

GSA Learning and Teaching: Creative Education as a Creative Sustainable Practice: How and what do we teach to meet the needs and ambitions of our creative communities?

Embedding Equality Diversity and Inclusion in creative education: strategies conceived through standalone EDI development workshops and holistic implementation of these strategies into a STE(A)M curriculum.

INTRO

CONTEXT: The BDes Sound for Moving Image programme recruits directly into Stage 3, articulating from HND (or from mature students with relevant experience).

OUR ACTION: The rapid jump from Further Education to Higher Education means that Equality Diversity and Inclusion is an urgent priority in this programme, to ensure students are **empowered, inspired and motivated** –

WHY?: as they may never have expected to be welcomed into an art school, due to societal inequalities experienced.

WRITTEN INTO THE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES: We support students to “conceptualise and justify the use of innovative methods and creative making with sound and moving image in order to interrogate personal, cultural or societal issues”.

IMPLEMENTATION

TEACHING METHODS:

This presentation will showcase teaching methods that celebrate neurodiversity;

HORIZONTAL PROJECT: accessible multi-sensory activities to foster collaborative creativity (such as analogue experimental film generation using optical devices and improvised music practices using “noise-makers”).

GENDER, COLONIALISM: CRITIQUING HARMFUL PAST PRACTICES WHILST SPOTLIGHTING INCLUSIVE PRACTICE, AND CROWDSOURCING SOLUTIONS Also featured are curricula on:

gender diversity and social justice,

- through critiquing the male gaze in cinema
- and the colonialism or class disparities in soundscape practices –
- then spotlighting artists who propose alternative inclusive practices.

The presentation will weave together insights from:

- the 2024 Equality Impact Assessment
- the 5-year reflection on an Associate Student Scheme in a Further Education College written with Widening Participation
- key reflections and strategies conceived during EDI staff and student development activities co-led by staff from GSA Library, International Foundation Programme, Architecture, and Marketing and Recruitment.
 - Together we discovered methods to build **pro-active inclusive recruitment** practices (sharing diverse student voices in recruitment materials)
 - **continue de-colonising curriculum** (spotlighting role model practitioners from minoritized groups in curriculum).

EDI WORKSHOP

The **staff** workshop was run as a panel discussion from experts across GSA, with a Q&A from a representative sample of the SimVis Academic team (Head of UG, a Lecturer in Interactive Audio and a Lecturer in Academic Skills - facilitated by PL BDes Sound).

The **student** workshop was run as a series of activities on a Miro board, first asking students to reflect on positive and negative experiences in cultural contexts outside of the GSA, then moving on to strategies to increase a gender balance, decolonise the curriculum, widen representation (spotlighting practice from underrepresented communities in STE(A)M, e.g. women, LGBTQIA+ and POC).

Both workshops began with a 20-minute introduction into how SimVis will pro-actively align with the new Equality Outcomes, analysing population data and explaining the impact of COVID and Anti-Racism movements in our objectives. In this introduction, we demystified some key terms (e.g. Decolonising the Curriculum), and established the motivations for the workshops in the context of:

- GSA's wider strategic plans, and acting on the results of SimVis Periodic Review and the Enhancement Led Institutional Review.
- Staff and Student experiences, evaluating the radical shifts in our society in 2020 as a result of:
 - the COVID-19 pandemic
 - and the other pandemic for which there is no vaccine (Brathwaite Shirley 2020) - that of systemic racism, unconscious bias, and the health/economic inequalities that come as a result.

Overall, these workshops have been a way to:

- pool our resources (across schools)
- to celebrate the good teaching practice
- to celebrate the equality, diversity and inclusion themes INHERENT in current and previous students' work
- and to reflect on challenges we have run into in the past (and prepare for challenges coming our way in the future).

- Ania Rolinka equips international students with the confidence to communicate in English and in Art School terminology, introducing them to concepts such as psychogeography.
- Bobbie and Bridget ensure students are empowered in their self-directed research, and that staff feel supported in building diverse resource lists (of texts, documentaries, radio, archive footage) for brand new courses from scratch (otherwise known as "Project Argo!")
- Isabel in Architecture has extended an invites to the School of Architecture Equalities Working Group, and acted as sounding board to review how EDI Architecture activities could be applied to SimVis.
- Beckie (and Jacquie) have ensured staff can let prospective students hear why SimVis @ GSA is the department for them – sharing our introduction videos, facilitating Q+A in an online open day that has a wider reach than ever. Next, we will try to broaden our reach so that under-represented communities can discover how we pro-actively support our students, promoting inclusion within a welcoming research environment, and we can support them through taster activities.
- Also, thanks to Scott, Leona and the team at Learning Support for encouraging students to "Speak their Mind" in academic contexts, and to overcome hurdles of dyslexia, anxiety, adjusting to higher education and more acute accessibility needs. A reminder that Scott and Leona are available for all students, they do not need to have a disclosed disability.

- **include student testimonies - tailor language and imagery to the targeted region or the imbalance.**
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- At SimVis, in the Sound department, 2020-2021 was the first academic year where MDes has 50/50 gender split, and 2021-2022 will be first year BDes has the same. (Often sound/engineering courses have 5% female representation, and we often had 20%). There is an opposite gender imbalance in jewellery silversmithing and fashion - they want more male students!

An example: a techie course might want to up female numbers. What works: **include language around design, conceptual thinking, artistic rationales, studio community - not just the technology.** Try to spark their interest in other areas.

KEY: spotlight the student testimonial - applicants will trust the student more than the staff, feeling they are definitely honest, open and use transparent language (not ART SCHOOL SPEAK).

LIB

A key principle of our teaching at SimVis is that it is connected – that means it is a two-way exchange of ideas – tutors deliver content but we also make space for your evaluations of that content. We often learn from students’ cultural experiences too – it’s a symbiosis, rather than a rigid, repeated structure! We find out what each of your artistic rationales are, tailor our courses to support you and fill in the gaps. An exciting way to start the week in the BDes Sound is that I give students a few minutes to share links to films, games, books, art, culture that has inspired them this week (or that they have enjoyed). These are often highly-emotive wake up calls about racism (Steve McQueen’s Small Axe), escapist science documentaries (Daniel Soares’ Planet Hunter), award winning musical scored animations (Atticus Ross, Jon Baptiste, Trent Reznor’s Score for Pixar’s Soul).

These are not limited to our weekly briefing social catch ups – but inherent throughout the curriculum. Students can choose from a selection of readings each week – its’ totally fine if they pick the shortest one –

- many pick a reader, overview text which condenses film history and politics from accessible form;
- some pick a primary source from a historical film director, such as the Soviet Montage filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein’s Montage is Conflict from 100 years ago
- or Guy Debord’s The Society of the Spectacle, a situationist manifesto.

Students provide 100 word responses to course materials on an interactive padlets, and share in zoom breakout rooms– **what if these were available on the Resource List as student reviews?**

1. STUDENT WORKSHOP

In the student workshop there were four activities:

- Positive and Negative Cultural Experience
- Gender Balance (and Gender, LGBTQIA+ issues more generally)

- Decolonising
- Accessibility

All the while keeping with Inclusive + Pro-active Recruitment Strategies in mind.

Analysis of activities

Activity 1a. Learning from positive Cultural Context Events – what could SimVis implement?

There is a full transcript available for further analysis – but for this report findings are taken from the Miro Board contributions.

Students were asked: “*What has been your most **positive** event/museum experience you can remember (conferences, exhibitions, performances, film festival Q+A, community event)?*”

- Was it engaging? Why do you think your attention was maintained?*
- Was it informative? Can you recall any key facts or insights that you learned?*
- Was it interactive?*
- Was it fun? Why?*
- Was the content relevant to your personal history or learning desires?*
- Did you feel included or excluded (culturally or in terms of limited accessibility?) - if included, how was this?”*

Students answered by sharing specific events or organisations which made them feel included, engaged, informed, like they were interacting, having fun, relevant to their personal history/learning desires. This included organisations where people from underrepresented communities were spotlighted as guest speakers, or pro-actively invited to participate in a range of activities - from cinema, to music to skating! These included:

- Document Film Festival
- SQIFF – Scottish Queer International Film Festival
- Pushing Borders (diversity in skating online event – student doing an AR app to make skating more inclusive)
- Goodpush Foundation
- Africa in Motion Digital Hub
- Café Flicker, Glasgow – LGBTQIA+ and International Backgrounds
- Skateboobs/Skatebirds – Doyenne Beginner Skate Sessions
- Women in Sound Women on Sound
- Nightwave Producer Girls (Violet)
- Skate Kitchen (a film)
- Melissa Parker Uye Guest lecture, electronic music production workshop (SimVis)
- Soma School, Red Bull Academy Event
- “The feeling of participating of women run events”

Activity 1b. Learning from negative Cultural Context Events - what could SimVis avoid?

Students were asked: “What has been your most **negative** event/museum experience you can remember (conferences, exhibitions, performances, film festival Q+A), community event?

- Was it engaging? Why do you think your attention was maintained?
- Was it informative? Can you recall any key facts or insights that you learned?
- Was it interactive?
- Was it fun? Why?
- Was the content relevant to your personal history or learning desires?
- Did you feel included or excluded (culturally or in terms of limited accessibility?) - if excluded, why was this?”

Students shared more abstract ways in which they felt excluded from cultural contexts outside of the GSA, where they had felt:

- Language was exclusionary [i.e. not written in plain language, jargon, or not clearly referenced or explained to a lay audience]
- Physical exhaustion – due to there being nowhere to sit in a large museum space, even ending up leaning on a wall
- audio guides can stop you communicating with other visitors
- the percentage of female/male artists @ MAT [*at the met? Influenced by the image from Guerilla Girls, see Figure 1)
- “People with technology” [unsure what this refers to]
- That it was too busy
- Or they felt “spatially excluded”

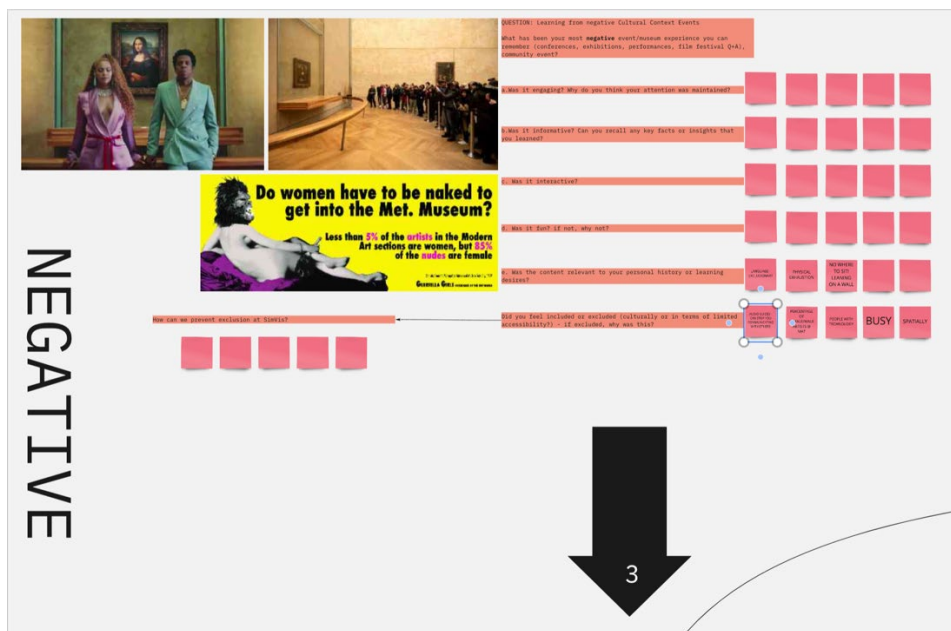


Figure 1: Physical barriers around the Mona Lisa and the cultural barriers highlighted by Guerilla Girls used as a prompt for the student workshop.

Activity 2. GENDER

Students were asked:

“ *ACTIVITY 2a: Can you think of ways to encourage gender balance in STAFF/STUDENT recruitment?*****

- *Can you think of a moment in GSA (or in school, college or other universities) where the gender of your tutor had an impact on your experience?*
- *did you have many staff, mentors, role models of your gender?*
- *did it matter? if not why not?”*

In response, a student identified Melissa Uye Parker as a role model (a SimVis guest speaker teaching Sound production in Ableton). Another student shared the experience of doing Audio Technology at a Further Education College, where only the last year had a female tutor – when she was included it was encouraging, as she could look up to her. It was also a novelty having a female colleague in their class at SimVis, compared to FE where she was the only one.

A student wrote it was “positive to feel included in GSA”, and another shared it was “fun to have other people to communicate”. There was an experience shared that a student had always been in classes that were “female dominated, where two out of 20 were guys, and the teachers were 50/50” – confirming that the gender imbalance is highly context dependent (as Beckie pointed out).

Finally, one student recalled that in their experience “female teachers were stricter” – without further background knowledge it is hard to know if this was a common experience in that institution, or if this perception could be to do with gendered behavioural expectations.

We concluded it is very encouraging when members of staff pro-actively share practitioner role models from all genders (such as Hedy Lamarr, or Sisters with Transistors documentary) (especially if that staff member identifies as male).

Then, students were asked:

“ *ACTIVITY 2b: Can you think of ways to encourage gender representation in SUBJECT MATTER, or course material?*****

To this, a student responded that they do not usually think about who writes the academic papers they read, “its more what they do” rather than it being “related to their gender”, and could remember examples of “both” (*perhaps all?) genders in the class reading list.

Students were further prompted with this question - “*Can you think of a film/TV show/video game/novel/art exhibition etc, where the gender of the maker (or the gender of character) was important? If so, why?”*

To which students shared:

- The Morning Show (its main theme is sexual misconduct and the Me Too Movement in the US TV industry.
- Feel Good (on Netflix)
- And Joey Soloway's TIFF keynote speech The Female Gaze.

Activity 3. DECOLONISING

From the Lecturers' perspective, we have found what is really important when delivering curriculum-embedded "difficult topic" classes with issues around EDI:

- trigger warnings
- optional pre-watch material
- breaks
- Small group discussions in breakout rooms, and prepared responses to texts are also crucial so students don't feel put on-the-spot in the larger group discussion.

Students were asked:

“ *ACTIVITY 3A: Widening Representation + Questioning Dominant Ideologies *****

Can you think of ways SimVis has widened representation in the curriculum so far?

how we might deliver content addressing:

- *gender bias*
- *racial bias*
- *or historic ideologies in cinema/immersive technologies.*

Can you share an example from your classes, where content addressed gender biases, racial biases or questioned dominant ideology in your field? add below

- *how was this delivered? (live lecture, seminar, asynchronous lecture w/trigger warnings?) “*

In response, students shared that there was a “natural discussion on gender bias in games / online platforms”, recommended <https://www.twitch.tv/negaoryx>, and discussed “community interactions – with female advocates exposing harassment behavior.”

Then students were asked:

“ *ACTIVITY 3B: Can you identify a media artefact with anger-inducing ideology?*****

search for a

- *piece of music*
- *clip from a game or film or a sound online*

that you feel has problematic or outdated representation/ideology, or led to protest activity at its release.

For example - Daniel's rage at the entirety of Skyfall”

Here students provided a playlist of media which angered them. For some, this was due to transphobic perspective of a main protagonist whom the audience is identifying with (in Ace Ventura Pet

Detective), or transphobia in the hyperbolic monster characterisation of Buffalo Bill in the Silence of the Lambs, similarly seen in Norman Bates' dressing as his Mother in Psycho.

There was a nuanced discussion of the homophobia exhibited by protagonists in the US Sitcom Friends, but constructively sharing they were re-watching it and recognising it is outdated. We discussed how Disney are keeping nearly all their outdated films (with caricatured stereotypes of different races) available on Disney+, but placing content warnings and apologies at the start of the film (along with their pro-active Stories Matter initiative, to try to prevent future racism in new films).

(Another general inclusion was "Films from the 80s").

On a more positive note, students were asked to...

"*ACTIVITY 3C identify a media "role model"? *****

a clip from a

- game
- film
- immersive experience
- or exhibit...

that restores your faith in humanity (presents a hopeful shift towards equality or at least awareness of inequality) "

Here students shared:

- Pose
- Hannah Fry – Inspirational Female in tech
- Reni Eddo Lodge podcast about race
- Schitts Creek
- Feel Good
- Loki
- Exposure of the colonial assimilation boarding schools in Anne of Green Gables
- The Wave (2008) German Film
- It's a Sin
- Joe Lycett
- Marie Claire Isaaman, CEO of Women in Games
- Mynameisjoely
- Lucifer – subversion of a villain
- "I Need Diverse Games"
- ContraPoints
- Diaries of a Spaceport Janitor.

This activity continues in the BDes Weekly briefings where we make a playlist of role model content (often along EDI principles) every week.

Activity 4. ACCESSIBILITY

Students were asked:

*“ ***ACTIVITY 4a*** What kind of class activity has felt the most accessible to you? Why?*

e.g. live discussions? breakout rooms? live lectures ? or pre-recorded? peer to peer critiques? asynchronous activities?

Students replied that the most accessible activities included:

- “Online = accessible during medical situations, where [they] would not have been able to go to buildings”
- “Pre-recorded lectures or zoom session recordings to see what lecturers were saying at the time” [for repeat viewings in case they misunderstood a detail – live transcripts on zoom are brilliant to help comprehension in live scenarios]
- Sometimes during live lectures WIFI was bad so recordings were essential
- On LinkedIn Learning students could “learn the stuff you want to learn specifically – computing”

More recently students have been shown the Immersive Reader feature on canvas – where they can choose the font, background and text colour, have it read aloud in English or even translated to a language of their choice.

A student also shared their appreciation of a paper-like tablet device “Remarkable” – and requested that Digital Inclusion might source these (whilst a recommendation can be made to IT, the student was told this will likely be unfeasible due to the premium price tag – but still worth asking. It may be something the GSA Library can loan out to individual students).

When asked “*Has there been any challenges regarding accessibility?*” students shared the difficulty in not having access to a printer during lockdowns, trying to read things online. Students were keen to access the GU Library.

Students were then asked:

*“ ***ACTIVITY 4b: Accessibility as the subject matter of your work / classes ****

Can you think of ways you have covered accessibility as the subject matter in your studio work or essays? Please add below

*Are there ways you have considered accessibility in your own practice?
or, can you think of ways it has been covered in the curriculum?*

**** ACTIVITY 4c: Any research activities or outreach projects which influence your practice? ****

A student shared the Scottish Neurodiverse Performance Network

<https://autismideasinmidlothian.com/2020/02/04/scottish-neurodiverse-performance-network/>

2. GSA HR: Equality Impact Assessment Training

In this session we split into groups to critique existing EIA paperwork from Student Recruitment and Staff Recruitment policies.

It was decided that these methods should be used at GSA:

- ensuring our recruitment page has a clear, overt statement on EDI, modelled on this excellent example <https://www.arts.ac.uk/working-at-ual/staff-diversity>
- blind shortlisting recruitment to prevent affinity bias/confirmation bias
- Diversity of panels - can be from another course, or school or even from an external organisation
- Greater clarity for applicants who may have accessibility requirements meaning the high pressure interview (in person or online) may place them at a disadvantage.
- Clarification for applicants on the resources available to support additional needs upon arrival at GSA (within the EIA itself).

3. CONCLUSION

Overall, these consultations kicked off fascinating conversations, which we intend to keep going, embedded within the curriculum. There are several concrete actions which SimVis staff can adopt to achieve our objectives.

The objectives are:

1. DO: Share our new strategy for inclusive staff and student recruitment + integrate students' suggestions. (regarding gender balance, accessibility and boosting POC representation to make GSA representative of the Glasgow population)
2. CONTINUE: our existing work on decolonizing curriculum, by collecting and acting on students' feedback.

The actions include:

- RECRUITMENT:
 - welcome exchanges/study abroad to diversify the population – emphasise GSA prestige and careers networks
 - include student testimonies in recruitment materials – trust and authenticity.
 - tailor language and imagery in recruitment videos to the targeted region or the imbalance.
 - In recruitment materials include language around design, conceptual thinking, artistic rationales, studio community - not just the technology.
 - CampusPress for autonomous SimVis showcasing of work and targeting recruits
 - Overt outline of EDI principles in Staff and Student recruitment pages
- DECOLONISING:

- GSA Library Keylinks could include student reviews
- ACCESSIBILITY
 - Maintaining the heightened accessibility that comes with Blended Learning (inc. pre-recorded lecture videos, live transcripts, lecture capture of live demos)
 - Inviting GSA Support Department staff to Weekly briefings and/or to relevant classes.
 - SimVis staff members participation on the Pre-Sessional English course/International Foundation Programme (PL on BDes has contributed since 2018, Lecturer in Academic Skills keen to contribute too.)
- STUDENT DIALOGUE:
 - Continuous collaboration on Gender, Decolonising and accessibility – sharing dialogue with students about their positive and negative cultural experiences outside of GSA, and shared critiquing of both anger-inducing ideologies or EDI role models in their media consumption/participation. This can be in class discussions and also in weekly briefings
 - continuous additions to the EDI Resources Padlet and/or Interaction Miro (from Staff and Students) – and signposting of where it is situated in the canvas pages (SimVis community homepage, and BDes Canvas Pages at the moment)

FORTH VALLEY COLLEGE

The most successful session I believe is the “Anatomy of the Soundtrack” workshop – as students are introduced to key theories on film sound in an interactive short lecture and then they get to implement these theories in a scaffolded practical exercise. The students are asked to build a soundtrack for a muted film clip, importing tracks from an expansive sound and music library (catalogued by BDes SfMI staff). Students are allowed to choose from a selection of movie clips, including:

- a stylised slow-motion fight scene in a Hollywood blockbuster
- a clip from German Expressionist silent cinema
- an emotionally ambiguous opening sequence from a social realist Brazilian art-house film
- to the iconic mazing through haunted hotel corridors from Stanley Kubrick

The task has been particularly empowering when students complete it either immediately after/or in the week following the lecture so they can cement their learning – and crucially the students then share their work and engage in their first GSA-style peer review, receiving feedback and suggestions. A bond is formed between staff and students, as the students showcase their creativity (and sense of humour!) as they are encouraged to subvert genre expectations. For example, students elicit a laugh when they superimpose a musical love theme over a film clip of a character first meeting a ghostly apparition.

IMPACT: Some students include this task as one of their portfolio items for admission. It encourages analytical thinking, conceptualisation, and awareness of context which are all marking criteria in admissions, so it actually prepares them better for interview. It reassures students that art school critique can be fun, playful and rewarding – breaking a pre-conception that art school critique is mysterious, pretentious, or harsh. It raises their confidence that they already have practical skills that it takes to apply to art school – skills that can be sharpened by working in GSA.

The “Introduction to Critical Studies” workshop provides students with an example book chapter extract, and encourages them to reply to this seminal theorist – to empower them to be part of an academic conversation. They are shown how to do detective work, to learn why an author has their worldview perhaps due to their affiliated institution or industry practice. It reassures students who are less confident with essay writing that the course has built-in supportive discussion tasks and that students learn to understand the texts together, rather than Critical Studies being an exclusionary comprehension test.

IMPACT: Once at GSA, students from the Associate Scheme often participate the most in Critical Studies small groups and support their peers from other colleges through the analysis of texts.

The “Degree Show Tour” excites students as they see the diversity of worldviews and personalisation of artistic practice from student to student – they are shown what is possible after completing the challenging project briefs at GSA, and are happy to learn about the Media Studio library of exhibition hardware, the 3D Making workshops and our spatial audio dubbing studios.

IMPACT: Seeing the breadth of work created by graduating students, associate students gain a better understanding of the degree programme, whether it is the right fit for them, and some insight into creating their own portfolios for entry. Graduates – where possible, former FVC associates – usually participate in these sessions by describing their work, answering questions and offering advice. This is a valuable opportunity for associates to learn about the programme and the transition from college from students who have travelled a similar route.

During the “Library Tour” the associate students meet the librarians and identify sound related books and archive material. Students are shown a plethora of accessibility tools and they are told about

Individual Requirements Forms to support those with neurodivergence or disabilities. They are excited to see the student-published zine library and see posters advertising exhibitions or gigs in the student community. This trip is enhanced by walking to the Student Support department and other buildings on the Garnethill campus. Students are encouraged that seeing art exhibitions and going to film Q+As is also a form of research (beyond reading books!) as we walk to the cultural neighbours the Centre of Contemporary Arts and Glasgow Film Theatre.

IMPACT: the library tour has encouraged students to trust librarians as a resource who can help them with research for essays and documentary projects, and they discover that they can supplant book reading with live engagement in the cultural context.

In the “Introduction to Experimental Research” I show them the physiological monitors and questionnaires that were used in our ambisonic soundlab, in my doctoral research, Immersive Soundscapes to Elicit Anxiety in Exposure Therapy: Physical Desensitization and Mental Catharsis.

IMPACT: This workshop spotlights another career path possible upon graduating BDes Sound for Moving Image, alternative to the film or game industry. It also reinforces the interdisciplinary nature of the School of Simulation and Visualisation – that we work at the intersection of art and science.

The “Portfolio Guidelines” session demystifies what we are looking for during the admissions process, and it is a great advantage to the Associate Scheme students that they receive formative feedback on their portfolio-in-progress prior to submission.

IMPACT: This insight into the portfolio and interview means associates often present more diverse portfolios and there is usually a long-term positive impact for the applicants who include at least:

- one narrative film clip re-sound design
- one field recording/soundscape work
- one work with self-shot imager
- one interactive game sound example
- one example of a live event or team collaboration in a professional setting.

Beyond improved confidence at interview, the positive impact is that these students are more confident when they are given the studio project briefs at GSA – they are much more self-sufficient when it comes to booking out camera equipment or coding a game in Unity 3D, than the students who produce an exclusively music-based portfolio, e.g. of five songs from a similar genre that they have recorded and mixed.

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Student Feedback

Although participation has been low, we successfully collected feedback from some of the 2018/19 and 2019/20 associate students who progressed to the BDes SfMI from FVC. Four students from the 2018/19 group were surveyed in person and two students from the 2019/20 cohort completed an online survey. As a new undergraduate programme, the students credited the associate scheme with introducing not just the programme, but also the subject, to the HND class. Several associates noted that learning about the subject gave them a new way to focus their learning and a goal to work towards. The introduction to critical studies was well received by all participants who seemed both ready and hungry for the opportunity to think and talk more critically about their subject. All of the students recognised the differences and similarities between the HND and the BDes and how the Associate Scheme bridged any gaps. It was clear from the feedback that the HND had prepared them with appropriate technical and project management skills. They noted that there was little to no critical discussion of their work on the HND and how much they enjoyed the opportunity to engage with these discussions during workshops on the Scheme. Similarly, critical and contextual studies are

not part of the HND, so all found the introduction of this area of study useful and exciting. Both the staff at the college and GSA were commended for their support and expertise throughout.

Student Feedback Quotes:

“I can’t praise Ronan and Jessica enough for their understanding and support through both personal and classwork”

“[The GSA tutors] were very helpful as you could book a meeting with them whenever one was needed, and personally my tutor cares about the students so you get more help than even expected”

“the HND prepared [me] well and had me versed in many different tasks, from video editing, audio restoration and creating studio designs, there wasn’t really any practical tasks I was clueless with and could approach them all with confidence”

“Having access to the resources the scheme gave me helped me to get a handle on what I was actually aiming for. It gave me a solid goal. I felt included in something far bigger than myself, which honestly isn't something I'm used to.”

“[The Associate Student Scheme] gave me something to aim for; something to focus on. I work better when I have a goal, and before I knew about the scheme I literally had no idea what I was going to do after I left FVC. The scheme gave me a sense that there was something to achieve, and the potential for more afterwards.”

Re: Intro to Critical Studies “Very interesting stuff and new for me. I started [to] notice things more. Very inspiring.”

“All three of the days that we spent talking and going to see what and how the SFTMI course at the GSA worked was all very exciting and interesting and made me want to try and aim to pass my course with the marks to get into this course.”

[In this promotional film created in July 2021](#), former FVC Associate Student, Molly Schutten, shares her experience

EQIA

Activities informing the Common Academic Framework

1. Recruitment from HOME: Further Education/MD20/MD40/Care

The BDes Sound for Moving Image programme is specially designed to widen participation, encouraging articulation from further education colleges and MD20/MD40 and Care experienced students (including an Associate Student Scheme with Forth Valley College comprised of several workshops at their campus, as well as programme introduction workshops at many other colleges in Scotland).

While this 2+2 structure is highly supportive and welcoming of students from Further Education Colleges in their transition to Higher Education – it makes the course less appealing for RUK and Overseas students who may favour a more traditional trajectory to Higher Education (e.g. School Leavers entering Year 1 of HE), hence there has generally been low numbers of RUK, Overseas and minoritized ethnicities from geographically diverse regions.

2. Recruitment from Internationalisation

The first year of our Study Abroad offering has proved beneficial as in AY 2023-2024 we have a strong visiting student incoming from France. There have been students from Greece, Spain, and Poland joining the class so far, two from England, and one from the USA. Internationalisation is key for sustaining the programme and encouraging greater diversity.

Upon consultation with GSA Internationalisation partners and colleagues it is clear that the BDes Sound for Moving Image Programme will be much more inviting for international students and school leavers from the rest of the UK when we can offer a four-year programme – the new School of Innovation and Technology are strategizing on how this could become a reality. Whilst internationalisation may encourage a greater diversity of minoritized ethnicities from overseas, this would not necessarily contribute to increased diversity in the home student population, so efforts to ensure recruitment at home is as inclusive as possible must continue.

3. External Examiners and Gender Inclusion Workshops

Our gender diversity over the years has been stronger than many similar subject degrees (e.g. Audio Technology, sound, engineering) with at least 20% of the students being women, and at times a 50/50 split. We have also welcomed and supported trans and non-binary students in several cohorts, with concrete welcoming measures (such as PL's pronoun introduction and gender-neutral bathrooms) and regular consultants, training and integrated professional and creative workshops (e.g. PopGirlz's quest for gender inclusion in the music industry, and Danielle Brathwaite Shirley's introduction to a Black Trans Archiving process through web gaming platform, Twine).

We prioritise gender inclusion, in all of our recruitment activities and within the course itself

4. SimVis Equality, Diversity & Inclusion workshops

The Programme Leader for the BDes Sound for the Moving Image was also Equality Diversity and Inclusion Lead for what was the School of Simulation and Visualisation (one of the two schools which later formed the School of Innovation and Technology) and has been a part of the Equalities Committee (attending where time has allowed). Prior to the formation of the Equalities Committee, the PL initiated EDI workshops (in 2019 and 2021) for staff and students bringing experts from across the school together and building resource pages to action key areas such as continuing decolonising curriculum, and pro-actively ensuring our recruitment materials emphasise support for marginalised communities. In these workshops the PL demystified the Equality Outcomes for the GSA. Staff from the GSA Library, GSASA, Marketing and Recruitment, International Foundation Programme, Architecture, Fine Art and Sustainability contributed presentations and answered our questions.

We took these colleagues' advice of making the following elements overt in our marketing materials:

- spotlighting the students' voice (in recorded testimonials, text, and live presence when possible)
- presenting the course as a space where the students' creative rationale is supported – we teach the students the technological workflows required to produce audio-visual work at an industry standard level, but we are deeply fascinated in the students creative concepts and give them space to grow.
- Sharing that we also encourage students' active questioning of dominant Eurocentric ideology in theory and in cinema, music and the art world, and are committed to decolonising the curriculum, anti-racism, and LGBTQIA+ inclusion.
- Communicating support information for students with disabilities, or those often facing barriers to higher education (economical or sociological) – namely learning support, personal tutor schemes, student wellbeing services.

We embedded these principles in bespoke SimVis course websites and course showreels videos in 2022 and since made a student-voice-led bespoke film on-site at the students' 2023 degree show. These films are sent directly to community colleges internationally, with some expression of interest returned.

In 2021, the programme also delivered decolonising reading lists Staff Development workshops for the GSA Library with the now ADL of SIT. Since then, staff continually learn from HR e-learning modules and interactive masterclasses from Scottish Trans Alliance, Unconscious Bias, and Anti-Racism for example.

When devising the Common Academic Framework in 2023, we referred to these resources, and reviewed the updates from Equalities Committee.

5. Embedding equality diversity and inclusion within the curriculum

Working with GSA Library and Learning Technology, we ensured that students were empowered to navigate through diverse forms of knowledge in Critical Studies courses (and studio). Staff from what was SimVis, Innovation and Library collaborated in Diversifying Resource Lists workshops, part of the GSA Library Staff Development series, which enabled librarians to share the best practice of participatory reading lists (co-created and reviewed by students). The students also learn to produce ethical documentaries accessing archive materials to bring lesser-known practitioners from history into the spotlight (a documentary Project begins with an in-library workshop with both the PL and librarians).

Recruitment

The programme information and promotional materials emphasise that students will learn complex technological workflows in sound, film and interactive software as a tool to express their own unique perspectives, through researching key political, socio-cultural movements and music/film/artworks from recent history.

There is a focus on ethics, sustainability and social justice in the sound and moving image industries. In admissions interviews, the applicants are encouraged to share their experiences and aspirations for this type of creative practice and critical studies, and they are made aware of student support departments to build their confidence that they could thrive on the programme.

The promotional videos shared through college visits and made available online are accessible with captions, spoken and audio-visual formats – the videos reveal ways that graduates from diverse backgrounds found the course accessible and inspiring. They show a diversity of gender and cultural backgrounds.

Curriculum

Recognising that the staff is predominantly white, we are continually pro-actively inclusive in our recruitment materials when jobs are advertised to encourage a greater diversity in the staff. For now, we ensure to teach about EDI and program diverse guest speakers from disciplines relevant to this domain.

The curriculum has anti-racism and de-colonisation embedded both in critical studies and studio projects, where students are encouraged to investigate how the (institutional, geographical, colonialist, or political) context of an author of a widely distributed theory or practice might have contributed to them developing a particular perspective, with a spotlighting of narratives from marginalised communities (LGBTQIA+, sensory impaired, and ethnic minorities). This can be seen in classes on the ethics of documentary where a film is shared from the perspective of a theologian who loses his sight, critiques on colonialism and cultural stereotyping in mainstream Hollywood cinema; to the colonial settler biases of early acoustic ecology practices in Canada. While students become aware of cultural exclusion in the past, they discover constructive methods to amplify marginalised voices in theory, cinema, and sonic practices in the present.

Particularly in the Critical Studies courses, every time period investigated has a critique of endemic racist and/or colonialist attitudes from musicians, artists, filmmakers, and acoustic ecologists across the 20th century, from overtly racist stereotyping in film and animation, to insidious “white saviour” ideologies that might pervade superhero franchises for example. There are also constructive approaches taught to encourage anti-racism in creative practice and role models of radical activism; topics such as the 1968 and 2020 protests are discussed, as well as the way they were represented in television and online news media, as well as the role that interactive technologies and social media can have in spreading hate. Many students have chosen to write essays and made self-directed studio work exploring these themes. Decolonisation of the curriculum is a priority and, as well as proactively inclusive recruitment strategies.

The staff’s own research of diverse knowledges feeds into the curriculum, such as the PL’s composition for orchestra and artists film arising from a residency with First Nations Australian musicians, which then featured alongside students’ work selected for sustainability prizes within GSA and the UCA in Kyrgyzstan, in The Living Land Film Festival.

The reading lists for critical studies classes are co-created with students as they write short reviews of their chosen source from the selection of readings for each lecture – they learn from each other and help fill information gaps.

Every week, students contribute a cultural influence in the community playlist of the week across Years 3 and 4, allowing the PL to learn about new forms of music and art that could be brought into the curriculum. Whilst there are some projects that are completed in a pair or a group (which can be challenging for students with neurodiversity, a learning disability or English as a second language, there are timetabled moments of independent study, so that students can process what can be intense work at a pace that suits them.

Learning and teaching approaches activities and practices

Students have shared that there is a reassuring structure in the timetable (akin to FE) and although the project briefs do often specify a particular method, or practical outcome, the subject matter of a project is usually very open, so the student can build a portfolio that explores their interests. This is especially important in easing a transition from Further Education or time out of study into Higher Education.

Whilst the majority of teaching sessions take place on-campus in person, if there is a day with only a 30-minute weekly briefing session this is conducted as a ZOOM session, to avoid excessive travel costs.

Online Learning tools such as Padlet and Miro mean that students can contribute to the class through dragging and dropping audio/audiovisual media, or writing free text comments and completing scaffolded tasks to prepare them to participate in an interactive class in person. These are also very helpful for peer review feedback sessions.

Canvas, and pre-recorded video lectures with subtitles allow a flipped learning model when appropriate (such as Critical Studies, where theories can be quite dense and pausing/rewinding lectures can be beneficial for information retention). These technologies also mean we are prepared if there is ever a recurrence of a pandemic-enforced remote working policy again. Text based and captioned material (and/or slides) available in advance of lectures supports neurodivergent and English as a second language students, as they can be familiar with the subject before a class discussion.

Formative assessment and feedback allow students to improve their work before the final grading point and prevents them leaving the work until the last minute. It can enable a sense of pride in their work as they share it with peers and staff. Formative Assessment, Peer Review and the Personal Tutor Scheme mean that students are proactively supported throughout their studies.

These measures ensure students are confident to explore challenging themes such as anti-racism, accessibility, and de-colonising in class discussion groups.

Assessment and feedback methods

In the NSS 2023, students shared responses of around 90-100% satisfaction on assessment and feedback, with one area for improvement in the timeliness of receiving feedback (63% satisfaction). It should be noted that students are given live feedback in many instances throughout the course, but indeed the CAF programme structure will allow greater timeliness and efficiency in providing written feedback to students.

Students are provided project briefs with assessment criteria that align with the Intended Learning Outcomes of that course. Students are provided feedback in the form of strengths and areas for improvement, and the weighting of each deliverable is made clear on the project brief and marksheet. These feedback sheets are uploaded and released on their Canvas Assignment page released via Speedgrader, and the students are given Canvas and verbal notifications when the feedback is released.

Students are given formative assessment points before their projects are summatively graded.

In the instance of a long-form course (spanning two semesters) each project is given a feedback marksheet at a formative submission stage.

For a course that is contained within one-semester, formative feedback is given in a Peer Review session, facilitated by one or more teaching (/teaching assistant) staff. The peer review session is documented by uploading the work in progress and student and staff constructive recommended references, comments or troubleshooting suggestions live to a Padlet page. Students are made aware of accessibility features such as the option of pre-recording a presentation to be played back to the class or presenting from their seat rather than standing in front of the cohort, or indeed just spectating if too anxious to present.

Learning resources

Canvas is the key virtual learning environment where the timetables, assignment pages, session pages, course modules with preparatory tasks (collected on a specific padlet page for each class), lecture slides, specially selected scans of book chapters and/or peer review academic journal articles/scientific studies/practitioner masterclasses/radio broadcasts/feature films for streaming/video demonstrations from staff and teaching assistants and a continually evolving bank of pre-recorded lecture videos are uploaded for students to review in advance of classes, to encourage confident participations in group discussions.

As much as is possible, our Keylinks reading lists include accessible digitisations of carefully chosen book chapters, so that students can access these either from the Hub campus or from home (as several students on this programme have long, costly commutes from remote towns across Scotland). Where possible, Critical Studies or selected relevant studio classes can take place in the GSA Library (once a week in Semester One), so students can access readings that are unable to be scanned, and easily browse the resources available there to enhance their assignments. Students are shown the accessibility tools available there (such as coloured overlays, focus reading windows, quiet spaces and a sensory room) to enhance their learning.

The use of pre-recorded lecture videos, bespoke padlet pages and the reading list options for each week of the programme are noted by Learning Technology staff as being quite prolific when evaluated comparison to other programmes at the GSA. There are continual efforts to ensure the authors and practitioners referred to in classes aims toward a decolonising of what could be western-centric curriculum and spotlighting of diverse knowledges.

Students are introduced to note-taking/transcript tools such as Otter.ai and Sonocent, as well as the Immersive Reader feature on Canvas

Staff Development

Staff Development has included GSA led activities, as well as external research activities, exhibition and competition opportunities that celebrate staff and student collaboration.

Examples of the former (GSA led activities) include:

- Intranet resources on EDI
- HR organised training workshops on Trans Awareness, Unconscious Bias, Neurodiversity at Work, Complaints Handling, among others; there are a growing bank of mandatory e-learning modules on EDI, e.g. the Prevent strategy (preventing radicalisation), safeguarding.
- Staff other than the PL are being trained to conduct the FE college recruitment visits
- the PL has been guest lecturer in Product Design, Interior Design, Pre-Sessional English – to understand best practices for EDI for diverse international cohorts.
- Staff from the school presented research in the GSA Learning and Teaching Conference on Creative Curriculum: Supporting Creative Practice and Practitioners for the 21st Century
- PL forums have had focused guest lectures featuring themes such as anti-racism in education.

For examples of the latter (external research and exhibition opportunities), the PL was invited to a Creative Music Intensive with the Australian Art Orchestra in the Tasmanian Highlands, where she learned diverse knowledges from First Nations musicians, manifesting in an original film and composed score for orchestra (funded by Creative Scotland and the Australian Government to be shared in Glasgow's Center for Contemporary Arts). This practice has been inspirational for students, included in relevant courses on the programme. The resulting work was also selected for a competition in The Living Land Film Festival at University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan, along with BDes Sound 2023 graduate work with a sustainability, climate and ecology focus. To celebrate this international development, one of these students and the PL along with Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra then collaborated on a film and outreach event for the GSA Christmas Card).

Sex

The programme frequently acknowledges and confronts historical lack of gender diversity in the film and sound industries, highlighting constructive strategies and working groups who are working to reduce this (Women in Sound, Women on Sound, PopGirlz for example) which ensures students of all genders are encouraged to participate fully in their chosen industries, and make positive change from within.

Students should feel safe to explore these issues in their self-directed essay, dissertation or practical studio work.

Men's mental health is also an important issue addressed in the curriculum, especially understanding that marginalisation can be intersectional (across gender, physical disability, language, economic deprivation etc), with each individual encountering varying levels of discrimination across a Wheel of Power (https://www.thisishowyoucan.com/post/wheel_of_power_and_privilege)

Student Support and Inclusive Communities e-learning modules are available to prevent Gender Based Violence and support mental health.

Gender diversity

When introducing the course and in her email signature, the PL shares her pronouns, and in an ice-breaker session students are welcomed to share theirs if they like (in either written or verbal form, as they use a Padlet in addition to the discussion). Where a pronoun is shared, this is used consistently by staff and students.

Gender neutral bathrooms are now widely available across The Hub campus and the GSA Reid and Library Building.

Staff have participated in Trans Awareness training workshops from Scottish Trans Alliance, which strengthened understanding of ways to pro-actively support and welcome students and colleagues from the entire trans umbrella (including non-binary people for example).

Logistically, students are shown the procedures in which they can formally change their name in the GSA learning environment if desired (on Canvas, emails, enrolment, and graduation scrolls) from Induction Day (or earlier if staff are contacted in advance). This means that all staff will have the correct attendance list and ensure dignity throughout the learning experience.

Sensitivity must be ensured regarding correspondence including a trans students' chosen name – as paper correspondence at a home address may have upsetting consequences if their relatives are not yet aware of their identity.

Trans practitioners in sound for moving image are often spotlighted in contextual lectures, and encouraged to lecture on the course, such as Black Trans Archivist Danielle Brathwaite Shirley's 2021 Graduate Showcase event.

The programme has supported trans students when they choose their experience as subject matter for a self-directed project.

Sexual orientation

LGBTQIA+ students are made to feel included and represented in this Programme (regardless of whether they have chosen to let others be aware of their orientation or not), as LGBTQIA+ practitioners and themes in relevant inspirational film/musical materials are frequently spotlighted (e.g. Wendy Carlos, Pauline Oliveros, John Cage...). Therefore, we amplify underrepresented voice in the contents of the curriculum. Again, the GSA's respect and dignity at work policy is key to ensuring students feel safe to be themselves and learn about the work of practitioners from alternative sexualities.

Multidimensional representation of LGBTQIA+ experiences has been an aspiration of several self-directed essay and dissertation projects, with astute critiques of cultural stereotyping of lesbian characters in mainstream comedy for example.

