) I hope to achieve this through the design of collaborative cards. However, I will note that images are subjective and have different meanings in cultures. (Phoenix 2010, p.2).

## Framework

‘Framework: A set of givens about the group's situation and how it will behave that form a stable platform from which the group operates.’ (Gersick and Hackman, 1990, pp. 65-97)



When relationships are formed collaboration comes into its own. A space of shared ideas and leadership. Relationships are based on trust. Trusting and understanding the intersections of individuals is vital to group work.

Creating fluid structures within education is important and they refer to Tuckman’s theory. (West Chester University (2024)

**Disadvantage of the Tuckman theory –** *Oversimplification* with a linear approach, *focus on conflict* in storming may reinforce stereotypes and jeopardise relationship building. (Crosta and McConnell, 2010). Are the stages fair? Are relationships linear?

The idea to support students basic physiological, safety, love and belonging needs so that they can achieve the esteem and self- actualisation goals.

(Maslow, 2007, pp.3-4)



## Maslow's hierarchy of needs

The idea to support students basic physiological, safety, love and belonging needs so that they can achieve the esteem and self- actualisation goals.

One of my main objectives for this project was to provide a safe space, provide resources, a sense of connection and friendships through my intervention for students.



Rationale for selecting the topic / intervention

## Aims and Objectives

- To create safe spaces for discussions, shared opportunities for cultural awareness and ways of working. This will encourage a more cohesive and productive collaborative space for students to thrive and learn from each other.

## What do I want to do?

- Co – create with students a set of collaborative working cards that will act as a supportive participatory tool for students.

Rationale for selecting the topic / intervention continued

## My role and my practice? Why do I want to do it?

As an Academic Support Lecturer, **I have witnessed a gap in provision** for supporting students in providing safe spaces to discuss if they so wish their cultural values when collaborating. My role is a supportive one and I am always looking to see how I can best support students.

As pointed out by a student from my survey, I must be careful not **to imply that student's cultural identity defines them or is the only barrier to collaborative working**. This is not the case; however, it can form a part of their intersectionality as highlighted by Crenshaw (2013).

'I am proud of my culture, but I am not just my culture. Get to know me and ask questions.' (LCC student, 2025)



**UAL collaborative tool kit** available for a MA course with no direct emphasis on cultural identity.  
(UAL, n.d.)





## Two of the contributory factors to feedback and observation at LCC from my survey

### 1. Students not knowing their peers ways of working.

‘Miscommunication, perseverance, conflicts.’ (LCC student, 2025)

‘Conflict, lack of organisation, communicating.’ (LCC student, 2025)

‘Being on the same page, equal contribution, tension.’ (LCC student, 2025)

### 2. Cultural divides when sometimes working in a group

I have a very different background from my friends. I think due to lack of experience of living and visiting western countries I cannot sometimes relate to them.’ (LCC student, 2025)



# Intervention

This took the form of initially 3 stages at the end of 2 workshops for about 30 mins each meeting.

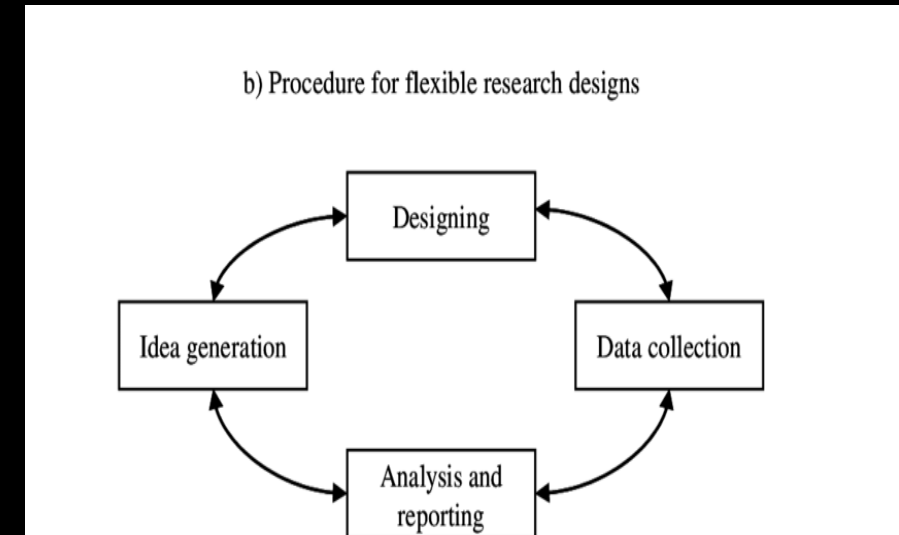
1. After discussion with the lecturer, I presented to students at the end of a critical thinking workshop with the research project information sheet, consent form and paper questionnaire. 17 students attended. Multi – cultural cohort. Enthusiastic and engaging group.
2. Two week later at the end of a critical reading workshop students were presented with sample designs and questions for further feedback. (2 students attended).
3. Will test out the prototype cards as an ice breaker at the end of January with a MA class for a collaborative workshop.

This project will be ongoing exercising the cyclic flexible research design approach.

# What did I do ? Who did I do it with?

I co – created 38 collaborative working cards that encourages discussion about cultural identity with 17 MA User Experience Design students at LCC

Duration of the project? Ongoing



(Assistance, 2019)

**Methodology - Mixed method research** - Qualitative and Quantitative

**Methods used** – **Primary research** using a questionnaire survey with 17 MA User Experience Design students and gathering the data collected for primary research. Reviewing **secondary research** looking at existing data such as UAL dashboard.

**Constraints** – Participation, time and access to students.

**Successes** – 100% response, detailed feedback and built relations.

Collated the information **thematically**.

**Methodology - Longitudinal ethnography** – conducting studies over a period with the same cohort of students. Immersing myself within the research.

**Methods used** – Feedback, questionnaires, co – design, participant observation, discussions with my peers, colleagues and students for feedback.

**Constraints** – long time to see complete results, my biases, not completely transparent when they get to know you.

**Successes** – Design collaboration, progressive development, student agency and an open dialogue.

I would also be thinking about the ethical aspect to my methodologies and **refer to my ethics action plan at regular intervals**.

**Card sorting** which is used in UX Design for research. This helps to understand user groups. Applying this familiar method for my MA UXD students. ( Will try this in stage 3).

Reflection on research method(s) used

Reflection Research  
Method/s used

**Combination of methods =  
gathering of meaningful data.**

‘...**continually reflexive research process** in order to insure that research methods do not undermine political and ethical research goals.’ (Olitsky and Weathers, 2005)

Difficulties of deciding on what methods to use. Shared by Walker (2006, p.2) who spoke about the struggles for a researcher to find an appropriate methodology for their investigation. They discuss that **fewer papers discuss the methodology in detail and concentrate more on the research results. Finding the right methods and methodologies is a skill.**

# Example of the Student Questionnaire

According to Patten (2016) the advantages are that they provide an efficient way to collect data and they are easy to analyse.

They are also useful for collecting information that are sensitive. They can be submitted anonymously. This is also an economical way of conducting a survey.

**Cultural Collaborative Working Cards** 7

**Student Questionnaire**

**Purpose:**  
I will be creating collaborative working cards to celebrate the diversity of our university community. Your answers will help design a meaningful set of cards that will help to achieve social purpose by acting as a prompt for effective collaborative working and contribute to an inclusive, empathetic and cohesive working environment.

This tool can be used in lectures and workshops to encourage self-expression, inclusion, and intercultural learning.

I would appreciate if you could answer the questions below as honestly and creatively as you would like.

1. What do you enjoy and what do you find challenging about working collaboratively?

Enjoy	Challenging
1. <u>Sharing / talking</u>	1. <u>Commitment</u>
2. <u>Way of working</u>	2. <u>Time constraints</u>
3. _____	3. _____

2. When working with someone on a project what are the key attributes that you look for? List in order of importance (1-7).

1 <u>Effective communication skills</u>
7 <u>Active listening skills</u>
3 <u>Adaptability</u>
6 <u>Empathy</u>
2 <u>Conflict resolution</u>
4 <u>Reliable</u>
5 <u>Open mindedness</u>

3. What are your preferred ways of communicating in a group and what role/s do you like to play?

Ways of communicating (For example, using imagery.)	Roles you like to play (For example, a leader.)
<u>Paper</u>	<u>Ice breaker</u>
<u>Figjam</u>	<u>Initiator</u>
<u>WA group</u>	<u>Conflict resolver</u>

4. How much do you think your cultural identity has an influence on the way you work within a group? Circle numbers 1- 10. 10 being the highest.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

If possible, state why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_


5. Is there anything about your culture or personality that you would like others to understand better? For example, thinking critically is something I am not normally accustomed to as part of my culture, or I am a good problem solver.


I like positive / happy groups.  
Good Vibes only.  
+ Please put in effort, I don't like doing it alone

6. Do you think this is a good idea to create collaborative cards that encourage conversation about your culture and ways of working? Circle Yes or No.  
(Please state a reason for your answer.)

I don't know. If people are unenthusiastic, cards can't do much.

7. Do you have any suggestions for the look, design and feel of the collaborative cards? (For example, suggested images, size, colours, feel or text etc.) You can sketch any ideas or write any suggestions below.

 → unique shape?



Thank you.

Your answers will help to create an innovative collaborative tool that will celebrate and encourage working together with transparency and to develop a better understanding of your peers.

All the best.

Gem Smith

# Student Questionnaire Collection of Raw Data - Quantitative

Analysing the data  
- quantitative

Being on the same page, equal contribution, tension											
Student form number	1.What do you <b>enjoy</b> and what do you find challenging about working collaboratively?	1.What do you enjoy and what do you find <b>challenging</b> about working collaboratively?	2. When working with someone on a project what are the key attributes that you look for? List in order of importance (1-7.) (1 being the highest and 7 the lowest.)	Effective communication skills	Active listening skills	Adaptability	Empathy	Conflict resolution	Reliable	Open mindness	
1											
2	1 Talk/commuicate, share culture, different opinions	Reject communication, different ideas, finalising			1	5	6	4	7	3	2
3	2 hearing new ideas	Getting to an agreement, finding time to work, assigning tasks			1	5	7	2	6	3	4
4	3 Criticise artwork, to know my group opinion on each at work, try to think more critically	To understand if I am in the right direction			1	7	2	6	4	3	5
5	4 Discussing with others, learning from others, everyone's different perspectives	Too many ideas, adjusting to each other			1	3	3	2	3	2	3
6	5 More ideas. Life experiences, not feeling alone	When people are late, stuck on own ideas, conflicting work styles			1	7	6	5	4	3	2
7	6 Able to do multiple things, generating different ideas, making jokes while working	Orgnaising group dynamics, working with disruptive people, getting to know groups			1	3	2	6	5	4	4
8	7 Sharing, talking, ways of working	Commitment, time constraints			1	7	5	6	2	4	3
9	8 Teamwork, different point of view, balance work load	Clashing of thoughts, lack of cooperation, lack of punctuality			3	1	5	7	4	6	2



# Student Questionnaire Analysis of Data

Analysing the data - quantitative

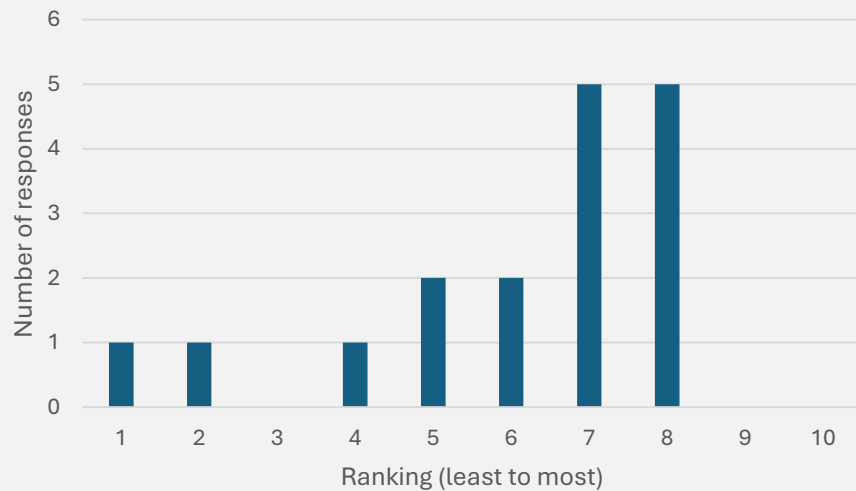
AutoSave On First stage - Final Summary of the results of the collaborative cards question... Last Modified: Thu at 12:48 Search														
File Home Insert Draw Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Automate Help														
Clipboard Font Alignment Number Styles Cells Editing														
The ideas that were suggested from students will be useful in formulating the design of the cards. The idea of co creating and collaborating with the students to make a useful tool for themselves is empowering as an ed														
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M		
1	Results	1.What do you enjoy and what do you find challenging about working collaboratively?	Results	1.What do you enjoy and what do you find challenging about working collaboratively?	2. When working with someone on a project what are the key attributes that you look for? List in order of importance (1-7.) (1 being the highest and 7 the lowest.)	Effective communication skills	Active listening skills	Adaptability	Empathy	Conflict resolution	Reliable	Open mindness		
2	Ranked highest to lowest	Students responses have been summarised under the following themes:	Ranked highest to lowest	Students responses have been summarised under the following themes:	Results - Ranked highest to lowest	Number of responses								
3	1st	Idea Generation - New ideas, Opinions, experiences, experimentation, skills and perspectives = 25 views	1st	Ideas - Clashing thoughts, different ideas, too many ideas, stuck on own ideas, finatising ideas and agreement = 8 views	1st place	9	1	0	2	0	1	3		
4	2nd	Teamwork - Can work on multiple areas at once, shared and balance workload = 11 views	Joint 2nd Place	Time Management - Time to work, lateness, punctuality and disorganisation = 5 views	2nd Place	1	4	2	3	2	2	5		
5	3rd	Relationships - Creating friendship groups, networking, getting to know each other, not feeling alone and openness = 8 views	Joint 2nd Place	Confidence - Knowing if in right direction, lack of confidence to share ideas, indecisiveness, voicing opinions of others and criticism about their own work = 5 views	3rd Place	2	4	2	2	1	6	3		
6	4th	Communication - Talking communicating with others = 4 responses	Joint 2nd Place	Team work - rigidness of others, disruptive people, adjusting to each other, group dynamics, conflict of work styles, and lack of cooperation = 5 views	4th Place	1		3	2	4	3	3		
7	5th	Critical thinking = 2 views	Joint 2nd Place	Communication - miscommunication, lack of and rejection of it = 5 views	Joint 5th Place		4	3	2	4	1	2		
8	6th	Culture - Sharing culture = 1 view	Joint 3rd Place	Lack of Empathy - Not being heard and denying others = 2 views	6th Place	1	1	5	4	2	3	1		
9	6th	Environment - Creating an active atmosphere = 1 view	Joint 3rd Place	Behavioural Management - Conflict and tension in the group = 2 views	Joint 7th Place	3	3	2	1	3	1	0		
10			Joint 3rd Place	Distribution of Tasks - Assigning tasks and equal distribution = 2 views										
11			Joint 3rd Place	Motivation - Lack of perseverance and commitment = 2 views										
Summary Q2 - charts Q4 - charts Q6 - charts +														
Ready Accessibility: Investigate Display														

(Smith, 2025)

# Analysis - Student Questionnaire Collection of Data

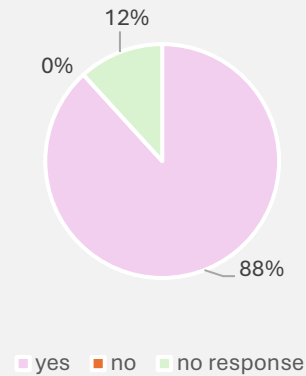
## Analysing the data - quantitative

4. Influence of cultural identity



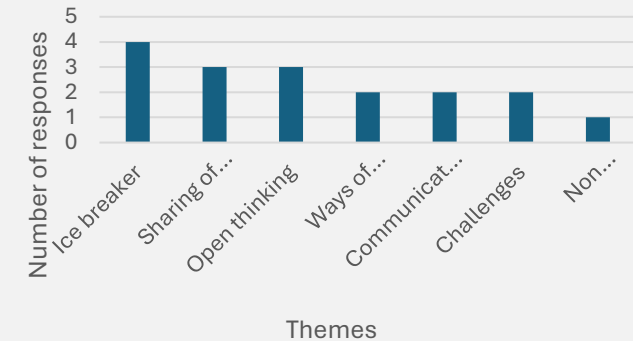
4. How much do you think your cultural identity has an influence on the way you work within a group? Circle numbers 1- 10. 10 being the highest.

6. Is creating collaboration cards a good idea?

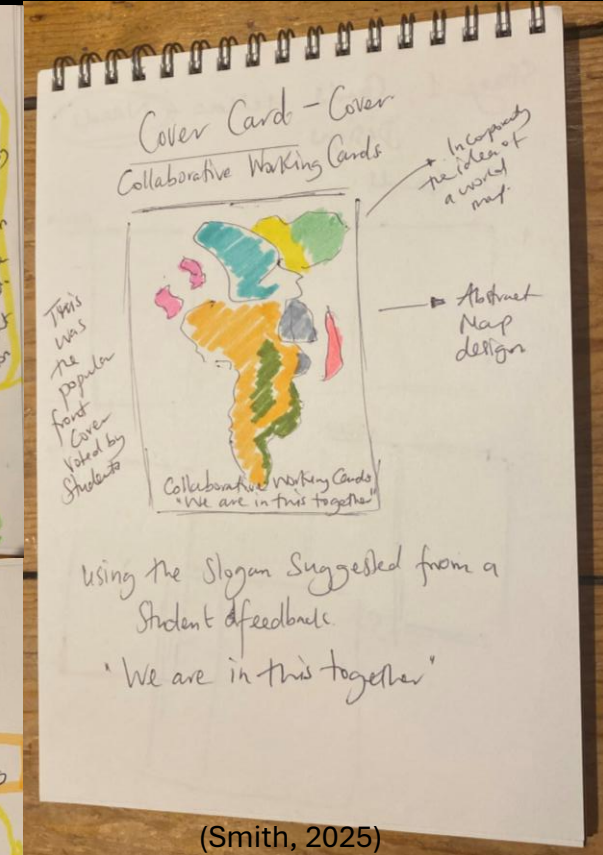
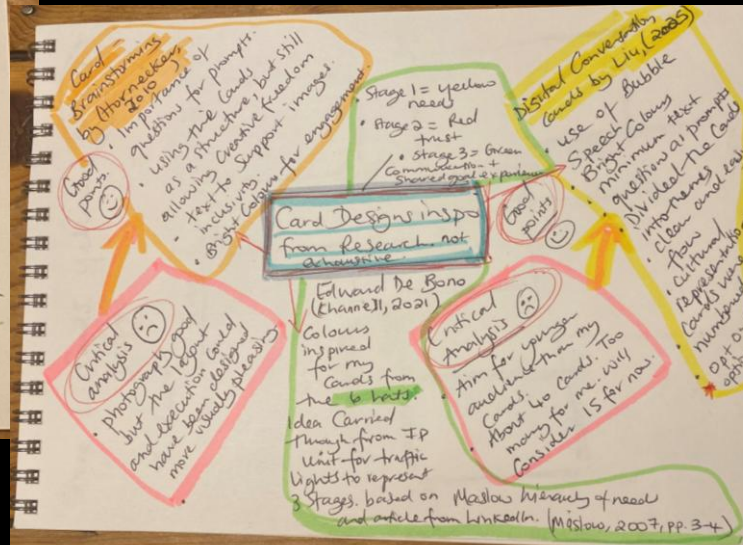
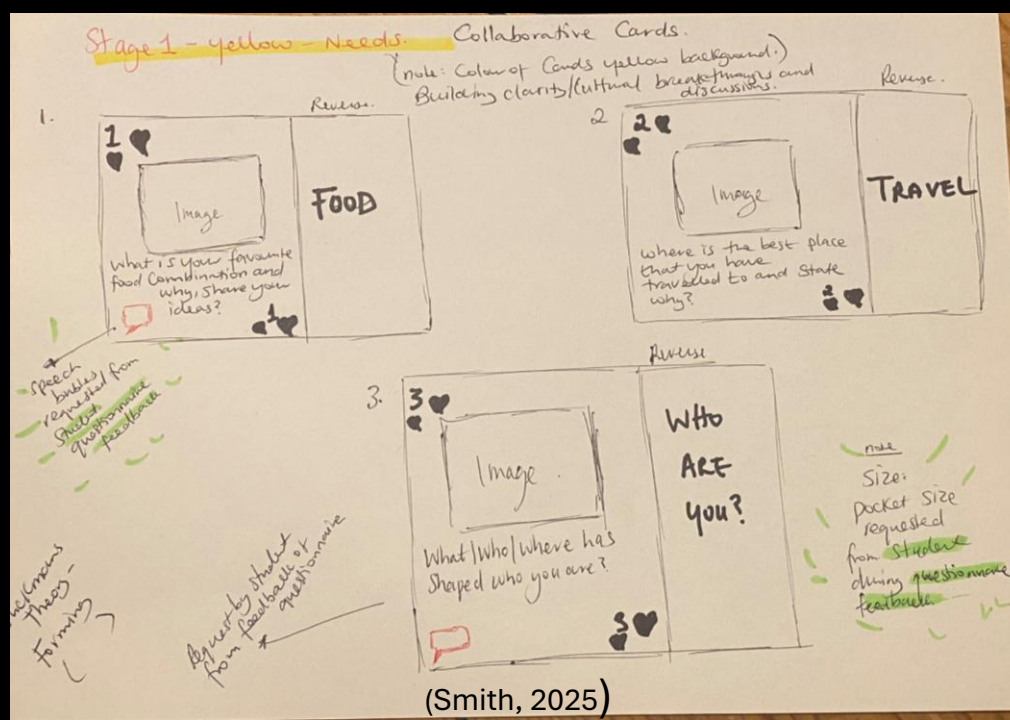


6. Do you think this is a good idea to create collaborative cards that encourage a conversation about your culture and ways of working? Circle Yes or No. (Please state a reason for your answer.)

6. Reasons for creating collaboration cards



# Reflection – Co - Design Collaborative Cards –a new research toolkit - planning



## Sample Designs

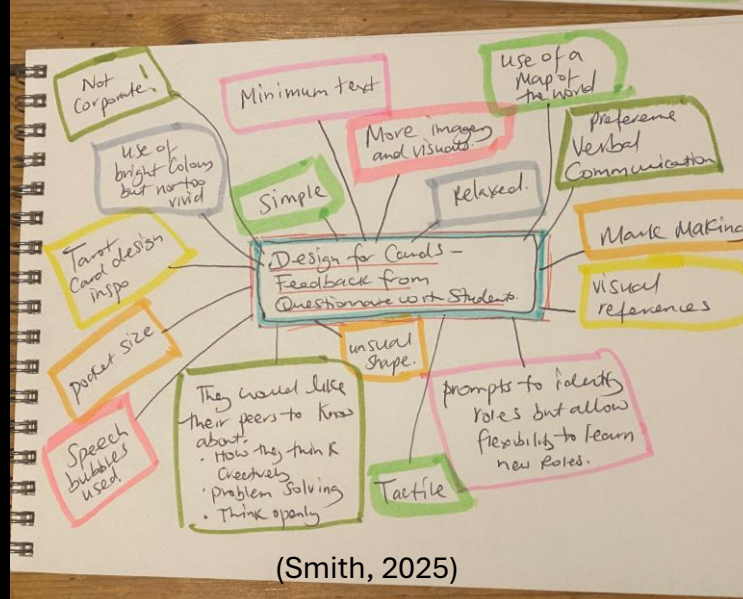


Front cover design 1



Front cover design 2

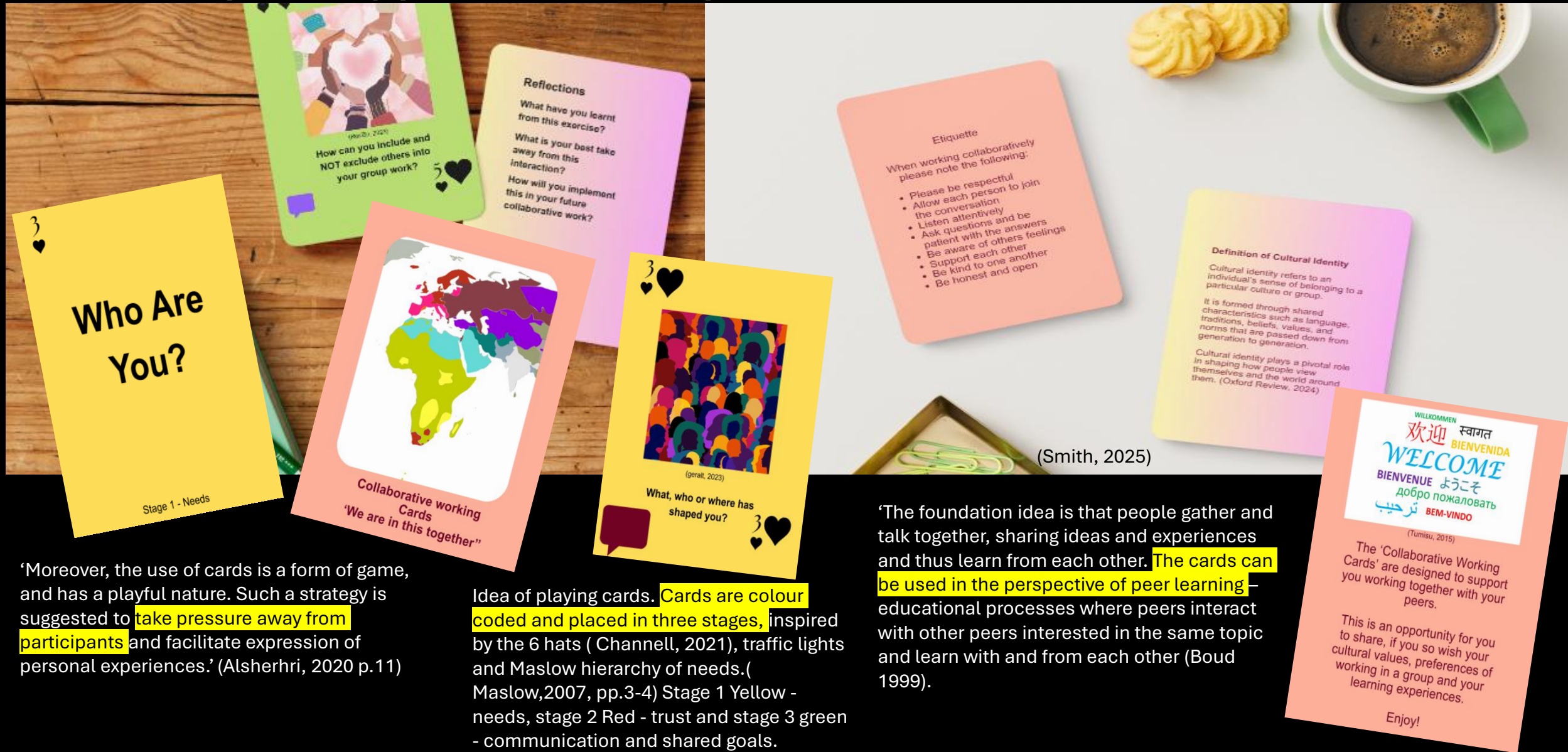
(Smith, 2025)



Encouraging peer learning and less tutor centred.  
Encourage visual thinking for creative students.



# Reflection - Co - Design Collaborative Cards –a new research toolkit – prototype still to be printed and tested.



(Smith, 2025)

‘Moreover, the use of cards is a form of game, and has a playful nature. Such a strategy is suggested to **take pressure away from participants** and facilitate expression of personal experiences.’ (Alsherhri, 2020 p.11)

Idea of playing cards. **Cards are colour coded and placed in three stages**, inspired by the 6 hats ( Channell, 2021), traffic lights and Maslow hierarchy of needs. ( Maslow,2007, pp.3-4) Stage 1 Yellow - needs, stage 2 Red - trust and stage 3 green - communication and shared goals.

‘The foundation idea is that people gather and talk together, sharing ideas and experiences and thus learn from each other. **The cards can be used in the perspective of peer learning** – educational processes where peers interact with other peers interested in the same topic and learn with and from each other (Boud 1999).





Students welcomed the opportunity to co - create and welcomed the cards idea..

'Yeah, it can be weird when you first get in a group, so would help break the ice.' (LCC student, 2025)

Evidence from my questionnaire suggests that there are students that are collaborating well particularly when there is no language barrier.

'My first language is English; I do not really have any trouble communicating.' (LCC student, 2025)

I had to ensure that my own biases due to my own positionality did not affect my research.

'We acknowledge reflexivity as ambiguous and complex and consider how processes of reflexivity address researcher positionality, identity and power in research.' (Corlett and Mavin, 2018, p.4)

This was a good opportunity for students to express any concerns, and they felt safe to share. Using a questionnaire was a success.

'Not being heard, miscommunication, too many ideas.' (LCC, Student, 2025)

'I do not know if this counts, but I have been diagnosed with ADHD and that sometimes poses a problem for effective communication.' (LCC Student, 2025)

## Primary Research

Speaking with colleagues, peers and students – confirmed a gap and challenges when working collaboratively. The break down of understanding within a group can bring discord this was clear. The questionnaire also confirmed this.

'Conflict, lack of organisation, communicating.' (LCC student, 2025)

**Limitations** - Questionnaire was pivotal in this research project and formed the basis of this project. Nevertheless, this information was only captured from one course group at post graduate level with a sample of 17 students. This was limited. Further research will need to be conducted to have a more detailed account and summary.

## Reflections/summary of project findings

### Improvements -

Conducting a focus group would have also been a good way of receiving more in - depth feedback.

**Further development** - An area that I would like to further develop would be to create an instruction manual to accompany the collaborative cards. Due to time restraints, I was unable to do this. This would be useful for students and facilitators.

'Better understanding and encourage communication more effectively and actively.' (LCC Student, 2025)

Conducting this research, I was mindful and noted that the challenges students face in group work is not only about culture as pointed out by a student. However, this is a contributory factor that can affect how we work within a group. This was also made evident in my findings.

### Secondary Research

Reviewing data from UAL dashboard was helpful and offered an overview in terms of stats, but what happens to the students after this? Reviewing other case studies of co created cards was important to the project and helpful. I was able to use this information to refine my cards. (Alshehri et.al., 2020)(Liu, 2025) (Hornecker, 2010, pp. 101-108)

Using the Maslow (McLeod, 2007, pp. 3-4) ) theory highlighting the hierarchy of needs and Tuckman's theory although limited in places due to the linear approach brought structure to my project.

'The outcome of such deductive research will either strengthen the theory by verifying the hypothesis or weaken its explanatory power if the evidence and analysis do not support the hypothesis.' (Riazi and Candlin, 2014, p.3)

# Thinking Forward

‘Cultural identity matters in DEI because it forms a **vital part of an individual’s lived experience**. Ignoring cultural identities can perpetuate inequities and contribute to exclusionary practices. Conversely, recognising and **valuing cultural diversity strengthens equity by providing individuals with the opportunity to contribute fully and equitably** within an organisation or community. Inclusion of cultural identity promotes better understanding and communication among diverse groups.’ (Oxford Review, 2024)

## My takeaway from the project:

It has enabled me **to build better communication with students as a facilitator and to be culturally aware of my ways of working as an educator**. Our differences do not define who we are but strengthens our experiences of working collaboratively. DEI is an integral part of social purpose and collaboration in HE.

## To further develop:

- Print Collaborative working cards
- Create a user manual
- Test cards with MA students and other courses and cohort of students
- Receive further feedback from students at touch points practising longitudinal research
- Further research is required.
- **Creating more themes for cards according to students needs**  
(Hämäläinen, 1999, p.2)

## Impact on my practice:

The collaborative cards will be **used during Academic Support workshops** and will be implemented not only in collaborative sessions but can be integrated into any ice breakers with students for all workshops. This tool will enhance my practice.

## Challenges faced: Time

On reflection this was not a huge task to tackle for this was a continuation of my IP unit. **I did not factor in heavy work demands some areas could have been developed further. This causes for better time management and realistic planning**. However, this project is a reflexive research project and will be ongoing, the cycle will continue.

I had to increase the number of cards due to feedback and welcome/ etiquette.

## Overcome:

Scaled back on not completing the instruction manual and final production of the cards. The experience of the students shared and the co – creation of the cards enriched the project. As I say to my students, ‘It is about the journey not necessarily the outcome.’

# References to relevant literature for Presentation and Blog

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UAL spreadsheet ?

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My UA photographs of LCC library and black board

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# Questions

# Blog entries

# Student Questionnaire Example Analysis of Data

1.What do you <b>enjoy</b> and what do you find challenging about working collaboratively?	1.What do you enjoy and what do you find <b>challenging</b> about working collaboratively?
Reflection from findings-	Reflection from findings-
<p>Students enjoy generating ideas, working as a team and building relationships. These are key components to collaboration.</p>	<p>Students find Ideation, time management, building confidence, working as a team and communicating as the top 5 areas of challenges when it comes to collaboration. These are some of the areas that I can include when creating the collaboration cards. Using the cards as a vehicle of support.</p>

‘Results supported **student feedback as a valuable improvement tool, and powerful stimulus for teacher reflection.** Student feedback informed teachers on the effectiveness of their practice and identified areas for future professional learning. Additionally, it opened up a dialogue around teaching and learning in the classroom and gave the **teachers insights into the unique challenges experienced by their students.**’ (Mandouit, 2018, P.2)

‘Data analysis indicated that when controlling for the quality of the initial projects, **there was a significant relationship between the quality of peer feedback students provided for others and the quality of the students’ own final projects.**’ (Liu and Steckelberg , 2010, p.1)



- Does students' cultural backgrounds affect their group participation?
- Is creating safe spaces important to collaborative relationships?



# Ethics Action Plan

I completed **two** drafts for my tutor with **two** research questions.

**1. How can the awareness of cultural identity enhance collaborative learning experiences in higher education?**

This research question would focus on the **experience and interactions** of students.

## Action

- I made changes to my second draft for I wanted to focus on the **students experience rather than the pedological aspect.**
- Highlighting student's intersectionality was important to the project as well as their cultural identity.
- Ensuring that the paper **questionnaire was inclusive** by printing on coloured paper and having a mark making design option at the end of the survey for students. Offering alternative feedback.

Cultural identity is part of a person's being this also impacts other parts of a person's intersectionality's as shared by (Crenshaw, 2013)

**Cultural Collaborative Working Cards**

### Student Questionnaire

**Purpose:**  
I will be creating collaborative working cards to celebrate the diversity of our university community. Your answers will help design a meaningful set of cards that will help to achieve social purpose by acting as a prompt for effective collaborative working and contribute to an inclusive, empathetic and cohesive working environment.

This tool can be used in lectures and workshops to encourage self-expression, inclusion, and intercultural learning.

I would appreciate if you could answer the questions below as honestly and creatively as you would like.

1. What do you enjoy and what do you find challenging about working collaboratively?

Enjoy	Challenging
1. <u>talking to people</u>	1. <u>lack of communication</u>
2. <u>working in pairs</u>	2. <u>group others</u>
3. <u>sharing ideas</u>	3. <u>✓</u>

2. When working with someone on a project what are the key attributes that you look for? List in order of importance (1-7).

- 3 Effective communication skills
- 2 Active listening skills
- 6 Adaptability
- 2 Empathy
- 4 Conflict resolution
- 5 Reliable
- 1 Open mindedness

**Ethical Action Plan (500-750 words)\* Draft**

This document is a chance for you to **begin shaping your project** while thinking through its ethical considerations, implications, and responsibilities. We know this might feel early in your action research journey, but this short plan is here to help pin down your ideas and work-in-progress.

Use whatever writing format that suits you - lists, bullet points, statements or paragraphs - and follow the suggested links stated alongside some of the questions for guidance.

A good starting point is the [BERA Guidelines for Educational Research, fifth edition \(2024\)](#) alongside the ['Ethics Files and Resources'](#) on Moodle.

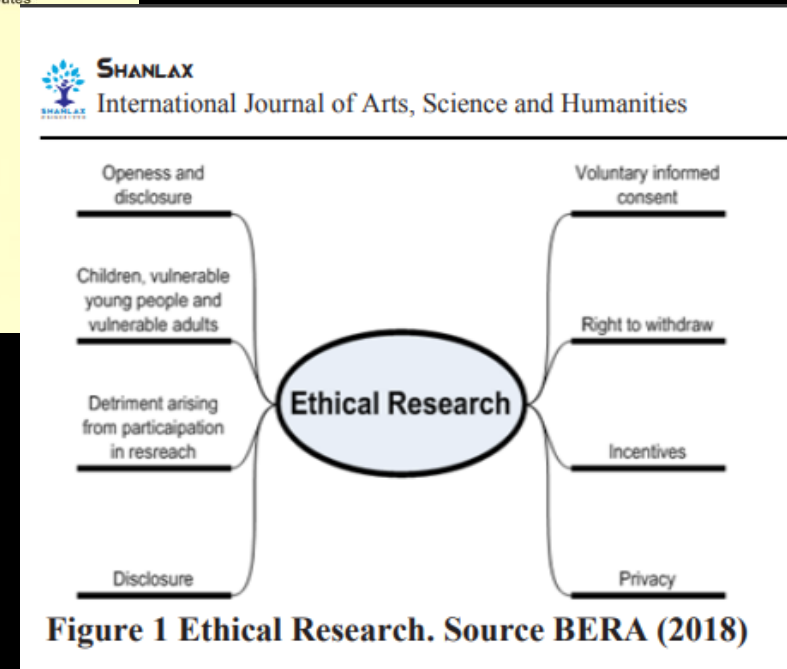
When you're ready, email your draft to your allocated tutor 48 hours in advance of your first group tutorial in the week commencing 6 October 2025, so it can help guide the focus of discussions and support your project development.

Name: Gem Smith  
Tutor: Mallika Kanyal  
Date: 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025

1. What is the working title of your project? Also write a few sentences about the focus of your project.

I currently have two working titles that I am trying to decide on: -

- How can the awareness of cultural identity enhance collaborative learning experiences in higher education?  
• This research question would be looking more at the **experience and interactions** of students.
- How does cultural identity shape the way that university students engage within a group when collaborating?  
• This research question would be concentrating on the **pedagogical perspective**.



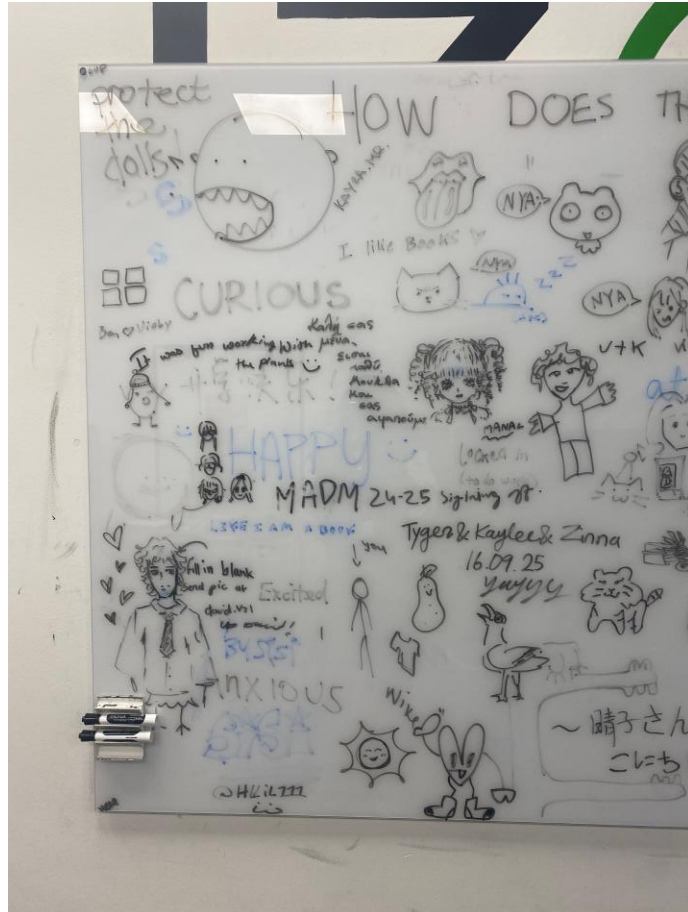
According to Kara (2015) ethics should underpin every step of a research project. From the first point of an idea to the last dissemination.

(Hall, 2020, p.2)

# Learning outcomes

- Learning outcomes 8
- Critically analyze how a social justice issue within your academic practice context **impacts student experience** [Knowledge] slide 3
- Develop a **feasible and detailed research design** [Enquiry] slide 8
- Design, **implement and review research methods** and instruments appropriate to your question [Process] slide 6
- **Synthesise your findings and present a critical evaluation** of your project in a coherent, context-sensitive manner. [Communication] slide 9

# Inspiration



# Thinking forward

- Time frame of my project – ongoing.
- Disseminate, iterate and further research and further scope to develop.
- Defining scope to identify action.
- Plans for further iterations and reflections on planning.

# Methods/Methodology

- Interviews
- Feedback
- Conversations
- Co creation
- Ethnography – immersing into the community
- Generative Design Method – Co – designing a Design/Research toolkit with and for students. Translating theory into practice.



# Case study -

- ‘Co-creation in learning can also challenge existing hierarchies between student and teacher and help to deliver meaningful learning experiences by constructing knowledge from their lived experience rather than through passive intake of information (Katz, 2021).’ p.3

Katz, C. (2021) ‘Splanetary urbanization’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 45(4), 597-611. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.13025>

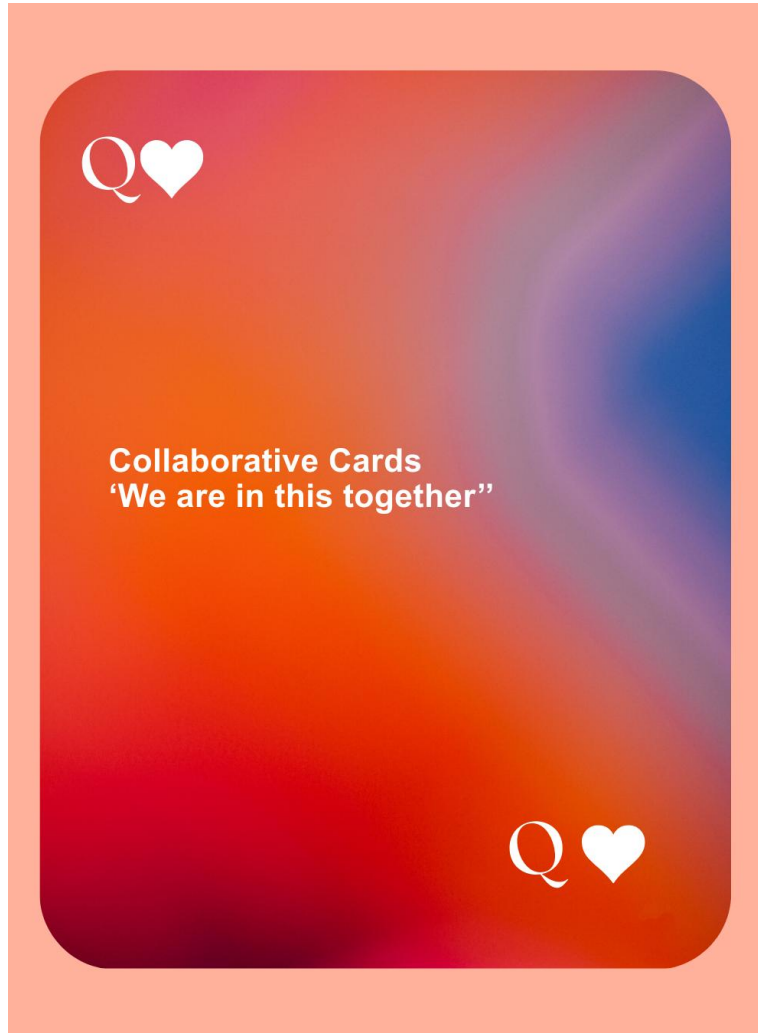
- ‘The method of co-created learning and teaching to develop new solutions with students, and for students, was key to this project.’ p.3
- Change makers at UCL – Co creating a toolkit to support communicating students research to a wider audience.

(Lee and Moore, 2024)

- Taken from:

Lee, S. and Moore, G. (2024). Co-creating a toolkit of resources and building knowledge share between students on how to communicate their own research to wider audiences. *Partnership and Change*, [online] 10(2), pp.1–15. Available at: <https://journals.studentengagement.org.uk/index.php/studentchangeagents/article/view/1269/928> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2026].

# Sample Designs



Front cover design 1



Front cover design 2

# Food



**What is your favourite food combination and why, share your ideas?**



# Travel



**Where is the best place that you have travelled to and state why?**



# Original context – Background/Research question

- – Opening. Catch attention/context background. Social justice and professional context in brief. Extension from my IP unit. Show the links. Have questions posed. Interior design background. Inclusive collaborative working highlighting intersectionality not just culture identity and ways of working.
- Scale
- Look back at my IP unit.
- the social justice and professional context

# Rationale for selecting topic/intervention

- this could be personal and / or professional, also backed up by literature. Relate to my practice. Duration of my project. My short time with students as AS. Initially 3 stages but feel that this will go beyond. My role.
- About me:
- Highlight intersectionality IP unit formed basis of project.Crenshaw.
- What I did?
- Who with?
- My intersections



## Reflection Research Method/s used

- How gathered data.
- evidence of process, methods of data collection and analysis
- Questionnaire, interviews etc my findings. Evidence of processes, method data collection and analysis. Show examples. How many students participated. What cohort of students included and how this can be used for other students. What were the constraints? What was my autonomy? Colour paper yellow. advantages and disadvantages of methods.
- Ethnography, interviews, feedback, questionnaire, participant observation, mixed method, co design, Participatory approach. Show examples
- Quantitative and qualitative.
- Participatory.

# Reflections/summary of project findings

- Time constraintsTime constraints
- Production of cards
- Striking an equal balance between cultural awareness and ways of working
- What changes did the project go through? (e.g. attitudes, ideas, ways of working...)
- • What worked and what didn't? What were the strengths in your work? What needed more practice?
- What changes did the project go through? (e.g. attitudes, ideas, ways of working...)
- • What inspired you / what brought you joy? What can you celebrate?
- • What caused blocks or barriers and how did you overcome them?
- • Have you experimented enough and gained any skills?
- • What ideas has it given you for the future?
- Speaking to colleagues.
- Show snippets of students feedback on slide
- Limitations??
- **what you found out, including from your primary and / or secondary materials, you might want to provide more critical reflections on the project here**
- **LO4: Synthesise your findings and present a critical evaluation of your project in a coherent, context-sensitive manner. [Communication]**

# Research findings

- Pie charts etc. students comments. Summary of project findings.
- what you found out, including from your primary and / or secondary materials, you might want to provide more critical reflections on the project here.
- Student voice.
- Critically analyse how a social justice issue within your academic practice context impacts student experience.
- Thematic analysis.
- Difficulties and successes