PgCert Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication

Action Research Project Ethical Enquiry Form

Participant name: Sarah Ee

Cohort: 3 (Wed online)

Tutor name/ Liz Bunting / Rachel Marsden

1. **What is your research question?**

How can learning bookbinding skills enhance access to learning for students with unseen, intersectional disabilities and/or neurodivergence? Can multi-sensory approaches reduce barriers to teaching and learning?

The aim of this enquiry is to open conversations around reducing the attainment gap for marginalised students and to examine ways of re-thinking and re-constructing notions of what a book is (for), who can make/write them, and how bookbinding might be framed as an autonomous tool for reducing barriers to learning, processing new learning, housing visual artefacts and bridging gaps between theory and creative practice.

I came to this enquiry as a result of processing my own learning on the PgCert. I had found the first unit very challenging and to help me process the new theory, policies and practices I was engaging with I made a small 'book'. This helped me to compartmentalise and reflect on different aspects of the unit. Conversations with colleagues at UAL revealed there was a lack of information available to lecturers on (disclosed) student disability, which presented challenges to designing inclusive learning. It also came light that there is a disparity on disclosure of disability and/or specific learning differences (SpLD) between white, home students, students of colour and international students, the latter two being much less likely to disclose disability and/or SpLD or to seek support.

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

Up to 20 BA Textile Design students have signed up to participate in the Bookbinding workshop. This has been arranged for 5th December 2023 through a sign-up on Moodle and has been agreed with the course leader. I will invite students to provide feedback verbally and through responding to a questionnaire. I have not saught to target students who self-identify as disabled and/or neurodivergent because I would like the workshop to be as inclusive as possible. It is important that I make the workshop available to all year groups as this will provide broader responses from students at different stages of their undergraduate learning journey within UAL.

I have approached a member of UAL staff with expert knowledge in disability services, and obtained written agreement for their participation in my research project. I plan to conduct an interview with this member of staff via email.

3. **What will you be asking participants to do?**

I will ask student participants to engage with a bookbinding workshop and to provide verbal and written feedback. I will ask participants to provide verbal and written feedback, in the form of a questionnaire (written using dyslexia-friendly fonts and emojis).

Questions:

1. What did you enjoy most about the workshop and learning bookbinding? Why?

2. What did you find most challenging? Why?

3. If you identify as having a 'disability', or specific learning difference how do you think making 'books' might enhance your learning experience and/or creative practice?

4. How might this new skill help you bridge any gaps between the theoretical and practical learning on the BA Textile Design course?

I will ask the staff member to respond to questions relating to their experience of working with students with unseen, intersectional disability and/or specific learning differences. Questions will be sent via email.

I will document my findings by writing notes on my observations and dialogue with participants. I will photograph activities during the workshop and the work produced by student participants.

The workshop will include the following:

- A short ice-breaker activity.

- Brief introduction to my project, the workshop, and slideshow of a selection of artists' books.

- Sharing and inviting participants to handle and discuss books I have produced within my creative practice.

- I will provide demonstrations on paper folding and book construction, and basic technical information.

- Participants engage in making books using their own sketches and/or fabrics. I will provide support to individuals as required and photograph making processes.

- Participants will share and discuss their work in small groups. I will observe, take photographs and contribute to discussions.

- Students will be invited to respond to the questionnaire and to ask questions.

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

I provided an information sheet about my project two weeks prior to the workshop, including my email address to receive any queries. I will ask participants to sign a consent form at the start of the workshop and provide the option to opt-out, whilst still being able to take part in activities.

I considered that providing information about my research project to potential participants may negatively impact the numbers that sign-up to the workshop. I also considered whether retrospective consent would be a better approach however, I do not feel this is an honest way to obtain data. To date I have obtained full sign-up to the workshop therefore providing information about my project prior to the workshop does not appear to have impacted numbers.

My introduction will include information about my pedagogical approach, my interest in social justice and in opening spaces for diverse student voices to be heard and acted on.

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

The use of sharp tools (scalpel, awl) presents a potential health risk. Participants will have undergone initial health and safety induction sessions. Safe use of equipment and tools will be covered during demonstrations and I will vigilant during making activities to ensure participants are adhering to safety advice.

Barriers to access or participation in the workshop might be due to timing - the last week of term means some international students may have already returned to their home country, also some students may feel drained after meeting recent assessment deadlines.

There is a potential privacy risk in that participants may feel uncomfortable with sharing, or having their work photographed despite haven given prior consent. I will ask each participant at the time, for verbal confirmation of their consent for me to document their work visually. I will reiterate that the work and responses documented will not be shared with external parties and will only be seen by myself, my assessors and PgCert peers within UAL.

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

The use of sharp tools (scalpel, awl) presents a potential health risk. During demonstrations I need ensure I take my time and focus fully on my actions; participants will be asked to observe quietly and ask questions after, not during demonstrations.

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

I anticipate there will be some participants with unseen disabilities, learning and/or language differences. To safeguard vulnerable adults I will:

- Provide written information in a dyslexia friendly font, using accessible language, coloured backgrounds (to reduce visual stress)

- Create a relaxed environment by: inviting people to express their thoughts and needs, remaining mindful that some may not feel comfortable speaking to the whole group; inviting participants to chose where they sit; showing interest in each individual and their work; asking open questions; encouraging informal dialogue; inviting people to take breaks when required

- Invite participants to work at their own pace, and provide support as and when required (ie. repeat demonstrations, observe individuals' progress)

- Provide positive praise throughout the practical activities

- Encourage reflection, verbal, written and/or visual

- Provide reassurance if and when mistakes are made, communicating an approach that centres making making as central to the learning process

- Use accessible language throughout the workshop, explaining any technical terms in detail

- Provide space and time for participants to ask questions

- Value and foreground participants prior knowledge and expertise

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

Names and/or student identifiers will not be attached to questionnaires, photographs, interview transcripts or in the documentation of my project.

All data used or shared will be anonymised.

Data will be stored on an external hard drive only accessible by myself.

I will retain the information indefinitely for my own professional development. I will seek further consent from participants should I wish to use any data at a future time.

I confirm my responsibility to deliver the project in accordance with the Code of Practice on Research Ethics of the University of the Arts London (the University). In signing this form I am also confirming that:

a) **The form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.**
b) **I understand and accept that the ethical propriety of this project may be monitored by the relevant College Research body and/or the University's Research Ethics Sub-Committee.**

Signed: __Sarah Ee_____ Date: ____2 December 2023_____

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____