



**DE MONTFORT  
UNIVERSITY**  
LEICESTER

**DECOLONISING  
DMU**

**The Education Academy**

**Decolonising DMU Toolkit**

# **Examples of Good Practice**

**Faculty of Arts, Design and Humanities**

# Decolonising DMU: ADH Examples

## Professor Tim Fulford

### English



## Marie Hay

### Dance



Through a lecture series focussing on diversity, students learnt about a greater range of artists, and exposed them to dance practices that they may be more familiar with or find it easier to identify with.

This creates a sense of belonging, and could also improve engagement and achievement. These lectures have included artists and practices from the US, UK and Europe for some time under varying sub-themes of identity, with specific BAME examples over more recent years including Bill T Jones, Namron, Kokuma Dance Company, IRIE! Dance Theatre, MAAS Movers, and Phoenix Dance Theatre. Positive expressions such as 'this lecture is about me' have been voiced by students.

This initiative does not involve particular modules or programmes, but is instead related to the environment for performing arts students generally.

The aim of the intervention is to improve on the number of students who have a sense of belonging.

The large image of 2 student dancers on the front wall of PACE is memorable and aspirational, but not diverse in terms of the ethnicity of students represented. Creating a more inclusive image may improve the sense of belonging students experience as part of the dance environment at DMU.

New images were photographed of white male; black female and Asian male dance students. In the creation of the final image the balance of power between 2 dancers in the image was carefully considered. The final image includes the black female student and Asian male student.

## Anu Koskela

### English Language



Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their learning by reflecting on their own everyday linguistic experiences with a module that includes writing about their own 'linguistic observations'.

As the focus of this is on the students' own experience, it is sensitive to the students' own socio-cultural identity and history. For example, bilingual and international students have written pieces commenting on linguistic differences between the languages they speak or some of the misunderstandings they have encountered as non-native speakers of English. Students have also reflected on slang uses specific to their own dialect and social group. Students are encouraged to work in inclusive and engaged



manner with their peers, with peer feedback and collaboration, as students can learn from each other's experiences.

Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their learning by reflecting on their own everyday linguistic experiences. It "tests 'real world' problems; assessments are socially, culturally & globally relevant and take into account the learners identity, experience and history"

- it means that "learning is authentic and contextualised; it is socially, culturally & globally relevant and takes into account learners' identity, experience and history".

- As the assessment also involves peer feedback and comments, this creates "opportunities for group work, collaboration, co-creation and peer support; students are encouraged to work in inclusive and engaged manner with their peers"

On this second-year English Language module, for one of the assessment components (20% of the overall module mark) the students write four blog posts about their 'linguistic observations'. The students are encouraged to comment on interesting or perhaps unusual examples of language use that they have encountered in their everyday lives (e.g. in online discussions, in books they've read or films they've watched or conversations they've had with their friends). Some of the blog topics from previous years have included the linguistic structure of a click-bait headline, the use of puns in jokes, the slang use of **gassed** to mean 'excited' and the semantics of the Beatles song title **Please Please Me**. The students propose their own tentative linguistic analysis of their linguistic observation (e.g. why the punchline to a joke is funny). The students apply concepts of linguistic analysis they have learned about on the module to the material they discuss in their blogs, thus creating an authentic context for learning and encouraging students to apply their knowledge to real-life contexts. As the focus is on the students' own experience, the blogging task is also sensitive to the students' own socio-cultural identity and experience. For example, bilingual and international students have written blog posts commenting on linguistic differences between the languages they speak or some of the misunderstandings they have

encountered as non-native speakers of English. Students have also reflected on slang uses specific to their own idiolect and social group. As part of the assessment, students are also required to comment on other students' blog posts: peer feedback (note: not peer assessment) forms 20% of their mark for this assessment component. Students are encouraged to add comments to other students' blogs, asking them questions or proposing further issues or examples for consideration. This also creates an opportunity for peer learning, as students can learn from each others' experiences and also co-operate with each other to come up with a joint analysis of the linguistic observation.

## David Soden

### Photography&Video

The Image Is The Servant predominantly involves Photography and Video students with Fine Art, Dance, Foundation, Performance, Animation and Film Studies students sometimes contributing. Led by David Soden with PHVP staff support it takes place on one evening during week 22. Approximately 30 students contribute per event with many more attending on the night.

The Image Is The Servant aims to build confidence in all who take part by offering accessible, creative opportunities, where even the smallest of contributions have value and work towards creating an event that is often received as "more than the sum of its parts."

The Image Is The Servant promotes ideas of inclusivity, diversity and collaboration by encouraging students to engage with the local Leicester arts and music community, which reflects Leicester's multicultural population.

The Image Is The Servant promotes the idea that diversity leads to more interesting creative outputs and solutions.

The students get the opportunity to create and submit photographic and moving image work that contributes to a themed, live art and performance event, alongside local artist, poets, dancers and musicians.

The themes have included Fearful, Playful, Peaceful and Body Beautiful.

## Huw Morgan

### Photography&Video

To enable our 2nd year PHVP students to gain confidence in working with real life clients on real photography and video projects.

Other than creating the initial link with the client, that is staff led, the students set up, implement and steer the project entirely by themselves. Typically a production unit is some 3/4 in number. They could be working with the public sector, the emergency services, or charities as well as start up companies such as those in the Innovation Centre at DMU. The students receive brief contact details straight upon return from Xmas, and they roughly have until Easter to complete the exercise. Marking is based around 4 areas, the final product, client feedback, personal evaluation and peer assessment. Examination is by VIVA.

The Live Briefs within PHVP2407 have been running for over 10 years now. We have worked with a very wide range of clients mainly from within Leicester and its County but also further afield. The impact has been mainly very positive as we have a large number of returning clients who have been delighted with the work that our students have created for them. The impact on the students is very high. Many of them still reference their Live Brief experience long after they have left DMU. They include it on their CV's and use material on their websites and show reels, something that the clients are usually only too happy to support.

It provides the students with a learning ground to bolster self-confidence and learn teamwork in an equal opportunity setting. They understand how to present themselves in the wider world and how to promote their talents, playing to their strengths as individuals and moreover their strength as a team. This could be placed just about anywhere where the student will one day have to work on projects set by an external client. It can't be rushed, which is why we give a realistic three months plus to complete the task. Also, it must be borne in mind what other workloads the students would have in addition to a live brief.

## Funmi Adewole

### Dance

This class is offered as part of the dance department's dance technique and performance modules. The aim is to give students a contemporary dance training that is open to culturally diverse influences.

For example

- To give students a sense of belonging to a global dance community as dances with Africanist principles have influenced most dance and entertainment practices.
- To place value on dance forms and techniques from non-western cultures.
- To give all students the permission to draw on dance knowledge from their own cultural background or social life in the development of their contemporary dance practice.
- To expand the students' scope for entrepreneurship, research and collaboration.
- This class is part of the dance department's dance technique module. This module gives the students the opportunity to learn dance skills which can be found in a variety of popular and artistic dance forms.

The students learn the skills taught in class by the teacher and practice them during their independent study time. They also can draw on these skills for their group work and their self-directed independent training, research and choreographic projects which are part of other modules.

## David Terris

### Design Products

As a means of providing a wide range of positive role models for all of our students, we are planning to create a display in the studio featuring our alumni. Rather than concentrating on the 'where are you now' question (which can often be remote to current students) we will ask alumni to reflect on their time at university and how this has influenced their careers and lives. We hope that this can be used to reflect the wide range of people and experiences in our subject area.

## Nicky Harding

### Interior Design

#### Wall of Fame:

To create a physical 'Wall of Fame' this intends to highlight students and graduates achievements whilst studying at DMU and beyond. This would be an aspirational space for students to see where graduates have succeeded whether that be in terms of their employment, competitions or other achievements. Our intention is to put up photos within the interior design base room with perhaps a short biography for each student/graduate, this will be added to year on year.

## Nicola Taylor

### Textile Design

Building a diverse reading list to include more BAME representation. This is to allow BAME students to see images that represent their culture in design, fashion and textiles. Successes, research, trends and future, traditional technology to increase awareness of cultural differences and global industry. Students will benefit from seeing images, contextual research and reading lists to include global influences. One of the key drivers of the revalidation process was that students had the opportunity to create and nurture their own design identity from level 4. Choice is key throughout the curriculum in all modules; all students have to research and create their own concept.

Embedded trips are free or heavily subsidised such as trips to London, exhibitions, museums and sculpture parks give equal opportunities, create a community and build student confidence and experiences.

## Paul McNicoll

### Fashion Design

Often, the fashion industry presents examples of highest practice as being work from UK and Western European fashion designers, very few of whom are identifiable as being from BAME backgrounds. In this student research and inspiration trip, the aim was to introduce a much wider range of "best practice" examples from a

more diverse range of sources.

As the event was at the Victoria and Albert's, Clothworker's Research Centre and selecting items from their permanent archive, the ownership and location gave additional authority to the importance and relevance of the items being viewed.

Half of the garments/outfits that the second year Fashion Design explored during the visit were celebrated examples from BAME designers and/or regions, both contemporary and traditional. Examples included a contemporary Japanese designer, a Rude Boy outfit curated by Normsky and a traditional, artisan, south Asian boys dress coat.

Exploring and discussing the significance, quality, value and opportunity for contemporary inspiration, three different members of staff analyse the pieces with the student group.

For further information, contact  
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